

Hezekiah's Illness (701 BC)

2 Kings 20:1–11	Isaiah 38:1–8, 21–22	2 Chronicles 32:24
<p>1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.</p> <p>2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,</p> <p>3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done <i>that which is good</i> in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.</p> <p>4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,</p> <p>5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.</p> <p>6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years;</p> <p>and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.</p> <p>7 And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs.</p> <p>And they took and laid <i>it</i> on the boil, and he recovered.</p> <p>8 And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What <i>shall be</i> the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?</p> <p>9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?</p> <p>10 And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.</p> <p>11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone</p>	<p>1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.</p> <p>2 Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD,</p> <p>3 And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done <i>that which is good</i> in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.</p> <p>4 Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying,</p> <p>5 Go, and say to Hezekiah,</p> <p>Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold,</p> <p>I will add unto thy days fifteen years.</p> <p>6 And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.</p> <p>21 For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay <i>it</i> for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover.</p> <p>22 Hezekiah also had said, What <i>is</i> the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?</p> <p>7 And this <i>shall be</i> a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;</p> <p>8 Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward.</p> <p>So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone</p>	<p>24 In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death,</p> <p>and prayed unto the LORD:</p> <p>and he spake unto him,</p> <p>and he gave him a sign.</p>

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Hezekiah's Prayer (701 BC)

Isaiah 38:9–20

9 The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:
 10 I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years.
 11 I said, I shall not see the LORD, *even* the LORD, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.
 12 Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me.
 13 I reckoned till morning, *that*, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day *even* to night wilt thou make an end of me.
 14 Like a crane *or* a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail *with looking* upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.
 15 What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done *it*: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.
 16 O Lord, by these *things men* live, and in all these *things is* the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.
 17 Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul *delivered it* from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.
 18 For the grave cannot praise thee, death can *not* celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.
 19 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I *do* this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.
 20 The LORD *was ready* to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.

Hezekiah's Accomplishments (716t–687t BC)

2 Chronicles 32:27–29, 30b

27 And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honor: 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;
 28 Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks.
 29 Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for God had given him substance very much.
 30b And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.

Hezekiah's Problem With Pride (701 BC)

2 Kings 20:12–19

Isaiah 39

2 Chronicles 32:25–26, 31

12 At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and *all* the house of his armor, and all that was found in his treasures:

1 At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered.

2 And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armor, and all that was found in his treasures:

25 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit *done* unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

31 Howbeit in *the business of* the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was *done* in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all *that was* in his heart.

<p>there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.</p> <p>14 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, <i>even</i> from Babylon.</p> <p>15 And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All <i>the things</i> that <i>are</i> in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.</p> <p>16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.</p> <p>17 Behold, the days come, that all that <i>is</i> in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.</p> <p>18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.</p> <p>19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good <i>is</i> the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, <i>Is it not good</i>, if peace and truth be in my days?</p>	<p>there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.</p> <p>3 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, <i>even</i> from Babylon.</p> <p>4 Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that <i>is</i> in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.</p> <p>5 Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts:</p> <p>6 Behold, the days come, that all that <i>is</i> in thine house, and <i>that</i> which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.</p> <p>7 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.</p> <p>8 Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good <i>is</i> the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.</p>	<p>26 Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, <i>both</i> he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.</p>
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Manasseh, Hezekiah's Son, Becomes Coregent With Hezekiah (697t BC)

2 Kings 21:1	2 Chronicles 33:1
1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah.	1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem:

Scripture quotations are from The King James Version (KJV). The KJV is in the public domain.

Chronological Notes

- 1) Many commentators argue that Isaiah 38–39 are out of place chronologically and should precede Isaiah 36–37.¹ The principle pieces of evidence offered are:
 - A) God's promise to Hezekiah in Isaiah 38:6 appears to indicate that the threat from the king of Assyria lay in the present/future and not in the past.
 - B) If Hezekiah gave Sennacherib tribute money (2 Kgs 18:14–16), what did he have left to show the messengers from

¹ John N. Oswalt, "The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39," *NICOT*, 674; Gary V. Smith, "Isaiah 1–39," *NAC*, 635–636; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 289.

Merodach-Baladan (Isa 39:2; 2 Kgs 20:13)?

