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Israel and Judah: 38. Hezekiah's Reign Ends

by David Sielaff, August 2020

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for August 2020](#)

Israel and Judah: 38

Hezekiah's
Reign
Ends

THE SITUATION: The Kingdom of Judah is saved. God destroyed the Assyrian army besieging Jerusalem, accomplished by a mysterious plague. Every one of the Assyrians surrounding the city died. The Assyrian king Sennacherib returned (most likely he fled in terror) to Assyria where years later he was murdered. Most of Judah's army is dead or scattered while King Hezekiah, the prophet Isaiah, the nobles of the kingdom, and the people in Jerusalem survived the siege.

There is a dispute among scholars whether the illness of Hezekiah occurred before or after the destruction of the Assyrian army in their siege on Jerusalem. This is because the sequence of events as presented in the books of Second Kings, Isaiah, and Second Chronicles differ somewhat.

After Sennacherib departed Judea and even after his death, the Kingdom of Assyria continued to be a threat to Hezekiah and the Kingdom of Judah. In the year after Sennacherib's death, King Esarhaddon (son and successor of Sennacherib) came with the Assyrian army down the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea and invaded Egypt. They were defeated. Neither when they marched toward Egypt or back to Assyria were there any reported attacks on Judah.

Two years later, Esarhaddon came with another army for a full invasion of Egypt and was successful. The city of Memphis in Egypt was captured, along with the Pharaoh's family, including his son and wife, and most of the royal court, all of whom were sent to Assyria as hostages. Esarhaddon placed a puppet ruler on the throne of Pharaoh and withdrew with great treasure. Judah under King Hezekiah gave tribute to Assyria and was not attacked. On their part, Assyria probably did not want to risk another disaster from unknown causes.

Back to the narrative of Hezekiah. A short but unknown time after the slaughter of Assyrian troops besieging Jerusalem and Sennacherib's withdrawal of Assyrian troops from Judah, Hezekiah was faced with a personal crisis. He came down with a sudden life-threatening illness. It seems that God gave Hezekiah the illness after the war. The name Hezekiah means "Yah is my strength" or "YHWH is my strength."

We pick up the narrative following the chronology of Second Kings as our base text. The Concordant Literal Version of the Old Testament is used because of its systematic and consistent translation of words into English between the various books of the Old Testament.

TEXT: Hezekiah's Illness

2 Kings 20:1–11

¹ In those days Hezekiah was ill to death. So Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him,

“Thus speaks Yahweh: Give instruction to your household, for you are going to die; and you shall not remain alive.”

² Hezekiah turned his face around to the sidewall and prayed to Yahweh, saying,

³ “Oh, Yahweh! Remember, I pray, how I walked before You in faithfulness and wholeheartedly, and I have done what is good in Your eyes.”

Then Hezekiah lamented with great lamentation.

⁴ Now this occurred to Isaiah: He had not yet gone forth from the middle court when Yahweh's word came to him, saying,

⁵ “Turn back and say to Hezekiah, the governor of My people,

‘Thus speaks Yahweh, the Elohim of your father David:

- [1] I have heard your prayer;
- [2] I have seen your tears.

Behold, I am healing you; on the third day you shall go up to the house of Yahweh.

⁶ And I will add to your days fifteen years; and from the palm of the king of Assyria I shall rescue you and this city.

I will protect this city on My own account and on account of My servant David.”

⁷ Then Isaiah said to the servants,

“Procure pressed dried figs, let them take and place them on the boil that he may revive.”

⁸ Now Hezekiah asked Isaiah,

“What is the sign that Yahweh shall heal me, and I will go up on the third day to the house of Yahweh?”

⁹ Isaiah said,

“This is the sign for you from Yahweh that Yahweh shall perform this word that He has spoken: The shadow has gone on ten steps; should it return ten steps?”

Isaiah 38:1–6, 21–22, 7–8

¹ In those days Hezekiah was ill to death. So Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him,

“Thus speaks Yahweh: Give instruction to your household, for you are going to die; you shall not remain alive.”

² Hezekiah turned his face around to the sidewall and prayed to Yahweh, ³ saying,

“Oh, Yahweh! Remember, I pray, how I have walked before You in faithfulness and wholeheartedly, and I have done what is good in Your eyes.”

Then Hezekiah lamented with great lamentation.

⁴ *After this* Yahweh's word came to *Isaiah*, saying,

⁵ “Go, and you will say to Hezekiah,

‘Thus speaks Yahweh, the Elohim of your father David:

- [1] I have heard your prayer;
- [2] I have seen your tears.

Behold,

I will add to your days fifteen years; ⁶ and from the palm of the king of Assyria I shall rescue you and this city.

I will protect this city on My own account and on account of My servant David.”

Isaiah 38:21–22 (out of sequence)

²¹ Now Isaiah had said,

“Let them take up pressed dried figs and put a poultice on the boil that he may revive.”

²² Yet Hezekiah had said,

“What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of Yahweh?”

Isaiah 38:7–8 (out of sequence)

⁷ **“And this is the sign for you from Yahweh that Yahweh shall perform this word that He has spoken:**

¹⁰ Hezekiah replied,

“It is but a slight thing for the shadow to decline [go down] ten steps, but not that the shadow returns back again ten steps.”

¹¹ So Isaiah the prophet called out to Yahweh; and He reversed the shadow on the steps (that had descended on the stairs of Ahaz) back again ten steps.

[said YHWH]

⁸ **Behold, I shall reverse the shadow on the steps (that had descended on the stairs of the upper chamber of Ahaz), by the sun, back again ten steps. And the sun turned back ten steps on the stairs which it had descended.”**
[end text]

2 Kings 20:1 and Isaiah 38:1. YHWH sent Isaiah to tell King Hezekiah that God will end his life. When YHWH says he will die, the outcome for Hezekiah seems to be certain death. Hezekiah is instructed to put his affairs in order and to prepare for his death, such as funeral and burial arrangements, and succession to the throne.

We find later that Hezekiah had a growing boil, perhaps filling with toxins threatening his death.

