

story, after Sennacherib made great preparations for an attack against Egypt, when the two armies were facing each other near Egypt's northeastern entrance, a great horde of field mice attacked Sennacherib's army in the night and ate the strings of their bows, thus rendering them unable to fight. It is interesting that this Egyptian tradition of a marvelous destruction of the power of an Assyrian army should refer to the same king as the account in the Bible. The mention of mice has led many scholars to think that probably the instrument the Lord used to destroy the Assyrian army was bubonic plague. All this is conjecture. What is clear is that the Bible says that a great visitation of God destroyed the great mass of Sennacherib's army and ended the Assyrian king's attempt to conquer Jerusalem.

While the records of King Sennacherib boast without measure of his great conquests of other cities, many of them larger and more powerful than Jerusalem, the best that he can say about Jerusalem is to claim that he shut Hezekiah up in it "like a bird in a cage." It is a pretty weak thing to boast about and is mute recognition of the fact described in this chapter that he was unable to conquer Jerusalem, even though he did not tell the reason why.

A minor point of interest is the fact that Isaiah 37:37-38 says that Sennacherib "went and returned and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his God, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword." Although the verses do not say that he was assassinated immediately after his return, many readers might erroneously make such an inference. Actually about twenty years passed before Sennacherib was slain.

So we see that the events described in these two chapters run through many years, since they begin with the first attack of Sennacherib against Judah and end with his death about twenty years after his final great invasion of Palestine.

The last part of our section -- chapters 38 and 39 -- deals with other events in the life of Hezekiah which probably occurred prior to the attack which takes up the bulk of chapters 36 and 37. Thus here, as at many other points in the Bible, the order is logical rather than chronological.