

# Stones and Stories #9

## Mighty Warriors: Assyrians and Tanakh

### **Summary Kings II**

1 – 9 Elijah and Elisha stories, end of the house of Omri

10 Rise of Yehu and attack on the followers of Baal

11 - 13 Coup against Ataliah queen of Judah, Yehoash becomes king

14-15 Reigns of Jeroboam II of Israel and Uziah of Judah

16 Intrigues and coups in Kingdom of Israel, rise of Assyrians

17 Fall of the Kingdom of Israel to Assyria, exile of the ten tribes, importation of other peoples to Samaria

18 - 20 Hezekiah king of Judah, religious reform, Assyrian attack on Judah and Jerusalem, Isaiah is the prophet

21 Menashe king of Judah, return of idolatry

22 - 23 Josiah, last good king of Judah

24 – 25 Final kings of Judah, fall of Judah to the Babylonians

### **When are the Assyrians: a Timeline of the Neo Assyrian Empire (911-609 BCE)**

853 Battle of Karkar coalition of western states against Shalmanesser III (858-824), including King Ahab of Israel

800-750 Assyria weakens, rise of smaller states, Israel and Judah powerful under Jeroboam II and Uziah. Story of Jonah?

750 Earthquake

744 – 727 Tiglat Pileser III aka Pul, strengthens Assyria, conquers Northern Israel

722 Shalmanesser V conquers Samaria, transfer of populations

721-705 Sargon II, founder of last royal house of Assyria

704-681 Sennacherib expands Nineveh, builds a new palace

701 Sennacherib besieges Jerusalem

681 Sennacherib assassinated, his son Esarhaddon rules and conquers Egypt

668-631 Ashurbanipal rules, survives rebellions and civil wars, builds and decorates his own palace at Nineveh and assembles his library

631-609 Civil wars, rebellion by Babylonians culminating in the destruction of Nineveh (612) and the fall of the empire

605 Battle of Karkemish: attempt by the Egyptians to restore Assyrian power, Josiah of Judah fights against them and is killed in battle

### **And More Tribute: Tiglat Pileser 744-727 and Menahem**

Kings 2 15: In the thirty-ninth year of King Azariah of Judah, Menahem son of Gadi became king over Israel in Samaria—for ten years. He did what was displeasing to the LORD; throughout his days he did not depart from the sins which Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. King Pul of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver that he might support him and strengthen his hold on the kingdom. Menahem exacted the money from Israel: every man of means had to pay fifty shekels of silver for the king of Assyria. The king of Assyria withdrew and did not remain in the land.

The Annals of Tiglat Pileser I received tribute from Kuštašpi of Commagene, Rezon of [Damascus](#), **Menahem of [Samaria](#)**, Hiram of [Tyre](#), Sibitti-bi'li of [Byblos](#), Urikki of [Qu'e](#), Pisisis of Karchemiš, I'nil of Hamath, Panammu of Sam'al, Tarhulara of Gurgum, Sulumal of Melitene, Dadili of Kaska, Uassarme of Tabal, Ušhitti of [Tuhana](#), Tuhamma of Ištunda, Urimme of Hubišna, and Zabibe, the queen of [Arabi](#)

### **Samaria and Transfer of Populations 722 Shalmanesser V and Sargon II**

Kings 2 17: In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria. He deported the Israelites to Assyria and settled them in Halah, at the [River] Habor, at the River Gozan, and in the towns of Media. This happened because the Israelites sinned against the LORD their God, who had freed them from the land of Egypt, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods

The king of Assyria brought [people] from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sephar-vaim, and he settled them in the towns of Samaria in place of the Israelites; they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its towns. When they first settled there, they did not worship the LORD; so the LORD sent lions against them which killed some of them. They said to the king of Assyria: “The nations which you deported and resettled in the towns of Samaria do not know the rules of the God of the land; therefore He has let lions loose against them which are killing them—for they do not know the rules of the God of the land.” The king of Assyria gave an order: “Send there one of the priests whom you have deported;

let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the practices of the God of the land.” So one of the priests whom they had exiled from Samaria came and settled in Bethel; he taught them how to worship the LORD. However, each nation continued to make its own gods and to set them up in the cult places which had been made by the people of Samaria; each nation [set them up] in the towns in which it lived.

## **King Hezekiah Prepares to Rebel**

Chronicles 2 32: After these faithful deeds, King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah and encamped against its fortified towns with the aim of taking them over. When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, intent on making war against Jerusalem, he consulted with his officers and warriors about stopping the flow of the springs outside the city, and they supported him. A large force was assembled to stop up all the springs and the wadi that flowed through the land, for otherwise, they thought, the king of Assyria would come and find water in abundance. He acted with vigor, rebuilding the whole breached wall, raising towers on it, and building another wall outside it. He fortified the Millo of the City of David, and made a great quantity of arms and shields. He appointed battle officers over the people; then, gathering them to him in the square of the city gate, he rallied them, saying, “Be strong and of good courage; do not be frightened or dismayed by the king of Assyria or by the horde that is with him, for we have more with us than he has with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles.”

