

Heroic Hezekiah

2 Kings 18-20

2 Chronicles 29-32

Isaiah 36-39

David Feddes

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Major events in chronological order

- Grows up the son of wicked Ahaz
- Leads spiritual revival and return to God
- Gets deadly illness, then 15 extra years
- Shows off, is rebuked, and selfishly feels relieved that at least he'll be secure
- 701 BC Heroically resists Assyria and trusts God when threatened by a mighty enemy

Son of a wicked father

Ahaz walked in the way of the kings of Israel. He even burned his son as an offering... And he sacrificed and made offerings on the high places... Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son. Come up and rescue me... When King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, he saw the altar that was at Damascus. And King Ahaz sent to Uriah the priest a model of the altar... And the bronze altar that was before the LORD he removed from the front of the house. (2 Kings 16)

Acting like David his father, not Ahaz his father

In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. (2 Kings 18:1-3)

Destroying idols

He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan). He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. (2 Kings 18:4-5)



A symbol of God's grace and forgiveness had become an idol. It was no longer a sign calling people to trust God, but had become a god. So Hezekiah smashed it.

Cleansing the temple

In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. He brought in the priests and the Levites and assembled them in the square on the east and said to them, “Hear me, Levites! Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of the LORD, the God of your fathers, and carry out the filth from the Holy Place... Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, in order that his fierce anger may turn away from us. (2 Chronicles 29:3-10)

Revival in worship

Hezekiah the king and the officials commanded the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped... Thus the service of the house of the LORD was restored. And Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced because God had provided for the people, for the thing came about suddenly. (2 Chronicles 29:3-10)

Revival means return

“O people of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may turn again to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria... For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him.” (2 Chronicles 30:6-9)

Revive our heart

So the couriers went from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun, but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them. However, some men of Asher, of Manasseh, and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD. (2 Chronicles 30:10-12)

Great joy

The whole assembly of Judah, and the priests and the Levites, and the whole assembly that came out of Israel, and the sojourners who came out of the land of Israel, and the sojourners who lived in Judah, rejoiced. So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem. Then the priests and the Levites arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard, and their prayer came to his holy habitation in heaven. (2 Chron 30:25-27)

Deathly sick

In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die; you shall not recover.’” Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying, “Now, O LORD, please remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly. (2 Kings 20:1-3)



Healer and deliverer

And before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: “Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD, and I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for my own sake and for my servant David's sake.” (1 Kings 20:4-6)

Praise for healing

Lord, by these things men live,
and in all these is the life of my spirit.
Oh restore me to health and make me live!
Behold, it was for my welfare
that I had great bitterness;
but in love you have delivered my life
from the pit of destruction,
for you have cast all my sins
behind your back.

(from Hezekiah's prayer in Isaiah 38:16-17)

Showing off

At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah welcomed them, and he showed them all his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them. (2 Kings 20:12-13)



Security for me

Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD: Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the LORD...” Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD that you have spoken is good.” For he thought, “Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?” (2 Kings 20:16-19)

Heart problem: self-centered

Hezekiah prospered in all his works. And so in the matter of the envoys of the princes of Babylon, who had been sent to him to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land, God left him to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart. (1 Chronicles 32:30-31)

Testing brings heart problems into the open.

- *Illness: self pity, self righteousness*
- *Envoy visit: self promotion, self protection*

Humbled himself

In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death, and he prayed to the LORD, and he answered him and gave him a sign. But Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud. Therefore wrath came upon him and Judah and Jerusalem. But Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah. (2 Chron 32:24-26)

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Big Bully

In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, “I have done wrong; withdraw from me. Whatever you impose on me I will bear.” And the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. (2 Kings 18:13-14)



Superpower

Assyria crushed:

Sepharvaim

Hamath

Arpad

Hena

Ivvah

Samaria

Damascus

Babylon

A photograph of a narrow, dimly lit tunnel carved into a rock wall. The tunnel is very narrow, with a person standing in the center for scale. The rock walls are textured and uneven, and the lighting is warm and focused on the person. The tunnel appears to be a hidden passage or a secret entrance.

