

THREE PORTRAYALS OF KING HEZEKIAH
A COMPARISON OF 2 KINGS 18–20, ISAIAH 36–39, AND 2 CHRONICLES 29–32

BY

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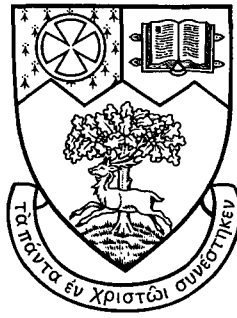
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ABSTRACT

“Three Portrayals of King Hezekiah: A Comparison of 2 Kings 18–20, Isaiah 36–39, and 2 Chronicles 29–32”

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Hezekiah is portrayed as a pious and faithful king in three biblical accounts: 2 Kgs 18–20, Isa 36–39 and 2 Chr 29–32. The way Hezekiah is characterized, however, is quite different in each of these three biblical accounts. Utilizing narrative analysis, this dissertation concentrated specifically on the characterization of Hezekiah in the literary context of these three biblical accounts. Hezekiah’s story was examined first as a discrete account applying narrative features separately and then as a story within the larger context of each book. Then, the portrayal of Hezekiah in the three biblical books was compared in conclusion. This dissertation demonstrated that these three biblical accounts relate the same reign of King Hezekiah in their unique way according to their purpose and their individual point of view. The Kings account focuses on Hezekiah’s political events including his negative aspects in order to show the faithfulness of the LORD in His promise to David (2 Sam 7) through Hezekiah’s faithful actions to the LORD. Hezekiah is portrayed as a round character whose characterization is developed within the story. In Isaiah, the Hezekiah story is reshaped by the narrator by omitting and inserting some parts of Hezekiah’s narratives in the Kings account. Hezekiah is portrayed as a more faithful king than his father, Ahaz, in order to encourage the people who heard the visions of Isaiah, to trust in the LORD sincerely. In Chronicles, the

Hezekiah narratives are related differently by expanding, abridging, and rephrasing his *Vorlage*. The Chronicles account depicts Hezekiah as the best king among the Davidic kings in order to indicate the beginning of the reunited kingdom. Thus, the Chronicles account fully expands Hezekiah's religious reforms and abridges his political events in order to portray him as a second David and Solomon. In the three accounts, Hezekiah is not portrayed as a perfect king, but instead as a limited human king in order to encourage the readers to see the LORD, the heavenly King.

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Abbreviations

1. Periodicals, Serials and Reference Works

AB	Anchor Bible
ABS	Archaeology and Biblical Studies
ALASPM	Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas und Mesopotamiens
AOAT	Alter Orient und Alter Testament
AOTC	Abingdon Old Testament Commentary
AUSS	<i>Andrews Universtiy Seminary Studies</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BAT	Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments
BCOT	Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
BeO	Biblica et Orientalia
BLH	Biblical Language: Hebrew
BO	Berit Olam
BTCB	Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible
BS	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BST	The Bible Speaks Today
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly: Monograph Series
CC	Continental Commentaries
DBI	<i>A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation</i> , edited by R.J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990.
DH	Deuteronomistic History
DSBS	The Daily Study Bible Series
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
FCI	Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation
<i>FeH</i>	<i>Fides et Historia</i>
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FtS	Freiburger theologische Studien
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> , edited by E. Kautzsch. Trnaslated by A.E. Cowley. 2 nd ed. Oxford, 1910
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J.J. Stamm, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden, 1994–1999
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HCHCB	Hermeneia-A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies

<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>IBHS</i>	<i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor. Winona Lake, Indiana, 1990
IBCTP	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IOS</i>	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
KPG	Knox Preaching Guides
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies
MC	Mentor Commentary
MTA	Münsteraner Theologische Abhandlungen
NAC	The New American Commentary
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
<i>NDOTTE</i>	<i>National Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis</i>
<i>NEASB</i>	<i>Near East Archaeological Society Bulletin</i>
NES	Near Eastern Studies
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICOT	The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIVAC	The NIV Application Commentary
OBS	Oxford Bible Series
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
Os	Oudtestamentische studiën
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>OTS</i>	<i>Old Testament Studies</i>
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
RNBC	Reading: A New Biblical Commentary
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Restoration Quarterly</i>
SB	Subsidia Biblica
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SKGGGK	Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse
SOTBT	Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology
<i>TB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TBC	Torch Bible Commentary
TLOT	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , edited by Menni, E. and C. Westermann. Translated by M. E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997
TOTC	The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries

HfT	Helps for Translators
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTGAASGe	Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum: Supplement Series
WASS	Westminster aids to the Study of the Scriptures
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palastina-Vereins</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

2. Translations and Texts

LXX	Septuagint
MT	Massoretic Text
NAB	New American Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NJPSV	New Jewish Publicans Society Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version

Chapter 1: Introduction and Past Research

1.1 Introduction

The story of the reign of King Hezekiah in Kings (2 Kgs 18–20) is very similar to the story in Isaiah (Isa 36–39). These Hezekiah narratives include the story of the invasion of Sennacherib and the deliverance of Judah from him (2 Kgs 18:13—19:37 // Isa 36–37), the illness and recovery of King Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:1–11 // Isa 38:1–22), and the visit of envoys from Babylon (2 Kgs 20:12–19 // Isa 39:1–8). Due to the similarities between these two accounts, the account of Isa 36–39 has generally been neglected for many years.¹ The Book of Chronicles, however, describes the reign of Hezekiah in different ways. The Chronicler not only adds a long account of Hezekiah’s religious reformation (2 Chr 29–31), which is different from accounts in Kings and Isaiah, but also briefly describes the events of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20 (2 Chr 32).²

Although Isa 36–39 and 2 Kgs 18–20 are very similar, the three accounts about the reign of Hezekiah in the Bible are described in their own ways. The Hezekiah narratives in Kings mention the reformation of Hezekiah in only one verse (2 Kgs 18:4). At the same time the story of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29–32 does not deal thoroughly with the political events in the reign of Hezekiah. It is not easy to understand the political involvements of the reign of Hezekiah in the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 32 without the

¹ Smelik, “Distortion,” 70–93. Of course, specifically there are on-going issues, namely the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E. (2 Kgs 18–19), and the “fourteen years of reign of Hezekiah” in Isa 36:1 (2 Kgs 18:13). Old Testament biblical scholarship has discussed these issues for a long time. For instance, recently William R. Gallagher studied the historical question of the account of Hezekiah in his book, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, (Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*) and a recent volume by the European Seminar on Historical Methodology, *‘Like a Bird in a Cage’*, also shows interest in events during the reign of King Hezekiah (Grabbe, *‘Like a Bird’*).

² I use the term “Chronicler” to refer to the author(s) of the Book of Chronicles. However, I am not dealing with the on-going debate regarding the authorship for the Book of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah. For this issue, see Japhet’s article “Common Authorship,” and Williamson’s book, *Israel*.

accounts of 2 Kgs 18–20 and the references of Isa 36–39. Furthermore the stories of Hezekiah in Kings and Isaiah are also different. The main differences are that Hezekiah's capitulation in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 is omitted in Isaiah and Hezekiah's psalm in Isa 38:9–20 is not found in Kings. These initial observations raise important questions. Why do these three biblical books describe the reign of King Hezekiah in different ways? Why is one book expanded or abridged at certain points in the story of Hezekiah in contrast to other books? Why are some parts of the story omitted in one book? What is the purpose of these divergences? These questions are quite interesting and important, but difficult to answer. These divergences may come from different sources which the author of each book utilized. At the same time they may be purposely caused by each author in order to show their ideological point of view.³ However, the goal of the present study is not to provide the sources of the Hezekiah narratives or the historicity of King Hezekiah, but to examine the characterization of Hezekiah in the biblical accounts (Kings, Isaiah, and Chronicles) through narrative analysis.

Despite the extensive amounts of study on the Hezekiah narratives, there has been little work done on a literary understanding of each account in the whole context of each book.⁴ Most studies are focused on the historical accuracy of the reign of Hezekiah raised by a comparison with both biblical accounts and extra-biblical materials, such as

³ Author means the author(s), compiler(s) or redactor(s) of the final form of these three books. For convenience I use the term 'author' in this paper to refer to all the process of the transmission of the texts.

⁴ In terms of the Hezekiah narrative in Isaiah, some scholars who are interested in the unity of Isaiah, deal with it in the whole context of Isaiah. For instances, Seitz considers Isa 36–39 as a crucial point for understanding the overall structure of Isaiah. He argues that the inclusion of Isa 36–39 suggests that the traditions have developed in such a way as to make clear the contrast between the responses of the royal house represented by the figures of Ahaz in Isa 7–8 and Hezekiah in Isa 36–39 (Seitz, *Destiny*).

the Assyrian annals⁵ and archaeological evidence.⁶ The complex history of tradition and composition of the accounts of Hezekiah has also raised some difficulties for Old Testament scholars who have been interested in form and tradition criticism.⁷ This dissertation recognizes the significance of the various issues involved with the Hezekiah narratives. However, this dissertation will not delve into the question of the historicity of different sources or trace textual development. Rather this dissertation will be concerned with literary and theological questions that may be answered through narrative analysis, which can provide key insights into the meaning of the accounts of Hezekiah in the final form of the text.

1.2 Past Research

Research on the reign of Hezekiah has been highly controversial in Old Testament study. Scholars have taken various approaches to the Hezekiah narratives. Many scholars approached the accounts of Hezekiah from a historical perspective, addressing the chronological difficulties of the account.⁸ Some scholars have strongly

⁵ Chávalas, "Historian's Approach," 5–22. According to Chávalas, the first modern report of the Assyrian accounts was by Rawlinson; cf. the discussion by Millard, "Sennacherib's Attack." The first published account of the Taylor prism was by Hincks in Layard, *Discoveries*, and Rawlinson, *Selection*. In his book, Evans gave a brief history of the Assyrian annals and its contents (Evans, *Invasion*, 2–3). According to Evans, Luckenbill produces a translation for various cuneiform inscriptions that referred to the events of 701 B.C.E. and he also made available in an English edition in 1924 (also see, Luckenbill, *Annals*). Thus, Luckenbill's works are very important sources for those who study Sennacherib's invasion of Judah during the reign of Hezekiah.

