

The Bible tells us that Hezekiah had previously sent a great present to Sennacherib, in order to try to prevent his attack. Sennacherib, after concluding his account of having shut Hezekiah up in the city, tells of the tribute which he received, detailing it at great length as if in order to hide the failure to conquer the city. The figures which he gives agree in the main with the biblical figures, though there are some discrepancies.

It is very easy for mistakes in figures to creep in, and it is also possible that Sennacherib magnified the amount of the tribute in his account.

A passage in Herodotus refers to a defeat of Sennacherib attributing it to a great multitude of mice which ate the quivers and bow strings of his men. George Adam Smith suggests that this points to the conclusion that Sennacherib's army was attacked by Bubonic Plague. This may easily have been the instrument that God used in protecting the people from the Assyrians.

One more incident in the life of Hezekiah is of interest to our present study. We are told that he was sick unto death and then recovered from his illness. Merodachbaladan, king of Babylon sent letters and a present to Hezekiah (Isaiah 39) Hezekiah showed the messengers everything in his house and in his dominion. After their departure, Isaiah declared to Hezekiah that the time had come when everything that was laid up as treasure in Jerusalem would be carried off to Babylon, the place from which these men had come.

The cuneiform records tell us that Merodachbaladan was a king of Babylon who rebelled against Sennacherib and for a time maintained his independence of him. Doubtless, his purpose in sending to Hezekiah was to secure his aid in movements against Sennacherib. Sennacherib routed him and compelled him to flee for his life. But eventually his successors made a great deal of trouble for the Assyrians