

Lecture #21 – Exposition of II Kings 15-20

Chapter 15 – Azariah to Jotham

vs. 1-7 – Reign of Azariah (Uzziah) over Judah

☪ II Chronicles 26:1-5, 21-23

On the two names for Azariah/Uzziah and his selection as king, Edersheim writes:

“It would seem that a peculiar meaning attaches to the notice that ‘all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father, Amaziah’ (2 Kings 14:21). With the exception of the name, this statement is literally repeated in 2 Chronicles 26:1, indicating that the writers of the two books had copied it from the same historical record. But considering the youth of the new king on the death of his father, Amaziah, at the age of fifty-four (2 Kings 14:2), he could scarcely have been his eldest son. Probably there was, therefore, a special reason for his selection by the people. Possibly there may be some connection between it and the twofold name which he bears in Holy Scripture. In 2 Chronicles - written, as we may say, from the priestly point of view - the new king is always called Uzziah,¹ while in the Book of Kings he is designated during the first part of his reign as Azariah, while one notices of the latter part of that period he appears as Uzziah (2 Kings 15:13, 30, 32, 34).

The usual explanations either of a clerical error through the confusion of similar letters, or that he bore two names, seem equally unsatisfactory. Nor is the meaning of the two names precisely the same – Azariah being ‘Jehovah helps;’ Uzziah, ‘My strength is Jehovah.’ May it not be that Azariah was his real name,² and that when after his daring intrusion into the sanctuary (2 Chronicles 26:16-20), he was smitten with lifelong leprosy, his name was significantly altered into the cognate Uzziah – ‘My strength is Jehovah’ – in order to mark that the ‘help’ which he had received had been dependent on his relation to the LORD. This would accord with the persistent use of the latter name in 2 Chronicles – considering the view-point of the writer – and with its occurrence in the prophetic writings (Hosea 1:1; Amos 1:1; Isaiah 1:1; 6:1; 7:1). And the explanation just suggested seems confirmed by the circumstance that although this king is always called Uzziah in 2 Chronicles, yet the Hebrew word for ‘help’ which forms the first part of the name Azariah, recurs with marked emphasis in the account of the Divine help accorded in his expeditions (2 Chronicles 26:7, 13, 15).”³

We will further with him when we get into II Chronicles. He was succeeded by his son, Jotham (“Jehovah is upright”)⁴.

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 6 – 759 B.C.

¹ Edersheim’s note: “With the exception of 1 Chronicles 3:12, which forms part of a bare genealogical list.”

² Edersheim’s note: “This is the name always given on the Assyrian monuments, *Azrijahu*.”

³ Bible History: Old Testament by Alfred Edersheim. Book 7, p. 60

⁴ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

vs. 8-12 – Reign of Zachariah over Israel

There is an *interregnum* period of about 12 years⁵ between the death of Jeroboam II and ascension of Zachariah.⁶ Reese suggests that this is due to either disputes on a successor or a reluctance to accept Zachariah.⁷ An alternative theory absorbs those missing 12 years into coregencies.⁸

We are only left to speculate on why the *interregnum* took place and why Zachariah was so quickly dispatched. Knapp writes:

“Anarchy probably prevailed during that unrecorded time. Hosea, whose prophecy dates about this time (as regards Israel, see Hos. 1:1), alluded frequently to this season of lawlessness and revolution. See Hos. 7:7; 10:3, 7; 13:10... The people were probably unwilling to have Zachariah succeed his father to the throne. He appears to have been quite unpopular with the mass of the nation, for Shallum slew him without fear ‘before the people.’ But God has said next to nothing as to this parenthetic period, and we dare not say more. To speculate here would be worse than folly, since God’s wisdom has chosen to give us no record of it. Where no useful end is gained, He always hides from the gaze of the curious the sins and errors of His people.”⁹

Zachariah was publicly assassinated after a reign of only six months. His death ends Jehu’s dynasty in its fourth generation from its founder, fulfilling the prophecy of II Kings 10:30.