**Preparing
for attack**

More with us than with him

Hezekiah set combat commanders over the people and gathered them together to him in the square at the gate of the city and spoke encouragingly to them, saying, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him, for there are more with us than 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.” And the people took confidence from the words of Hezekiah king of Judah. (2 Chron 32:6-8)

Persuasive liar

And the Rabshakeh said to them, “Say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this trust of yours? ...if you say to me, “We trust in the LORD our God,” is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed... Moreover, is it without the LORD that I have come up against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.’” (2 Kings 18:19-25)



Intimidation

“Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and to drink their own urine?” (18:27)

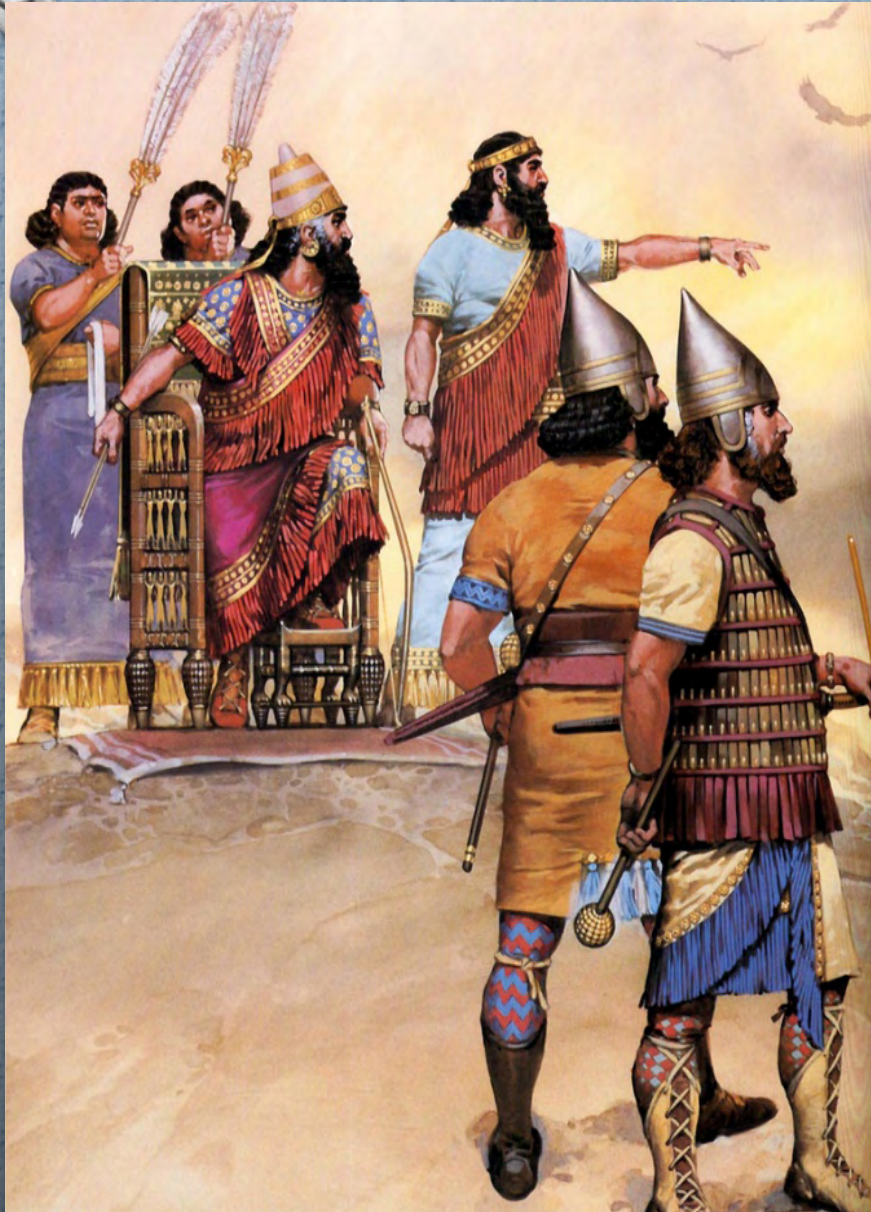
Can any god stop Assyria?

Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you out of my hand. Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD by saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.' ... Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? (18:28-33)

Greater than the Lord of hosts?

Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it,
or the saw magnify itself against him who
wields it?

