

# 2 Kings 18 - Annals of Judah: Hezekiah's Good Reign in Judah; Sennacherib Boasts Against the Lord

III. The Southern kingdom from the time of the Assyrian captivity to the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 18:1—25:30)

(1) Hezekiah's reign (18:1—20:21)

(A) Hezekiah's reforms (18:1-12)

(B) Sennacherib invades Judah (18:13-37)

## 2 Kings 18

III. The Southern kingdom from the time of the Assyrian captivity to the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 18:1—25:30)

In this third major section of 1&2 Kings, the writer showed that the captivity of Judah was also a natural consequence of not being faithful to the covenantal relationship that the Israelites had with Yahweh. The remaining kings in 2 Kings all ruled over the Southern Kingdom of Judah. This part of the book concludes with events that happened in Judah immediately following the Babylonian Captivity in 586 BC.

(1) Hezekiah's reign (18:1—20:21)

(A) Hezekiah's reforms (18:1-12)

**1** Now it came about in the third year of Hoshea, the son of Elah king of Israel, that **Hezekiah** the son of Ahaz king of Judah became king.

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**1** Now it happened that during the third year of the reign of Elah's son Hoshea, king of Israel, that Ahaz' son Hezekiah became king.

**1** Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.

- "...Hezekiah" - "Yahweh Has Strengthened"

- The writer of 1 and 2 Kings devoted more space and gave more commendation to Hezekiah for his accomplishments than to any king except Solomon

— It is not only recorded here in 2 Kings, but also in 2 Chronicles, and in the historical section of the prophecy of Isaiah

2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah.

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2 He was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem for 29 years. His mother was Zechariah's daughter Abi.

2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.

- Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, was a very wicked king; yet he had this wonderful son. This leads us to believe that Abi, the mother of Hezekiah, was a very fine mother and a godly woman.

- Hezekiah reigned as co-regent with his father Ahaz for 14 years (729-715 BC)

— The third year of Hoshea was the year in which Hezekiah is said to have begun reigning (as co-regent with Ahaz, 729 BC)

— He reigned alone for 18 years (715-697 BC) and then as co-regent with his son Manasseh for 11 years (697-686 BC). Together these two reigns were 29 years (715-686 BC).

3 He did what was right in the sight of the LORD, in accordance with everything that his father David had done.

3 He did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

3 He did what the LORD considered to be right, according to everything that his ancestor David had done.

3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.

- The commendation that Hezekiah did right as David had done is made of only three other kings of Judah: Asa (1 Kings 15:11), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:3), and Josiah (2 Kings 22:2)

4 He removed the high places and smashed the memorial stones to pieces, and cut down the Asherah. He also crushed to pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel had been burning incense to it; and it was called **Nehushtan**.

4 He removed the high places and broke down the *sacred* pillars and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan.

4 He removed the high places, demolished the sacred pillars, and tore down the Asherah poles. He also demolished the bronze serpent that Moses had crafted, because the Israelis had been burning incense to it right up until that time. Hezekiah called it a piece of brass.

4 He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

- Hezekiah removed the high places where the Lord was worshiped contrary to the Mosaic Law (Cf. Deut 12:2-7, 13-14). Jehoshaphat was the only other king, other than Hezekiah, to remove the high places (2 Chr 17:6).

— Later, however, Jehoshaphat did not remove the high places (1 Kings 22:43; 2 Chr 20:33). Apparently the people rebuilt them and Jehoshaphat did not remove them again.) Josiah also destroyed the idols used to aid in the worship of Baal and Asherah (2 Chr 31:1).

- "...Nehushtan" - the name someone had given to Moses' bronze serpent (Num 21:8-9)

— The Israelites had come to worship the object that had been a symbol of Yahweh's healing grace

### **The Brazen Serpent**

The bronze snake that Moses made in the wilderness (Num 21:1-9) had been preserved and had become a religious fetish. The brazen serpent was a symbol that was fulfilled by Christ (John 3:14-15).