⁶ Recently Vaughn published his doctoral dissertation, *Theology, History, and Archaeology*. In his book, Vaughn dealt with Hezekiah's economic buildup and civil strength found in 2 Chr 29–32. He concluded that although the Chronicler presents an ideological message for his community ("the post-exilic community"), he was still interested in the history of Israel. There were other studies for using archaeological evidence in order to understand the account of Hezekiah, such as Fried's "High places"; Faust's "Note"; Norin's "Siloam Inscription"; Reich's "Hezekiah's Tunnel"; Shaheen's "Siloam End"; Shea's "Epigraphic Evidence"; Cross's "Hezekiah's Seal"; Na'aman's "Debated Historicity"; Geraty's "Hezekiah's Lachish."

⁷ Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 79–90. Fewell provided a selective bibliography on these issues.

⁸ Recent studies of the historical question include Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, and the recent volume by the European Seminar on Historical Methodology, *'Like a Bird in a cage'* edited by

focused on questions of textual criticism or of source criticism,⁹ while others largely concentrated on redactional questions about the Hezekiah narratives.¹⁰ However, few studies have taken the literary aspects of the Hezekiah narratives seriously.¹¹ These studies just focused on the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 and in Isa 36–39, in order to understand what happened during the reign of King Hezekiah. The present study is not interested in historical and redactional matters but with literary and theological matters. Thus, this interest is naturally reflected in the choice of secondary literature reviewed below.¹²

In *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis*, B. S. Childs dealt with historical issues in 2 Kgs 18–20. In his study, Childs tried to resolve the historical problems in the story of Hezekiah by examining the prophecies of Isaiah from a form critical perspective and provided a new approach to the difficult historical, exegetical and theological problems in the Hezekiah narratives. One of his contributions was to distinguish the original

Lester L. Grabbe. Both of these books showed that many scholars are still interested in the historical accuracy of the events of the reign of King Hezekiah; also see Provan's article, "In the Stable," for a brief attempt at a synoptic historical reconstruction of the events surrounding Sennacherib's invasion based on Kings, Isaiah, Chronicles, and the Assyrian Annals.

⁹ For example, in his article, "The Sources of the Story of Hezekiah," Konkel utilized the *kaige* recension in order to show that the proto-Masoretic text of Kings was significantly different from the Masoretic text of Kings and that these differences were the result of the assimilation of the texts of Kings and Isaiah in the Masoretic process of standardizing the textual tradition. Konkel asserted that this process of standardization significantly reduced the narrative distinctions between the Hezekiah narratives in Kings and Isaiah, which is tremendously important for this dissertation. Alessandro Catastini also studied the Hezekiah narratives in terms of textual criticism in his book, *Isaia ed Ezechia*. Catastini also provided us an English summary of the work in this book (321–26).

¹⁰ See, Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabild*. In his book, Camp discussed several redaction models of the Deuteronomistic History and the theological outlooks of the various redactions that he accepted. He also dealt with some historical questions in his book. See also Smelik, *Converting the Past*.

¹¹ See, Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 79–90; Hull, "Hezekiah-Saint"; Rudman, "Is the Rabshakeh?" 100–110; Bostock, *Trust*.

¹² This review of the past research on the Hezekiah narratives is brief and selective. It includes some works that may be seen to presage a more literary and/or theological interpretation. It also includes two Ph.D. dissertations: "Hezekiah in Biblical Tradition" by August H. Konkel and "Hezekiah-Saint and Sinner" by John H. Hull Jr. These works dealt with the Hezekiah narratives using the literary approach, but they have not been published.

ending of 2 Kgs 19:9b–35 from that of 2 Kgs 18:17—19:9a, 36–37 by using source-critical analysis.¹³ Thus, Childs accepted B. Stade’s two divisions of the narrative, 2 Kgs 18:13–16 (A) and 2 Kgs 18:17—19:37 (B), into three accounts, 2 Kgs 18:13–16 (A); 18:17—19:9a, 36–37 (B1); 19:9b–35 (B2).¹⁴ Childs contended that 2 Kgs 18:13–16 (A) was historically accurate, because this account was quite similar to the Assyrian annals. At the same time, he assessed that 2 Kgs 18:17—19:9a and 19:36–37 (B1) were more historically accurate than 2 Kgs 19:9b–35 (B2), but he pointed out that historical accuracy in the Hezekiah narrative should not determine the theological value of the story.¹⁵ Accordingly Childs saw the emphasis upon the character of King Hezekiah as a pious king in 2 Kgs 19:36–37 (B1).¹⁶ Furthermore his final concluding remarks in the chapter “Historical and Theological Conclusions” revealed his ideas on biblical texts. Childs strongly considered biblical books or texts in their canonical contexts. He said “[t]he problems of developing theological norms with which to evaluate the diversity within the Old Testament finally forces the interpreter outside of the context of the Old Testament and raises the broader questions of Scripture and canon.”¹⁷ Although his study was largely concerned with historical events in the Hezekiah narratives, Childs suggested that we should not ignore the theological perspective of the Hezekiah narratives.

¹³ Stade who broke new ground for studying 2 Kgs 18–19 and was largely followed by later scholarship, has found only one conclusion for both B1 and B2 that remained in the narrative. In his article, “Miscellen,” he asserted that the editor of the book decided against retaining two different conclusions to the story (Stade, “Miscellen,” 156–89).

¹⁴ Bostock, *Trust*, 7. The exact divisions of source B have been debated by some scholars. The original idea of these two divisions was credited to Stade. In his book, Evans correctly saw that Childs basically accepted the previous works, such as the work of Stade and Honor who thoroughly examined both the Assyrian annals and the biblical accounts in 2 Kings and Isaiah (Evans, *Invasion*, 6–7).

¹⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 123–24.

¹⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 96–103.

¹⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, 127.

R. E. Clements in *Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem* clarified and provided a solution for the problem of the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18:13—19:37 and Isa 36–39, not by introducing new historical evidence as Childs considered necessary for further study,¹⁸ but by investigating the theological grounds that affected the interpretation of the prophet's preaching and his impact on Deuteronomistic reform in Josiah's reign. Clements accepted 2 Kgs 18:13–16 (A) as a historical account, while treating 2 Kgs 18:17—19:37 (B) as “narrative theology,”¹⁹ which consisted of two accounts (B1 and B2) which have been developed theologically. Account B1 (2 Kgs 18:17—19:9a, 36–37) agreed with account A (2 Kgs 18:13–16), while account B2 (2 Kgs 19:9b–35) added the dramatic denouement about the angel of the LORD (2 Kgs 19:35) and the lengthy citation of Isaiah. Clements asserted that 2 Kgs 19:15–19 in account B2 showed the influence of the Deuteronomistic (Dtr)²⁰ school, while 2 Kgs 19:27–31 was dependent on Isa 7:3 and Isa 10:20–23. Thus, only 2 Kgs 19:35 with its “theological maximizing” and “theological colouring” was left to be explained.²¹ However, Clements claimed that the problem in account B was not a historical one, but a “literary and theological” problem.²² In terms of the origin and purpose of 2 Kgs 18:17—19:37, Clements viewed account B in a very special light as the fact that “Jerusalem did not suffer the torments and destruction which befell most of the rest of Judah.”²³ Both Childs and Clements

¹⁸ Childs, *Isaiah*, 120.

¹⁹ Clements, *Deliverance*, 21. Clements asserted that “[t]he narrative is self-evidently not from a time closely contemporaneous with the events it describes, since it concludes with a mention of the circumstances of Sennacherib's death, which did not take place until 681 B.C. ... Its explanation for the event which forms its climax is dramatically theological in character.”

²⁰ The term “Deuteronomistic”(Dtr) was first used by Noth in his book, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, in order to denote the Exilic author of Joshua-Kings and the framework of Deuteronomy.

²¹ Clements, *Deliverance*, 56–66.

²² Clements, *Deliverance*, 11.

²³ Clements, *Deliverance*, 92.

were interested in historical problems in the Hezekiah narratives and utilized similar methods. Although Clements solved the historical difficulties by viewing account B as “midrashic appropriation of prophecy,”²⁴ he failed to deal with the Hezekiah narratives using a literary analysis which was necessary for him to solve the problems presented by account B. However, Childs and Clements saw that the Hezekiah narratives were theologically influenced during the redactional process.

A. H. Konkel’s dissertation, “Hezekiah in Biblical Tradition,” compared the three Hezekiah narratives in the Bible.²⁵ He was mainly concerned with the historicity of the Hezekiah narrative. Although Konkel focused on historical events during the reign of King Hezekiah, he also dealt with the Hezekiah narrative in its own literary contexts: in the Deuteronomistic History, in Isaiah, and in Chronicles. He began by considering the Hezekiah narratives as the object of historical enquiry, including a discussion of the chronological problems that have been raised and the use of various sources. Konkel then examined the Hezekiah narratives and suggested that the story of Hezekiah in Kings joined “two accounts of the campaign ... in order to show how the word of the covenant worked out in the history of God’s people.”²⁶ In Isaiah the Hezekiah narrative served as a model of hope for Jerusalem and functions as a transition from the section of judgment for Jerusalem to the section of hope.²⁷ He also asserted that the accounts of Hezekiah in Chronicles were “a model for the possibilities of the kingdom of God” and served as “an example for how the healing and blessing of God may be obtained.”²⁸

²⁴ Evans, *Invasion*, 9.