Verses 2 and 2. However, Hezekiah has knowledge, understanding, wisdom and experience that YHWH listens to petitions from those who honor and pray to Him for mercy. That is what Hezekiah does. Prayer and calling out to God was successful in the crisis of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem. Hezekiah’s immediate reaction to God’s declaration of his coming death was to pray. This is a good example for us all to follow in any health crisis.^a

Turning his face to the wall was something the evil King Ahab of Israel did when Naboth would not sell him his vineyard (1 Kings 21:4). Ahab pouted, but Hezekiah’s distress and actions were not trivial.

Verses 3 and 3. We are given the opening words of Hezekiah’s prayer. The text goes on to state his **“great lamentation”** which means deep mourning, and even howling in anguish.

2 Kings 20:4. The writer of Second Kings adds a detail Isaiah does not give. YHWH reacts immediately to Hezekiah’s prayers and crying out to YHWH. He stops Isaiah **“in the middle court”** as he was about to leave and gives him words to speak to Hezekiah. Is this the middle court of the Temple or the palace? The two were close to each other.

Verses 5 and 5. God orders Isaiah to return and speak new words to Hezekiah, that YHWH heard his prayer and saw his tears. YHWH will rescue Hezekiah on the third day of the illness. He shall then go to the Temple and give thanks to his God.

God repented of His intention to kill Hezekiah. It is important to remember that Christ was raised from death on the third day.^b In 2 Kings 20:5 YHWH specifically says He will heal Hezekiah **“on the third day”** of his illness. Hezekiah is told to go to the Temple, **“the house of YHWH.”**

Verses 6 (first line) and 5 (last line). God states He will keep Hezekiah alive for another 15 years. This is a remarkable statement. YHWH gave a similar extension of life to King David.

Moses was denied entry into the land promised to the people of Israel. A sentence of death was declared upon Moses who acted presumptuously toward YHWH in front of the God’s people (Deuteronomy 32:48–52). King David was denied the right to construct a permanent place for God’s presence. His death was declared by YHWH (2 Samuel 7:11–12). However, David sought YHWH’s forgiveness and mercy, and unlike

^a See two of Dr. Martin’s 1992 article, [“Healing and Christian Atonement,”](#) a 1974 and a 1981 article, [“Healing and New Testament Teaching,”](#) and a 1994 article, [“Disease Epidemics and Bible Prophecy.”](#) Regarding healing we should pray for God’s mercy and not for His grace. We already have His grace, more than we can ever desire.

^b **“The third day”** (used inclusively) was a day of salvation in the Old Testament with regard to death (Genesis 22:4; Esther 5:1; Hosea 6:2) and in the New Testament specifically with regard to the resurrection of Jesus: Matthew 16:21, 17:23, 20:19, 27:64; Mark 9:31, 10:34; Luke 9:22, 13:32, 18:33, 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40, 27:19; and 1 Corinthians 15:4.

his descendant Hezekiah, he was given a life extension of unspecified length.^c

We can date this event of Hezekiah's illness within his reign. He reigned for 29 years total, beginning his reign when he was 25 years old (2 Kings 18:2 and 2 Chronicles 29:1). Therefore his illness occurred in the 14th year of his reign, 15 years before his death.^d

God says He will rescue Hezekiah and Jerusalem because of his ancestor David, the founder of the Davidic dynasty. Assyria was still a threat to the Kingdom of Judah, and they were marching through Judah along the Mediterranean coast for several years in campaigns against Egypt during the reign of Sennacherib.^e Eventually the Assyrian king was assassinated by his sons (2 Kings 19:36–37).

2 Kings 20:7 and Isaiah 38:21. We are not told much about Hezekiah's malady, but Isaiah said a poultice of dried figs was to be made and placed **"on the boil."**

2 Kings 20:8 and Isaiah 38:22. Hezekiah (somewhat boldly, in my opinion) asks for **"the sign"** that he will be healed and go to the House of YHWH to worship and thank his God for his healing as well as for God's rescue from the Assyrians.

2 Kings 20:9 and Isaiah 38:7. Isaiah tells Hezekiah that on the steps of Ahaz (Hezekiah's father, who was also given a sign, Isaiah 7:10–8:15), the shadow will go forward ten of the steps, and then backward ten steps.

Isaiah 38:8. The last part of verse 8, **"And the sun turned back ten steps on the stairs which it had descended,"** is difficult to coordinate within 2 Kings chapter 20, but it does work out in the end.

2 Kings 20:10. Hezekiah had the confidence (or the boldness) to ask for an additional condition to God's sign of his healing. He asks for the shadow to go down (forward) ten steps and not return ten steps.

Verses 11 and 8. YHWH agreed to perform the sign but went beyond what Hezekiah asked. It not only declined ten steps, but it returned, both were opposite to the natural sequence of solar and shadow movement.

So, Hezekiah did all that YHWH said (through Isaiah's prophetic ministry) for him to do, and the King of Judah was healed by YHWH. Hezekiah composed a song of praise and thanksgiving to YHWH. It is contained in verses 9–20 of Isaiah chapter 38. I find it interesting that neither Hezekiah nor Isaiah inserted this into the Book of Psalms. Such a thing would not be unusual. Hezekiah compiled and inserted a collections of Proverbs by Solomon into the 5th division of the Book of Proverbs, Proverbs 25:1 to 29:27. **"These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, transcribed [copied]"** (Proverbs 25:1).^f

TEXT: Hezekiah's Song of Praise to YHWH After His Healing

Isaiah 38:9–20

⁹ A **written psalm by Hezekiah** king of Judah when he was ill and revived from his illness:

¹⁰ I myself said, **"In the height of my days I must go into the gates of the unseen [Hebrew, *sheol*]; I am made to miss the rest of my years."**

^c In my article, "[The House of David](#)" I show that the house YHWH was to build for King David in 2 Samuel 7:11–12 was a tomb complex. David was not allowed to build the Temple because he was a bloody man. My article "[The Tomb of David and Psalm 30](#)" shows that Psalm 30 is not about the dedication of the Temple. The subject of Psalm 30 is about (1) YHWH's death sentence pronounced upon King David, (2) David's repentance of sins against His God, and (3) David's rejoicing after God canceled David's death sentence. Unlike Hezekiah, David's reprieve from death was not time specific.