These people had turned the thing all around and had begun to worship the serpent instead of God. Hezekiah broke it up since it was a spiritually unclean thing; it had become a stumbling block to the Israelites. Nehushtan was the name of the snake, a word that sounded like the Heb. for "bronze," "snake," and "unclean thing").

5 He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel; and after him there was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *among those* who came before him.

5 He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *among those* who were before him.

5 He trusted the LORD God of Israel, and after him there were none like him among all the kings of Judah,

5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.

- Hezekiah was the greatest Judahite king

— He did not depart from Yahweh later in life like so many other kings; consequently, God's blessing rested on him (v7; 2 Chr 29-31)

6 For he clung to the LORD; he did not desist from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses.

6 For he clung to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses.

6 because he depended on the LORD, not abandoning pursuit of him, and keeping the LORD's commands that he had commanded Moses.

6 For he clung to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

7 And the LORD was with him; wherever he went he was successful. And he revolted against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.

7 And the LORD was with him; wherever he went he prospered. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.

7 So the LORD was with him, and Hezekiah prospered wherever he went, even when he rebelled against the king of Assyria, refusing to serve him.

7 And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

- Hezekiah's best quality was that he trusted in the LORD. He was the greatest of all the kings of the Southern Kingdom in this respect. Unlike some of the other kings, he did not apostasize later in life but kept the Mosaic Covenant faithfully.

— As a result the LORD was with him and blessed him with success in all he undertook

- His rebellion against Sennacherib (705-681 BC), king of Assyria, precipitated the Assyrian invasion recorded later (18:13—19:36)

— Hezekiah was anti-Assyrian in contrast with his father Ahaz. But so long as Sargon II remained on the throne, Hezekiah wisely did not antagonize the Assyrians.

— With the accession of Sennacherib, Sargon's son, Hezekiah judged that Assyria was not so strong. He decided to join an alliance with neighboring nations to oppose the northern foe and began making preparations for Assyria's anticipated retaliation.

The writer of 2 Kings gave only a brief record of Hezekiah's spiritual reforms and activities; the chronicler recorded many more.

8 He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, **from watchtower to fortified city.**

8 He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city.

8 He attacked the Philistines, invading Gaza and its borders from watchtower to fortified garrison.

8 He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

- Hezekiah was successful in defeating the Philistines who had taken several cities from Judah during Ahaz's reign (2 Chr 28:18)

— Gaza was the southernmost city in Philistia

- "...from watchtower to fortified city" - means wherever he turned

9 Now in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against Samaria and besieged it.

9 Now in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it.

9 In the fourth year of King Hezekiah's reign (that is, during the seventh year of Elah's son Hoshea's reign as king of Israel), King Shalmaneser from Assyria invaded Samaria and besieged it.

9 And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it.

- Verses 9-12 serve a double purpose: they relate the Assyrian defeat of Samaria to Hezekiah's reign, and they explain again (Cf. 17:7-18) the spiritual reason for that defeat (v12).

10 And at the end of three years they captured it; in the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was captured.

10 At the end of three years they captured it; in the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was captured.

10 Three years later, they captured Samaria during the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign, which was the ninth year of Hoshea's reign as king of Israel.

10 And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.

- At the end of three years (in 722 BC) Shalmaneser V captured Israel's capital

11 Then the king of Assyria led Israel into exile to Assyria, and put them in Halah and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

11 Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and put them in Halah and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes,

11 After this, the king of Assyria carried Israel off into exile in Assyria, settling them in Halah, on the Habor River in Gozan, and in cities controlled by the Medes,

11 And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes:

- The places to which the Israelites were deported for resettlement are the same as those mentioned in 17:6

12 *This happened* because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but violated His covenant, all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded; they would neither

listen nor do *it*.

12 because they did not obey the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant, *even* all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded; they would neither listen nor do *it*.

12 because they would not obey the voice of the LORD their God. Instead, they transgressed his covenant, including everything that Moses, the servant of the LORD, had commanded, by neither listening nor putting what he had commanded into practice.

12 Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them.

- This summary statement states why Israel fell: she was disobedient to the Mosaic Law (Cf. 17:7-23)

(B) Sennacherib invades Judah (18:13-37) (Cf. 2 Chr 21:1-19; Is 36)

**13** Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria marched against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them.

