

The Prophecies of Isaiah ⁵²

Lesson 23

712 BC - Sennacherib's Attack and Retreat – Historical Record

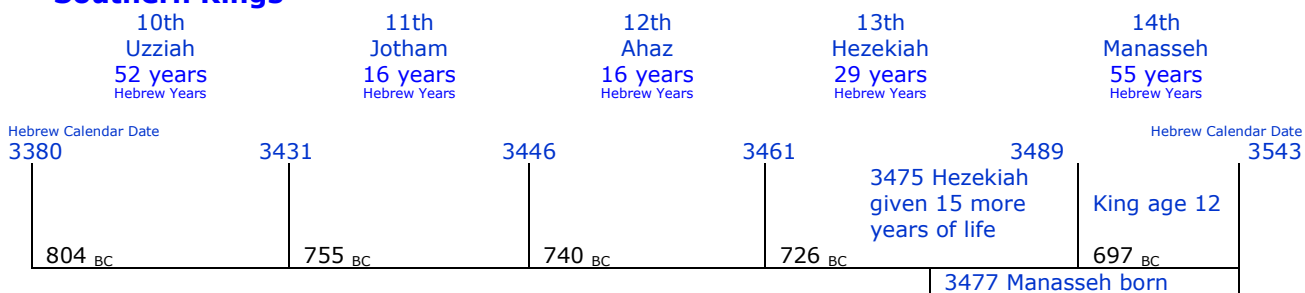
History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

HEZEKIAH'S 14TH YEAR

Isaiah 36:1 Now it came about in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them.

Hezekiah takes the throne in the Southern Kingdom near the end of 726 BC; therefore his fourteenth year as king is 712 BC.

Southern Kings



In 712 BC, Sargon II, the father of Sennacherib is in his 10th year as king of Assyria and he will hold that position until his death in 705 BC. However, Sennacherib is the heir apparent to the throne and is serving as co-regent with his father. He doesn't become the sole king of Assyria until the twenty-third year of Hezekiah's reign.

The events of Isaiah's eye witness report were also recorded by Sennacherib when he took control of Assyria in 705 BC. Although his report favors his position, history indicates that Sennacherib is a weak king. His report is now housed in the British Museum and a replica can be viewed on the campus of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

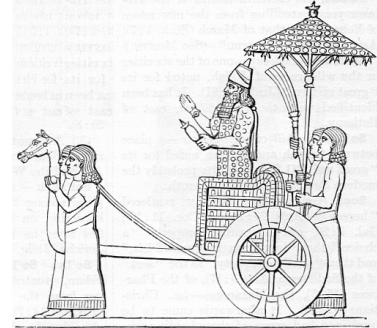
| Kings of Assyria During the Ministry of Isaiah | | |
|---|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Adad-nirari III | 811–783 BC | <i>son of Shamshi-Adad V</i> |
| Shalmaneser IV | 783–773 BC | <i>son of Adad-nirari III</i> |
| Ashur-Dan III | 773–755 BC | <i>son of Shalmaneser IV</i> |
| Ashur-nirari V | 755–745 BC | <i>son of Adad-nirari III</i> |
| Tiglath-Pileser III also known by the abbreviation "Pul" | 745–727 BC | <i>son of Ashur-nirari V</i> |
| Shalmaneser V | 727–722 BC | <i>son of Tiglath-Pileser III</i> |
| Sargon II | 722–705 BC | <i>unknown father</i> |
| Sennacherib | 705–681 BC | <i>son of Sargon II</i> |

Figure 51: Kings of Assyria during the Ministry of Isaiah

⁵² ALL SCRIPTURES IN THIS LESSON ENTITLED "THE Prophecies of Isaiah" ARE TAKEN FROM THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE, COPYRIGHT (C) 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1988, BY THE LOCKMAN FOUNDATION. USED BY PERMISSION.