^d This was the same year the Assyrian army was destroyed by YHWH according to Isaiah 36:1:

"It came to be in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria marched up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took possession of them."

This is one reason I believe Hezekiah's illness occurred after YHWH destroyed the Assyrian army and not before, but both happened in the same 14th year.

^e Sennacherib's descendants Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal both invaded Egypt before the later destruction of the Assyrian Empire.

^f See Dr. Martin's "[Appendix Two: The Book of Proverbs: Its Structure, Design and Teaching](#)" in his book *Restoring the Original Bible*, where fact is presented.

- ¹¹ I said, "**I shall not see Yah, Yah in the land of the living,**
And I shall not look on humanity [*adam*] further
Or the dwellers of transience."
- ¹² My lifespan is uprooted And is deported from me like a shepherd's tent;
 I have rolled up my life like a weaver; He is clipping me from the thrum.
 From day unto night, You are finishing me up.
- ¹³ I composed myself until the morning;
 Like a lion, so He [YHWH] is breaking all my bones;
 From day unto night, You are finishing me up.
- ¹⁴ Like a swift, a thrush, so am I chirping; I am cooing like a dove.
 My eyes are weakened in looking to the height;
 O Yahweh, threatening is for me; Be surety for me!
- ¹⁵ What shall I speak? He speaks to me, And He Himself does it.
 I shall pilgrimage all my years on account of the bitterness of my soul.
- ¹⁶ O Yahweh, on account of them they [the years God added] shall be lived,
 And for all in them, my spirit will have life;
 You console me and preserve me alive.
- ¹⁷ Behold, it was for well-being that it was very bitter for me,
 Yet You Yourself kept back my soul from the pit of decay,
 For You have flung all my sins behind Your back.
- ¹⁸ Indeed the unseen [*sheol*] cannot acclaim You,
Nor can death praise You;
 And those who descend into a crypt cannot look forward to Your faithfulness.
- ¹⁹ The living! the living one! he is acclaiming You as I do today;
 The father makes known to his sons Your faithfulness.
- ²⁰ Yahweh is to save me,
 And we shall play my accompaniments
 all the days of our lives at the house of Yahweh. [end text]

Hezekiah was well educated, an intellectual like the prophet Isaiah. Some even think Hezekiah was a good candidate to be the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes, rather than Solomon.^g

He expresses the words of a man who expected he would die, who is then rescued.

Isaiah 38:9. This verse was by Isaiah. Verses 10–20 were written by Hezekiah.

Verse 10. Hezekiah quotes himself that he is "**in the height of my days,**" In today's English phrasing this means that Hezekiah was "in the prime of life." Hezekiah was brought close to the grave ("Gates").

Remember that YHWH reserves to Himself all decisions about your life and death.^h YHWH controls the important aspects of our lives for Himself to determine — and He does so any time He chooses, and for whosoever He chooses, not only for us who are believers in Him:

"See now that I, I am He, And there are no other elohim beside Me. I Myself put to death, and !

^g See my October 2018 Commentary, "[Who Wrote Ecclesiastes?](#)" where interesting evidence is presented about the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes. Some think Hezekiah wrote Ecclesiastes, not Solomon.

^h Remember God allowed Job's children to be killed by Satan but did not allow Job to be killed. Satan obeyed God's command because he had no choice but to do so.

keep alive; I have transfixed, and I Myself shall heal, And there is no one who could reclaim from My hand!"

• *Deuteronomy 32:39*

"For He Himself causes pain, and He shall bind up; He transfixes, and His hands, they shall heal."

• *Job 5:18*

"Yahweh is putting to death and is keeping alive, He is bringing down to the unseen, and He brings up. Yahweh is making destitute and is enriching; He is laying low and is exalting too."

• *1 Samuel 2:6-7*

"Come, let us return to Yahweh our Elohim, For He tore to pieces, and He shall heal us; He smote, and He shall bind us up. He shall make us alive after two days; On the third day He shall raise us up, That we may live before Him."

• *Hosea 6:1*

Verse 11. "Yah" is an abbreviated expression of YHWH. The word "transience" means a short time, referring to his mortality. Vision is the theme of this verse. Life is a vapor, appearing briefly and then disappearing from the scene (James 4:14, also Job 7:7, 14:1-2; Psalm 102:3; 1 Peter 1:24). The King James Version translates this verse:

"I said, I shall not see YHWH, even YHWH, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world."

Here are two other verses from the Concordant Literal Translation:

"Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, And my transient lifetime is as nothing in front of You. Yea, all of humanity, standing up, is altogether a transitory breath."

• *Psalm 39:5*

"Remember how transient is my life, For what futility have You created all the sons of humanity?"

• *Psalm 89:47*

Verse 12. A "thrum" is the uneven end of a thread that is cut off and cast away. Weaving symbolism is used in this verse. He is progressing steadily toward death.

Verse 13. He endured through the night to morning. YHWH is crushing his bones like a lion. Hezekiah thinks his life is nearly finished.

Verse 14. His attention is attracted to something. He is muttering sounds in weakness and pain. Perhaps his breaths are wheezing.

Verse 15. God Himself is the direct cause of Hezekiah's situation. This may be referring to the moment YHWH told Hezekiah (through Isaiah) that he was to live and not die. His condition begins to improve slightly. He was to live 15 more years (although the text does not say that here), we are told it in this chapter of Isaiah. He pledges to make his life a continual pilgrimage, in other words to learn more about God.

Verse 16. He begins to feel God's peace and that he will be preserved to live. Every day he lives his **"spirit will have life."** Hezekiah is consoled

Verse 17. His suffering was indeed bitter for him, but he accepts and understands the lesson why YHWH put him through this trial. He has received mercy and for now, Hezekiah's sins against God have been put behind His back, where figuratively they cannot be viewed.