²⁵ Konkel, “Hezekiah.” Konkel’s dissertation was presented to the Faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary in 1987.

²⁶ Konkel, “Hezekiah,” 284.

²⁷ Konkel, “Hezekiah,” 215.

²⁸ Konkel, “Hezekiah,” 285.

Then, Konkel concluded the treatment of Hezekiah in biblical tradition was “progressive idealization.”²⁹ He contended that the accounts of Hezekiah have been told to serve the purpose of the composition of each book. Various elements of each book have been utilized to provide the story structure in its particular setting. However, these elements were not arbitrarily created or modified in the story of Hezekiah. Konkel’s study provided many insights to understand the story of Hezekiah and the purpose of the composition of each book.

At the same time, in his article, “The Source of the Story of Hezekiah in the Book of Isaiah,” Konkel maintained that the proto-Masoretic text of Kings was significantly different from the Masoretic text in Kings.³⁰ Comparing the differences of the proto-Masoretic text of Kings, especially as seen in *kaige*, he asserted that the Hezekiah narratives in Isaiah had been altered, added, abbreviated and expanded to function as “a theology for the future of Jerusalem.”³¹ One of the most important features of his study was that Konkel pointed out the important function of the proto-Masoretic text for the comparison of the story of Hezekiah in the Hebrew Bible.

J. Rosenbaum wrote his short article, “Hezekiah’s Reform and the Deuteronomistic Tradition,” in which he dealt with the accuracy and intent of the two biblical accounts which described Hezekiah’s reform in the Dtr book of 2 Kings and “the priestly-oriented later work” of 2 Chronicles.³² Following F. M. Cross, Rosenbaum assumed at least a major redaction of Dtr during the reign of Josiah, and presented a

²⁹ Konkel, “Hezekiah,” 284.

³⁰ Konkel, “Sources,” 462–82.

³¹ Konkel, “Sources,” 478.

³² Rosenbaum, “Hezekiah’s Reform,” 23.

coherent argument for Hezekiah as a rival to Josiah.³³ He contended that the Josianic redactor of Dtr intentionally omitted details of Hezekiah's prosperity in order to praise King Josiah and stimulate support for him. On the other hand, in 2 Chr 29–32 the Chronicler described Hezekiah's reform in detail because "[t]he tragic death of Josiah and the Exile of Judah made Dtr1's sensitivities irrelevant and probably incomprehensible to the Chronicler."³⁴ Rosenbaum continued that the Chronicler added the material concerning Hezekiah's reform in order to support his own literary goals, such as "a defense of Davidic political claims, support of a royal restoration under Zerubbabel, and the demonstration of post-Exilic royal continuity."³⁵ Although Rosenbaum's main concern was to establish the historical accuracy of the Hezekiah narratives, his conclusion provided a new way of understanding the story of Hezekiah in the whole context of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles. Rosenbaum's study provides good reasons for understanding the different depictions of Hezekiah in these two books more clearly in terms of the ideological point of view of each author.

³³ A comparison of Dtr1's accounts of religious accomplishments and transgressions of all the kings of Judah from Rehoboam through Zedekiah revealed that only Josiah received credit for six general accomplishments (destruction of idols, cult prostitution, *מַעֲבֹדֹת*, *אֲשֵׁרִים*, *בְּמֹח*, and doing right). Interestingly just two other kings were credited with even four accomplishments: Asa (destruction of idols, cult prostitution, *אֲשֵׁרִים* and doing right) and Hezekiah (destruction of *אֲשֵׁרִים*, *מַעֲבֹדֹת*, and *בְּמֹח*, and doing right). However, Dtr1 spent only five verses (1 Kgs 15:11–15) depicting Asa and five verses (2 Kgs 18:3–7 to which we can add the oblique reference of 2 Kgs 18:16–22) describing Hezekiah. The story of Hezekiah's reforms is minimal when compared to the two chapters (2 Kgs 22–23) describing Josiah's religious accomplishment (Rosenbaum, "Hezekiah's Reform," 24–25).

³⁴ Rosenbaum, "Hezekiah's Reform," 26–29. According to Rosenbaum, Dtr1 applied to the seventh-century author of the Deuteronomistic History, while Dtr2 designated the exilic author of the work. This procedure agreed with the use of this terminology adopted by Cross ("Structure," 9–24).

³⁵ Rosenbaum, "Hezekiah's Reform," 42.

Besides the significance of the Chronicler's portrayal of Hezekiah in the whole context of Chronicles,³⁶ I. W. Provan in *Hezekiah and the Books of Kings* thoroughly dealt with the reign of King Hezekiah by comparing him to other Judean kings in the Book of Kings and provided a new hypothesis concerning the Deuteronomistic history. Provan examined in turn the judgment formulae, the theme of *בְּמִוֶּחֶ*, the David theme, and the regnal formulae in the entire book of Kings. According to Provan, the *בְּמִוֶּחֶ* theme and the David theme reached their conclusion in the Hezekiah narratives³⁷ and the first Dtr edition ended with the Hezekiah narratives.³⁸ Thus, he concluded that the first edition of the book of Kings ended with the reign of Hezekiah but was written in the reign of Josiah.³⁹ Provan's conclusion provided a new way of understanding the Deuteronomistic history and indicated that the accounts of Hezekiah play an important role in the Deuteronomistic history. However, in terms of theological and structural issues, the distinction between the reign of Josiah and the reign of other Judean kings in 2 Kgs 23–25 was stronger than the distinction between King Hezekiah and King Josiah.

³⁶ Throntveit also asserted that the Chronicler portrays Hezekiah as “a second David” and “a second Solomon” in his overall presentation of the history of Judean kings (Throntveit, “Hezekiah,” 105–22).

³⁷ Provan, *Hezekiah*, 57–131. In terms of the *בְּמִוֶּחֶ*, Provan found two different views in the judgment formulae: “Yahwistic places of worship” and “idolatrous places of worship.” The author of Kings was concerned with both “the centralization of Yahweh-worship” and “the removal of idolatry from Israel.” The former was the more dominant one of the two in Kings and found its conclusion in the story of King Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18 and the latter became dominant in 2 Kgs 21–23. At the same time, Provan asserted that the theme of David presented in Kings also found its conclusion in the story of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–19, where Hezekiah was portrayed as “the second David.” He also pointed out that the theology of Zion was presented by an unexpected end of the fortunes of Assyria described in 2 Kgs 18:17–19:37 (account B).

³⁸ Provan, *Hezekiah*, 132–55. Provan explained that “[s]uch a conclusion is supported by changes in the accession formulae at the same reign in the books of Chronicles, which at this point almost certainly reflects an earlier edition of Kings than our present MT.”

³⁹ Provan, *Hezekiah*, 172. However, Provan claimed that in the first edition of Dtr the materials concerning Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah himself were not included, but this edition was revised before the exile to include accounts of the reign of these three kings. Provan also provided some reasons for his claim that *בְּשָׁלוֹם* in 2 Kgs 22:20 referred only to Josiah's burial and there was no mention of a peaceful death for him.

Recently Rosenbaum's work has been fully supported by the work of Andrew G. Vaughn. In his book, *Theology, History, and Archaeology in the Chronicler's Account of Hezekiah*, Vaughn sought to solve the vexing question of historicity in Chronicles by evaluating the relationship between certain extra-biblical historical evidence and the account of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29–32.⁴⁰ He specifically dealt with the positive details of Hezekiah's economic buildup found in 2 Chr 32:27–30 in order to show that "the Chronicler's use of these verses was meant to provide historical legitimacy to his ideological message."⁴¹ Vaughn asserted that the detailed economic buildup described in 2 Chr 32:27–30 could be substantiated from archaeological evidence associated with the reign of Hezekiah. After careful assessment of archaeological evidence, Vaughn concluded that the reign of Hezekiah saw a considerable increase in economic activity and administrative power. This economic buildup and civil strength exceeded that of Josiah in some areas and may have rivaled Josiah's in other places.⁴² Then, Vaughn contended that "the archaeological data support Rosenbaum's explanation for the omission by Dtr of specifics regarding the economic buildup and civil strength of Hezekiah,"⁴³ which I mentioned above. Both Rosenbaum and Vaughn concluded that both accounts in 2 Kgs 18–19 and 2 Chr 29–32 were historically accurate but the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler described the Hezekiah narratives according to their own point of view. Thus, the conclusion of Rosenbaum and Vaughn leads us to read the

⁴⁰ Vaughn, *Theology*, 3–5.

⁴¹ Vaughn, *Theology*, 4.

⁴² Vaughn, *Theology*, 79. According to Vaughn, "[t]he Shephelah experienced four times more settlement and development of resources during the reign of Hezekiah than during that of Josiah. Further, settlement of Jerusalem, the towns surrounding it, and the Judean Hills was at least not significantly greater during Josiah's reign than during Hezekiah's. The only areas where Josiah had a greater presence were in the marginal areas of the Judean Desert and the Negeb."

⁴³ Vaughn, *Theology*, 79.

account of Hezekiah's reign in its own literary context. However, although they exhaustively presented their ideas by using extra-biblical evidences, they failed to subject the biblical account of the Hezekiah narratives to a literary analysis.

D. F. Fewell also wrote a short article on the story of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:13—19:37 titled "Sennacherib's Defeat: Words at War in 2 Kings 18.13—19.37."⁴⁴ In her article Fewell convincingly showed that it was important to read the story of Hezekiah as a whole in its final form,⁴⁵ rather than to see it as the separate pericopes that were demarcated by form-, source-, or redaction-critical methods. Exploring the compositional artistry of the text, Fewell examined three different aspects of the Hezekiah narratives, such as "the narrative techniques," "the story world," and "the verbal or grammatical level of the text."⁴⁶ In her study Fewell especially focused on "characterization" and "repetition." She concluded that the story of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:13—19:37 was a cohesive unit in which the speeches were prominent. Fewell also asserted that "[t]he story ... is an ironic story about words ... [and] depicts the deliverance of Jerusalem to be Yahweh's assertion of autonomy over life and death in the face of the Assyrian counter-claim."⁴⁷ One of the most significant things in her study was that Fewell pointed out the important function of characters' speeches in the

⁴⁴ Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 79–90.

