

DIGGING DEEPER

Hezekiah

I. IMPORTANT SCRIPTURES ABOUT HEZEKIAH

2 Kings 16-21; 2 Chr. 28-33; Isaiah 36-39; Mt. 1:9-10

II. HEZEKIAH'S CHRONOLOGY

BIBLICAL EVENT	KLASSEN DATE	REFERENCE
David's reign	1025-985 B.C.	
Solomon's reign	985-945 B.C.	
Ahab's reign	889-870 B.C.	
Elijah's ministry	889-868 B.C.	
Elisha's ministry	868-808 B.C.	
King Uzziah (Azariah) reigns in Judah	784-732 B.C.	2 Kgs. 15:1-2
Isaiah is born in Judah	765 B.C.	
Ministry of Hosea in Israel	784-724 B.C.	Hosea
Ministry of Amos in Israel	774-763 B.C.	Amos
Death of Uzziah & Isaiah's Vision	732 B.C.	Isa. 6
Reign of Jotham & son Ahaz	732-717 B.C.	2 Chr. 27:1-2
Hezekiah begins reign with Ahaz	727 B.C.	
Fall of Israel to Assyria	721 B.C.	2 Kgs. 17:6
God extends Hezekiah's life	712 B.C.	2 Kgs. 20
God saves Jerusalem from Assyria	710 B.C.	2 Kgs. 19
Death of Hezekiah	697 B.C.	2 Kgs. 20:21

III. THE WORLD AND FAMILY OF HEZEKIAH

A. The World in Hezekiah's Day

By the time that Hezekiah's co-regency with his father ended with the death of King Ahaz, Judah was in a mess both spiritually and politically. Ahaz had been one of Judah's most wicked kings, comparable in many ways to Ahab in Israel. Ahaz forsook the Lord God and promoted the worship of many pagan gods. He caused an altar to the gods of Damascus to replace the altar of sacrifice in front of the temple and took the former and turned it into a personal shrine for divination. He also had images of the Canaanite goddess Asherah put inside the temple itself.

Politically, Ahaz had made Judah a vassal of Assyria. Vast sums of money were being sent to the Assyrian monarch to keep him from attacking their country. Israel, the northern kingdom, had already fallen to Assyria's might. Any military analyst would have said that Judah was next.

B. Hezekiah's family

Hezekiah was one of the sons of Ahaz, falling in the line of Abraham, Israel, Judah, and David. While Ahaz was one of Judah's most wicked kings, his son Hezekiah was one of Judah's most godly kings. The Scripture says this of Hezekiah in **2 Kings 18:3,5-6**, "And he did *what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done... He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses.*"

IV. HEZEKIAH'S SIGNIFICANCE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. Hezekiah's first test

1. At the age of 25, in his first year as king, Hezekiah was confronted by his first test as monarch of Judah.
2. The question: Whom do you trust: the Lord, yourself, or some powerful ally?
3. The situation: Egypt and Ethiopia had encouraged the Philistine cities to rebel against Assyria. They sought to enlist Judah to join forces with them.
4. The Lord sent Isaiah with a message graphically displayed. The Lord told his prophet to walk about Judah naked for three years saying that the Assyrians would lead the Egyptians and Ethiopians out of their land as naked captives and prisoners.

Isa. 20:1-6 ¹ In the year that Tartan came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it, ² at the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and remove the sackcloth from your body, and take your sandals off your feet." And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. ³ Then the LORD said, "Just as My servant

Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, ⁴ so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. ⁵ Then they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation and Egypt their glory. ⁶ And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, 'Surely such is our expectation, wherever we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and how shall we escape?'"

5. Hezekiah believed the word of the Lord through Isaiah and did not enter into the alliance.

B. Revival!

1. Hezekiah caused some of his scribes to copy some of the proverbs of King Solomon. Many of these are now a part of the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 25:1 These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied:

2. He reinstated much of the worship in the temple, including reviving the use of the levitical music.
3. He had the bronze serpent of Moses day, which had been turned into an instrument of idolatry, removed from its place in the temple and destroyed.
4. He also removed the images of Asherah and reconsecrated the altar of sacrifice and other temple furnishings and implements.
5. Hezekiah destroyed the other "high places" and altars to pagan gods in the land of Judah.

