

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 32

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem

After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities, thinking to conquer them for himself. ² When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem, ³ he consulted with his officials and military staff about blocking off the water from the springs outside the city, and they helped him. ⁴ A large force of men assembled, and they blocked all the springs and the stream that flowed through the land. “Why should the kings ^a of Assyria come and find plenty of water?” they said. ⁵ Then he worked hard repairing all the broken sections of the wall and building towers on it. He built another wall outside that one and reinforced the supporting terraces ^b of the City of David. He also made large numbers of weapons and shields. ⁶ He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate and encouraged them with these words: ⁷ “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. ⁸ With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles.” And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said. ⁹ Later, when Sennacherib king of Assyria and all his forces were laying siege to Lachish, he sent his officers to Jerusalem with this message for Hezekiah king of Judah and for all the people of Judah who were there: ¹⁰ “This is what Sennacherib king of Assyria says: On what are you basing your confidence, that you remain in Jerusalem under siege? ¹¹ When Hezekiah says, ‘The LORD our God will save us from the hand of the king of Assyria,’ he is misleading you, to let you die of hunger and thirst. ¹² Did not Hezekiah himself remove this god’s high places and altars, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You must worship before one altar and burn sacrifices on it’? ¹³ “Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of the other lands? Were the gods of those nations ever able to deliver their land from my hand? ¹⁴ Who of all the gods of these nations that my fathers destroyed has been able to save his people from me? How then can your god deliver you from my hand? ¹⁵ Now do not let Hezekiah deceive you and mislead you like this. Do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my fathers. How much less will your god deliver you from my hand!” ¹⁶ Sennacherib’s officers spoke further against the LORD God and against his servant Hezekiah. ¹⁷ The king also wrote letters insulting the LORD, the God of Israel, and saying this against him: “Just as the gods of the peoples of the other lands did not rescue their people from my hand, so the god of Hezekiah will not rescue his people from my hand.” ¹⁸ Then they called out in Hebrew to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to terrify them and make them afraid in order to

capture the city. ¹⁹ They spoke about the God of Jerusalem as they did about the gods of the other peoples of the world—the work of men’s hands. ²⁰ King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to heaven about this. ²¹ And the LORD sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king. So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace. And when he went into the temple of his god, some of his sons cut him down with the sword. ²² So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of all others. He took care of them ^c on every side. ²³ Many brought offerings to Jerusalem for the LORD and valuable gifts for Hezekiah king of Judah. From then on he was highly regarded by all the nations.

2:1–23 The record of Sennacherib’s invasion is much more detailed in 2 Kings and Isaiah. (CSB)

The Chronicler’s emphasis on Hezekiah’s religious activity cannot be separated from his presentation of the warfare in this chapter. Overall, the Chronicler focuses on Hezekiah as a great reformer, not as a warrior. As with David and Solomon, the Chronicler omits material that casts Hezekiah in a negative light. (TLSB)

32:1 The Chronicler omits the date of the invasion (701 B.C., Hezekiah’s 14th year; see 2Ki 18:13; Isa 36:1). (CSB)

32:2–8 Unique to the Chronicler, but normal preparations for invasion. (CSB)

Hezekiah prepares for war. Rather than portraying the king as looking to Egypt for help (2Ki 18:20–25), the Chronicler speaks of Hezekiah’s trust in the Lord. (TLSB)

32:3 *planned*. Before the siege began, Hezekiah cut off the supply of water outside the city (vv 3–4); strengthened the city’s fortifications and stepped up the production of weaponry (v 5); converted the city into a military camp, setting “combat commanders over the people” (v 6); bolstered the morale of the defenders, reminding them that the enemy, “an arm of flesh” (v 8), was no match for the Lord, who would fight their battles (vv 7–8). (TLSB)

32:3–4 See v. 30. (CSB)

32:4 *brook*. The Gihon. Cf v 30. Archaeologists have discovered foundations of huge defensive towers around these water supplies. Water formerly flowed down to the Kidron Valley, irrigating gardens. (TLSB)

32:5 *Millo*. Part of the city’s fortification, it needed periodic repair (cf 1Ki 9:15; 11:27). (TLSB)

32:9–19 Message of Sennacherib’s servants and the challenge they present to Judah on behalf of the king of Assyria (cf 2Ki 18:17–35; Is 36:2–20). (TLSB)

32:9 The Chronicler bypasses 2Ki 18:14–16, which records Hezekiah’s suit for peace with its accompanying bribe stripped from the temple treasures. These acts were apparently out of accord with the Chronicler’s portrait of Hezekiah. He also omits 2Ki 18:17b–18. (CSB)

servants. Sennacherib’s attempt to cajole and frighten Hezekiah and the people into surrender (v 18) is described in greater detail in 2Ki 18:14–37; 19:8–14. (TLSB)

32:10 The Chronicler omits 2Ki 18:20–21 (and Isa 36:5–6), containing a portion of the Assyrian commander’s speech ridiculing Hezekiah and the citizens of Jerusalem for trusting in Egypt and Pharaoh. This, too, may be theologically motivated, in light of the Chronicler’s attitude toward foreign alliances. The same concern with foreign alliances is also likely the reason for the omission of the material in 2Ki 18:23–27 (and Isa 36:8–12), where mention is again made of the hope of Egyptian intervention (see 2Ki 19:9 for the incursion of Tirhakah). (CSB)