Zachariah is succeeded by his assassin, Shallum (“retribution”)¹⁰.

vs. 13-15 – Reign of Shallum over Israel

The assassin Shallum is in turn assassinated by Menahem (“comforter”)¹¹

Knapp writes:

“This assassination of two rulers, Zachariah and Shallum, within the space of half a year, speaks loudly of the state of anarchy prevailing in the kingdom at the time. It was, as the prophet testified, ‘blood toucheth blood’ (Hos. 4:2). The great prosperity and expansion under Jeroboam II appears

⁵ Amaziah ruled over Judah for 29 years. Jeroboam II was crown in the 14th year of Amaziah’s reign and ruled for 41 years. Uzziah followed Amaziah over Judah and ruled for 52 years. So, Jeroboam II’s rule would coincide with the final 15 years of Amaziah and the first 26 of Uzziah. Therefore, Jeroboam II would have died in the 26th year of Uzziah’s reign, but his successor Zachariah is not crowned until the 38th year of Uzziah’s reign. That leaves a gap with no recorded ruler for up to 12 years.

⁶ See Reese’s Chronological Bible, p. 673; Knapp’s Kings of Israel, p. 121; and Edersheim’s Old Testament History, book 7, p. 80.

⁷ Reese’s Chronological Bible, p. 673, footnote b.

⁸ See *Kingdom of Priests* p. 373-374

⁹ The Kings of Israel by C. Knapp. p. 122.

¹⁰ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

¹¹ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

to have corrupted the people and caused them to give free rein to their evil desires and violence (see Hos. 4:7).”¹²

vs. 16-22 – Reign of Menahem over Israel

Josephus describes Menahem and his rise to power:

“Now when Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam, had reigned six months over Israel, he was slain by the treachery of a certain friend of his, whose name was Shallum, the son of Jabesh, who took the kingdom afterward, but kept it no longer than thirty days; for Menahem, the general of his army, who was at that time in the city Tirzah, and heard of what had befallen Zachariah, removed thereupon with all his forces to Samaria, and joining battle with Shallum, slew him; and when he had made himself king, he went thence, and came to the city Tiphseh; but the citizens that were in it shut their gates, and barred them against the king, and would not admit him: but in order to be avenged on them, he burnt the country round about it, and took the city by force, upon a siege; and being very much displeased at what the inhabitants of Tiphseh had done, he slew them all, and spared not so much as the infants, without omitting the utmost instances of cruelty and barbarity; for he used such severity upon his own countrymen, as would not be pardonable with regard to strangers who had been conquered by him. And after this manner it was that this Menahem continued to reign with cruelty and barbarity for ten years.”¹³

We must also note the arrival, and first historical appearance in Scripture, of the Assyrian empire.¹⁴ Historians identify this as the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Be careful not to mix up the Syrian¹⁵ and Assyrian empires. In English these names are similar,¹⁶ but they are two distinct kingdoms. Both are descended from Shem (Genesis 10:22) through Aram (Syria) and Asshur (Assyria). Syria was a regional kingdom around the capital of Damascus. Assyria was a far stronger and more expansive empire centered around the original capital of Asshur.

The Assyrian king Pul (“lord”)¹⁷ is generally accepted to be Tiglath-Pileser III, the king who led the resurgence of the Assyrian power.

The Assyrians were given a tribute/bribe to leave that was 1,000 talents (\$26,407,417),¹⁸ equal to 3,000,000 shekels.¹⁹ It appears that Menahem put this burden on wealthy individuals in the land, at 50 shekels (a weight that is called a *mina*) a piece. Thus, there would have been 60,000 men so taxed.

¹² The Kings of Israel by C. Knapp. p. 126

¹³ https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Antiquities_of_the_Jews/Book_IX - accessed 11-11-22

¹⁴ *Assyria* (from Strong’s H804 – *Asshur*) is used to describe a region in Genesis 2:14 and 25:18. The name it is derived from – *Asshur* – appears in Genesis 10:11 and in Numbers 24:22,24.

¹⁵ Strong’s H758 – *Aram*.

¹⁶ As shown, they are not so similar in Hebrew. It appears that the two names became similar when processed through Greek and Latin writers.

¹⁷ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

¹⁸ <https://www.unitconverters.net/weight-and-mass/talent-biblical-hebrew-to-ounce.htm> - accessed 11-11-22 - 1,000 talents is about 1,206,369 ounces which was then multiplied by the silver price of \$21.89.

¹⁹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/biblical-weights-and-measures.html> - accessed 11-11-22. 1 talent = 3,000 shekels.

