

CHAPTER 32

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 32

This chapter relates Sennacherib's invasion of the land of Judah, the preparations Hezekiah made to resist him, and the encouragement he gave his people to trust in the Lord, (^{<4430>}2 Chronicles 32:1-8) the messages and letters Sennacherib sent to Hezekiah and his subjects, full of arrogance and blasphemy, to solicit them to deliver up Jerusalem to him, (^{<4431>}2 Chronicles 32:9-19) the destruction of his army by an angel, and the deliverance of the Jews at the prayers of Hezekiah and Isaiah, (^{<4432>}2 Chronicles 32:20-23) the sin Hezekiah fell into after this, and his recovery from a fit of illness; but, upon his humiliation for it, wrath was averted, (^{<4433>}2 Chronicles 32:24-26) and the chapter is concluded with an account of his honours, riches, and exploits, and of his death and burial, (^{<4437>}2 Chronicles 32:27-33).

Ver. 1. *After these things, and the establishment thereof*, etc.] What are recorded in the preceding chapters, when matters were well settled, especially with respect to religion and temple service, and when Hezekiah was well established in the throne of his kingdom, had fought with and defeated the Philistines, and cast off the Assyrian yoke, and was in very prosperous circumstances; for it was in the fourteenth year of his reign that what follows was done:

Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself; or to break them, or into them; or through them ^{f134} to break down the walls to take them, and join them to himself, as the Targum, and he did take them, (see ^{<2183>}2 Kings 18:13).

Ver. 2. *And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come*, etc.] Into the land of Judah, which he perceived and understood by reports brought to him: and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem; to besiege it and take it, if possible; this he saw was his design, by taking the fenced cities in his way, and coming forward with his forces.

Ver. 3. *He took counsel with his princes, and his mighty men,* etc.] With his nobles, and the officers of his army, what steps should be taken to resist, retard, and distress the enemy, and among the rest what follows was proposed:

to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city; that so the Assyrian army would find it difficult to supply themselves with water, which was an article of great importance:

and they did help him; to stop the fountains, not only with their advice how to do it, but with their men, their servants, who assisted those that Hezekiah employed in this work.

Ver. 4. *So there was gathered much people together,* etc.] At the instance of Hezekiah, his nobles and officers:

who stopped all the fountains; perhaps by laying planks over them, and earth upon them, so that it could not be discerned there were any fountains there:

and the brook that ran through the midst of the land; which, according to Kimchi, was Gihon, (^{<4820>}2 Chronicles 32:30), which was near Jerusalem; the stream of this very probably they turned into channels under ground, whereby it was brought into the city into reservoirs there provided, that that might have a supply during the siege, while the enemy was distressed for want of it:

saying, why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water? by which means they would be able to carry on the siege to a great length, when otherwise they would be obliged to raise it quickly: mention is made of kings of Assyria, though there was but one, with whom there might be petty kings, or tributary ones; and, besides, as he boasted, his princes were altogether kings, (^{<2308>}Isaiah 10:8).

Ver. 5. *Also he strengthened himself,* etc.] In the Lord his God, and fortified his city, and put it in the best manner of defence he could:

and built up all the wall that was broken; which was broken from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate by Joash king of Israel; and though it might have been repaired by Uzziah, it might again be broken down in the times of Ahaz, by Pekah, king of Israel, or some other enemy, (see ^{<4838>}2 Chronicles 25:3 26:9 28:6,7)

and raised it up to the towers; from the corner tower to the tower of the gate of Ephraim, which, as before observed, had been broken down:

and another wall without; a second wall, either all around the city, or at such a part of it which was weakest; Josephus ^{f135} says the city of Jerusalem had three walls about it:

and repaired Millo in the city of David; a wall on the north side of the city:

and made darts and shields in abundance; darts to cast from the walls of the city, to annoy the enemy with, and shields to defend them from those of the enemy.

Ver. 6. *And he set captains of war over the people*, etc.] To teach them the exercises of war, to lead them on against the enemy, to direct them where to stand, and what to do in defence of the city:

and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city; the street which led to the gate, and was large and commodious to assemble the people in:

and spake comfortably to them; to animate and encourage them to hold out the siege, and do all they could to repel the enemy;

saying; as follows.

Ver. 7. *Be strong and courageous*, etc.] Be of good heart and spirit, and quit yourselves like men:

be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; which was very large; for no less than 185,000 were slain of them by an angel in one night, (^{1298}2 Kings 19:35)

for there be more with us than with him; though not in number, yet in power and might; and if angels are meant, they are more in number; but it seems, by what follows, that Hezekiah had only the Lord his God in his thoughts and view.