As if a rod should wield him who lifts it,
or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood!
Therefore the Lord GOD of hosts will send
wasting sickness among his stout warriors,
and under his glory a burning will be kindled,
like the burning of fire. (Isaiah 10:15-16)



Nasty letter

“Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you...

Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction.

And shall you be delivered?”

(2 Kings 19:9-11)



Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. (19:14)

The living God

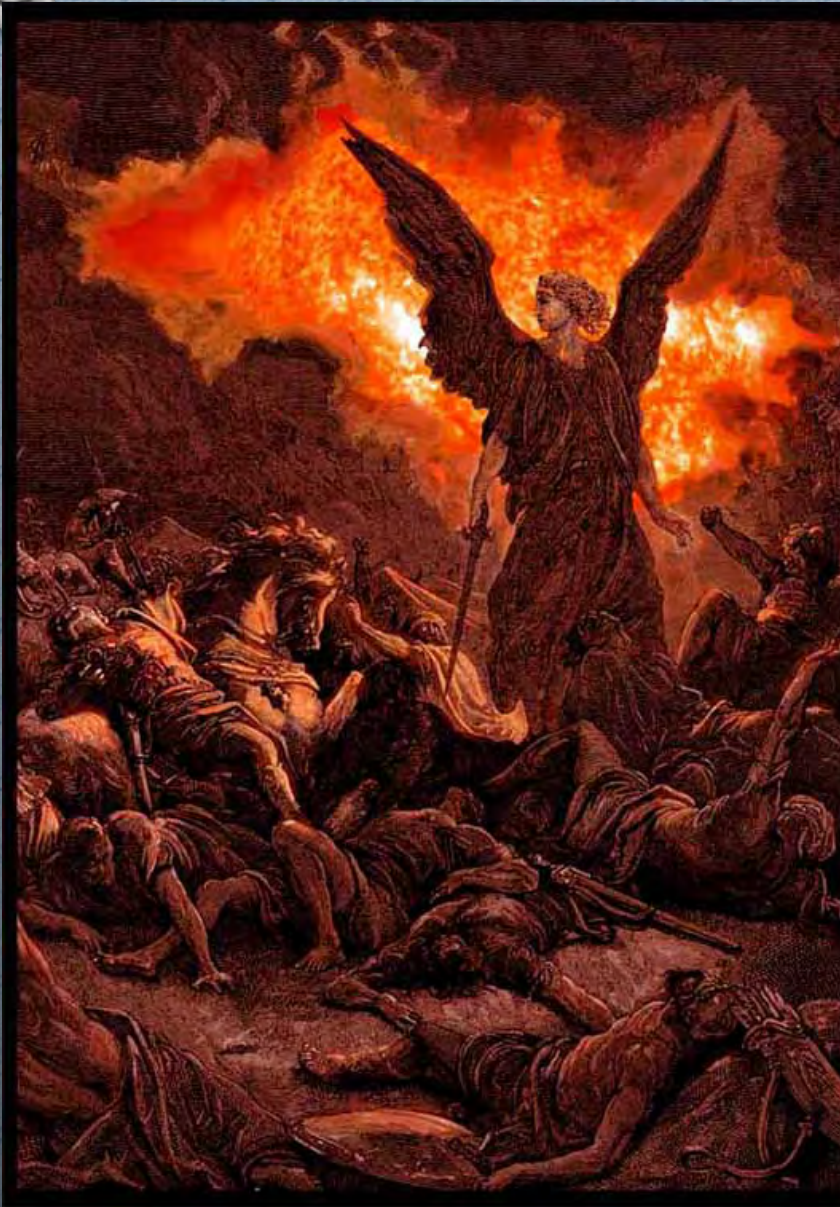
And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said: “O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. (2 Kings 19:15-16)

That all kingdoms may know

Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone.” (2 Kings 19:17-19)

Our shield and defender

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Your prayer to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard... He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it... For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.” (2 Kings 19:20-34)



And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. (19:35)

The Destruction of Sennacherib

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the
sea,

When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:

Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

The Destruction of Sennacherib

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew
still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