This in part proves the testimony of the prophets that the Northern Kingdom was very prosperous and wealthy at this time.

Menahem was succeeded by his son Pekahiah (“whose eyes Jehovah opened”)²⁰

📖 The Book of Jonah – 770 B.C.

vs. 23-26 – Reign of Pekahiah over Israel

Pekahiah was yet another wicked king on the throne of Israel. He reigned only two years before being assassinated by Pekah (“open-eyed”)²¹

vs. 27-31 – Reign of Pekah over Israel

Yet another wicked king over Israel.

We will look at an expedition Pekah made with Syria against Judah in the next chapter.

Tiglath-Pileser III and the Assyrians take large portions of the Northern Kingdom’s territory. The towns and areas in vs. 29 are around the Sea of Galilee and in the Trans-Jordan.

Pekah was assassinated and succeeded by Hoshea (“salvation”)²², who was a friend of Pekah’s according to Josephus.²³

vs. 32-38 – Reign of Jotham over Judah

🔄 II Chronicles 27:1-9

Jotham was a good king, following the pattern of Uzziah in his better days.

Davis writes:

“Very little is written about King Jotham in Scripture, possibly because his reign was overlapped largely by co-regencies with his father, Uzziah, and son, Ahaz. Though he was a godly man, his reign was somewhat colorless. He built some cities and towers, and won a foreign war (which is not mentioned in Kings). The only significant adverse comment is that ‘he entered not into the

²⁰ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

²¹ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

²² Smith’s Bible Dictionary

²³ https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Antiquities_of_the_Jews/Book_IX - Book IX, ch. 13, p. 1

temple of Jehovah' (II Chron. 27:2). Was he trying to honor his father who was smitten with leprosy in the temple, or was he superstitiously fearful of suffering the same fate?"²⁴

Noted here is that he rebuilt the "higher gate". On this Knapp writes:

"The high gate led from the king's house to the temple (see 2 Chron. 23:20), and Jotham's building it (rebuilding, or repairing) is very significant. He wished free access from his own house to that of the Lord. He would strengthen the link between the two houses—keep his line of communication open (to use a military figure) with the source of his supplies of strength and wisdom. This is one of the secrets of his prosperity and power."²⁵

He was succeeded by his son Ahaz ("possessor")²⁶.

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 1-5 – 759 B.C.

📖 The Book of Micah, ch. 1-2 – 747 B.C.

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 10-12– 739 B.C.

📖 The Book of Hosea, ch. 5-6 – 739 B.C.

Chapter 16 – Ahaz and Hezekiah

vs. 1-4 – Reign of Ahaz over Judah

↪ II Chronicles 28:1-5

Ahaz breaks from his father and grandfather in becoming a wicked king that turned from the Lord.

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 9-10 – 759 B.C.

vs. 5-9 – Judah's Alliance with Assyria Against Syria and Israel

↪ II Chronicles 28:6-8,16

Ahaz faced a combined threat of Israel and Syria. The Syrians took the port of Elath ("a grove")²⁷ on the northern tip of the gulf of Aqaba. Ahaz makes an alliance with Assyria to come to his aid by sending them tribute of the treasures of the Temple and palace. The Assyrians conquer the Syrians and Damascus and kill their king.

²⁴ Israel: From Conquest to Exile by John J. Davis and John C. Whitcomb. p. 444

²⁵ The Kings of Judah by C. Knapp. p. 104-105

²⁶ Smith's Bible Dictionary

²⁷ Smith's Bible Dictionary

Gaebelein writes:

“When Rezin, King of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, King of Israel, came against Jerusalem and besieged Ahaz, he appealed to Tiglath-pileser to save him out of their hands, instead of crying to Jehovah for the deliverance He had promised to His people. The king also took the silver and gold from the LORD’s house and presented it to Tiglath-pileser. Then after Ahaz had declared himself the vassal of Assyria (‘I am thy servant’), Tiglath-pileser conquered Damascus. The inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser mention this fact. We refer again to Isaiah 7. The alliance with the Assyrian was opposed by Isaiah. He told Ahaz ‘at the end of the conduit of the upper pool’ to ask a sign of any kind of the LORD God, to allay the fears of the king and give an evidence that the LORD would preserve the house of David. And furthermore Isaiah had taken with him his son Shear-jashub, which means ‘the remnant shall return,’ prophetic also of the preservation of a remnant. When wicked Ahaz refused, the prophet uttered that great sign which was to take place over seven hundred years after, that the virgin should conceive and bring forth a son, even Immanuel. The house of David might be punished and chastised, but there could be no full end of the royal family, for the promised One had to come from David and receive in due time the promised kingdom. And Isaiah also predicted that the Assyrian, in whom Ahaz had put his trust, should come upon them (Isaiah 7:17). What Pekah did to Judah and Oded’s testimony against Pekah we shall learn from the Chronicles.”²⁸