Ver. 8. *With him is an arm of flesh*, etc.] Only weak, frail, mortal men, not at all to be feared; nothing in comparison of the Lord:

but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles; who is the Lord God Almighty, who has the host of heaven at his command, and with whom all the inhabitants of the earth are as nothing; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord our God is for us to help us, and fight our battles:”

and the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah; not upon his bare words, but on what was contained in them, on the strength and power of the Lord God he assured them was on their side; they believed what he said to be true, and trusted in the Lord that he would save them.

Ver. 9. *After this did Sennacherib king of Assyria send his servants to Jerusalem*, etc.] Who are mentioned by name, (^{<1287>}2 Kings 18:17) this was after Hezekiah had given him a large quantity of silver and gold to depart, and he did depart from him, (^{<1284>}2 Kings 18:14-16)

but he himself laid siege against Lachish, and all his power with him; one of the cities of Judah, (see ^{<2302>}Isaiah 36:2), from hence he dispatched them *unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto all Judah that were at Jerusalem*; who had retired thither for safety, upon the invasion of their country by the king of Assyria.

Ver. 10. *Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, whereon do ye trust*, etc.] On what power in heaven or on earth?

that ye abide in the siege in Jerusalem? hold out against the siege of it, and do not deliver it up.

Ver. 11. *Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine, and by thirst*, etc.] Suggesting that would be their case if they did not surrender:

saying, the Lord our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria? (See Gill on “^{<2365>}Isaiah 36:15”).

Ver. 12-15. *Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places*, etc.] For the sense of this and the three following verses, see the notes on (See Gill on “^{<2367>}Isaiah 36:17-20”)

Ver. 16. *And his servants spake yet more against the Lord God, and against his servant Hezekiah.*] Than what is here recorded, as may be read in (^{<1281>}2 Kings 18:1-19:37), and (^{<2301>}Isaiah 36:1-22).

Ver. 17. *He wrote also letters to rail on the Lord God of Israel*, etc.] (see ^{<1291>}2 Kings 19:9-14 ^{<2370>}Isaiah 37:9-14).

Ver. 18. *Then they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech unto the people of Jerusalem that were on the wall,* etc.] The messengers of Sennacherib, particularly Rabshakeh the chief speaker; though they were desired to speak in the Syrian language, (^{<2361>}Isaiah 36:11,13),

but this they did to affright them, and to trouble them, that they might take the city; to throw them into terror and confusion, that they might prevail upon them to deliver up the city to them.

Ver. 19. *And they spake against the God of Jerusalem,* etc.] The only living and true God, whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem professed to be their God, and who was worshipped by them in the temple there:

as against the gods of the people of the earth, which were the work of the hands of man; they made no difference between the one and the other, but spoke as freely and as contemptibly of the one as of the other, (see ^{<2369>}Isaiah 36:19,20 37:10-13).

Ver. 20. *And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven.*] To God in heaven; of the prayer of Hezekiah on this account, (see ^{<23715>}Isaiah 37:15-20), and the notes there;

and though we read not of the prayer of Isaiah, no doubt he made one, as Hezekiah desired, and since he received a message from the Lord, which he sent to Hezekiah, (^{<23704>}Isaiah 37:4,21).

Ver. 21. *And the Lord sent an angel,* etc.] The Targum is, ``the Word of the Lord sent Gabriel;’’

Josephus^{f136} takes this angel, or messenger sent of God, to be the pestilence; and others suppose it to be a hot pestilential wind, common in the eastern countries, called “Samiel”, or the poison wind, by which multitudes are sometimes destroyed at once; of which Thevenot and other travellers make mention, (see Gill on “^{<38721>}Job 27:21”), (see Gill on “^{<49106>}Psalm 91:6”), but be it as it may, it was sent of God, was under his direction, and by his power and providence did the execution according to his prediction:

which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria; the generals and officers of his army, with the common soldiers, to the number of 185,000, (^{<23801>}Isaiah 36:1), among

these, no doubt, were the three generals sent with railing letters to Hezekiah, particularly Rabshakeh, (See Gill on “²³⁷⁶Isaiah 37:36”)

so he returned with shame of face to his own land; Assyria, particularly to Nineveh, the metropolis of it, (²³⁷⁵Isaiah 37:37)

and when he was come into the house of his god; the temple of his idol, whose name was Nisroch:

they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword; his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer, (²³⁷⁸Isaiah 37:38).

Ver. 22. *Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria*, etc.] As most clearly appeared; for no stroke was struck but by him:

and from the hand of all other; the Arabic version adds,

“who were round about them;”

who by this defeat were deterred from attacking them:

and guided them on every side: and guarded them all around, as a shepherd leads his flock, where they may be secure from all dangers.

Ver. 23. *And many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem*, etc.] Even out of neighbouring nations, things which they devoted to the service of God in the temple, being convinced that this wonderful deliverance was wrought by the Lord God of Israel, and by him only:

and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah; being desirous of living in friendship with him, who appeared to be the favourite of the God of heaven:

so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth; from the time of the destruction of the Assyrian army in such a wonderful manner, he was highly esteemed, and his name and fame spread abroad among all the neighbouring nations round about him.