⁴⁵ Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 79–80. Fewell dealt with 2 Kgs 18:13—19:37 as a unified story. She did not divide the story into three parts (account A, B1 and B2), which is commonly known as the Stade-Childs hypothesis.

⁴⁶ Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 79. In terms of the narrative techniques, Fewell dealt with two methods of narration: "summaries of events" and "scenic presentation." At the same time in the story world she focused on "characterization." In the last aspect of the text she examined "repetitions, usages of figurative language, unusual grammatical and syntactical constructions, and groups of words falling into the same semantic range. These levels of narrative were outlined in Bar-Efrat's article called "Some Observations."

⁴⁷ Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 87.

Hezekiah narratives. These speeches played an important role in developing the plot according to the author's point of view.

C. Hardmeier's monograph, *Prophetie im Streit vor dem Untergang Judas*, introduced a fictional reading of the Hezekiah narrative by suggesting that the entire story of 2 Kgs 18:9—19:37 is a fictional story written during the events in 588 B.C.E.⁴⁸ The events surrounding the 6th century Babylonian threat to Jerusalem was the background of the story of Hezekiah in the Bible.⁴⁹ Hardmeier viewed the narrative in Jer 37–40 as the reason why the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story (2 Kgs 18:9—19:37) was written. The Hezekiah story in 2 Kings was written for Jerusalemites in order to encourage them to stand against the Babylonians and to defy Jeremiah's words of submission to Babylon.⁵⁰ In his book, recognizing 2 Kgs 18:9—19:37 as a fictional narrative, Hardmeier saw account A (2 Kgs 18:13–16) and account B1 (2 Kgs 18:17—19:9a, 36–37) as a coherent story, but he viewed account B2 (2 Kgs 19:9b–35) as secondary.⁵¹ Utilizing narrative criticism, Hardmeier explained the strange sequence of events between account A and account B1, where a siege was laid against Jerusalem after tribute was paid. He asserted that this strange sequence was necessary in order to present the similarity between the story of Sennacherib's invasion and the events of 588 B.C.E.⁵² Although Hardmeier's understanding of the Hezekiah narrative had the advantage of explaining the problems in the Hezekiah narrative in 2 Kgs 18:13—19:37,

⁴⁸ Hardmeier, *Prophetie im Streit*.

⁴⁹ Ruprecht also asserted similarly that the story of Hezekiah was written in 588 B.C.E. in order to encourage the people of Judah under the invasion of Babylon (Ruprecht, "Die ursprüngliche Komposition," 33–66). However, Van der Kooij questioned the closeness of the supposed similarity between account B1 and the events of 588 B.C.E. (Van der Kooij, "Story," 117–18).

⁵⁰ Evans correctly pointed out that Hardmeier's original title, "Die Polemik gegen Ezechiël und Jeremia in den Hiskia-Jesaja-Erzählungen," showed this (Evans, *Invasion*, 10).

⁵¹ Hardmeier, *Prophetie im Streit*, 157–59.

⁵² Hardmeier, *Prophetie im Streit*, 154–56.

his understanding of the story of Hezekiah in terms of the events of 588 B.C.E. was problematic. It is hard to explain how this narrative survived in the light of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E. shortly after this narrative was written in 588 B.C.E.⁵³ At the same time his understanding of the Hezekiah narrative as a fiction was also problematic. Most scholarship accepts that at least part of the Hezekiah narrative in 2 Kings was historical.⁵⁴ Thus, Hardmeier's theory concerning the entire narrative of Hezekiah as fiction has not been accepted by other scholars.

At the same time J. H. Hull's dissertation entitled "Hezekiah—Saint and Sinner: A Conceptual and Contextual Narrative Analysis of 2 Kgs 18–20," was the one of the most detailed works about the account of the reign of Hezekiah.⁵⁵ His main concern was the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20. In his thesis Hull basically dealt with two aspects: "a *conceptual* aspect" and "a *contextual* aspect."⁵⁶ For the first aspect Hull dealt with the meaning of individual words found in 2 Kgs 18–20 within the context of Kings. On the other hand, for the second aspect, Hull dealt with the overall structural framework of the Book of Kings, because the context played an important role in making "the meaning of the text" and establishing "the coherence of its message."⁵⁷ Although Hull did not utilize strictly narrative analysis as his methodology, he used the narrative terminologies, namely "real author," "implied author," and "narrator."⁵⁸ Hull's approach has moved away from "historical criticism" to a literary study, which

⁵³ Evans, *Invasion*, 10; Seitz, "Review," 511–13.

⁵⁴ Concerning the historicity of the Hezekiah narrative, see Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*; Ben Zvi, "Who Wrote," 79–92; Dubovsky, *Hezekiah*; Evans, *Invasion*.

⁵⁵ Hull, "Hezekiah-Saint." Hull presented his Ph.D. dissertation to The Claremont Graduate School in 1994.

⁵⁶ The subtitle of Hull's dissertation is "A Conceptual and Contextual Narrative Analysis of 2 Kings 18–20."

⁵⁷ Hull, "Hezekiah-Saint," 55.

⁵⁸ Hull, "Hezekiah-Saint," 57–58.

combined several kinds of criticism.⁵⁹ Although Hull's thesis included many thoughtful ideas for understanding the Hezekiah narrative in 2 Kgs 18–20 in terms of the perspective of narrative analysis, his methodology was not a clear and constant one.⁶⁰

In recent years, three monographs have been published concerning the Hezekiah narratives. First, in his book, *A Portrayal of Trust: The Theme of Faith in the Hezekiah narratives*, D. Bostock thoroughly dealt with the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 and Isa 36–39 by using “narrative criticism” in order to reveal “the theme of faith.”⁶¹ In terms of narrative criticism, he focused on the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:1–12 and the portrayal of Hezekiah's faith in 2 Kgs 18:13—19:37. According to Bostock, Hezekiah was characterized as a good king who trusts (בטח) in the LORD in an exceptional way.⁶² At the same time Bostock views Hezekiah positively in the story of the payment of tribute to Sennacherib and does not believe that Hezekiah may have made an alliance with Egypt.⁶³ For Bostock this was not the case in the narrative. Rather the text focused on Hezekiah as “a man of devotion to his God,” which was shown by his praying to God in the temple.⁶⁴ In terms of the theme of trust, the account of Hezekiah in Isa 36–39 clearly showed this theme by making a contrast with the Ahaz

⁵⁹ Hull, “Hezekiah-Saint,” 62.

⁶⁰ Hull basically focused on two main issues: firstly “the coherence and meaning of 2 Kings 18 – 20 as it currently exists”; secondly “the role it plays within the large literary context of Kings” (Hull, “Hezekiah-Saint,” 47).

⁶¹ Bostock, *Trust*, 12–15.

⁶² Bostock, *Trust*, 41.

⁶³ Bostock, *Trust*, 46–59.

⁶⁴ Bostock, *Trust*, 78–80. Bostock also focused on the verb בטח (“trust”) which was the chief *leitmotif* of the story of Sennacherib's invasion. He said, “the faith that is attributed to Hezekiah may be seen as a personal trust in YHWH as implied by the repeated and ironical use of בטח by the Rabshakeh.” Bostock also asserts that in 2 Kgs 20 the verb בטח is not used, but the verb האמין is used. Thus, he makes a connection between the verb בטח and the verb האמין (“to believe”).

narrative in Isa 7.⁶⁵ By using a close reading of the text, Bostock provided theological assessment rather than historical-critical evaluation. He also evaluated the plot, setting, characterization, and authorial point of view in order to reveal that the Hezekiah narratives concentrated on the “theme of trust.” Bostock’s study offered a fresh, nuanced and cogent reading of a text often analyzed to the point of fragmentation. However, he does not examine the story of Hezekiah in the context of the book of Kings and Isaiah separately.

Second, P. S. Evans in *The Invasion of Sennacherib in the Book of Kings: A Source-Critical and Rhetorical Study of 2 Kings 18–19* thoroughly examined 2 Kgs 18:13—19:37 in order to provide a new way to solve the difficult problems in the Hezekiah narrative in 2 Kgs 18–19.⁶⁶ His main goal was to determine the sources that lay behind the Hezekiah narrative and how it could be used in historical reconstruction.⁶⁷ Like Hardmeier who combined a traditional method with a new literary approach, Evans employed a combination of two methods, namely “source-critical” and “rhetorical-critical” approaches,⁶⁸ in order to achieve his goal. In his close reading of the Hezekiah narrative, Evans revealed that the city of Jerusalem was not besieged, since no siege language was employed in the narrative. He asserted that “[t]he report of a ‘heavy force’ (חיל כבד) visiting Jerusalem appears to refer to an Assyrian military detachment that

⁶⁵ Bostock, *Trust*, 205. Bostock asserted that “[t]he situation as regarded the root נטח is different in the Book of Isaiah, but literary considerations invited comparison be made in particular with the Ahaz narrative in Isaiah 7, where the root נטח is found.”

⁶⁶ Evans, *Invasion*, ix.

⁶⁷ Evans, *Invasion*, 37.