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 7, 8:1-8, 17 – 740 B.C.

vs. 10-18 – Ahaz brings Pagan Worship into Jerusalem

We saw in vs. 3-4 that Ahaz was himself a pagan. He uses his royal power to remodel the Temple and its services according to pagan practices. He constructs a new altar on the design of one in Damascus. He removes the base of the brazen laver (possibly to use the metal in this remodeling project). He corrupts the practices of the Temple in adding pagan practices from the kingdoms he admired.

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 8:9-22, 9:1-7 – 739 B.C.

📖 The Book of Micah, ch. 3 – 739 B.C.

vs. 19-20 – Overview of Ahaz’s Reign Over Judah

🔄 II Chronicles 28:26-28

Ahaz passes and his son Hezekiah (“the might of Jehovah”)²⁹ takes the throne.

²⁸ Annotated Bible by A.C. Gaebelein. E-Sword module.

²⁹ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

Chapter 17 – Hoshea and the Fall of Israel

vs. 1-4 – The Reign of Hoshea over Israel

Hoshea took the throne after another *interregnum* period of 8 or 9 years.³⁰

Knapp quips: “He was the last of the nineteen kings who ruled (or, rather, misruled) Israel.”³¹

Merrill writes:

“We have already seen that Hoshea, Israel's last king, came to power as an Assyrian puppet. His options were extremely limited, for in the very year of his accession, 732, Damascus was reduced to ashes and it was clear that Tiglath-pileser had Samaria next in mind. Hoshea was not a reliable puppet as it turned out, for when Tiglath-pileser had to return east to put down the Babylonian rebellions, Hoshea declared himself free of Assyrian suzerainty. He had little time to enjoy this independence, though, because Shalmaneser V resumed the imperialistic policies of his father. Shalmaneser came to Israel in 725 to demand Hoshea's loyalty. When this was not forthcoming, he laid Samaria under siege. Though the city held out valiantly for three years, it surrendered in 722.”³²

Shalmaneser³³ V of Assyria made demanded tribute from Hoshea and Israel, But Hoshea stopped the tribute payments and sought an alliance with Egypt.³⁴

vs. 5-23 – The Fall of Israel

In response to Hoshea's rebellious acts, Shalmaneser V conquers the land and besieges Samara. Samaria falls in 721 B.C. after a three-year siege.³⁵ Hoshea appears to have been killed (see Hosea 10:7).

Knapp writes:

“In 2 Kings 17:7-23 we are given an instructive and touching review of Israel's downward course. It has been truly observed that the most dismal picture of Old Testament history is that of the kingdom of Israel. Of the nine distinct dynasties that successively ruled the dissevered tribes, three ended with the total extermination of the reigning family. The kingdom lasted for a period of about 250 years, and the inspired records of those eventful two-and-a-half centuries of Israel's kings and people furnish us with little more than repeated and fearful exhibitions of lawlessness and evil. Out of the nineteen kings that ruled Israel from the great division to the deportation of

³⁰ See Reese's Chronological Bible, p. 693 or The Kings of Israel by C. Knapp. p. 135

³¹ The Kings of Israel by C. Knapp. p. 135

³² Kingdom of Priests, p. 398. His dates differ from Reese's.

³³ There is no consensus on the meaning of his name, which likely refers to a pagan deity.

³⁴ The identity of the Egyptian king So is not certain. At this time Egypt was fractured and the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th dynasties all ruled concurrently different portions of the land. Two possibilities are suggested: Tefnakht, who ruled at Sais from 724-717, or Osorkon IV, who ruled at Tanis from 730-712.