Ver. 24. *In those days Hezekiah was sick*, etc.] Of which sickness, and of his prayer, and of the sign given him, (see ²³⁸⁰Isaiah 38:1-22) and the notes there.

Ver. 25. *But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him*, etc.] Both in the deliverance of him and his people from the king of Assyria, and the recovery of him from his sickness:

for his heart was lifted up; with pride, because of the wonderful defeat of the Assyrian army in his favour, the miracle wrought at his recovery from illness, the riches and honour conferred upon him, the presents brought him from his neighbours, and especially the embassy of the king of Babylon to him:

therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem; who, in imitation of him, fell into the same sin of pride, with many others; and therefore both he and they were threatened with some tokens of the divine displeasure.

Ver. 26. *Notwithstanding, Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, etc.] In what manner is not said; perhaps by putting on sackcloth, and by fasting and prayer, and making confession of sin, and declaring repentance for it:

so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah; but in the days of his son's sons, (^{<2307>}Isaiah 39:7,8).

Ver. 27. *And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches*, etc.] Increased by the spoil of the Assyrian camp, and the presents sent him after that by neighbouring nations, (^{<4421>}2 Chronicles 32:21,23)

and honour; both from his subjects, and the nations around him:

and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels: which were houses both for rich and curious things, and for armour, he showed to the ambassadors of Babylon, (see Gill on "^{<2302>}Isaiah 39:2").

Ver. 28. *Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil*, etc.] The produce of his fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, such as David had, with persons over them, (see ^{<1375>}1 Chronicles 27:25-28)

and stands for all manner of beasts; as oxen, horses, camels, and asses, (see ^{<4125>}2 Chronicles 9:25)

and cotes for flocks; folds for sheep.

Ver. 29. *Moreover, he provided him cities*, etc.] Where he had the above storehouses and stalls, and convenient dwellings for those that looked after them, and were over his cattle, small and great, as follows; the Vulgate Latin version reads six cities in some copies ^{f137}:

and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; in which the riches of men, and even of kings, lay in those times:

for God had given him substance very much; for all was owing to his disposing providence, let it come which way it might.

Ver. 30. *This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper water course of Gihon*, etc.] Which Procopius Gazeus says was the same with Siloam, and which it seems had two streams, and this was the upper one; Mr. Maundrell says ^{f138}, the pool of Gihon

“lies about two furlongs without Bethlehem gate westward; it is a stately pool, one hundred and six paces long, and sixty seven broad, and lined with wall and plaster, and was, when we were there, well stored with water:”

and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David; through canals under the plain of the city of David; as the Targum, by a subterraneous passage; and Siloam, as Dr. Lightfoot ^{f139} observes from Josephus, was behind the west wall, not far from the corner that pointed toward the southwest:

and Hezekiah prospered in all his works; natural, civil, and religious, (⁻⁴⁶²2 Chronicles 31:21).

Ver. 31. *Howbeit, [in the business of] the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire the wonder that was [done] in the land*, etc.] Not to see the two tables of stone which were in the ark, with the other two that were broken because of the sin of the calf, as the Targum; nor to ask about the destruction of the Assyrian army, and the manner of it, as Grotius; but to be informed of the miracle of the sun’s going back ten degrees, when Hezekiah was recovered from his sickness; the Chaldeans being a people much given to astrology, and curious in their observations of that kind:

God left him to try him; by showing him all his treasures:

that he might know all that was in his heart; not that God might know, who knows all things, unless spoken of him after the manner of men; but rather that Hezekiah might know the pride lurking in his heart, and other sins which escaped his notice, (^{<2170>}Jeremiah 17:9) or that it might be known by others; that the children of men might know it, as Kimchi; and take warning by it, and observe the frailty and infirmity of the best of men.

Ver. 32. *Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness*, etc.] His acts of piety and liberality:

behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz; in the prophecy of Isaiah, (^{<2300>}Isaiah 36:1-39:8), whose book is called the Vision of Isaiah, (^{<2300>}Isaiah 1:1)

and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel; in (^{<2800>}2 Kings 18:1-20:21).

Ver. 33. *And Hezekiah slept with his fathers*, etc.] Died, as they did:

and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David; in the more honourable and principal of them; there are still to be seen, on the north of Jerusalem, some grottos, called the sepulchres of the kings, though it is certain none of the kings of Israel or Judah were buried there; unless it may be thought, as Mr. Maundrell ^{f140} conjectures, that Hezekiah was here interred, and that these are the sepulchres of the sons of David here mentioned; however, he observes, whoever was buried here, this is certain, that the place itself discovers so great an expense both of labour and treasure, that we may well suppose it to be the work of kings:

and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death; by attending his funeral in great numbers, by burning spices for him, and by mourning for him many days:

and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead; of whom a further account is given in the next chapter.