Verse 18. There is not knowledge or praise of God in death. Nothing is known in death. The dead cannot look forward to God's restoration, as the patriarch Job asked, **"If a man dies, will he live again?"** (Job 14:14). The answer is "Yes!" but only by God for His own sake, and not because of anything anyone does.

Verse 19. Only the living can praise God, as Hezekiah says, **"acclaiming You as I do today."** Now he can tell of God's faithfulness to his children.

Unfortunately, the son who inherits the throne of Judah from Hezekiah rules for 55 years and he is one of

the most sinful and evil of all the kings of Israel and Judah. Toward the end of his life Hezekiah's son earnestly repents and remembers Hezekiah's teachings after learning horrific lessons. That story is for next time.

Verse 20. He feels secure to explicitly state **“YHWH is to save me.”** Hezekiah will be pleased to have music played in **“the house of YHWH,”** meaning the Temple, continually.

We find, however, that Hezekiah (being human) did not please God completely. The writer of the text of the Book of Second Chronicles gives an interesting commentary about Hezekiah's relationship with YHWH.

The Experience of Most Humanity Will Be Similar to Hezekiah's — in One Way

This entire psalm of Hezekiah will be the experience of many people who will be brought back to physical life (not spiritual glory) after their death. Of course, that will be a remarkably high percentage of human beings who ever lived. Most will have endured much of what Hezekiah experienced before death, and their emotional reaction to being resurrected to the flesh (for judgment) will be similar to Hezekiah's experience after he began his healing process and in a sense “coming alive again.”ⁱ

TEXT: A Later Analysis After Hezekiah's Illness and Other Blessings

2 Chronicles 32:22–26

²² Thus Yahweh saved Hezekiah and the dwellers of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria, and from the hand of everyone; He granted them rest from those round about.

²³ Many were bringing an approach present for Yahweh to Jerusalem, and costly gifts for Hezekiah king of Judah; thereafter he was lifted up in the eyes of all the nations.

²⁴ In those days Hezekiah was ill to death. He prayed to Yahweh Who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign.

²⁵ But for the well-dealing done to him Hezekiah made no return, for his heart became haughty; so wrath came [1] on him and [2] on Judah and [3] Jerusalem.

²⁶ Then Hezekiah was submissive in the haughtiness of his heart, he and the dwellers of Jerusalem, and no wrath of Yahweh came on them in the days of Hezekiah. [end text]

2 Chronicles 32:22–23. These two verses are quoted for context. They were quoted in [“Israel and Judah: 37. Hezekiah and God's Salvation.”](#) They review the marvels YHWH has done for Hezekiah, Judah, and for Jerusalem.

Verses 24–25. The issues of Hezekiah's illness, his prayer to YHWH, His answer, and the sign He gave to Hezekiah are quickly stated as a review. The effect of these great events upon Hezekiah were not all good. There was more than a bit of arrogance in Hezekiah's thoughts and behavior after he had been shown many great mercies by YHWH and even had his life extended 15 years. Few people ever have been told by God Himself when they shall die. Fewer still have been told they will have their life extended — and for how long. Hezekiah truly lived a remarkable life outside the experience of most every human being.

The Chronicler goes on to critique another aspect of the latter reign: Hezekiah's wealth.

Verse 26. Again, Hezekiah was submissive. And again, he repented of his self-pride or **“haughtiness”** toward God. We should not be surprised. Hezekiah was human. Yes, he was a king. Yes, he was favored greatly in his life by his God. YHWH made him king, protected and saved Jerusalem from the Assyrian horde when Hezekiah prayed. YHWH pronounced Hezekiah's death and then God repented of His punishment because of Hezekiah's earnest prayer. Even the humblest person might become “haughty,” with a normal ego thinking the good things came from him and God.

Perhaps Hezekiah displayed this haughtiness in public more than one time and God let Hezekiah know that He recognized it and God threatened to punish him for it.

ⁱ The physical process of “enfleshment” (yes, it is a real word!) is vividly described in Ezekiel 37:1–14.

TEXT: Hezekiah's Wealth After the Assyrian Deaths at Jerusalem

2 Chronicles 32:27–31

²⁷ Hezekiah came to have riches and glory in very great abundance; and he made for himself treasuries for silver, for gold and for precious stones, also for aromatics, for shields and for all coveted articles; ²⁸ and provision cities for the harvest yield of grain, grape juice and clarified oil, and stalls for every kind of domestic beast and droves in stalls.

²⁹ He acquired cities for himself, and also livestock of the flock and the herd in abundance, for Elohim gave him very many goods.

³⁰ It was the same Hezekiah who stopped up the upper flowing well of the waters of Gihon and unleashed them downward to the west of the city of David; Hezekiah prospered in his every work.

³¹ So too with the intermediaries of the chiefs of Babylon who sent to him to inquire about the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land, when the One, Elohim, forsook him in order to probe him, to know all that was in his heart. [end text]

2 Chronicles 32:27. The fame of the events of the Assyrian departure from Judea was told to all kingdoms in the vicinity. Riches flowed into the land and Hezekiah took personal interest in his portion. A list of the wealth is itemized. Hezekiah had to construct special “**treasuries,**” depository buildings for the portable wealth the kingdom accumulated. Much of it came from the gifts Hezekiah and Judah were given to honor the victory over the Assyrians. Also, Hezekiah plundered the Philistine cities before the Assyrians invaded Judah. “**It was he [Hezekiah] who smote the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territories, from the tower of field-keepers to the city fortress**” (2 Kings 18:8). Hezekiah was also given gifts from the kingdoms around Judah far and wide.

Verse 28. Entire cities were constructed to hold the provisions from Hezekiah’s many land holdings throughout the kingdom. These provided for the Hezekiah’s table and court in Jerusalem, as well as for the kingdom when needed by the people.