³⁵ The siege may have been started by Shalmaneser V but finished by Sargon II. Both seem to take credit.

the people to the land of Assyria, only seven died natural deaths (Baasha, Omri, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and Menahem); seven were assassinated (Nadab, Elah, Joram, Zachariah, Shallum, Pekaiiah, and Pekah); one committed suicide (Zimri); one died of wounds received in battle (Ahab); one was ‘struck’ by the judgment of God (Jeroboam); one died of injuries received from a fall (Ahaziah); and the other, and last (Hoshea), apparently was ‘cut off as foam upon the water.’ To this meaningful array of facts must be added two prolonged periods of anarchy, when there was no king in Israel, every man doing, in all likelihood, ‘that which was right in his own eyes.’”³⁶

📖 The Book of Hosea, ch. 7-14 – 723 B.C.

vs. 24-41 – The Resettlement of Samaria

Gaebelein writes:

“The account of the colonization of Samaria by the King of Assyria is interesting. It gives the history of the Samaritans, which emanated from this mixture of races and religions and which were responsible for much trouble after the return of the Jewish remnant from the exile. The priest who was returned from Assyria to teach religious rites to the colonists settled in Bethel, where Jeroboam had instituted the idolatrous worship, which had dragged Israel down, produced a new religion, partly Israelitish and partly heathenish, like the mixed multitude which dwelt in the land.”³⁷

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 13-16, 18-19 – 717 B.C.

Chapter 18 – Rise of Hezekiah

vs. 1-8 – Reign of Hezekiah over Judah

↪ II Chronicles 29:1-2

Hezekiah was a good king, to be ranked among the very best that reigned over Israel. He did much to restore true worship and to expand the authority of his kingdom. We will see in greater detail in II Chronicles of his religious reforms. Part of his purging of idolatry was the destruction of Moses’s brazen serpent that they worshipped and called Nehushtan (“a thing of brass”).³⁸

³⁶ The Kings of Israel by C. Knapp. p. 137-138.

³⁷ Annotated Bible by A.C. Gaebelein. E-Sword module.

³⁸ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

There is some debate on the chronology of when Hezekiah began to rule. This is in part to explain how Ahaz would have a son when he himself is calculated to only be eleven.³⁹ Some speculate that there is a period of coregency between Hezekiah and Ahaz.⁴⁰ Others speculate that there is a gap of years that is not counted either during the reign of Ahaz or as an *interregnum* period between Ahaz and Hezekiah. The simplest solution is that Ahaz did indeed bear a son at an early age.

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 28 – 725 B.C.

vs. 9-12 – Fall of Israel

The fall of Israel is repeated as time marker in the reign of Hezekiah.

vs. 13-37 – Sennacherib Besieges Jerusalem – 701 B.C.

↪ II Chronicles 32:1-19

The Assyrian king Sennacherib (“sin, the moon, increases brothers”)⁴¹ sets his sights on Judah, likely because of Hezekiah’s rebellion against him (vs. 7). Sennacherib exacts tribute of 300 talents of silver (\$8,023,567)⁴² and 30 talents of gold (\$64,443,475.20)⁴³. Hezekiah is forced to spoil the palace and Temple of their riches in order to meet the demand.

But Sennacherib was not satisfied. Davis writes:

“His appetite whetted by Hezekiah's easy surrender to his demands, Sennacherib determined to take everything (compare the effort of France and England to appease Hitler by giving him the outer borders of Czechoslovakia in 1938). It was very important to the Assyrian commander to eliminate Jerusalem as potential threat on his left flank as he faced the Egyptian army to the south. Therefore he sent three highly trained military ambassadors to terrify the Jews of Jerusalem into immediate sur-render: *Tartan* (‘Field Marshal’; cf. Isa. 20:1), *Rab-saris* (‘Chief Eunuch’; cf. Jer. 39:3), and *Rabshakeh* (‘Chief Officer’).”⁴⁴

Note in vs. 18 that Hezekiah responds to Sennacherib sending three envoys by sending his own three envoys. Had he responded himself it would have shown his subservience to the Assyrian king.

³⁹ Ahaz was 20 when he took the throne and reigned for 16 years (II Kings 16:2, II Chronicles 28:1). Hezekiah became king at age 25 (II Kings 18:2, II Chronicles 29:1). If Hezekiah took the throne after the death of his father at age 36, that means Hezekiah would have to be born 25 years earlier when Ahaz was only 11.