SENNACHERIB'S RECORD

"Because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms and by the might of my power I took forty-six of his strong fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about, I took and plundered a countless number. From these places I took and carried off 200,156 persons, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mules, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude; and Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates, so as to prevent escape...Then upon Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem with 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver, and divers treasures, a rich and immense booty...All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my government."



Picture 8: Sennacherib in Chariot
(From Koyunjik.)

As can be expected, Sennacherib's record does not include the unexpected disaster that befalls his men later in this story.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

SENNACHERIB SENDS RABSHAKEH

Isaiah 36:2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem to King Hezekiah with a large army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway of the fuller's field.

Second Chronicles states that Sennacherib is besieging Lachish when he decides to send troops under the leadership of Rabshakeh to threaten Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 32:9 After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem while he was besieging Lachish with all his forces with him, against Hezekiah king of Judah and against all Judah who were at Jerusalem, saying, ¹⁰ "Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria, 'On what are you trusting that you are remaining in Jerusalem under siege? ¹¹ 'Is not Hezekiah misleading you to give yourselves over to die by hunger and by thirst, saying, "The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria"?"

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

HEZEKIAH'S ENVOY TO RANSHAKEH

Isaiah 36:3 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

Hezekiah's envoy consists of three of his trusted cabinet members. Eliakim is the manager of Hezekiah's household and palace. Shebna is the king's lawyer and Joah is the secretary. Part of Isaiah's 18th vision in chapter 22 foretells the formation of this envoy and the ultimate fate of Eliakim and Shebna. Under order of the king, the three men leave Jerusalem to meet Rabshakeh at the tunnel by the upper pool.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S MESSAGE – HEZEKIAH'S CONFIDENCE

Isaiah 36:4 Then Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, "What is this confidence that you have? ⁵ "I say, 'Your

counsel and strength for the war are only empty words.' Now on whom do you rely, that you have rebelled against me?

Rabshakeh calls for Hezekiah to open the city gates and allow Assyria to take control but Hezekiah refuses; the king's refusal seems extremely futile to Rabshakeh because his army has already overthrown 45 cities in the Southern Kingdom. Rabshakeh asks, "Now on whom do you rely ... ?" With all of Assyria's accomplishments, Rabshakeh knows Hezekiah is alone in his rebellion.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S MESSAGE – EGYPT'S WEEKNESS

Isaiah 36:6 "Behold, you rely on the staff of this crushed reed, even on Egypt; on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him.

Rabshakeh mentions the only possible ally of Hezekiah, the weak Pharaoh of Egypt. At that time, Shabaka is Egypt's Pharaoh and he is a weak leader; however, his nephew, Tirhakah, the king of Cush, which falls under Egypt's control, is growing in strength and has a special relationship with Hezekiah. If anyone from the Egyptian Kingdom attempts to help Hezekiah, it will be Tirhakah. Rabshakeh is correct that Shabaka cannot help Hezekiah.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S MESSAGE – HEZEKIAH'S LORD

Isaiah 36:7 "But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar'?"

Rabshakeh attacks Hezekiah's trust in the Lord. Earlier in Hezekiah's reign, he attempted to have all the high places and altars of false worship removed and crushed. Rabshakeh knew of Hezekiah's attempt and used it against him in his taunt, not realizing that he was blaspheming the Lord with his words.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S MESSAGE – HEZEKIAH'S SURRENDER

Isaiah 36:8 "Now therefore, come make a bargain with my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. ⁹ "How then can you repulse one official of the least of my master's servants, and rely on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?"

Rabshakeh attempts to bribe Hezekiah to relinquish his kingdom to Sennacherib. In his arrogance, Rabshakeh cannot not understand why Hezekiah will not accept his offer instead of relying on the supplies and support of Egypt.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S MESSAGE – RABSHAKEH'S CONFIDENCE

Isaiah 36:10 "And have I now come up without the LORD'S approval against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'""

Correctly, Rabshakeh believes that Sennacherib's success in the Northern Kingdom and surrounding countries occurs because of the direct authority of the Lord. Mistakenly, he believes that the Southern Kingdom should be included in the Lord's plan, but it is not. The attack on Hezekiah's kingdom infuriates the Lord and He will send the Babylonians to defeat Assyria.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

ENVOY'S REQUEST - ARAMAIC

Isaiah 36:11 Then Eliakim and Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, "Speak now to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it*; and do not speak with us in Judean, in the hearing of the people who are on the wall."