## **Why Should the Assyrians Come and Find the Water?**

... the tunnel ... and this is the story of the tunnel while ...the axes were against each other and while three [cubits](#) were left to (cut?) ... the voice of a man ...called to his counterpart, (for) there was ZADA in the rock, on the right ... and on the day of the tunnel (being finished) the stonecutters struck each man towards his counterpart, ax against ax and flowed water from the source to the pool for 1,200 cubits. and (100?) cubits was the height over the head of the stonecutters ...

## **Sennacherib Advances on Jerusalem**

Isaiah 10-11 He advanced upon Aiath, He proceeded to Migron, At Michmas he deposited his baggage. They made the crossing; “Geba is to be our night quarters!”- Ramah was alarmed; Gibeah of Saul took to flight. “Give a shrill cry, O Bath-gallim! Hearken, Laishah! Take up the cry, Anathoth!” Madmenah ran away; The dwellers of Gebim sought refuge. This same day at Nob He shall stand and wave his hand. O mount of Fair Zion! O hill of Jerusalem! Lo! The Sovereign LORD of Hosts Will hew off the tree-crowns with an ax: The tall ones shall be felled, The lofty ones cut down: The thickets of the forest shall be hacked away with iron, And the Lebanon trees shall fall in their majesty.

11 But a shoot shall grow out of the stump of Jesse, A twig shall sprout from his stock. The spirit of the LORD shall alight upon him: A spirit of wisdom and insight, A spirit of counsel and valor, A spirit of devotion and reverence for the LORD.

## **March on Jerusalem**

Kings 2 18: In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria marched against all the fortified towns of Judah and seized them. . . But the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh from Lachish with a large force to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. They marched up to Jerusalem; and when they arrived, they took up a position near the conduit of the Upper Pool, by the road of the Fuller's Field. They summoned the king; and Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the scribe, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went out to them. The Rabshakeh said to them, "You tell Hezekiah: Thus said the Great King, the King of Assyria: What makes you so confident? You must think that mere talk is counsel and valor for war! Look, on whom are you relying, that you have rebelled against me? You rely, of all things, on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which enters and punctures the palm of anyone who leans on it! That's what Pharaoh king of Egypt is like to all who rely on him. And if you tell me that you are relying on the LORD your God, He is the very one whose shrines and altars Hezekiah did away with, telling Judah and Jerusalem, 'You must worship only at this altar in Jerusalem.' Come now, make this wager with my master, the king of Assyria: I'll give you two thousand horses if you can produce riders to mount them. So how could you refuse anything even to the deputy of one of my master's lesser servants, relying on Egypt for chariots and horsemen? And do you think I have marched against this land to destroy it without the LORD? The LORD Himself told me: Go up against that land and destroy it." Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah replied to the Rabshakeh, "Please, speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; do not speak to us in Judean in the hearing of the people on the wall." But the Rabshakeh answered them, "Was it to your master and to you that my master sent me to speak those words? It was precisely to the men who are sitting on the wall—who will have to eat their dung and drink their urine with you." And the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in Judean: "Hear the words of the Great King, the King of Assyria. Thus said the king: Don't let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you from my hands. Don't let Hezekiah make you rely on the LORD, saying: The LORD will surely save us: this city will not fall into the hands of the king of Assyria. Don't listen to Hezekiah. For thus said the king of Assyria: Make your peace with me and come out to me, so that you may all eat from your vines and your fig trees and drink water from your cisterns, until I come and take you away to a land like your own, a land of grain [fields] and vineyards, of bread and wine, of olive oil and honey, so that you may live and not die.

Kings 2:19 Assuredly, thus said the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not enter this city: He shall not shoot an arrow at it, Or advance upon it with a shield, Or pile up a siege mound against it. He shall go back By the way he came; He shall not enter this city —declares the LORD. I will protect and save this city for My sake, And for the sake of My servant David.” That night an angel of the LORD went out and struck down one hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp, and the following morning they were all dead corpses. So King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and retreated, and stayed in Nineveh. While he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sarezzer struck him down with the sword. They fled to the land of Ararat, and his son Esarhaddon succeeded him as king.

### **Did Tanakh Spin it or did Sennacherib?**

And Hezekiah King of Judah, I shut him up like a bird in a cage. . .

Isaiah 31:5 כְּצִפְרִים עֹפֹת לֵן יִגֵן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם גִּנוֹן וְהִצִּיל פָּסֶחַ וְהִמְלִיט:

Like the birds that fly, even so will the LORD of Hosts shield Jerusalem, shielding and saving, protecting and rescuing.

### **Nahum and the Fall of Nineveh**

Nahum 2:9 Nineveh has been like a [placid] pool of water From earliest times; Now they flee. “Stop! Stop!”— But none can turn them back.

“Plunder silver! Plunder gold!” There is no limit to the treasure; It is a hoard of all precious objects.

Desolation, devastation, and destruction! Spirits sink, Knees buckle, All loins tremble, All faces turn ashen.

What has become of that lions’ den, That pasture of great beasts, Where lion and lion’s breed walked, And lion’s cub—with none to disturb them?

[Where is] the lion that tore victims for his cubs And strangled for his lionesses, And filled his lairs with prey And his dens with mangled flesh?