Verse 29. Somehow Hezekiah not only accumulated this wealth, but he seems to have either owned or controlled that wealth. This all happened although Hezekiah’s kingdom was in chaos from the recent Assyrian attacks. Was much of the land wealth in Judah without ownership somehow devolve to the king? Hezekiah was given this great wealth to test him.

The text says, “**He acquired cities for himself.**” Good for Hezekiah, but how did that transpire? The text also says, “**Elohim gave him very many goods**” which might have been owned by someone else. We are not given specifics on how the transfer was made. That statement was given so the reader/listener would understand that all wealth comes from YHWH. Certainly, there was great plunder from the dead of the Assyrian army surrounding Jerusalem. That may have been considerable, but it would not all go to Hezekiah. The king would receive the largest gold and silver hoard of that Assyrian army.^j In other words, Hezekiah got back some of the tribute money he sent to Sennacherib.

Verse 30. Another of Hezekiah’s accomplishments is told for the first time. The waters of Gihon went to the top of the City of David to channel water for the Temple. However, there was excess water beyond the needs of the Temple. This text seems to say Hezekiah built a system to convey water south of the City of David and make the western slope of the City of David (the eastern slope of the Tyropean Valley) productive for agricultural use.^k

Verse 31. Again, YHWH tested Hezekiah, “**in order to probe him, to know all that was in his heart.**” In the next narrative below we read the details of the ambassadors from Babylon, and we also learn the reaction of Isaiah to Hezekiah’s mistake of showing them everything they wanted to know. We should not feel sorry for Hezekiah. Great wealth and great power come with great responsibility. Hezekiah seems to have responded

^j And much of the same gold seized after the death of the Assyrian army before Jerusalem would be used to pay later tribute to Assyria (2 Kings 18:14–16).

^k This would have been in addition to his ordering Hezekiah’s Tunnel to be carved out before the Assyrian attack on Jerusalem.

positively to most all of YHWH's tests. Below are the details in Second Kings and Isaiah about the ambassadors coming from Babylon. YHWH gives Hezekiah a warning through Isaiah the prophet that his successor kings of Judah did not heed.

TEXT: An Embassy Arrives from Babylon to Hezekiah in Jerusalem

2 Kings 20:12–19

¹² In that era, Merodach-baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent scrolls and a present to Hezekiah; for he had heard that Hezekiah had been ill.

¹³ Hezekiah rejoiced over them and showed them all his treasure house, the silver and the gold, the aromatics and the good oil, his whole house of weapons and all that was to be found in his treasuries. There was not a thing that Hezekiah did not show them in his house and in all his realm.

¹⁴ Then Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah and demand of him, **“What did these men say to you? And from where did they come to you?”**

Hezekiah replied, **“They came from a far land to me, from Babylon.”**

¹⁵ Isaiah asked, **“What did they see in your house?”**

Hezekiah said, **“They saw everything that is in my house. There is not a thing that I did not show them in my treasuries.”**

¹⁶ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, **“Hear the word of Yahweh of hosts:**

¹⁷ **‘Behold, days are coming, this is the averting of Yahweh, when**

[1] **all that is in your house and**

[2] **that your fathers treasured until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Not a thing shall be left, says Yahweh.**

¹⁸ **And some of your sons, who shall come forth from you, whom you shall beget, they shall be taken away. And they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’**

¹⁹ Hezekiah replied to Isaiah, **“Good is the word of Yahweh that you have spoken.”** For he thought, Is it not so, if peace and faithfulness shall come to be in my days?

Isaiah 39:1–8

¹ In that era, Merodach-baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent scrolls and a present to Hezekiah when he heard that he had been ill yet [Hezekiah] was mending.

² Hezekiah rejoiced over them and showed them all his treasure house, the silver and the gold, the aromatics and the good oil, his whole house of weapons and all that was to be found in his treasuries. There was not a thing that Hezekiah did not show them in his house and in all his realm.

³ Then Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah and demand of him, **“What did these men say? And from where did they come to you?”**

Hezekiah replied, **“They came from a far land to me, from Babylon.”**

⁴ Isaiah asked, **“What did they see in your house?”**

Hezekiah said, **“They saw everything that is in my house. There is not a thing that I did not show them in my treasuries.”**

⁵ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, **“Hear the word of Yahweh of hosts:**

⁶ **‘Behold, days are coming when**

[1] **all that is in your house and**

[2] **that your fathers treasured until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Not a thing shall be left, says Yahweh.**

⁷ **And some of your sons, who shall come forth from you, whom you shall beget, they shall be taken away. And they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’**

⁸ Hezekiah replied to Isaiah, **“Good is the word of Yahweh that you have spoken.”** For he thought, Indeed peace and faithfulness shall come to be in my days. [end text]

The texts in 2 Kings 20 and Isaiah 39 are nearly identical. This emphasizes the importance of the message. Without realizing he is doing so; Hezekiah causes himself another problem.

2 Kings 20:12 and Isaiah 39:1. There seems to be an indefinite time indicated. This is probably intentional. Certainly, Hezekiah's scribes and Isaiah himself knew precisely when the meeting took place, but they chose not to be precise. The name "Merodach" is not in the King James Version, but it is in the Septuagint. The full name is given in Isaiah.

The message in the scrolls were probably "get well soon" encouragements and health tips, in addition to presents. These messages are common from one ruler to another.

Merodach-baladan was king of Babylon two times. Assyriologist Donald J. Wiseman wrote:

"Sending letters and a gift by envoys was the normal Babylonian diplomatic procedure. The timing of the embassy may have been before or during Merodach-baladan's second period on the throne. Hezekiah 'paid attention' to the messengers.

According to Josephus [*Antiquities* 10:30–31] the purpose of the visit was to secure Hezekiah as an ally in an anti-Assyrian coalition, but this is not stressed here. The Babylonians were already challenging their Assyrian overlords and Isaiah was consistently against alliance with any world-powers of the day."¹

• **Donald J. Wiseman, 1 and 2 Kings**

If Prof. Wiseman is correct, why did Isaiah show the envoys anything? And where was Isaiah when the Babylonians were in Jerusalem? Was knowledge of their presence kept from Isaiah? This incident was important to Hezekiah, to Isaiah and to God, otherwise it would not have been mentioned by either the writer of Kings or by Isaiah. One can speculate that Hezekiah viewed Babylon as a potential ally, perhaps along with Egypt, to counter the still powerful Assyrian Empire. Isaiah took a dim view of any interaction with Babylon.