Hezekiah's men ask Rabshakeh to speak in Aramaic, the official language of the Assyrians so the townspeople of Jerusalem will not understand and be disturbed by his taunts.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S REFUSAL – JUDEAN/HEBREW

Isaiah 36:12 But Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me only to your master and to you to speak these words, *and* not to the men who sit on the wall, *doomed* to eat their own dung and drink their own urine with you?"

Rabshakeh refuses to speak in his native tongue, continuing to speak in Judean or Hebrew so that everyone in Jerusalem will know his demands and lose faith in their king.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S MESSAGE – DO NOT TRUST WORDS OF HEZEKIAH

Isaiah 36:13 Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in Judean, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. ¹⁴ "Thus says the king, 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; ¹⁵ nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us, this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ¹⁶ 'Do not listen to Hezekiah,' for thus says the king of Assyria, ' Make your peace with me and come out to me, and eat each of his vine and each of his fig tree and drink each of the waters of his own cistern, ¹⁷ until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. ¹⁸ 'Beware lest Hezekiah misleads you, saying, " The LORD will deliver us." Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria?"

Herein is the greatest of Rabshakeh's sins against the Lord; he attempts to lure the people of Jerusalem out of the city into the hands of the Assyrians who will care for them as he asserts that the God of Hezekiah cannot rescue them.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S MESSAGE –DO NOT TRUST THE GOD OF HEZEKIAH

Isaiah 36:19 'Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And when have they delivered Samaria from my hand? ²⁰ 'Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?'"

Rabshakeh knows firsthand that the other nations have not been helped by their gods; therefore, how can Hezekiah's One God rescue Jerusalem? Hamath, Arpad and Sepharvaim are cities in the fallen Aramian Empire; Samaria is the capital of the fallen Northern Kingdom.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

ENVOY'S REPLY – SILENCE

Isaiah 36:21 But they were silent and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." ²² Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

Hezekiah's three man envoy hears Rabshakeh's demand; they return to Hezekiah without responding to Rabshakeh in accordance with Hezekiah's instruction.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

HEZEKIAH'S GRIEF

Isaiah 37:1 And when King Hezekiah heard *it*, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth and entered the house of the LORD.

Hezekiah responds to Rabshakeh's demand the same way as his men, with mourning and grief. Hezekiah leaves the palace and enters the Temple; he now has nowhere to turn except to the Lord.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

HEZEKIAH'S MESSAGE – TO PRIESTS AND ISAIAH

Isaiah 37:2 Then he sent Eliakim who was over the household with Shebna the scribe and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. ³ And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, 'This day is a day of distress, rebuke, and rejection; for children have come to birth, and there is no strength to deliver. ⁴ 'Perhaps the LORD your God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore, offer a prayer for the remnant that is left.'" ⁵ So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

Evidently, the envoy follows Hezekiah to the Temple where the king decides that he needs the help of his priests and Isaiah the prophet. Old Isaiah, at least 73 years old at this time, hears Hezekiah's message of desperation. The king hopes that Isaiah's God has been offended by Rabshakeh's message and he hopes that Isaiah will pray for the safety of the Jews left in the Southern Kingdom.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

ISAIAH'S REPLY FROM THE LORD

Isaiah 37:6 And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD, " Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. ⁷ "Behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land. And I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.'"

Isaiah assures Hezekiah that Rabshakeh will not give the Southern Kingdom or Hezekiah any more problems. While outside Jerusalem, Rabshakeh will hear a rumor that Sennacherib has left Lachish and will leave Jerusalem to search for his king.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S RETURN TO SENNACHERIB

Isaiah 37:8 Then Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he had heard that the king had left Lachish.