**13** Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them.

**13** During the fourteenth year of the reign of King Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria approached all of the walled cities of Judah and seized them.

**13** Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

- Sennacherib's predecessor Sargon II had continued to expand Assyrian territory and to strengthen her hold on conquered peoples. After Samaria's conqueror, Shalmaneser V died (722 BC), shortly after his conquest, Sargon II (722-705 BC) carried out the deportation of the Israelites.

— The king who followed Sargon II was Sennacherib (705-681 BC)

— Sennacherib put down a revolt headed by Hamath (a city north of Damascus; Cf. 14:28), fought successfully in Asia Minor, squelched a revolution at Carchemish north of Hamath and deported its population, broke the power of Assyria's hated northern neighboring kingdom Urartu, and moved down into Philistia where he crushed a rebellion led by the city of Ashdod, then the leading city in Philistia.

— Hezekiah prepared for an Assyrian invasion by fortifying Jerusalem (Cf. 2 Chr 32:1-8). Sennacherib led his armies into Judah as expected. This was in 701 BC, the 14th year of Hezekiah's sole reign which began in 715 BC.

On their way to Judah, the Assyrians defeated the rebels in Phoenicia. Then Sennacherib marched his armies down the coast into Philistia where he brought the Philistine cities into

line. Next he attacked all the fortified cities of Judah except Jerusalem and captured the people. Sennacherib's inscriptions refer to his conquest of 46 strong cities of Hezekiah plus many villages.

14 Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent *messengers* to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "**I have done wrong**. Withdraw from me; whatever you impose on me I will endure." So the king of Assyria imposed on Hezekiah king of Judah *the payment of* three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

14 Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong. Withdraw from me; whatever you impose on me I will bear." So the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

14 So Hezekiah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have offended you. Withdraw from me, and I'll accept whatever tribute you impose." So the king of Assyria required Hezekiah to pay him 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold.

14 And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou putttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

- The Assyrian king then set up his headquarters at Lachish (28 miles SW of Jerusalem), a well fortified city near the Philistine border in central Judah, in preparation for his siege of Jerusalem

- "...I have done wrong" - Hezekiah had joined an alliance with Phoenicia, Philistia and Egypt to resist Assyria; he admitted to Sennacherib that this was a mistake

— Understandably Hezekiah did not want to fight Sennacherib, whose armies had been consistently successful against other members of the now severely weakened alliance

— So Hezekiah sent a message to Sennacherib at Lachish. He offered to pay whatever the Assyrian king demanded if he would withdraw and not attack Jerusalem.

— Sennacherib asked for 300 talents (ca. 11 tons) of silver and 30 talents (ca. 1 ton) of gold, which Hezekiah paid

15 Hezekiah then gave *him* all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king's house.

15 Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver which was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasuries of the king's house.

15 Hezekiah gave him all the silver that could be removed from the LORD's Temple and from the treasuries in the king's palace.

15 And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house.

16 At that time Hezekiah cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the doorposts, which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and he gave it to the king of Assyria.

16 At that time Hezekiah cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the Lord, and *from* the doorposts which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

16 At that time, Hezekiah removed the doors to the LORD's Temple and the doorposts that he had overlaid with gold, and gave the gold to the king of Assyria.

16 At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

- Hezekiah paid him all the silver in the treasuries of the temple and palace. To gather all the gold the king had to strip off all the gold plating on the temple doors and door frames.

**17** Then the king of Assyria sent **Tartan, Rab-saris, and Rabshakeh** from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a large army to Jerusalem. So they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they went up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the road of the fuller's field.

**17** Then the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rab-saris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a large army to Jerusalem. So they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they went up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway of the fuller's field.

**17** Sometime later, the king of Assyria sent Tartan, Rab-saris, and Rab-shakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem, accompanied with a large army.