⁴⁰ Reese says about 1 year, while others as long as 12 or 13 years.

⁴¹ Smith’s Bible Dictionary. He is the grandson of Tiglath-Pileser III, son of Sargon II, and nephew of Shalmaneser V.

⁴² <https://www.unitconverters.net/weight-and-mass/talent-biblical-hebrew-to-ounce.htm> - accessed 11-14-22.

Calculated as 361,911 ounces as \$22.17 an ounce.

⁴³ <https://www.unitconverters.net/weight-and-mass/talent-biblical-hebrew-to-ounce.htm> -accessed 11-14-22.

Calculated as 36,192 ounces at \$1,780.60 an ounce.

⁴⁴ Israel: From Conquest to Exile by John J. Davis and John C. Whitcomb. p. 450

Rabshakeh addresses the people of Jerusalem in the Hebrew tongue.⁴⁵ He gives six arguments for the surrender of Jerusalem: (1) Egypt could not be trusted to help – vs. 21, (2) Hezekiah had removed their idols – vs. 22, (3) the Assyrian might – vs. 23-24, (4) claim of Jehovah's blessing upon the Assyrian endeavor – vs. 25, (5) surrender would lead to prospering in captivity – vs. 31-32, and (6) Jehovah would not deliver them just as the gods of their neighbors had also failed – vs. 33-35.

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 36 – 701 B.C.

Chapter 19 – Hezekiah's Deliverance

vs. 1-7 – Isaiah Reassures Hezekiah

Davis writes:

“Having been thoroughly chastened by his experience with the Assyrians, Hezekiah now set the pattern for his people in following God's way of dealing with a great crisis: (1) self-humiliation - 19:1a; (2) going to the appointed place of worship - 19:1b; (3) consulting the Word of God through His prophets - 19:2; and (4) putting God's honor and glory above everything else - 19:4. If the thrice-holy God of Israel had honored the sincere repentance of a wicked king like Ahab (I Kings 21:29), and later honored the repentant prayer of another wicked king named Manasseh (11 Chron. 33:12-101; He would surely respond to this kind of a prayer from this kind of a king. And Hezekiah was not disappointed. The Lord promised through Isaiah that was blasphemies of Rabshakeh would be dealt with. With regard to Sennacherib, God would maneuver him back to Nineveh (possibly by a report of potential rebellion there) and cause him to be killed at the hand of assassins ...”⁴⁶

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 37 – 701 B.C.

vs. 8-13 – Sennacherib Presses for Surrender

Sennacherib is forced to change tactics with a new threat rising in Tihakah⁴⁷ of Ethiopia.⁴⁸ He sends a threatening letter to Hezekiah to press him to surrender so he can focus on this new threat.

⁴⁵ In vs. 26 Elkiem requests that he speak in the Syrian language (Aramaic), which was the commercial language and not readily understood by the masses.

⁴⁶ Israel: From Conquest to Exile by John J. Davis and John C. Whitcomb. p. 453-454.

⁴⁷ Taharqa would become pharaoh from 690-664 B.C, the last of the 25th dynasty.

⁴⁸ Hebrew – *Kush*. The Kingdom of Kush was in the area of the Nubian Desert in Upper Egypt.

vs. 14-19 – Hezekiah’s Prayer

☪ II Chronicles 32:20

Hezekiah literally lays out his problem before the Lord by taking the letter to the Temple to pray for guidance and aid.

vs. 20-37 – Isaiah’s Prophecy and Deliverance

☪ II Chronicles 32:21-23

Davis writes:

“That very night (compare the death of the firstborn of Egypt- Exod. 12:29) the angel of the Lord (the pre-incarnate Christ) killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers! Is this difficult for us to believe? In order to make the narrative more palatable to the ‘modern mind,’ some have pointed to a tradition recorded by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus (ii, 141) that mice once infested a camp of the Assyrian army and ate the bow-strings and leather shield handles. The actual truth of the tradition, we are told, is the presence of mice, which would have spread bubonic plague and thus destroyed the army. But would this many men die from such a cause in one night? It is also suggested that 185,000 is an exaggerated figure which somehow got into the text of I Kings. Note, for example, this unfortunate and irresponsible comment by an evangelical scholar: ‘there is no evidence outside of the Bible of such tremendous loss; in Chronicles it is much more moderate... a pestilence such as bubonic plague may have been behind both stories [i.e., Herodotus and II Kings]” (*New Bible Commentary*: Revised, Eerdmans, 1970, p. 363). Does every miracle recorded in the Bible have to be confirmed by outside sources before we can really believe it? Does the fact that II Chronicles 32:31 omits the number of soldiers killed contradict the number given in II Kings, *which is found also in Isaiah 37:36*? ‘Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God’ (Matt. 22:29).