Picture 9: Libnah, Lachish & Jerusalem

Rabshakeh hears that Sennacherib has left his war efforts in Lachish, 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem; therefore, he leaves Jerusalem and finds Sennacherib in Libnah about five miles from Lachish.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S MESSENGER TO HEZEKIAH – DO NOT TRUST YOUR GOD

Isaiah 37:9 When he heard *them* say concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, "He has come out to fight against you," and when he heard *it* he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, ¹⁰ "Thus you shall say to Hezekiah king of Judah, ' Do not let your God in

whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."

In Libnah, with Sennacherib, Rabshakeh hears the rumor that Tirhakah is on his way to help Hezekiah. Tirhakah is the king of Cush in 712 BC which is part of the Egyptian Empire. He is an Ethiopian and his uncle Shabaka is the Pharaoh at the time. The Egyptian records call him Taharka. Tirhakah will become the third Pharaoh of the 25th Egyptian dynasty in 691 BC.⁵³ Whether Tirhakah is headed to support Hezekiah and the Southern Kingdom or not is unknown; however, it is the rumor that Rabshakeh hears. Rabshakeh sends messengers to continue the Assyrian taunt against Jerusalem and Hezekiah, fully believing that God is on his side and that Assyria will defeat Hezekiah soon.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

RABSHAKEH'S MESSENGER TO HEZEKIAH – THE GOD'S DID NOT HELP THE OTHER NATIONS

Isaiah 37:11 ' Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, destroying them completely. So will you be spared? ¹² 'Did the gods of those nations which my fathers have destroyed deliver them, *even* Gozan and Haran and Rezech and the sons of Eden who *were* in Telassar? ¹³ 'Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, *and of* Hena and Ivvah?'"

Rabshakeh's written message to Hezekiah is interesting. He mentions Gozan, Haran, Rezech Telassar, Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah, all Aramean cities that were destroyed by the Assyrians, but not all were defeated by Sennacherib. Several of them had been defeated by Assyria more than one hundred years before Sennacherib's time; however, the knowledge of the defeat of all of these cities by the Assyrians was well known to the Southern Kingdom. Rabshakeh is using their defeats to threaten and strike fear in the heart of Hezekiah.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER IN THE TEMPLE

Isaiah 37:14 Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. ¹⁵ And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD saying, ¹⁶ "O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, who art enthroned *above* the cherubim, Thou art the God, Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made heaven and earth. ¹⁷ " Incline Thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open Thine eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to all the words of Sennacherib, who sent *them* to reproach the living God. ¹⁸ "Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have devastated all the countries and their lands, ¹⁹ and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. ²⁰ "And now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou alone, LORD, art God."



Picture 10: Shekinah Glory of the Lord hovering over the Ark of the Covenant behind the Veil in the Temple

Hezekiah recognizes that Rabshakeh's letter is a threat but he also understands that it is a "reproach" from the living God. He takes the letter into the Temple and spreads it out in front of the veil as he prays to God. He is in Solomon's Temple where the Lord still maintains a presence in the form of a glowing cloud above the Ark of the Covenant behind the veil. Hezekiah cannot go behind the veil. Only the high priest can do that once a year

⁵³ A. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs* (1961), pp. 335-51; K. A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt* (1972), pp. 154-56, 164-68, 383-86.

after a rigorous cleansing process. Hezekiah knows the Lord is there because the glow of the cloud which is hovering over the carved cherubim mounted on the lid of the Ark radiates over the top of the veil to light the front portion of the room. There, Hezekiah prays for the Lord's help.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

ISAIAH'S MESSAGE TO HEZEKIAH – YOUR GOD HAS HEARD YOU

Isaiah 37:21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent *word* to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, ^{22a} this is the word that the LORD has spoken against him:

Hezekiah's prayer is heard by the Lord and Isaiah is sent to proclaim the Lord's answer to the king.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA - SENNACHERIB'S SIN

Isaiah 37:22b She has despised you and mocked you, The virgin daughter of Zion; She has shaken *her* head behind you, The daughter of Jerusalem! ²³ "Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? And against whom have you raised *your* voice, And haughtily lifted up your eyes? Against the Holy One of Israel!