⁶⁸ Evans, *Invasion*, 31–37. Evans rightly points out one of the short-comings of rhetorical criticism in biblical scholarship that was it “has tended to be *ahistorical* in its concerns” (Evans, *Invasion*, 31). In other words rhetorical criticism has ignored historical questions in the analysis; rather it constantly focused on the art of the narrative. Thus, Evans uses a combination of the historical-critical approach of source criticism and literary (rhetorical) criticism in order to form a coherent understanding of the text. He also discusses some literary critics who have noted the ramifications of their work for source criticism, such as Sternberg (*Poetics*) and Polzin (*Moses*).

accompanied the Assyrian messengers rather than a besieging army at the gate of Jerusalem.”⁶⁹ At the same time, Evans also pointed out that there is “a causal link” between the story of Hezekiah’s payment in 2 Kgs 18:13–16 and the story of sending Assyrian messengers to Jerusalem in the account B (2 Kgs 18:17—19:37). He claimed that “[t]he text suggests that Hezekiah reneged on surrendering the required payment of gold.”⁷⁰ According to Evans these results of a close reading clearly showed the integrity of the Hezekiah narrative and became the basis for understanding the historical claims of the text. Utilizing source-critical and rhetorical-critical approaches, Evans’ approach to 2 Kgs 18:13—19:37 provided many insights and a new way of examining the Hezekiah narrative and the result of his study gave a solution for historical difficulties in the text.

Finally, R. A. Young also dealt with the story of Hezekiah in his book, *Hezekiah in History and Tradition*.⁷¹ Young’s main concern was to provide a historical reconstruction of the reign of King Hezekiah.⁷² He investigated the history of Hezekiah by utilizing both extra-biblical materials and biblical texts in Kings, Isaiah, and Chronicles. Young focused especially on those issues which “either remain contentious in biblical scholarship, or else have been resolved into a general consensus which needs to be called into question.”⁷³ Then, Young concluded that the accounts of Hezekiah in the Bible were historical texts, particularly in regard to pre-exilic Israel.⁷⁴ In terms of “economic prosperity” and “literary creativity” during the reign of Hezekiah, Young

⁶⁹ Evans, *Invasion*, 191.

⁷⁰ Evans, *Invasion*, 192.

⁷¹ Young, *Hezekiah*, xv. Young’s book is a revision of his Ph.D. dissertation entitled “The Theme of Faith in the Hezekiah Narratives” which was submitted to the University of Durham in 2003.

⁷² Young, *Hezekiah*, 3.

⁷³ Young, *Hezekiah*, 6. In his book, Young dealt with the regnal years and lineage of Hezekiah, Sennacherib’s campaign against Judah, and the religious reform in Chronicles.

⁷⁴ Young, *Hezekiah*, 285–90.

suggested that the national history of Israel was composed under King Hezekiah, rather than under King Josiah.⁷⁵ Although Young's work essentially focused on the historicity of the accounts of Hezekiah, he asserted that Hezekiah was portrayed as the one who is "the rightful successor to the dynasty's eponymous ancestor" in the Hezekiah narratives.⁷⁶

1.3 Conclusion

Some of the scholars as mentioned above, have utilized narrative analysis as the methodology to examine the Hezekiah narratives. Some literary critics were using this approach to solve the historical claims in 2 Kgs 18–20, and others applied narrative analysis to the text in order to read the text ahistorically. However, these scholars still tried to understand the Hezekiah story by combining three biblical accounts (2 Kgs 18–20, Isa 36–39, and 2 Chr 29–32), rather than read each text in its own literary context. At the same time, a comparison between these three accounts of the reign of Hezekiah was treated in a limited fashion by some scholars. Thus, it is still necessary to read the Hezekiah narratives in the literary context of each book, in order to properly understand the story of Hezekiah. At the same time, comparing the Hezekiah narrative in these three biblical books highlights each composition's ideological point of view.

Therefore, this dissertation will concentrate specifically on the portrayal of Hezekiah in the literary context of Kings, Isaiah, and Chronicles. Utilizing narrative analysis, this dissertation will demonstrate that the Hezekiah narratives in the aforementioned books describe the same reign of King Hezekiah, in their unique way

⁷⁵ Young, *Hezekiah*, 290–91. Some scholars believed that the pre-exilic redactions of Deuteronomy, the Deuteronomistic History, and First Isaiah were composed under King Josiah (Young, *Hezekiah*, 290). In terms of "a pan-Josianic approach" to the biblical text, see Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*.

⁷⁶ Young, *Hezekiah*, 291.

according to their purpose and their individual point of view and that the three biblical books are 'ideological' in nature. The Kings account focuses on Hezekiah's political events including his negative aspects in order to show the faithfulness of the LORD to His promise to David (2 Sam 7) through Hezekiah's faithful actions to the LORD. In the Isaiah account, Hezekiah is portrayed as a more faithful king than his father, Ahaz, in order to encourage the people to trust in the LORD sincerely. The Chronicles account depicts Hezekiah as the best king among the Davidic kings in order to indicate the beginning of the reunited kingdom. Thus, the Chronicles account fully expands Hezekiah's religious reforms and abridges his political events in order to portray him as a second David and Solomon.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This dissertation utilizes narrative analysis as the main approach to the Hezekiah narratives. It is taken as given that 2 Kgs 18–20, Isa 36–39, and 2 Chr 29–32 are the narratives of the reign of Hezekiah.¹ As many scholars have pointed out, the narratives in the Bible consist of two things, “history and theology” which are combined together in a “story.”² Narrative critics have also recognized that the biblical text should be understood “as a whole.”³ Thus, narrative analysis is an ideal way to understand the meaning of the Hezekiah narrative in the context of each biblical book, and to make sense of the differences between these three accounts of Hezekiah.

When dealing with the Hezekiah narratives, this dissertation concentrates upon the final form of the text as found in the Hebrew Bible. In terms of the Kings account (2 Kgs 18–20), however, it is necessary to find the proto-Masoretic text form of the story, for the later Masoretic text (MT) has been corrupted in transmission with the presence of a very similar text in Isaiah. Konkel maintains that “[c]ompositional changes that have been made are much more evident before the texts have begun to conform to each other through harmonization in the transmission process.”⁴ In other words, the proto-Masoretic text is the final form of the Masoretic text which is not corrupted by harmonization in the transmission process. Childs also asserts that “the Masoretic text is not identical with the canonical text, but is only a vehicle for its recovery,” and “[t]he proto-Masoretic tradition was at best one among many competing traditions.”⁵

¹ In this dissertation I use the term “narrative” as a story.

² Wenham, *Story*, 1–4.

³ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 153.

⁴ Konkel, “Sources,” 464.

⁵ Childs, *Introduction*, 100–102; also see, Konkel, “Sources,” 462–82.

In this respect, it would be difficult to underestimate the influence of B. S. Childs, who sought to emphasize the canonical context of the final form of the biblical text. Although Childs recognized the importance of the foundational work of biblical scholars who used traditional methods, Childs strongly suggested that biblical scholarship should turn away from studying the “original contexts” of the text and rather emphasize the “canonical contexts” of each text.⁶ He convincingly asserted that “[t]he term canon points to the received, collected, and interpreted material of the church and thus establishes the theological context in which the tradition continues to function authoritatively for today.”⁷ He developed his method, “canonical approach” also known as “canon criticism” in his work, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. He said that canonical analysis focused on the final form of texts, the Hebrew Bible, but he disagreed with those scholars who sought to reconstruct a history of the religious development of ancient Israel by using other sources of information.⁸ He asserted the need to investigate any historical influences on the canonical shapers to the extent that they can be determined. Childs noted that dealing with the final stage of the text was not losing the “historical dimension.” He maintained that “[t]he canonical approach was concerned to understand the nature of the theological shape of the text.”⁹ According to Childs, the main concern of the canonical approach was to study “the features of this

⁶ Childs, “Reflections,” 377–88; Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 39. For Childs, the word “canonical” means “a cipher to encompass the various and diverse factors involved in the formation of the literature.” He continued that “[t]he term also included the process by which the collection arose which led up to its final stage of literary and textual stabilization, that is, canonization proper” (Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 70).

⁷ Childs, *Biblical Theology*, 71. Childs believed that “[t]he material was transmitted through its various oral, literary, and redactional stages by many different groups toward a theological end. Because the traditions were received as religiously authoritative, they were transmitted in such a way as to maintain a normative function for subsequent generations of believers within a community of faith.”

⁸ Childs, *Introduction*, 73.

⁹ Childs, *Introduction*, 74.

peculiar set of religious texts in relation to their usage within the historical community of ancient Israel.”¹⁰ Thus, the main task of a canonical approach to the biblical accounts was “to understand the peculiar shape and special function of these texts which comprised the Hebrew canon.”¹¹

Before the present study enters into the story world of the Hezekiah narratives, it is worthwhile to survey narrative criticism in general, specifically techniques of narrative approach.

2.1 Reading Biblical Narratives

The main concern of narrative analysis is to deal with a particular type of literature. In terms of a broad definition, a narrative can be understood as any literary work which is related to tell a story.¹² However, the biblical narratives were written long ago by author(s) who lived in the context of a certain time for those who lived in the same time and culture. Thus, we as readers are faced with many interpretive difficulties. Many biblical scholars have tried to determine the meaning of the text in their own ways. In contrast to traditional biblical critics who have treated the text as a fragment, narrative critics have dealt with the text as a whole. In most cases their emphasis has been on the final form of the text in the Hebrew Bible. In this way the “synchronic study” of the final form of a text is more important than the “diachronic study” of that text in terms of narrative analysis.¹³ Recognizing important contributions of the various historical approaches to the biblical narratives, Bar-Efrat contends that the literary approach (narrative approach) is as equally important as the historical approach. He also maintains

¹⁰ Childs, *Introduction*, 73.

¹¹ Childs, *Introduction*, 72.

¹² Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 23. Other literary critics have been also devoted to the study of poetry.