The city of Babylon was captured and destroyed by Assyria in around 729 BC (traditional dating), before Assyria attacked Judea and besieged Jerusalem. Merodach-baladan led a revolt against Assyria and the city of Babylon became independent again (under Merodach-baladan), was rebuilt and became wealthy again. Judah was devastated from the Assyrian invasion, but Jerusalem was saved by YHWH, and was also prosperous.^m Everyone not within the Assyrian Empire hated the oppressive Assyrians. Perhaps Hezekiah's purpose was to show the Babylonians he could fulfill his obligations toward an alliance against Assyria?

It is interesting that the meeting with the Babylonians took place during Hezekiah's illness. Isaiah 39:1 above says Hezekiah was not fully healed, **"he had been ill, yet was mending."**

Verses 13 and 2. Some feel that Merodach-baladan first sent letters (with presents) and later sent envoys (with more gifts). The first "them" refers to the gifts. The second "them" refers to the representatives of Merodach-baladan who traveled to Jerusalem and presented the gifts directly to Hezekiah. The phrase **"his whole house of weapons"** means the armory in Jerusalem.

Verses 14–15 and 3–4. The prophet Isaiah directly confronts and even interrogates King Hezekiah with direct questions. Isaiah **"demanded of him"** an answer to his questions. This shows that when necessary, Isaiah "pulled rank" as a prophet. He represents YHWH, and at times has greater authority than Hezekiah. The king answers truthfully to Isaiah without hesitation or evasion. It is an interesting exchange between two powerful personalities, Isaiah a conscientious prophet and Hezekiah a "good" king ruling over God's chosen people.

Verses 16 and 5. What comes next will not be good! Isaiah gives Hezekiah a pronouncement from YHWH. The words are not good for Judah. All the treasure Hezekiah showed the Babylonians will be seized and taken to Babylon. **"Not a thing shall be left, says YHWH."** It is remarkable that the treasure will be available to be seized almost 100 years after Hezekiah's death.

Verses 17 and 6. Hezekiah is being told of events that would take place after Hezekiah is dead. What is meant by **"the averring"** in verse 17? It means the speaker (YHWH) is strongly proclaiming or stating

¹ Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 9, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 307.

^m For the complex situation (not yet fully understood in my opinion) about the Judah-Assyria-Babylon sequence of historical events, see the short article by Joshua J. Mark, "[The Mutual Destruction of Sennacherib & Babylon](#)" in *Ancient History Encyclopedia*. Last modified August 22, 2014.

important words. In this case Isaiah is making an important statement with power and force: The treasure Hezekiah showed the Babylonian officials will be sent to a future king in Babylon. This is a declaration of future exile for Israel's royalty, just as was suffered by the northern Kingdom of Israel and by some of Judah's people earlier.

Verses 18 and 7. More than one of Hezekiah's descendants who rule as king will be taken captive. Some of those will be made eunuchs. And not only those who rule will suffer these indignities. This included Daniel who was of the royal lineage, but far from becoming a ruling king. See my February 2020 Commentary, "[Was Daniel a Eunuch?](#)" I believe he was one of those spoken of in YHWH's prophecy. It is also likely Daniel himself read this Scripture, even though the prophecy was not fulfilled until 100+ years in the future.

Verses 19 and 8. Hezekiah responded, "**Good is the word of Yahweh.**" He acknowledges this evil news from YHWH with acceptance, perhaps because it would occur long after his death, and there was nothing he could do about it.

A Sequence of Events – Interactions of Assyria, Babylon, and Jerusalem

Assyria had a long history interacting with Babylon. Here is a sequence of interactions between the three kings: (1) **Sennacherib** of Assyria, (2) **Merodach-baladan** of Babylon, and (3) **Hezekiah** of Judah. I begin with Tiglathpileser, the conqueror of the Kingdom of Israel.

- Tiglathpileser III of Assyria conquers and is overlord over Babylon for two years, 729–728 BC.
- Shalmaneser V of Assyria follows Tiglathpileser and rules over Babylon 727–723 BC.
- Sargon II follows Shalmaneser V and rules Assyria 722–705.
- **Merodach-baladan** rebels against Assyria (722–710 BC, traditional dating, a period of 12 years).
- **Sennacherib** of Assyria (705–681 BC, traditional dating) succeeds Sargon II. Sennacherib sends an Assyrian army to attack Babylon. The Assyrian army is defeated.
- **Sennacherib's** army at Jerusalem is killed by YHWH. Sennacherib returns to Assyria.
- **Merodach-baladan** sends a representative to **Hezekiah**, perhaps to learn how **Sennacherib** was defeated. The Babylonians wondered, was it done by YHWH, by a weapon, by stealth, or by magic.
- **Sennacherib** personally leads the Assyrian army, destroys the Babylonian army, and recaptures Babylon.

Even though there is a synchronization with Assyrian history, the biblical dating does not correspond with the secular dating of historians. We will need to wait until findings prove the biblical chronology is correct, even though most scholars would scoff at that suggestion.

TEXT: Hezekiah's Death and Burial

2 Kings 20:20–21

²⁰ As for the rest of the affairs of Hezekiah, all his masterful deeds, how he built the reservoir and the trench [*conduit*, KJV] and brought the water into the city, are they not written on the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Judah?

²¹ Then Hezekiah lay down with his fathers and was entombed with his fathers in the city of David;

2 Chronicles 32:32–33

³² As for the rest of the affairs of Hezekiah, and his kindness, behold,

they *are* written in the vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, the prophet, and on the scroll of the kings of Judah *and Israel*.