The Lord also holds Sennacherib responsible for his general's action and words against Jerusalem and Hezekiah; He also holds him responsible for Rabshakeh's blasphemy against the Lord.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA - RABSHAKEH'S SIN

Isaiah 37:24 "Through your servants you have reproached the Lord, And you have said, 'With my many chariots I came up to the heights of the mountains, To the remotest parts of Lebanon; And I cut down its tall cedars *and* its choice cypresses. And I will go to its highest peak, its thickest forest. ²⁵ 'I dug *wells* and drank waters, And with the sole of my feet I dried up All the rivers of Egypt.'

The Lord holds General Rabshakeh responsible for his words and attitude toward Jerusalem and his blasphemy against the Lord. His boasts recorded in this passage are just that, boasts. Rabshakeh has not been successful in cutting down either the cedars and cypresses or the forests of the mountains. Neither did he perform the miracle of drying of the rivers of Egypt with the sole of his feet. One hundred years after this event, Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the forests. Rabshakeh never dries the rivers of Egypt.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA - GOD'S PLAN

Isaiah 37:26 " Have you not heard? Long ago I did it, From ancient times I planned it. Now I have brought it to pass, That you should turn fortified cities into ruinous heaps. ²⁷ "Therefore their inhabitants were short of strength, They were dismayed and put to shame; They were *as* the vegetation of the field and *as* the green herb, As grass on the housetops is scorched before it is grown up.

Assyria's success in the Northern Kingdom was planned by God from the beginning of time; however, Assyria's attempt to overtake Jerusalem is not part of God's plan and He has already made the arrangements for Babylon to take over Assyria as prophesied in Vision 7, Isaiah Chapter 13.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA - GOD'S WRATH

Isaiah 37:28 "But I know your sitting down, And your going out and your coming in, And your raging against Me. ²⁹ "Because of your raging against Me, And because your

arrogance has come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose, And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back by the way which you came.

The Lord is well aware of Assyria's rage against Him, especially the haughty intentions of both Sennacherib and Rabshakeh. Sennacherib marched his armies up the Euphrates to Aram and down into the Southern Kingdom; the Lord will force the remnant of Assyria's army back to Nineveh on that same path and they will never bother the Southern Kingdom again.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA - GOD'S SIGN

Isaiah 37:30 "Then this shall be the sign for you: you shall eat this year what grows of itself, in the second year what springs from the same, and in the third year sow, reap, plant vineyards, and eat their fruit.

The Lord gives Hezekiah a sign of His blessing on the Southern Kingdom; He promises that within three years the kingdom will be restored to Hezekiah's control and the land will once again provide for the needs of its people.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA - JUDAH'S SURVIVAL

Isaiah 37:31 "And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. ³² "For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall perform this."

When Sennacherib joins Rabshakeh outside the city of Jerusalem, he has devastated Hezekiah's kingdom, defeating 46 cities and killing many of the Southern Kingdom's inhabitants. The kingdom is hurt; the kingdom is damaged; the kingdom is weakened, but the Lord will take the remnant that is left and strengthen her into a mighty nation again; it is the Lord's promise.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA - SENNACHERIB'S FATE

Isaiah 37:33 "Therefore, thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, 'He shall not come to this city, or shoot an arrow there; neither shall he come before it with a shield, nor throw up a mound against it. ³⁴ ' By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come to this city,' declares the LORD. ³⁵ 'For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'"

The Lord's message to Hezekiah ends with His promise that Jerusalem will be safe and Sennacherib will not so much as shovel a scoop of dirt against the city; he will return home on the same road upon which he arrived. The Lord does not tell Hezekiah how He will protect the city; the promise ends there, but Isaiah reveals the events of that night in the next sentence.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA - SENNACHERIB'S LOSS

Isaiah 37:36 Then the angel of the LORD went out, and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead.