¹³ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 83–84.

that anyone who studies the biblical narratives must use the literary approach, “for it is impossible to appreciate the nature of biblical narrative fully, understand the network of its component elements or penetrate into inner world without having recourse to the methods and tools of literary scholarship.”¹⁴

As seen above, narrative critics have introduced many skills that help the reader perform a “close reading” of the biblical text and understand many literary aspects such as “narrative time and settings, plot and character tension, point of view, dialogue, and narration.”¹⁵ These features help the reader to see the biblical text properly and to understand the flow of the biblical text in order to determine the meaning of the text and the purpose of the biblical author. In terms of the act of communication, which is the philosophical basis for literary criticism, there are three basic elements: a sender, a message, and a receiver. In literature, these three basic elements may be identified with the author, the text, and the reader.¹⁶ However, the exact way in which these three components interact with each other is understood differently by different literary critics.¹⁷

¹⁴ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 10.

¹⁵ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 154.

¹⁶ Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 8–9. This is a ‘speech-act model’ proposed by R. Jakobson, which is one of the simplest and yet most profound of his communication theories. With regard to literary criticism this speech-act theory can be illustrated as follows: Author (Sender) → Text (Message) → Reader (Receiver).

¹⁷ For instance, as a school of literary criticism, the goal of structuralism is to understand how literature works. According to structuralism the meaning of a text is found within the deep structures of the text rather than in the intentions of the author or in the perception of the reader. In rhetorical criticism it is important to know as much as possible about the circumstances of a work’s intended audience. However, rhetorical criticism differs from reader-response approaches which seek to understand the effect of the text on modern reader. At this point narrative criticism is similar to rhetorical criticism, but narrative critics employ a concept of the implied reader that makes it a more text-centered approach. In other words narrative critics “interpret the text from the perspective of an idealized *implied reader* who is presupposed by and constructed from the text itself” (Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 15).

Most narrative critics, however, have recognized the distinction between the real author and the implied author. The real author does not appear in the story, but he uses a persona which he creates in the story. This created person in the story is usually called “the implied author.” G. Wenham asserts that “[i]n dealing with biblical texts we are always dealing with the implied author not the real author, because all our knowledge of the author and his mind is derived from the text themselves.”¹⁸

On the other hand, narrative critics also have made a distinction between the real reader and the implied reader. The real reader corresponds to the real author and the implied reader is the counterpart to the implied author.¹⁹ The real reader can be the original reader who first received the text, the secondary reader who reads the text upon the solicitation of the original reader, or every generation of readers who read the text in different time frames. The implied reader, Tate mentions, is “the reader whom the author has in mind during the process of composition” or “audience presupposed by the narrative.”²⁰ When the author wrote, he/she had a certain sort of reader in mind. The author made a guess as to be inclusive his reader’s experience, knowledge, and outlook, and presents his story in order to appeal to this implied reader. Thus, narrative critics understand an implied reader from the story itself.²¹ By utilizing this understanding of the implied reader narrative analysis represents a more text-centered approach to the text.

¹⁸ Wenham, *Story*, 9. Longman also points out that the implied author is “the textual manifestation of the real author,” and the real author can be constructed “based on inference from the text” (Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 84).

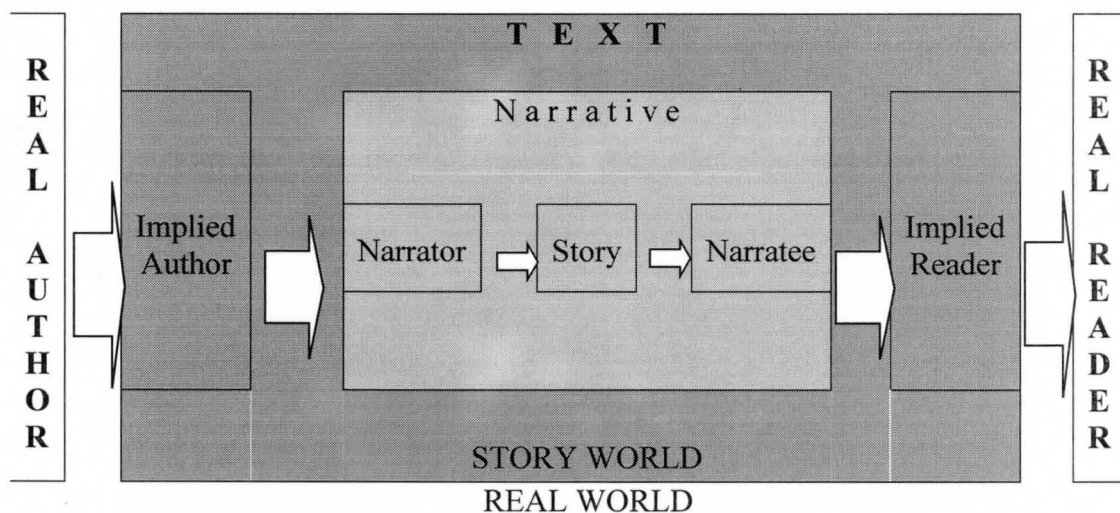
¹⁹ Wenham, *Story*, 9.

²⁰ Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 81.

²¹ Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 19. In this way narrative criticism clearly differs from rhetorical criticism that “focuses on the means through which a work achieves a particular effect on its reader,” because narrative criticism seeks to discover the implied reader rather than the original reader (Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 15).

Thus, narrative critics basically interpret the story through the viewpoint of an implied reader who is only understood from the narrative itself.

According to narrative critics, the implied author is distinguished from the narrator in the story. The narrator is the person within the story that is telling the story, while the implied author is the perspective from which the text is written. At the same time, narrative critics make a distinction between the implied reader and the narratee. Corresponding to the narrator in the text is the narratee, to whom the story is being told. Tate asserts that “the narratee may or may not be a character in the narrative.”²² However, the real reader always feels that the narrative is told by someone. Thus, in the narrative the narrator (the narratee) should be distinguished from the implied author (the implied reader). The narrator and the narratee, Powell indicates, “are rhetorical devices, created by the implied author ... [and] part of the narrative itself, part of the discourse through which the story is told.”²³ Thus, the communication model (Sender → Message → Receiver) for narrative analysis can be reformulated as follows:²⁴



²² Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 82.

²³ Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 27.

²⁴ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 155. This chart is a modification of Osborne's.

Narrative critics intently focus on the text. Within the text, they have sought to find all three parts of the communication process: the implied author (sender), narrative (message), and the implied reader (receiver). These three components are all internal to the text and are reconstructed from the text. Thus, the main goal of the narrative approach to the text is to read the story as the implied reader. Narrative critics also find all three components of the communication process within the narrative, namely the narrator, story and narratee. Bar-Efrat points out that the implied author utilizes the voice and presence of the narrator to combine and assess all aspects of the narrative, and to attempt to convince the implied reader to accept a particular viewpoint.²⁵ Thus, in terms of a narrative critical study, the narrator and narratee are the most important elements to understand the story because they are literary creations and are embodied in the process of communication within the narrative.

According to the diagram above, there is another distinction between the real world and the story world. The real world is the world where the real author lived, while the story world is the artificial world created by the real author and found only in the narrative. Tate contends:

The real world refers to the author's world with its patterns of behavior, social institutions, and ideological, economic, religious, and ethical structures. ... Framed by the beginning and ending of the text, it [the story world] is a creation of an author who selects and arranges events in a complex structure. The arrangement of events and the characterization of individuals within the story do not correlate exactly with historical chronology or with the real world persona.²⁶

²⁵ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 14. Also see Sternberg, *Poetics*, 51; Mathewson, "Narratives," 418–21.

²⁶ Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 84.

Tate also points out that the meaning of the story and its significance are in the story world rather than in the real world.²⁷ However, we as the readers of the biblical narratives have many interpretative difficulties, because they were written centuries ago by real authors who lived in their own time and space. Thus, if we want to understand the story world of the biblical narratives, we still need to know the real world of the real author. Osborne correctly points out that “[i]n reality the literary and historical exist side-by-side and are interdependent. As a literal representation of an event and its significance, both text and its background are essential components of the meaning.”²⁸ Although it is better to know the real world in terms of the understanding of the biblical story world, a narrative exists in the story world as an independent world separated from the real world. Thus, narrative critics must examine the biblical narratives only in the story world.²⁹

In order to achieve the goal of narrative analysis within the story world, certain literary tools are required and available: setting, plot, narrator, characters, and the particular style of the biblical narratives. Before entering into the story world, narrative critics need to understand these narrative features, which the present study will review.

2.2 Narrative Analysis

The main narrative features considered in the narrative methodology of the present study will be narration, plot, setting, characterization, and style.

²⁷ Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 85.

²⁸ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 213–14.

²⁹ Walsh, *1 Kings*, xi–xii; Brown, “Discovering David,” 26.

2.2.1 Narration

The narration is the voice of the narrator who is only present in the story world. He combines every aspect of the narrative to tell the story, but he does not always appear on the stage in the story as a visible character.³⁰ The narrator may describe the action of the character as it actually occurs, before it happens, or after the fact. The narrator can exist in many different ways in the narratives. The narrator may appear in the story as the first person introduced, the principal character in the story, or a combination of these. At the same time the narrator may be absent from the story by speaking in third person about the characters in the narrative. In the third person narratives, Longman asserts, “the narrator may display omniscience and omnipresence.”³¹ In this mode, Rhodes, Dewey, and Michie also point out:

Third-person narrators can vary. A narrator with ‘objective omniscience’ tells only what can be seen and heard. A narrator with ‘limited omniscience’ also tells thoughts and feelings, but only those in the mind of the protagonist. A narrator with ‘unlimited omniscience’ is able to tell anything about the story world, including what is in the mind of any character at any time and place. Most ancient stories ... are told by a narrator with unlimited omniscience.³²

The role of narrator’s voice in the story is to explain the story for the reader. The voice of the narrator directs the reader to accept the narrator’s analysis and response to the characters and events in the story. The reader of the story usually follows the direction of a third person narrator with an unconscious submissiveness. Longman correctly

³⁰ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 15; Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 82; Heard, “Narrative Criticism,” 36–37.