- C) At the time following the invasion of Sennacherib, Merodach-Baladan was no longer king of Babylon.
- 2) I think Benjamin Downer has ably argued against this majority view:²
- A) Concerning Isaiah 38:6—“But what was of more pressing concern to the inhabitants of the city than their future safety? From a human standpoint it was altogether probable that Sennacherib would return to the west land at no distant date and make another attempt on Jerusalem. The promise made to Hezekiah is therefore taken naturally to mean that, for the period to which his life was extended, he and his city should be safe from further aggression” (Downer, p. 255).
- B) Concerning the tribute—“But how long the treasury was allowed to remain thus depleted is another question. There is no reason to think the city was impoverished. It had not been through a protracted siege, probably only a blockade for a brief period. It would have been deemed necessary to take immediate steps, after the withdrawal of Sennacherib from the land, to replenish the treasury, if for no other reason, to aid in the rehabilitation of the wasted country districts. Menahem of Israel had raised a thousand talents in an emergency to buy the aid of Pul of Assyria by taking a fixed sum from all the wealthy men of his realm (2 Kgs 15:19–20). Jehoiakim of Judah at a later time raised the amount demanded by Pharaoh-Necho by exacting it of the people according to their property valuation (2 Kgs 23:35). It is worth while to observe also that the treasures shown by Hezekiah did not consist altogether of gold and silver, but of costly articles of various kinds, and of warlike equipment (Isa 39:2). Besides it is stated in 2 Chr 32:23 that much had come in from other peoples in the way of gifts of honor after the deliverance of the city from Sennacherib” (Downer, p. 254).³
- C) Concerning Merodach-Baladan—“Merodach-baladan had been already twice king of Babylon. He had ruled over the city, together with all southern Babylonia, for twelve years during the reign of Sargon II, from 721 to 709 B.C., and had held his own against all the power of Assyria (Rogers, *History of Babylonia and Assyria*, II, 316ff, 336ff). He had himself made king again in 702 B.C., and was dislodged after a reign of nine months by Sennacherib (R. II, 356ff). A man by the name of Bel-ibni, of little force and ability apparently, but wholly subservient to Sennacherib, was placed on the throne. He is in the several lists put down as king for the next three years (R. I, 514, 533, 535), but according to McCurdy (*History, Prophecy and the Monuments*, II, p. 275), this mock kingship ‘was intended merely as a compromise and makeshift till the time should come for the formal annexation of the whole country.’ While Sennacherib was engaged in his campaign in Palestine in 701 B.C., rebellion broke out again in Babylon. Bel-ibni was forced into a position hostile to Assyria, while Merodach-baladan joined in the revolt (R. II, 373f). If we may trust his former record, he was the chief figure in the rebellion, and the one to whom the populace would turn as the only man capable of carrying the struggle to a successful issue. With the Babylonians then hostile to the rule of Sennacherib, refusing ever to acknowledge him as king because of his ignoring their time-honored customs as to the manner of his assuming the royal prerogative (R. II, 355f); and with Bel-ibni helpless against public sentiment, while Merodach-baladan was apparently the brains and organizer of the revolt, there does not seem to be any serious objection to his being styled king of Babylon, a position he had held during the greater part of the time from the beginning of Sargon’s reign until that very day. Moreover, one of the accounts (2 Chr 32:31) does not mention him by name, but simply speaks of ‘the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon.’ We may suppose that Hezekiah’s sickness followed soon after the deliverance of Jerusalem. The general note of time, ‘in those days,’ found in all the accounts is sufficiently explained by the fact that in all the narratives the disastrous ending of Sennacherib’s campaign had been made to include the circumstances of his death at the hands of his sons twenty years later. The news of these events would soon reach Babylonia, for according to Rogers (II, 373) ‘news traveled far and fast in the ancient orient.’ Nothing would be of more importance to Merodach-baladan, knowing the certainty that Sennacherib would soon give his attention to the uprising in Babylon, than seeking to stir up more trouble for him in the west land. Therefore, hearing of Hezekiah’s successful resistance, and of his sickness and recovery, the opportunity offered itself, under the guise of congratulations on his recovery and interest in the reported wonder connected with it, of finding what chance there was of stirring up a new revolt in Palestine” (Downer, 255–56).⁴

² Benjamin R. Downer, “The Added Years of Hezekiah’s Life,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 80.318 (Apr 1923): 251–271.

³ I would add that the tribute Hezekiah paid to Sennacherib prior to the siege of Jerusalem may well have been recovered in whole or in part after God’s destruction of Sennacherib’s forces in a single night.

⁴ For those who argue that Hezekiah’s illness took place during Merodach-baladan’s first rule during Sargon’s reign, it should be noted that a straightforward calculation from the end of Hezekiah’s life in 687t bc yields the following: 687t + added 15 years of life = 702t or 701 bc. Thus we have an upper bound on the dating of Isaiah 38–39 of 702/701 bc.