

## **Document A: The Sennacherib Prism** (Excerpted from Original)

In my third campaign, I went against the Hittite-land. Lulê, king of Sidon, the terrifying splendor of my sovereignty overcame him, and far off into the midst of the sea he fled. There he died. Great Sidon, Little Sidon, Bît-Zitti, Zaribtu, Mahalliba, Ushu, Akzib, Akko, his strong, walled cities, where there were fodder and drink, for his garrisons, the terrors of the weapon of Assur, my lord, overpowered them and they bowed in submission at my feet. I seated Tuba'lu on the royal throne over them, and tribute, gifts for my majesty, I imposed upon him for all time, without ceasing.

From Menachem, the Shamsimurunite, Tuba'lu the Sidonite, Abdi-liti the Arvadite, Uru-milki the Gublite, Mitinti the Ashdodite Budu-ilu the Beth Ammonite, Kammusu-nadbi the Moabite, Malik-rammu the Edomite, kings of Amurru, all of them, numerous presents as their heavy tribute, they brought before me for the fourth time, and kissed my feet.

But Sidka, the king of Ashkelon, who had not submitted to my yoke, the gods of his father's house, himself, his wife, his sons, his daughters, his brothers, the seed of his paternal house, I tore away and brought to Assyria. Sharru-lu-dari, son of Rukibtu, their former king, I set over the people of Ashkelon, and I imposed upon him the payment of tribute: presents to my majesty. He accepted my yoke. In the course of my campaign, Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Banaibarka, Asuru, cities of Sidka, who had not speedily bowed in submission at my feet, I besieged, I conquered, I carried off their spoil.

The officials, nobles, and people of Ekron, who had thrown Padi their king—bound by oath and curse of Assyria—into fetters of iron and had given him over to Hezekiah, the Judahite—he kept him in confinement like an enemy—their heart became afraid, and they called upon the Egyptian kings, the bowmen, chariots and horses of the king of Meluhha [Ethiopia], a countless host, and these came to their aid. In the neighborhood of Eltekeh, their ranks being drawn up before me, they offered battle. With the aid of Assur, my lord, I fought with them and brought about their defeat. The Egyptian charioteers and princes, together with the Ethiopian king's charioteers, my hands captured alive in the midst of the battle. Eltekeh and Timnah I besieged, I captured, and I took away their spoil.

I approached Ekron and slew the governors and nobles who had rebelled, and hung their bodies on stakes around the city. The inhabitants who rebelled and treated (Assyria) lightly I counted as spoil. The rest of them, who were not guilty of rebellion and contempt, for whom there was no punishment, I declared their pardon. Padi, their king, I brought out to Jerusalem, set him on the royal throne over them, and imposed upon him my royal tribute.

As for Hezekiah the Judahite, who did not submit to my yoke: forty-six of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small towns in their area, which were without number, by levelling with battering-rams and by bringing up siege-engines, and by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels, and breeches, I besieged and took them. 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil. (Hezekiah) himself, like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city. I threw up earthworks against him—the one coming out of the city-gate, I turned back to his misery. His cities, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land, and to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-bêl, king of Gaza, I gave (them). And thus I diminished his land. I added to the former tribute, and I lad upon him the surrender of their land and imposts—gifts for my majesty. As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and the Arabs and his mercenary troops which he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, deserted him. In addition to the thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, gems, antimony, jewels, large carnelians, ivory-inlaid couches, ivory-inlaid chairs, elephant hides, elephant tusks, ebony, boxwood, all kinds of valuable treasures, as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians, which he had brought after me to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute and to accept servitude, he dispatched his messengers.

*Source: Sennacherib Prism, 701 BCE.*

**Document B: The Book of Kings** (Excerpted from Original)

Loyal to the LORD, Hezekiah never turned away from him, but observed the commandments which the LORD had given Moses. The LORD was with him, and he prospered in all that he set out to do. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. He also subjugated the watchtowers and walled cities of the Philistines, all the way to Gaza and its territory.

In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea, son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, attacked Samaria, laid siege to it, and after three years captured it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, the ninth year of Hoshea, king of Israel, Samaria was taken. The king of Assyria then deported the Israelites to Assyria and settled them in Halah, at the Habor, a river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. This came about because they had not heeded the warning of the LORD, their God, but violated his covenant, not heeding and not fulfilling the commandments of Moses, the servant of the LORD.

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, went on an expedition against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. Hezekiah, king of Judah, sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong. Leave me, and I will pay whatever tribute you impose on me." The king of Assyria exacted three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold from Hezekiah, king of Judah. Hezekiah paid him all the funds there were in the temple of the LORD and in the palace treasuries. He broke up the door panels and the uprights of the temple of the LORD which he himself had ordered to be overlaid with gold, and gave the gold to the king of Assyria.

The king of Assyria sent the general, the lord chamberlain, and the commander from Lachish with a great army to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. They went up, and on their arrival in Jerusalem, stopped at the conduit of the upper pool on the highway of the fuller's field. They called for the king, who sent out to them Eliakim, son of Hilkiyah, the master of the palace; Shebna the scribe; and the herald Joah, son of Asaph.

The commander said to them, "Tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you base this confidence of yours? Do you think mere words substitute for strategy and might in war? On whom, then, do you rely, that you rebel against me? This Egypt, the staff on which you rely, is in fact a broken reed which pierces the hand of anyone who leans on it. That is what Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is to all who rely on him. But if you say to me, We rely on the LORD, our God, is not he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, commanding Judah and Jerusalem to worship before this altar in Jerusalem?' "Now, make a wager with my lord, the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses if you can put riders on them. How then can you repulse even one of the least servants of my lord, relying as you do on Egypt for chariots and horsemen? Was it without the LORD'S will that I have come up to destroy this place? The LORD said to me, 'Go up and destroy that land!'" . . .

When the commander, on his return, heard that the king of Assyria had withdrawn from Lachish, he found him besieging Libnah. The king of Assyria heard a report that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, had come out to fight against him. Again he sent envoys to Hezekiah with this message: "Thus shall you say to Hezekiah, king of Judah: 'Do not let your God on whom you rely deceive you by saying that Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria. You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all other countries: they doomed them! Will you, then, be saved? Did the gods of the nations whom my

fathers destroyed save them? Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, or the Edenites in Telassar? Where are the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, or the kings of the cities Sepharvaim, Hena and Avva?'' . . .

Then Isaiah, son of Amoz, sent this message to Hezekiah: "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel . . . concerning the king of Assyria: 'He shall not reach this city, nor shoot an arrow at it, nor come before it with a shield, nor cast up siege-works against it. He shall return by the same way he came, without entering the city, says the LORD. I will shield and save this city for my own sake, and for the sake of my servant David.'"

That night the angel of the LORD went forth and struck down one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. Early the next morning, there they were, all the corpses of the dead. So Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, broke camp, and went back home to Nineveh. When he was worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer slew him with the sword and fled into the land of Ararat. His son Esarhaddon reigned in his stead.

*Source: The Book of Kings, written 7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century BCE.*