³¹ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 85–86.

³² Rhodes et al., *Mark*, 39–40. Longman also points out that most biblical narratives are presented as third person narratives (Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 86).

points out that “[t]he choice of such a powerfully persuasive literary device fits in with the Bible’s concern to proclaim an authoritative message.”³³

The third person omniscient narrator in a story is an observer, not a participant, who unfolds the story. Thus, it is important for the reader to know the way that the narrator observes the story. The narrator usually utilizes particular points of view in order to tell a story properly. In terms of the biblical narratives, there are five narrator’s points of view: spatial, temporal, psychological, evaluative, and phraseological points of view.³⁴

First of all, the spatial point of view indicates the place where the narrator stands when he tells the event. Spatially, the biblical narrators are usually *omnipresent*. They can move from one place to the other freely. They also tell the narratives from various places. They have the ability to control the movement of characters in the story in order to provide the readers the narrator’s spatial point of view.³⁵ In terms of the temporal point of view, the biblical narrators are usually *omniscient*. Temporally, the biblical narrators can reveal the event before it happens. On the other hand, they can purposely keep the result of the event from the readers until later. In this way the narrator directs the readers to read the story from that viewpoint.³⁶

The evaluative point of view refers to the narrator’s evaluation about the characters and the events in the story. The narrator has an ability to evaluate aspects of the narrative as appropriate or inappropriate, good or evil, approved or disapproved.³⁷

The narrator tells the story in this way in order to persuade the reader to adopt the

³³ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 86.

³⁴ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 156–57; Berlin, *Poetics*, 43–44, 55–56.

³⁵ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 157–58; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 15–20; Berlin, *Poetics*, 43.

³⁶ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 157; Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 95.

³⁷ Berlin, *Poetics*, 55; Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 156; Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 88.

narrator's evaluative (or ideological) point of view. Typically the narrator does this in irre recognizable ways, but at other times the narrator directly provides the readers his evaluative comments and statements.³⁸

In terms of the psychological point of view, the narrator reveals the inside information of characters in the story. The psychological viewpoint denotes the perspective of the narrator on the actions of the characters in the story.³⁹ In this perspective the narrator shows the inner thoughts and feelings of the characters in the story. In this way the narrators in the biblical narratives are *omniscient* once again and provide the readers information no one could possibly know.⁴⁰ Being omniscient, the narrator can be recognized by the readers as a reliable and authoritative source of knowledge within the story.⁴¹ However, Osborne correctly asserts that “when the point of view is that of the characters within the story, the perspective is finite and often wrong,” so that “the reader experiences in a poignant way the tensions within the story.”⁴²

Finally, the phraseological viewpoint of the narrator refers to a private dialogue or speeches in a story. In this point of view the narrator is seen as omni-competent.⁴³ The narrator reveals a private dialogue that no one can hear in order to provide the reader some information for the proper understanding of the story. Osborne points out,

³⁸ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 157; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 16; Berlin, *Poetics*, 52.

³⁹ Berlin, *Poetics*, 56; Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 88.

⁴⁰ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 156.

⁴¹ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 65–67; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 17–23; Amit, *Biblical Narratives*,

74.

⁴² Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 156.

⁴³ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 157.

“the reader is given valuable inside information that leads to the dramatic and theological lessons.”⁴⁴

In narrative texts, the narrator utilizes different modes of narration to present his story.⁴⁵ M. J. Boda summarizes five major categories of narrative: direct, dramatic, descriptive, declarative, and documentary narrative.⁴⁶ Direct narrative is a “simple reporting of the events, usually in third person,”⁴⁷ and dramatic narrative uses dialogues and speeches to report the events. Descriptive narrative is a description of something, usually a place or a character, while pausing the flow of the action of a character. Declarative narrative is also another type of “suspension of the action” to give the reader the narrator’s perspective or commentary on a character, or an event. Finally documentary narrative refers to some documents that the narrator utilizes in his story,

⁴⁴ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 157. At the same time Berlin asserts that the phraseological point of view refers to “the linguistic features in the discourse that indicate whose point of view is being expressed.” She finds this point of view with the other four categories from B. Uspensky’s work (Uspensky, *Poetics*). According to Berlin, many insights of Uspensky in his book can be profitably used for the analysis of biblical story. One of the most important contributions of his work is “his great sensitivity to language as an indicator of point of view” (Berlin, *Poetics*, 57). However, Longman removes this point of view from his list as an important point of view for the literary analysis of biblical narrative (Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 87).

⁴⁵ Bar-Efrat suggests that there are two types of narration, namely overt narration and covert narration. Overt narration inserts comments about characters and events into the narrative by the narrator, and covert narration occurs, “when the narrative is allowed to speak for itself” (Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 23). In the former the presence of the narrator is obviously felt and it is easy to discern the narrator’s points of view. In the latter, however, the existence of the narrator is scarcely felt because the narrator intentionally limits the presentation of his point of view. Bar-Efrat correctly asserts that this distinction is convenient but should not be regarded as an absolute and unequivocal one, because there is a continuum of intermediate situations between these two narrations (Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 23–32). Minimizing the presence of the narrator, covert narration not only increases the vivid depiction of character and plot, but also creates intentional ambiguity between “some truth and the whole truth” (Sternberg, *Poetics*, 126, 230–63). Thus, in covert narration the reader is more actively involved reading the story by adopting the limited point of view of a particular character or observer. The narrator, however, still remains in control of narrative development in order to persuade the reader to adopt the ideological viewpoint of the narrator. Thus, it is necessary for the reader to be sensitive to the ways in which the narrator is subtly describing the narrative, being careful to read the narrative in its proper literary context.⁴⁵ Using overt and covert narration, the narrator helps the reader identify the narrator’s ideological viewpoint, which is important in making assessments about biblical narratives correctly (Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 32–45).

⁴⁶ Boda, “Prayer,” 270–72.

⁴⁷ Boda, “Prayer,” 270.

such as “lists, correspondence, or proclamations.”⁴⁸ Most biblical narratives are a combination of the first four narrative types with either the flow of the story continually moving forward or stopping the flow of the story. Boda, however, points out that the fifth category, documentary narrative, is also important to understand the biblical narratives which have many important documents.⁴⁹ Boda also notes that these narratives play a different role in the story.⁵⁰ Direct narrative pushes the plot forward, and dramatic and descriptive narrative “draw rhetorical focus by reducing the story’s pace and sparing the imagination.”⁵¹ Declarative narrative provides “clarification” for the understanding of the story.⁵²

2.2.2 Plot

The plot is the sequence of events in a story, arranged by an author in temporal sequence. In other words the plot is the arrangement of all events in a story as a meaningful chain by a cause and effect order.⁵³ Thus, the plot plays an important role for authors in order to hold the reader’s attention and to keep the reader’s interest until the

⁴⁸ Boda, “Prayer,” 270.

⁴⁹ Boda, “Prayer,” 270. Following Momigliano, Boda observes that “the use of ‘documents’ as a key characteristic of 5th-century B.C.E. historiography in Greek, Persian, and Jewish historiography.” Boda also warns us that “documents” in the biblical narratives are not necessarily those identified by source or redactional critical analysis, because he does not see these documents as “different source layers that can be discerned underlying the text.”

⁵⁰ Boda, “Prayer,” 271–75.

⁵¹ Boda, “Prayer,” 271.

⁵² Boda, “Prayer,” 271. Bar-Efrat also states that the narrator utilizes many different methods of narratives: “narrator’s account as opposed to character’s speech (dialogue), scenic presentation versus summary, narration as against description, explanation, comment, etc” (Bar-Efrat, “Some Observations,” 158). These methods of narratives are used by the narrator for the structuring of the narratives. In terms of time in a narrative, Bar-Efrat asserts that the narrator utilizes two methods of narrations: summaries of events and scenic presentation when he tells his story. Bar-Efrat explains that “[i]n scenic presentation narrated time flows rather slowly, where in summary it runs quickly, relative to narration time” (Bar-Efrat, “Some Observations,” 159). Fewell also notes, “[s]ummaries of events accelerate the passage of time by reporting events in rapid succession . . . Scenic presentation slows the pace of time, describes events in detail, presents characters with more depth, and develops more subtle and complex themes” (Fewell, “Sennacherib’s Defeat,” 80).

⁵³ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 93.

end of the story. The plot basically contains a beginning, middle, and end.⁵⁴ At the beginning the narrator often mentions “all the important elements for the unfolding story.”⁵⁵ By doing this the narrator provides the reader important background information. Sometimes the narrator also presents a specific narrative perspective of the characters, events, and plot at the beginning.⁵⁶ At the end of the story the narrator often states the meaning or result of the narrative in order to indicate the end of the story.⁵⁷ In contrast to the beginning and ending of a narrative, the middle of the plot typically consists of dialogue. Alter points out, “narration is often relegated to the role of confirming assertions made in dialogue.”⁵⁸

In fact, dialogue and speech play an important role in the biblical narrative. On the one hand, speech in a story reports events in order to move the plot forward. Boda states that speeches often explain or justify the particular actions of a character or why a character is acted upon and against.⁵⁹ Boda continues that “speeches express the ideological message of the narrator.”⁶⁰ A character’s speech, however, sometimes contrasts the narrator’s point of view in order to provide another point of view. In this way, speeches are significant to provide characterization, which we will see below in more detail. The speech of a character also reveals a character’s thoughts, motives, and desires. Boda notes, “[t]hrough a speech the narrator is able to convey with simplicity

⁵⁴ Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 46; Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 93; Brown, “Discovering David,” 26.

⁵⁵ Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 34.

⁵⁶ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 111, 117; Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 47; Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 110.

⁵⁷ Gunn and Fewell, *Narrative*, 105.

⁵⁸ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 65.