The Destruction of Sennacherib

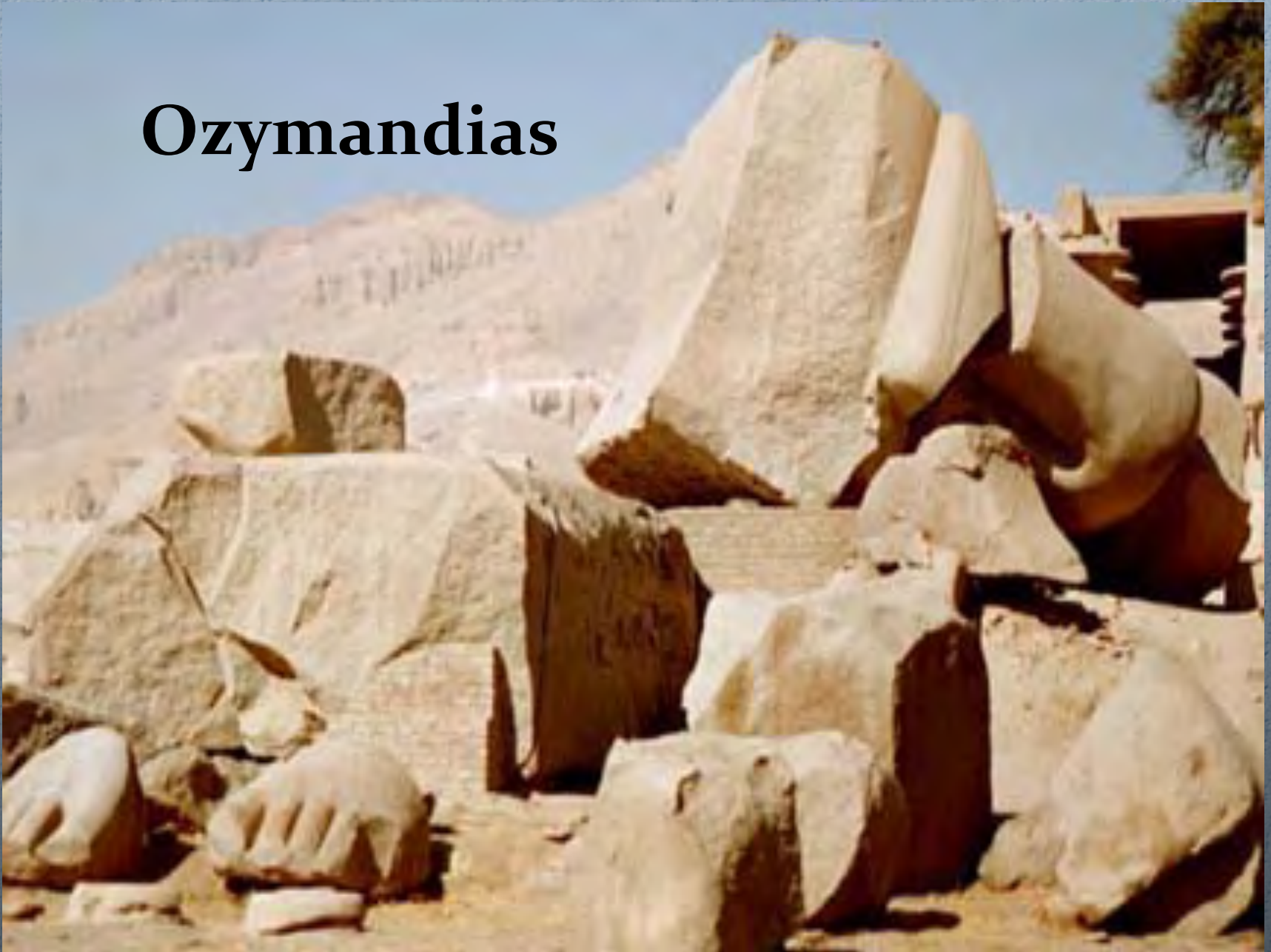
And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.
And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