C. Revolt Against Assyria

1. When King Sargon of Assyria died in battle and was replaced by his son Sennacherib, Hezekiah sensed that the time was ripe to be liberated from Assyrian domination. This time, there was no warning from the Lord to hold him back, and he quickly struck alliances with cities of Phoenicia, Philistia, and Egypt.
2. Sennacherib responded by marching toward Judah, coming down the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, conquering Tyre and many other cities on the way. Many rebel cities surrendered. Only Ekron, Askelon, and Judah remained in opposition to the armies of this powerful warrior.
3. Judah was prepared. The walls of Jerusalem were strengthened and weaponry stockpiled. (2 Chr. 32:5)
4. Hezekiah gathered his military forces in the open square of Jerusalem and challenged them:

2 Chr. 32:7-8 ⁷ "Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him; for

there are more with us than with him. ⁸ With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah."

5. Hezekiah had a tunnel dug 1,750 feet through solid rock to connect the pool of Siloam in the interior of Jerusalem with the Gihon spring.

He then extended Jerusalem's protective wall around the spring itself.

6. Having assured a water supply for the inhabitants of Zion, he proceeded to deny water to the approaching enemy. He had wells filled with rocks throughout the land so that water could not be drawn for the Assyrian army.
7. Nevertheless, the Assyrian war machine advanced relentlessly, conquering many cities of Judah. The record of the Assyrian devastation of Lachish is still well preserved in a bas-relief from Sennacherib's palace in Nineveh, a portion of which can be viewed in a display in the British Museum in London.
8. Assyria marched on toward Jerusalem.

D. An Extension of Life

1. During this time, Hezekiah became ill. Isaiah came to tell him he would die.
2. But good King Hezekiah prayed to the Lord and asked for an extension of his life. Before Isaiah had left the palace, God sent him back to tell Hezekiah that the Lord had given him an additional 15 years to live and that God would save Jerusalem from the attack of Assyria. God made the sun go backward as a sign of His promise.

E. Jerusalem Attacked

1. When Sennacherib and his forces began their siege of Zion, his envoys tried to intimidate the people by first threatening them and then offering them good treatment if they deserted. In Hebrew, they derided Yahweh as unable to rescue the residents of Jerusalem, and they boasted of how many cities they had conquered and how many captives they had taken.
2. This scorn and scoffing was not only delivered vocally at the walls of Jerusalem for all the citizens to hear, it was put in writing and delivered to King Hezekiah.
3. Hezekiah took the letter containing the blasphemous words of Sennacherib to the temple and spread out the pages before the Lord in His Holy House. The Word of God records his prayer in 2 Kings 19:15-19:

*Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, *the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. "Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. "Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, "and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands—**

wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. “Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You *are* the LORD God, You alone.”

4. God heard Hezekiah’s prayer and sent Isaiah with His answer. It is recorded in 2 Kings 19:21-34. Two select portions give us a taste of its flavor:

2 Kings 19:22 ‘Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised *your* voice, And lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy *One* of Israel.

2 Kings 19:32-34 “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: ‘He shall not come into this city, Nor shoot an arrow there, Nor come before it with shield, Nor build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, By the same shall he return; And he shall not come into this city,’ Says the LORD. ‘For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.’”

5. One night, sometime after this promise was delivered, God fulfilled His Word.

2 Chronicles 32:21 Then the LORD sent an angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his own land. ...

That night, the Angel of the Lord slew a total of 185,000 Assyrians while they slept. Sennacherib and the rest packed up and went back to Nineveh. Once back, Sennacherib was killed by two of his own sons as he worshipped in the temple of his pagan god Nisroch.

F. Final Days

1. Not long afterward, Hezekiah was visited by Babylonian envoys, wishing him well following his illness. Hezekiah toured them through Jerusalem, showing them all the treasures of the City of Zion.
2. Isaiah told King Hezekiah that he had made a terrible mistake. The Lord said that the descendants of these Babylonians would return to carry all these treasures to Babylon and that the sons of Hezekiah would be made eunuchs in that foreign land.
3. Again Hezekiah believed the Lord, but his response was not as noble as in times past. He said in essence, “At least there will be peace in my days.”