Isaiah has already foretold this event in chapters 10, 13 and 17 and the fulfillment of those visions has occurred. It is the Lord who foretold these visions to Isaiah and it is the Lord who now fulfills them. Without human intervention, 185,000 of Sennacherib's soldiers are dead at the hand of the Divine - God Himself.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA – SENNACHERIB'S RETREAT

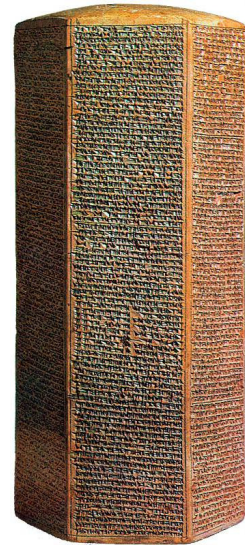
Isaiah 37:37 So Sennacherib, king of Assyria, departed and returned *home*, and lived at Nineveh.

When Sennacherib leaves Jerusalem in 712 BC, he will become king of Assyria on Ab 12th, 705 BC. He does not have his father's boldness or resources; it will take all the strength of his will and might to hold the kingdom together. He tries to bolster his image with documents of his victories in the record found on the Taylor Cylinder now in the British Museum, but that was all a sham; the Elamites, Babylonians, Aramaeans and Medians were growing in strength and Sennacherib could not fight them all. The destruction of Babylong in 689 BC does not quell the spirit of the Babylonians. Sennacherib is weak and because of the great loss outside Jerusalem, he has returned home never to threaten her again.⁵⁴

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA – SENNACHERIB'S DEATH

Isaiah 37:38a And it came about as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons killed him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat.



Picture 11: Sennacherib's Prism, called Taylor's Cylinder

Nisroch is an unidentified god whom Sennacherib worshipped in Nineveh. It is possible that Nisroch is a perversion of the name Marduk but that is not substantiated.

Two sons of Sennacherib kill him when he is worshipping Nisroch in 681 BC. Second Kings also mentions his death with the exact wording, an indication that it might have been added by the writer of 2 Kings which tradition attributes to Jeremiah.

2 Kings 19:37 And it came about as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son became king in his place.



Picture 12: Nisroch

Ararat is 200 miles from Nineveh. Ararat is the countryside between the Tigris River and the Caucasus Mountains. By the time of Isaiah, the name was applied to a portion of the mountain range on the Russian border in modern day eastern Turkey. The highest mountain is 16,946 feet above sea level.

History/Isaiah's Eye Witness Account

AGAINST ASSYRIA – ASSYRIA'S NEW KING

Isaiah 37:38b And Esarhaddon his son became king in his place.



Map 25: Nineveh to Ararat

⁵⁴ D. D. Luckenbill, *The Annals of Sennacherib* (1924); L. L. Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah* (1926); D. W. Thomas, ed., *Documents from Old Testament Times* (1958), pp. 64-73; H. H. Rowley, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 44 (1962): 395-431; D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (1968), 2:160-98; J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (1969), pp. 221, 272-73, 287-89, 291, 301-3, 309, 427-28, 450, 531, 606. The New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

Sennacherib's murder in 681 BC allows Esarhaddon, another of his sons to become king. If Isaiah had lived to see Esarhaddon as king, he would have been at least 104 years old and 16 years into the reign of Hezekiah's son, Manasseh. It is possible that Isaiah lived that long; however, the visions of the Lord came to Isaiah only during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah and not during the reign of Manasseh. According to Easton's Illustrated Dictionary and the New Unger's Bible Dictionary, credible tradition states that Isaiah was sawn in half by Manasseh's men. If so, Isaiah is still recording all the Word of the Lord for his book when Esarhaddon takes the throne.