³³ Then Hezekiah lay down with his fathers; they entombed him in the ascent of the tombs of the sons of David; all of Judah and the dwellers of Jerusalem

his son Manasseh reigned in his stead.

showed him honor in his death;

his son Manasseh reigned in his stead.

[end text]

These verses present the typical formula for royal transition of power.

2 Kings 20:20. Focus is on Hezekiah's "**masterful deeds**" and great works as a builder to improve life in Jerusalem.

I do not believe the reference to "**the reservoir and the trench**" refers to Hezekiah's tunnel. Water was conveyed to the top of the City of David and this describes a change to the system to provide additional water to the top in addition to supplying water just to the Temple and the royal palace. This was an addition to bring "**the water into the city.**"

2 Chronicles 32:32. The emphasis in this verse is on Hezekiah's kindness.

2 Kings 20:20 and 2 Chronicles 32:32. Apparently "**the annals of the days of the kings of Judah**" are different historical documents than the book of Second Kings or Second Chronicles. Nor is it a reference to the Book of Isaiah. We have no way of knowing.

Hezekiah's father was the very evil king Ahaz who sacrificed to pagan gods in the Temple of YHWH. Hezekiah was a good king, but his son Manasseh, who ruled for 55 years (2 Kings 21:1; 2 Chronicles 33:1), was one of the worst kings of Judah, again following the pagan practice of sacrificing his own children.

Verses 21 and 33. Hezekiah was buried with the people of Judah and Jerusalem honoring the king. He was buried "**in the ascent**" of the Tombs of the sons of David. The King James Version says Hezekiah was buried "**in the chiefest**" (or the highest) of the Tombs of the sons of David. It can be known where the Tombs of David are located (and the bodies are still in them). They are in relation to the Temple of God built by Solomon that was still standing in the days of Hezekiah until the Kingdom of Judah was eliminated by God through the agency of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

See my article, "[The Location and Future Discovery of King David's Tomb](#)." You will be surprised by the evidence of its location in Scripture and even in Jewish Talmudic writings.ⁿ

Remember that Hezekiah began his reign at age 25 and reigned for 29 years (2 Kings 18:2; 2 Chronicles 29:1), dying when he was 54 years old, 16 years short of the 70 years King David lived (2 Samuel 5:4, Psalm 90:10). Without his life extension of 15 years from God, he would have died at age 39. For more information about the Kings of Judah, see the Chart TL-4g in the "[ELM Timeline Project](#)" presented on page 14 below.

After King Hezekiah

Following Hezekiah's death, seven kings ruled Judah for a combined 102 years before the kingdom, Jerusalem, and the Temple were destroyed by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. Two of Hezekiah's successors ruled a long time: (1) Evil King Manasseh ruled 55 years. He began badly doing the worst sins imaginable, but surprisingly repenting toward the end of his life. (2) Good King Josiah ruled 31 years, but he died earlier than everyone anticipated. Of the last four kings, two reigned less than one year.

Another Prophet During Hezekiah's Reign

Isaiah was not the only prophet of God who ministered to the people of Judah. The prophet Micah did not have many identifiable passages of his seven chapters of prophecies. Micah was also a prophet to the northern kingdom of Samaria as well as to Jerusalem. He served along with Isaiah but also with the prophet Hosea for an unknown number of years during the reign of King Hezekiah.

Micah spoke and wrote his teaching not so much to the kings of Judah, but more to the people (and somewhat to the rich and the nobility of Israel and Judah), those who still felt drawn to the paganism of the nations.

ⁿ If the Temple were at the Harem esh-Sharif, the false "Temple Mount," then King David's Tomb should have been found already by the many decades of digging south of the so-called "Temple Mount." Why? Because they wrongly identify the site of the Temple, the Tomb remains to be discovered. There may be marvelous artifacts inside, including written documents.

Micah wrote (and certainly preached) a synopsis of what God wanted from His chosen people:

“With what shall I go before Yahweh, And be bending down to Elohim of the height?

Shall I go before Him with ascent offerings,	With calves a year old?
Shall Yahweh accept thousands of rams,	With myriads of watercourses of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,	The fruit of my belly for the sin of my soul?

He has told you, humanity, what is good;

What is Yahweh requiring from you, save [except]

- [1] **to do right judgment and**
- [2] **love kindness, And**
- [3] **to walk meekly with your Elohim [God]?”**

Micah 6:6–8, Concordant Literal Version

YHWH wants nothing from any human being, nothing from those who are His people. They have nothing to give Him. All He wants for you is to do the three things listed above, and each of those three points refer to actions toward other people, not toward God.

If those things are done toward others, you will fulfill how God wants us all to live. Yet it is impossible to fulfill these requirements under the Law of God. It can be done only under **“the law of Christ”** (Galatians 6:2, in context) with the help of God’s Holy Spirit.