**17** And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.

- "...Tartan" - field marshall or second in rank (Cf. Is 20:1)

- "...Rab-saris" - chief eunuch (Cf. Jer 39:3)

- "...Rabshakeh" - an Assyrian title equivalent to commander-in-chief of the army

- The ransom did not satisfy Sennacherib, however, so he sent messengers to demand a complete surrender

— At first they presented their claims only to Hezekiah's representatives (v17-27) but then to all the people of Jerusalem (v28-37)

— The three officers sent by Sennacherib were his top men. They went with a large army to intimidate Hezekiah so he would capitulate without resistance

— They advanced by way of the road to the Washerman's Field to the aqueduct of the Upper Pool that extended from the spring of Gihon to the field where the people washed their clothes. This was within earshot of the wall of Jerusalem (Cf. v26) and was a busy location.

— This was the very same spot where Isaiah stood when he warned King Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, against making an alliance with Assyria (Cf. Is 7:3-9)

18 Then they called to the king, and Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the secretary, went out to them.

18 When they called to the king, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, came out to them.

18 When they called for the King, Hilkiah's son Eliakim, who managed the household, Shebna the scribe, and Asaph's son Joah the recorder went out to them.

18 And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.

**19** And Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'This is what the great king, the king of Assyria says: "What is this confidence that you have?"

**19** 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?"

19 Rab-shakeh told them, "Tell Hezekiah right now, 'This is what the great king, the king of Assyria says:

"Why are you so confident?"

19 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

- Sennacherib's field commander spoke for his side and repeated his king's message to Hezekiah

— What he said was designed to impress Hezekiah with Sennacherib's power and glory, and to intimidate him into surrendering. He asked the basis of Hezekiah's confidence that he could possibly withstand the great king of Assyria.

20 You say—*but they are* only empty words—'I have a plan and strength for the war!' Now on whom have you relied, that you have revolted against me?

20 You say (but *they are* only empty words), 'I have counsel and strength for the war!' Now on whom do you rely, that you have rebelled against me?

20 You're saying—but they're only empty words—"I have enough advice and resources to conduct warfare!"

"Now who are you relying on, that you have rebelled against me?"

20 Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

21 Now behold, you have relied on the support of this broken reed, on Egypt; on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. That is how Pharaoh king of Egypt is to all who rely on him.

21 Now 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.

21 Look, you're trusting on Egypt to lean on like a staff, but it's a crushed reed, and if you lean on it, it will collapse and pierce your hand. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is just like that to everyone who relies on him!

21 Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.

- Assuming Judah was depending on strategy and force, the commander pointed out the weakness of both these resources

— Egypt was the only member of the alliance yet remaining, and she would splinter like a weak reed if any weight of confidence were placed on her

— Rather than helping Judah, Egypt would hurt her by both failing and frustrating Hezekiah

— The commander was correct; Egypt was not strong at that time and could not be counted on for help

22 However, if you say to me, 'We have trusted in the LORD our God,' is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has removed, and has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?

22 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 in Jerusalem'?

22 "Of course, you might tell me, "We rely on the LORD our God!" But isn't it he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has demolished, all the while telling Jerusalem, "You're to worship in front of this altar in Jerusalem?"

22 But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?

- If the Judahites' strategy was to rely on the LORD, the commander said they should remember that Hezekiah had incurred His wrath (he supposed) by removing the high places and altars (Cf. v4) where the Lord had been worshiped throughout the land  
— The Assyrians obviously had information about what had been going on in Judah, but they did not understand that Hezekiah's actions had been carried out in obedience to God's commands, not out of disrespect for Him

23 Now then, come make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to put riders on them!

23 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.

23 "Come now, and make a deal with my master, the king of Assyria, and I'll give you 2,000 horses, if you can furnish them with riders.

23 Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

- The commander called on Hezekiah to strike a bargain and surrender. This, the commander reasoned, would be wise.

— The Judahites had few horses; this was part of the help Hezekiah had hoped to get from Egypt

— Even if Sennacherib were to give Judah 2,000 horses Hezekiah could not put trained cavalymen on them

24 How then can you drive back *even* one official of the least of my master's servants, and rely on Egypt for chariots and horsemen?