32:15–18 Each verse directly reflects or paraphrases a portion of the accounts found in 2Ki 18–19; Isa 36–37, the bulk of which are omitted by the Chronicler: v 15 (2Ki 18:29; Isa 36:14); vv 16–17 (2Ki 19:14; Isa 37:14); v 18 (2Ki 18:28; Isa 36:13). (TLSB)

32:16 *spoke further.* The Chronicler appears to assume his reader’s familiarity with the longer account of the Assyrian taunts found in Kings and Isaiah. (CSB)

32:17 *letters to cast contempt.* Curse letters were used in ancient times. (TLSB)

32:18 *called out in Hebrew.* Assumes knowledge of the fuller story (2Ki 18:26–28; Isa 36:11–13). (CSB)

language of Judah. Hebrew. (TLSB)

32:20 This brief reference to the prayers of Hezekiah and Isaiah abridges the much longer narrative in 2Ki 19:1–34 (and Isa 37:1–35). (CSB)

prayed . . . cried. Cf 2Ki 19:15–34 for Hezekiah’s prayer and God’s answer through Isaiah. There, however, the prophet’s intercession is not mentioned. (TLSB)

32:21 See 2Ki 19:35–37; Isa 37:36–38. The Chronicler and the parallel accounts telescope events somewhat: Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah was in 701 B.C., while his death at the hand of his sons was in 681. (CSB)

Battle occurs quickly and decisively. In all three accounts (cf 2Ki 19:35–36; Isa 37:36–37), an angel of the Lord accomplishes the victory; the army of Judah does not fight at all. The victory of Hezekiah is, for the Chronicler, the victory of a righteous king.

32:22–23 Summary of Hezekiah’s reign. Like David and Solomon (1Ch 14:17; 2Ch 9:23–24), Hezekiah was honored by the nations. (TLSB)

32:22 *He provided for them.* Lit, “He led them.” (TLSB)

32:23 *highly regarded by all the nations.* Another effort to compare Hezekiah with Solomon (see 9:23–24). (CSB)

Hezekiah’s Pride, Success and Death

24 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign. **25** But Hezekiah’s heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the LORD’s wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. **26** Then Hezekiah repented of the pride of his heart, as did the people of Jerusalem; therefore the LORD’s wrath did not come upon them during the days of Hezekiah. **27** Hezekiah had very great riches and honor, and he made treasuries for his silver and gold and for his precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuables. **28** He also made buildings to store the harvest of grain, new wine and oil; and he made stalls for various kinds of cattle, and pens for the flocks. **29** He built villages and acquired great numbers of flocks and herds, for God had given him very great riches. **30** It was Hezekiah who blocked the upper outlet of the Gihon spring and channeled the water down to the west side of the City of David. He succeeded in everything he undertook. **31** But when envoys were sent by the rulers of Babylon to ask him about the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land, God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart. **32** The other events of Hezekiah’s reign and his acts of devotion are written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. **33** Hezekiah rested with his fathers and was buried on the hill where the tombs of David’s descendants are. All Judah and the people of Jerusalem honored him when he died. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.

32:24–26 Hezekiah becomes prideful, just as David had when he took a census (1Ch 21:1–4). (TLSB)

32:24 The Chronicler again abridges the narrative in 2Ki 20:1–11 (and Isa 38:1–8), assuming the reader’s familiarity with the role of Isaiah and the miraculous sign of the shadow reversing ten steps. (CSB)

sick. Cf 2Ki 20:1–11 for a more complete report of Hezekiah’s recovery from illness. (TLSB)

32:25–30 Not found in the parallel texts. (CSB)

32:25–26 *proud ... pride.* The Chronicler does not specify the nature of Hezekiah’s pride (however, see v. 31; 2Ki 20:12–13; Isa 39:1–2). Even for a “second Solomon” like Hezekiah, disobedience brings anger from the Lord. (CSB)

32:27–29 The Chronicler likens Hezekiah to Solomon also by recounting his wealth (9:13–14). (CSB)

Unique to 2Ch. Hezekiah, like David and Solomon, was the recipient of great honor and wealth. Archaeologists have found large storage rooms at Hazor, Samaria, Jerusalem, and Lachish. (TLSB)

32:30 See vv. 2–4; 2Ki 20:20. (CSB)

32:31 See v. 25. The Chronicler assumes the reader’s knowledge of the fuller account in 2Ki 20:12–19 (and Isa 39:1–8). The envoys from Babylon were apparently interested in joint efforts against the Assyrians, hoping to open two fronts against them simultaneously. (CSB)

32:33 *upper part*. A rise in the terrain led to the royal sepulchers. (TLSB)

did him honor. For rites to honor the dead. (TLSB)

32:24–33 Hezekiah, blessed with great wealth and power, struggles with pride. This threatens to destroy him, his kingdom, and his descendants. Even if you are able to fend off all other threats, pride will still assault and defeat you if the Lord does not come to your aid. Like Hezekiah, humble yourself before the Lord and ask for His forgiveness. Recognize your successes as signs of His kindness, which He extends through the blessings of creation and the mercy of Jesus Christ. • Grant me sincere humility, O Lord, like that of Jesus, who became obedient until death, even death on a cross, for my salvation. Amen. (TLSB)