David Sielaff, August 2020

The Kings of Judah Timeline and Chart

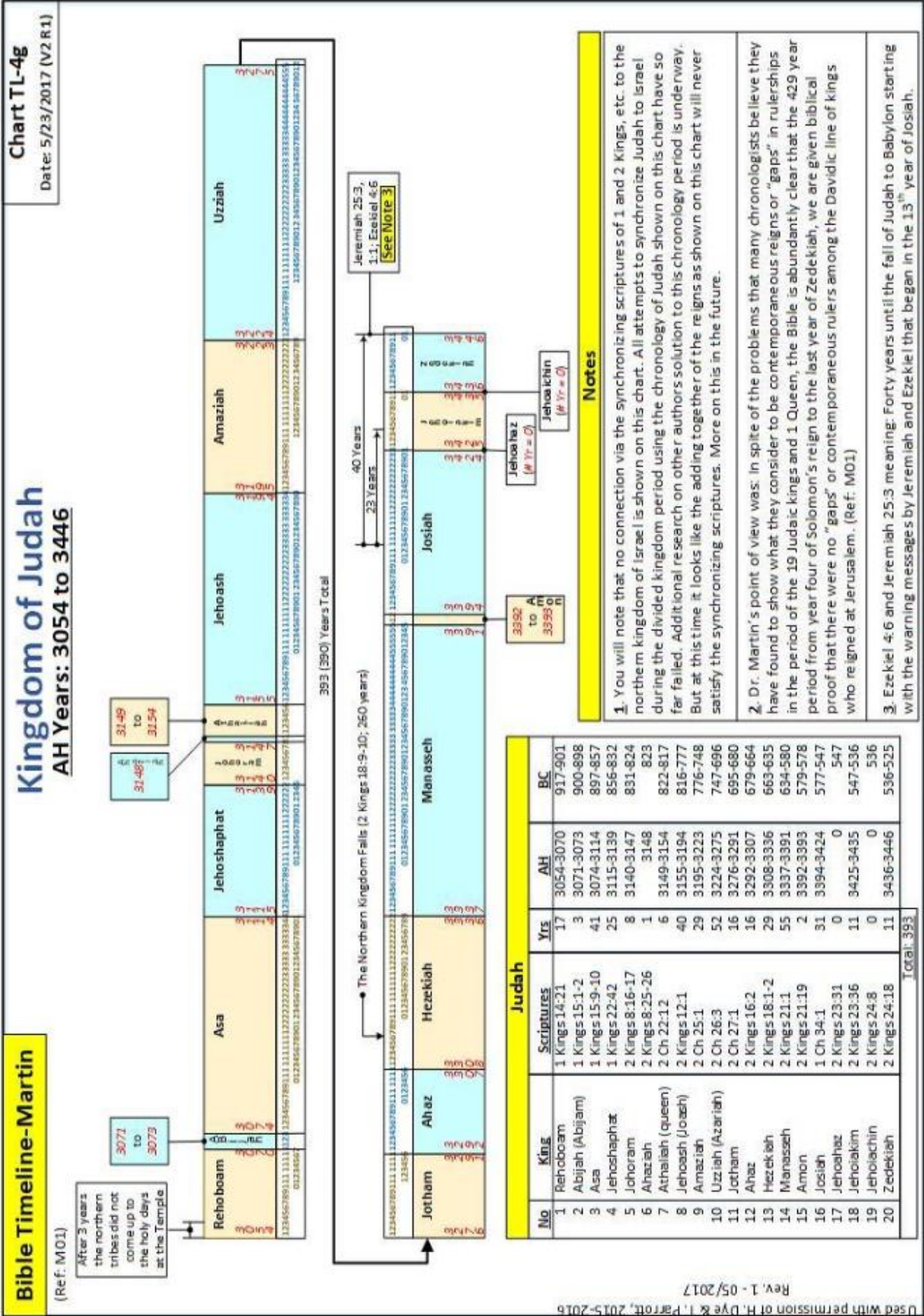
On the next page is a relevant page titled “The Kings of Judah.” It comes from the [“ELM Timeline Project”](#) (page 13 of the Timeline PDF), conceived and laid out by Henry Dye and Tim Parrott. I positioned the chart sideways so it would print as large as possible on the page. Nevertheless, the text is still small. It can be better viewed when enlarged on a computer.

Here are the Notes on the lower right side of the chart:

- 1.** You will note that no connection via the synchronizing scriptures of 1 and 2 Kings, etc., to the northern kingdom of Israel is shown on this chart. All attempts to synchronize Judah to Israel during the divided kingdom period using the chronology of Judah shown on this chart have so far failed. Additional research on other authors’ solutions to this chronological period is underway. But at this time, it looks like the adding together of the reigns as shown on this chart will never satisfy the synchronizing scriptures. More on this in the future.
- 2.** Dr. Martin’s point of view was: In spite of the problems that many chronologists believe they have found to show what they consider to be contemporaneous reigns or “gaps” in rulership’s in the period of the 19 Judaic kings and 1 queen, the Bible is abundantly clear that the 429 year period from year four of Solomon’s reign to the last year of Zedekiah, we are given biblical proof that there are no “gaps” or contemporaneous rulers among the Davidic line of kings who reigned at Jerusalem. (Ref: M01)^o
- 3.** Ezekiel 4:6 and Jeremiah 25:3 meaning: Forty years until the fall of Judah to Babylon starting with the warning messages by Jeremiah and Ezekiel that began in the 13th year of Josiah.

DWS

^o M01 is a reference to the article [“Chronology - The Key to Prophetic Understanding Part 1.”](#) Then read the second portion, [“Chronology - The Key to Prophetic Understanding Part 2.”](#)



Judah					
No	King	Scriptures	Yrs	AH	BC
1	Rehoobam	1 Kings 14:21	17	3054-3070	917-901
2	Abijah (Abijam)	1 Kings 15:1-2	3	3071-3073	900-898
3	Asa	1 Kings 15:9-10	41	3074-3114	897-857
4	Jehoshaphat	1 Kings 22:42	25	3115-3139	856-832
5	Johoram	2 Kings 8:16-17	8	3140-3147	831-824
6	Ahaziah	2 Kings 8:25-26	1	3148	823
7	Athaliah (queen)	2 Ch 22:12	6	3149-3154	822-817
8	Jehoash (Joash)	2 Kings 12:1	40	3155-3194	816-777
9	Amaziah	2 Ch 25:1	29	3195-3223	776-748
10	Uzziah (Azariah)	2 Ch 26:3	52	3224-3275	747-696
11	Jotham	2 Ch 27:1	16	3276-3291	695-680
12	Ahaz	2 Kings 16:2	16	3292-3307	679-664
13	Hezekiah	2 Kings 18:1-2	29	3308-3336	663-635
14	Manasseh	2 Kings 21:1	55	3337-3391	634-580
15	Amon	2 Kings 21:19	2	3392-3393	579-578
16	Josiah	1 Ch 34:1	31	3394-3424	577-547
17	Jehoiahaz	2 Kings 23:31	0	0	547
18	Jehoiakim	2 Kings 23:36	11	3425-3435	547-536
19	Jehoiachin	2 Kings 24:8	0	0	536
20	Zedekiah	2 Kings 24:18	11	3436-3446	536-525
Total: 393					393

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