24 How then can you repulse one official of the least of my master's servants, and rely on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

24 How can you refuse even one official from the least of my master's servants and rely on Egypt for chariots and horsemen?

24 How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

25 Have I now come up without the LORD'S approval against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it.'""

25 Have I now come up without the Lord's approval against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it.'""

25 "Now then, haven't I come up—apart from the LORD—to attack and destroy this place? The LORD told me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it!'"

25 Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

- The commander's final appeal was a strong one. He claimed that the LORD had commanded his master to attack and destroy Jerusalem

— Though this is improbable it is not impossible (Cf. Is 45:1-6). The people of Judah had seen Israel fall to Assyria. Might not God's plan be the same for Judah?

The Rabshakeh used six arguments to persuade Hezekiah to surrender:

1. Egypt was an undependable ally (v19-21), therefore Hezekiah should not count on Egypt for help.
2. The altars to *Yahweh* throughout the land had been removed (v22), therefore Hezekiah should not count on the LORD's assistance.
3. The Assyrian army was overwhelmingly large and powerful (v23-24), therefore resistance would cost the Judahites many lives.
4. *Yahweh* had told Sennacherib to attack Jerusalem (v25), therefore God was on the side of the Assyrians.
5. Conditions for the Israelites would be paradisiacal if they surrendered (v31-32), therefore the Judahites should not fear defeat.
6. No other god was able to save the nations that the Assyrians had attacked (v33-35), therefore Hezekiah should not think that *Yahweh* could save Judah.

**26** Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah, said to Rabshakeh, "Speak now to your servants in Aramaic, because we understand *it*; and do not speak with us in Judean so that the people who are on the wall hear *you*."

**26** Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, 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."

**26** At this, Hilkiah's son Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah asked Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, because we understand it, but don't speak the language of Judah to us within the hearing of the people who are on the wall."

**26** Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

- Hezekiah's three representatives realized that these arguments could make the people lose heart, so they asked the Assyrians to speak only in the Aramaic language which only the educated leaders of Israel understood.

— Aramaic was the language of international diplomacy at that time, so it would've been the normal medium of communication in such a situation

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

27 But Rabshakeh said to them, "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?"

27 But Rab-shakeh spoke to them, "Has my master sent me to talk about this just to your master and to you, and not also to the men who are sitting on the wall, who will soon be eating their own feces and drinking their own urine—along with you?"

**27** But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?

- The commander refused; he realized the importance of destroying the people's confidence in their ability to succeed in any military encounter against the Assyrian army

— The commander replied that he had been sent with this message to all the people, not just the leaders of Judah

— After all, it was the common people who would suffer most from a long siege and the resulting famine. They would be reduced to eating their own excrement and drinking their own urine.

— Nothing could be more repulsive to the residents of Jerusalem than this possibility. The commander wanted the people to conclude that surrender would be better than resistance.

**28** Then Rabshakeh stood up and shouted with a loud voice in Judean, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria!

**28** Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in Judean, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria.

**28** Then Rab-shakeh stood up and cried out loud, "Listen to what the great king, the king of Assyria has to say.

**28** Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria:

29 This is what the king says: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to save you from my hand.

29 Thus says the king, 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you from my hand;

29 This is what the king says:

'Don't let Hezekiah deceive you, because he will prove to be unable to deliver you from my control.

29 Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand:

30 And do not let Hezekiah lead you to trust in the LORD by saying, "The LORD will certainly save us, and this city will not be handed over to the king of Assyria."

30 nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, "The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."

30 And don't let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD by telling you, "The LORD will certainly deliver us and this city will not be handed over to the king of Assyria."

30 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

31 Do not listen to Hezekiah, for this is what the king of Assyria says: "Make your peace with me and come out to me, and eat, each one, *from* his vine and each *from* his fig tree, and drink, each one, the waters of his own cistern,

31 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,

31 Don't listen to Hezekiah, because this is what the king of Assyria says: "Make peace with me and come out to me! Each of you will eat from his own vine. Each will eat from his own fig tree. And each of you will drink water from his own cistern

31 Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern:

- It would be better for the people, the commander promised, if they surrendered. Rather than siege and starvation there would be peace and plenty to eat and drink.