However, those who are skilled at ‘reading between the lines’ of Assyrian historical records find convincing evidence of a great Assyrian military debacle in Palestine at this time. In his famous Prism Inscription..., Sennacherib states: ‘Hezekiah himself, whom the terror-inspiring splendor of my lordship had overwhelmed and whose irregular and elite troops which he had brought into Jerusalem, his royal residence, in order to strengthen it, had deserted him, did send me, later, to Nineveh, my lordly city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver....’. Now the fact that Sennacherib said nothing about conquering Jerusalem is tantamount to admitting a total defeat, for otherwise he would have gloated over the conquest in great detail. Furthermore, it was thirteen years before the Assyrians appeared in Palestine again.”⁴⁹

Sennacherib is killed maybe 10-20 years after his retreat from Jerusalem.⁵⁰

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 40-66 – 701 B.C.

⁴⁹ Israel: From Conquest to Exile by John J. Davis and John C. Whitcomb. p. 457-459

⁵⁰ Reese has it at about 12 years, other sources up to 20.

Chapter 20 – Hezekiah’s Last Days

vs. 1-7 – Hezekiah’s Illness

☪ II Chronicles 32:24, Isaiah 38

There is evidence that the events of this chapter take place before the troubles with Sennacherib in chapters 18 and 19. The promise of 20:6 points to a future deliverance that must be that just covered. Also, Hezekiah is able to show off the wealth of his kingdom that he would have given as tribute to the Assyrians.

This illness seems to have been a check on Hezekiah’s growing pride (compare to II Chronicles 32:25).

The use of a sundial is interesting to note. This is the only Biblical appearance of one, and some instead wish to explain it not as a sundial but as a series of steps. However, the sundials of various designs were known to exist in during this time. Since it is attributed to Ahaz, we might assume he copied something he saw in Damascus (see 16:10). Regardless of its actual design, it is obvious that it was a means of calculating time through the movement of shadows.

Note – the claims that NASA (or anyone else) have calculated the “missing time” of Joshua 10:13 and II Kings 20:9-11 are false.⁵¹ It is impossible to calculate “missing time” without a sure, fixed starting point, which we do not have one so precise from that far back into history.

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 38, 20 – 713 B.C.

vs. 12-19 – Hezekiah and the Babylonian Envoys

☪ II Chronicles 32:31, Isaiah 39

Berodachbaladin⁵², king of Babylon, heard of the miraculous recovery of Hezekiah and sent envoys to meet him. Isaiah confronts him for revealing the wealth of the kingdom and says that the Babylonians will one day come and conquer Judah.

On Hezekiah’s question of “Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?”, Poole writes:

“...which speaks not as if he were careless and unconcerned for his posterity, (which neither the common inclinations and affections of nature in all men, nor that singular piety and charity which was eminent and manifest in Hezekiah, can suffer us to believe,) or for the church⁵³ and people of God, for whose welfare he was so solicitous and industrious in the whole course of his life; but

⁵¹ <https://answersingenesis.org/creationism/arguments-to-avoid/nasa-found-joshuas-missing-day/> - accessed 11-14-22

⁵² Also called Merodachbaladin. Known to history as Marduk-apla-iddina II. He led a kingdom that was independent of Assyrian control from 722-710 B.C..

⁵³ Referring to Israel here, not the New Testament church.

because it was a singular favour that this judgment did not immediately follow his sin, the cause of it, but was suspended for a longer time.”

📖 The Book of Isaiah, ch. 21-35, 39 – 713 B.C.

📖 The Book of Micah, ch. 4-7 – 704 B.C.

vs. 20-21 – Death of Hezekiah

🔄 II Chronicles 32:32-33

Hezekiah passes and his son Manasseh (“forgetting”)⁵⁴ takes the throne.

⁵⁴ Smith’s Bible Dictionary