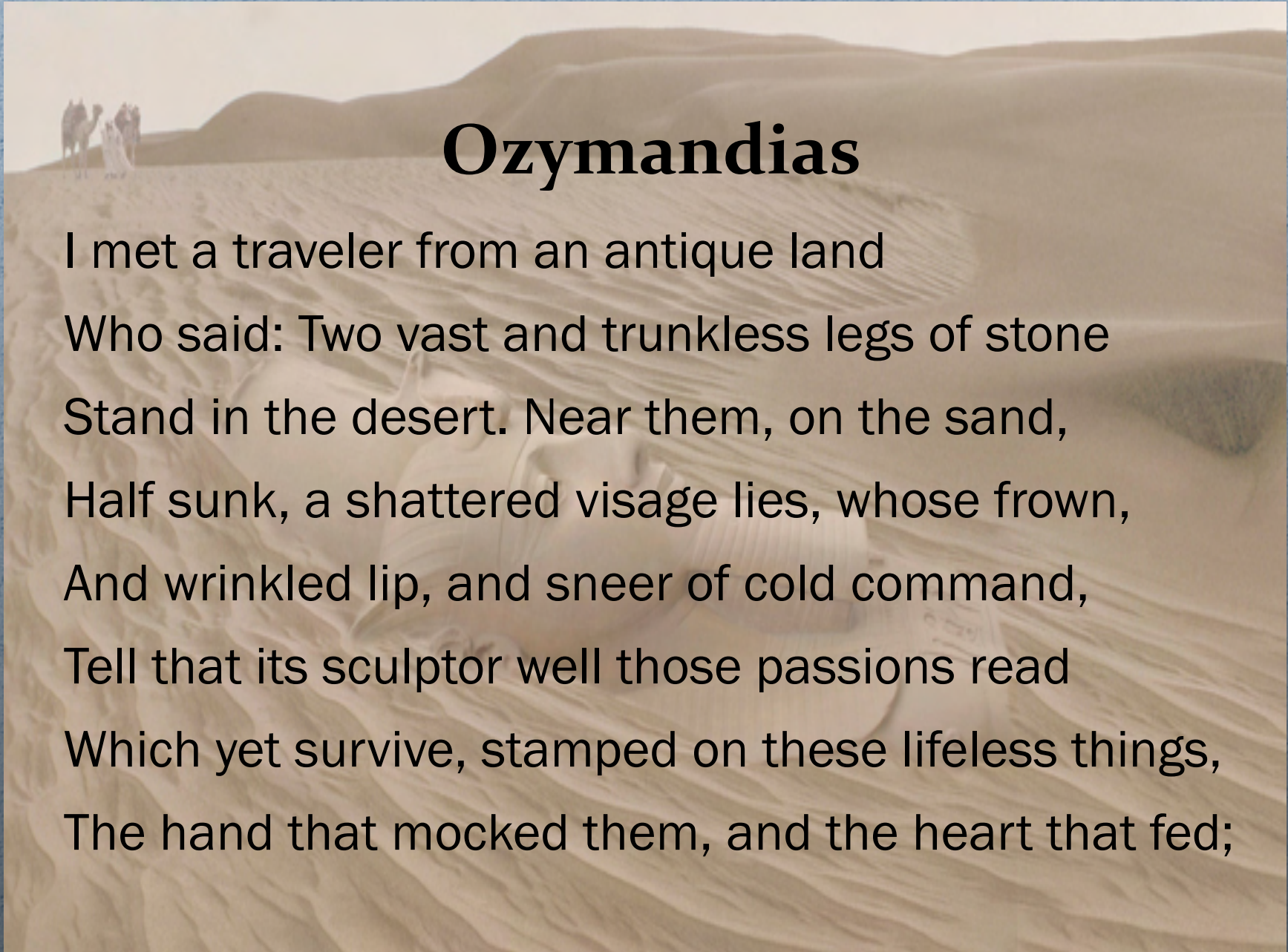
(Alfred, Lord Tennyson)

Death of a tyrant

Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place. (2 Kings 19:26-37)

Ozymandias





Ozymandias

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;



Ozymandias

And on the pedestal these words appear:

“My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:

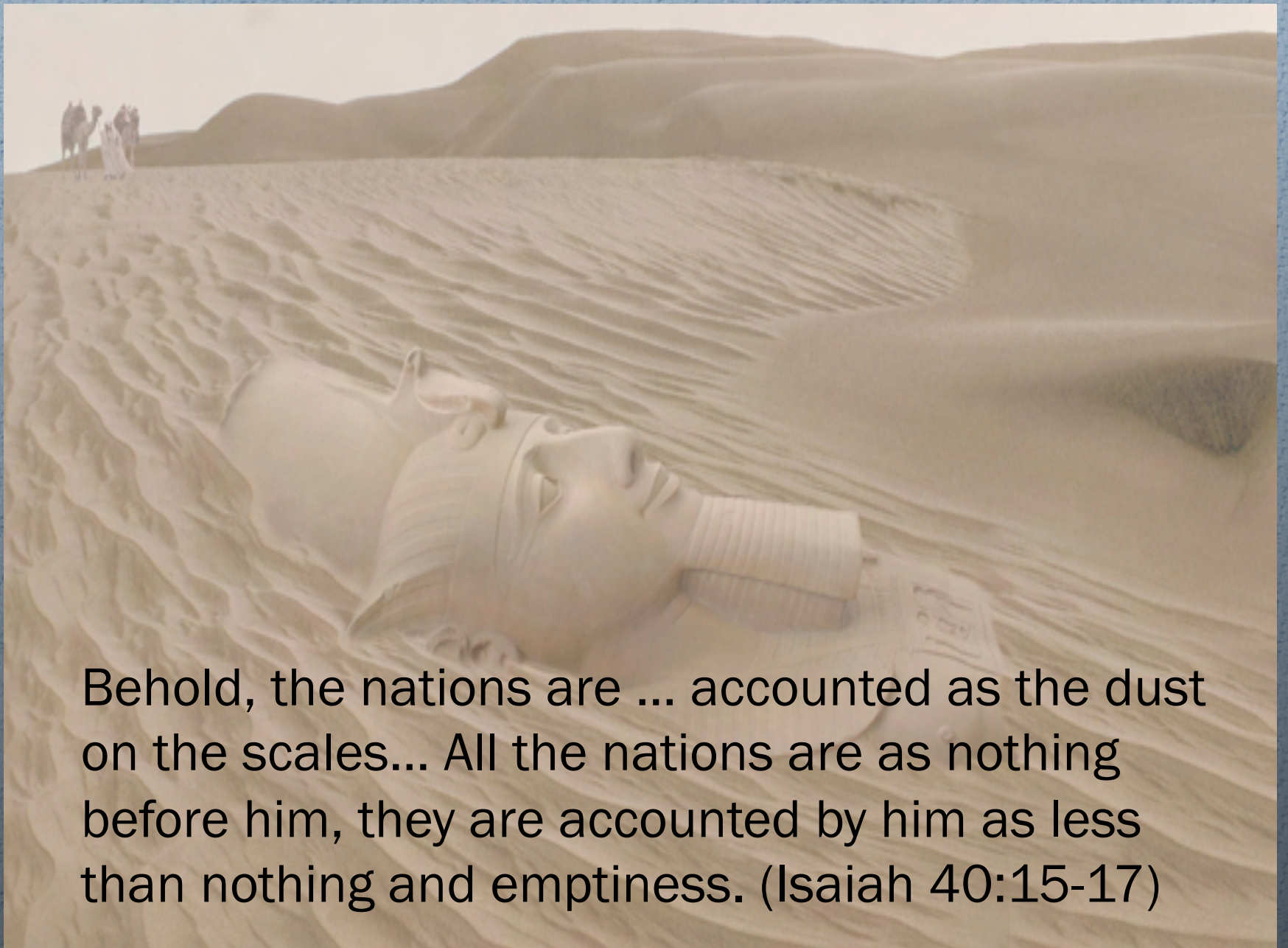
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away.

(Percy Bysshe Shelley)



Behold, the nations are ... accounted as the dust on the scales... All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. (Isaiah 40:15-17)

God shall arise,
his enemies shall be scattered;
and those who hate him
shall flee before him!
As smoke is driven away,
so you shall drive them away;
as wax melts before fire,
so the wicked shall perish before God!
But the righteous shall be glad;
they shall exult before God;
they shall be jubilant with joy!

(Psalm 68:1-3)

The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands... Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens. Our God is a God who saves.

(Psalm 68:17-19)

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him, for there are more with us than 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.” (2 Chronicles 32:6-8)