— Each person having his own vine and fig tree is a figure of speech for enjoying peace and prosperity (Cf. 1 Kings 4:25; Micah 4:4; Zech 3:10)

- When under a siege one of the first needs people faced was water. Hezekiah had provided for this need by cutting a tunnel from the spring of Gihon under the wall of the city to the Pool of Siloam (Cf. 2 Kings 20:20) but the Assyrians did not know about this or chose to ignore it.

32 until I come and take you to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees *producing* oil, and of honey, so that you

will live and not die." But do not listen to Hezekiah, because he misleads you by saying, "The LORD will save us."

32 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, a land of olive trees and honey, that you may live and not die." But do not listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you, saying, "The Lord will deliver us."

32 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, one overflowing with grain and new wine, a land filled with bread and vineyards, with olive trees and honey, so you may live and not die."

'But don't listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you by saying, "The LORD will deliver us!"

32 Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us.

- In time, the commander said, the Assyrians would transport them to other cities. The people had heard that this was Assyrian policy. But he assured them that they would be sent to a land like their own where they would have plenty of their favorite foods and drink.

— The commander punctuated his eloquent and attractive appeal with a call to choose surrender and life rather than resistance and certain death

33 Has any of the gods of the nations actually saved his land from the hand of the king of Assyria?

33 Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria?

33 Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land from control by the king of Assyria?

33 Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

34 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Have they saved Samaria from my hand?

34 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand?

34 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sephar-vaim, of Hena, and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria from my control?

34 Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand?

- He next focused on Hezekiah's promise to the people that the LORD would deliver them if they trusted in Him

— His ideas reflect a polytheistic and pagan concept of God but his words could not help but raise questions in his hearers' minds. No other gods had been able to deliver their worshipers from the might of Assyria.

— The places mentioned were probably known to the Judahites. Arpad was 13 miles north of Aleppo in Aram. Hena and Ivvah were north of the Euphrates River east of Hamath. On Hamath and Sepharvaim, see 17:24.

35 Who among all the gods of the lands *are there* who have saved their land from my hand, that the LORD would save Jerusalem from my hand?"

35 Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

35 Who among all the gods of these lands has delivered their land from my control, so that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from me?"

35 Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?

- His references to the inability of the gods of Samaria would have been especially intimidating, since many in the Northern Kingdom of Israel had worshipped *Yahweh*

**36** But the people were silent and did not answer him *with even* a word, because it was the king's command: "Do not answer him."

**36** But the people were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him."

**36** But the people remained silent and did not answer with even so much as a word, because the king's order was, "Don't answer him."

**36** But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

- The Assyrian commander's rhetorical questions (v33-35) needed no answer and the people gave him none

— Hezekiah had previously instructed the people not to reply to the cunning general's statements. Undoubtedly those forceful arguments aroused much heated discussion among the common people after the Assyrian messengers departed.

37 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the household, and Shebna the scribe and Joah the son of Asaph, the secretary, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and they reported to him the words of Rabshakeh.

37 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.

37 But Hilkiah's son Eliakim, who managed the household, Shebna the scribe, and Asaph's son Joah the recorder came back to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him what Rab-shakeh had said.

37 Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

- The summit conference broke up and Hezekiah's three representatives (Cf. v18) returned to the king

— He could see that they had torn their clothes out of great distress (Cf. Gen 37:29,34; Joshua 7:6; 2 Kings 5:7; 6:30; 11:14; 22:11; Esther 4:1; Job 1:20; 2:12); they faced a most serious situation. Then they told him what the Assyrians had said.

The writer recorded this lengthy incident in Kings because it shows the central issues that Judah faced. Would she trust in Yahweh or herself or her allies? This is another instance in which God's enemies challenged Him again (Cf. Ex 7—11; 1 Sam 17). Isaiah also recorded these events (18:13, 17—20:17) in Is 36:1—38:8 and 39:1-8, as did the writer of Chronicles in 2 Chr 32:1-23. The threefold repetition of this revelation underlines the importance of its lessons for every reader of Scripture.