

in the end the nation will be right next to the great Assyrian power and that the Assyrian forces will even come into the land of Judah itself.

He declares that they will overrun most of the land of Judah, but he says that God will protect Jerusalem "like birds hovering" (Isa. 31:5). God will do this without any help from human sources.

During the reign of Hezekiah, the situation predicted in the reign of Ahaz actually comes to pass. Judah is now face to face with the power of the Assyrian king who has destroyed Syria and conquered Israel. The Assyrian power comes down against Judah with overwhelming strength, as part of its endeavor to force all the nations to bow beneath its yoke. It appears that nothing human can protect Jerusalem. Yet God delivers Jerusalem in a most unexpected way, by suddenly destroying a large part of Sennacherib's army (Isa. 37:36).

About the same time King Hezekiah makes a friendly arrangement with the king of far-away Babylon. Isaiah points out to him that from this land of Babylon there is to come one who will destroy Judah and take the people into captivity as punishment for their sins. Hezekiah is thankful that this catastrophe will not occur during his own lifetime.

Manasseh follows Hezekiah and terrible persecutions take place during his reign, so that it becomes obvious to Isaiah and to the godly people of the land that God must punish the nation for the terrible wickedness that is being shown by the king and by the people as a whole. Punishment is so certain that the godly of the land begin to think of it almost as something which has already come.