⁵⁹ Boda, “Prayer,” 275.

⁶⁰ Boda, “Prayer,” 274.

the inner psychology and ideology of a character.”⁶¹ Thus, the narrator utilizes speeches in a story not only to give the reader information, but also to contribute to the dramatic effect and vividness of the story. On the other hand, Alter also asserts that the biblical narrative is often “narration-through-dialogue.”⁶² The narrator slows down “the pace of the plot” by employing dialogues.⁶³ In this way, the narrator delays the advancement of the action and focuses on a particular character in order to accentuate the narrative moment or character. Boda also points out that the dialogue indicates “key turning points or climaxes in the structural framework of a narrative.”⁶⁴

In the biblical narratives, however, the plot structure is more complicated than the simplest plot outline, such as a beginning, middle, and end.⁶⁵ The plot traces tensions between characters within the narrative, marking a moment of conflict and then advancing the story forward to its resolution. Conflict is one of the basic elements to develop the plot in the biblical narratives.⁶⁶ A type of conflict appears at the beginning of the story and then it becomes more complicated in various ways through the middle. Finally the conflict is resolved at the end of the story. Thus, Amit asserts that the plot in biblical narratives often consists of five elements, such as a beginning condition, complication, change, resolution and conclusion.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Boda, “Prayer,” 274.

⁶² Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 69.

⁶³ Boda, “Prayer,” 274.

⁶⁴ Boda, “Prayer,” 274.

⁶⁵ Longman, *Biblical Narrative*, 93; Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 46; Tate, *Biblical Narrative*, 110; Hofman, “Tamar,” 21; Brown, “Discovering David,” 28. According to narrative critics the simplest plot outline of Aristotle (beginning, middle, and end) is developed in more detail. Longman’s book provides a good diagram for the detailed plot outline.

⁶⁶ Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 88; Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 93.

⁶⁷ Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 62. Amit suggests that this kind of plot can be represented by the formula ABXBA. L. Ryken also provides a pattern of the plot in biblical narrative as follows: “exposition (background information), inciting moment (or inciting force), rising action, turning point (the point from

In terms of the types of plot, however, there are several kinds of plot in biblical narratives, namely, concentric, comedy, epic, and tragedy.⁶⁸ First of all, a concentric plot is the most common type of plot in biblical narratives and appears when the circumstances of the story are similar before the conflict at the beginning and after the resolution of the conflict at the end of the story. However, the characters in the story have been influenced or changed by the events of the chapter.⁶⁹ A comedy is “a story with a U-shaped plot in which the action begins in prosperity, descends into potentially tragic events, and rises to a happy ending.”⁷⁰ Thirdly, an epic is “a long narrative having a number of conventional characteristics,” like the journey of a heroic figure who is protected by a supernatural being.⁷¹ Finally, tragedy is a story that highlights the failing journey of a protagonist who encounters a misfortune resulting from poor choices on his or her part.⁷² In other words, tragedy is a story that depicts “a decline from bliss to woe.”⁷³ In a biblical narrative, however, it is not easy to define the type of plot, because they are usually combined together. A plot in the biblical story may be a single plot type or a combination of more than one. Thus, one of the key distinctions between these four types of plot in biblical narratives is a simple or complex plot type.

As mentioned above, the narrator also employs five different narrations in order to develop the plot of the story. However, these five narrations are not separated from

which, at least in retrospect, the reader can begin to see how the plot conflict will be resolved), further complication, climax and denouement” (Ryken, *Words*, 363).

⁶⁸ Ryken, *Words*, 360; Exum, *Tragedy*, 4–15; Brown, “Discovering David,” 28.

⁶⁹ Rhodes and Michie, *Mark*, 36.

⁷⁰ Ryken, *Words*, 360.

⁷¹ Ryken, *Words*, 360.

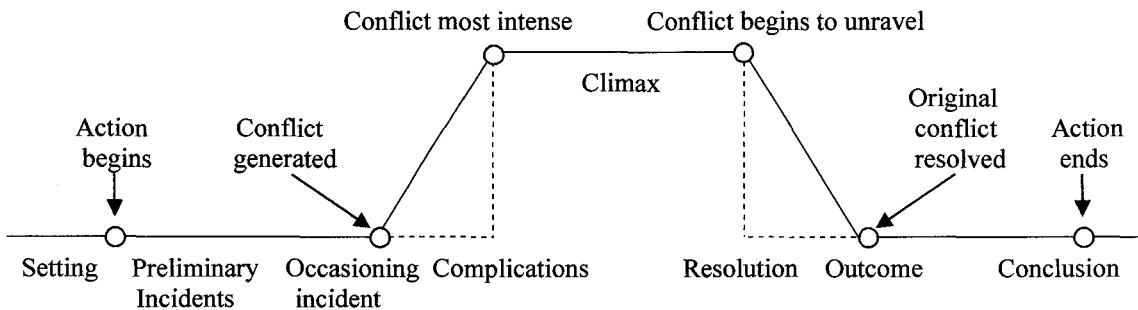
⁷² Exum, *Tragedy*, 4–15.

⁷³ Ryken, *Words*, 49.

each other; rather they are combined together in every narrative and serve a variety of purposes. Boda states:

The narrative types have each been associated with specific functions, with direct narrative used to advance the plot, dramatic and descriptive narrative to draw rhetorical focus by reducing the story's pace and sparking the imagination, and declarative narrative to offer clarification for the interpretation of the story.⁷⁴

The plot of a story provides organization and structure to the reader. Although there are many plot types in biblical narratives, they basically follow a similar structure: conflict, complication and resolution. In biblical narratives this similar structure can be repeated many times in a single plot until the final resolution.⁷⁵ Berlin also correctly points out that a resolution of a plot may not be a mark for the end of the story, but a sign for the reader that discourse of the narrative becomes a final conclusion.⁷⁶ The single plot of biblical narrative can be represented graphically as follows:⁷⁷



⁷⁴ Boda, "Prayer," 271.

⁷⁵ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 147.

⁷⁶ Berlin, *Poetics*, 107–10.

⁷⁷ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 92. I utilize Longman's plot structure which originally came from the work of V. Poythress (Poythress, "Structuralism," 221–37). According to Longman, the plot structure of Poythress is based on the work of J. Beekman who did not publish his paper "The Semantic Structure." The present study will utilize this plot structure to examine Hezekiah's narratives in three biblical books. According to Longman, "[t]he plot may be traced by means of the conflict between characters in the story" (Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 103). Ryken also notes that "[t]he essence of plot is a central conflict or set of conflicts moving toward a resolution" (Ryken, *The Bible as Literature*, 40). Thus, in the diagram, the horizon indicates the moving of the conflict toward a resolution and the vertical line shows the narrative tension which increases once and then de-escalates within the story (Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 103–4).

In biblical narratives a plot may be a single plot type or a combination of more than one plot type. Studying the type of plot is important to understand the roles of the character within the story, because the plot is only developed through the action of characters.⁷⁸

2.2.3 Setting

Setting is also one of the crucial features of biblical narrative. The setting provides the physical background for the action of characters in a story. Thus, the setting is closely related to the characters and the plot of the narrative. The setting consists of a basic context given in a story in which the plot and characters develop.⁷⁹ Essentially, the setting provides a time and space where the story occurs. The setting also presents historical, sociological, and cultural background, which influences the characters and events.⁸⁰

One of the essential elements of the setting is “time.” Bar-Efrat claims, “[a] narrative cannot exist without time.”⁸¹ He also points out that textual indications through temporal expressions and verb shifts denote time and its various relations. The narrator intentionally employs the words and constructs the sentences and paragraphs by paying close attention to their length in order “to create a dynamic rhythm,” which also relates time.⁸²

According to narrative critics, there are two kinds of time: narration time and narrated time.⁸³ Narration time indicates the time in the real world when the story is told

⁷⁸ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 93.

⁷⁹ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 94; Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 111.

⁸⁰ Ryken, *Words*, 61.

⁸¹ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 141.

⁸² Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 142–44. Amit also asserts that time is “a central value in biblical literature as a whole,” and time also emphasizes its “calculated and deliberate nature” (Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 114).

⁸³ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 63; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 143; Berlin, *Poetics*, 96.

to the people or is read by the reader. In other words, narration time refers to “objective time” outside of a story.⁸⁴ On the other hand, narrated time represents the time within the story. In other words, narrated time indicates the time which is described by the author in a story. Thus narrated time is called “literary time” inside of a story.⁸⁵ In general narrated time is much faster than narration time.⁸⁶ The biblical story often covers many days or years even many generations (narrated time), but the biblical story is told in few minutes (narration time).

The narrator easily moves forward or backward in a story through narrated time. Amit asserts that the narrator can advance narrated time forward quickly by utilizing genealogies, “standard phrases” that indicate the new generation, and “summarizing statements” that show us that many years have passed.⁸⁷ The narrator, on the other hand, slows down narrated time by employing the techniques of “repetition,” and “dialogue.”⁸⁸ When the story slows down, it is usually an indication that the narrator tries to get the reader’s attention to a particular event or to a particular section from the quickly moving narrated time of the story. Thus, Alter asserts that if biblical narratives include certain sections which describe in detail, the reader should view those sections as more important than others, which can be indicated through the slowing pace of narrated time.⁸⁹ Although during dialogue the speed of time between narration time and narrated time is roughly the same, discourse between characters is regarded as essential, as Alter

⁸⁴ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 143.

⁸⁵ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 143.

⁸⁶ Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 105.

⁸⁷ Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 106–8.

⁸⁸ Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 108–9.

⁸⁹ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 63.

maintains.⁹⁰ By slowing down narrated time the narrator might show some clues to the reader about the ideological point of view of the narrator.

The other important element of setting is space. Like time, space is also important because all events take place and characters act within space. Space is the physical location where the event occurs, but the narrative does not exist within space.⁹¹ The biblical narratives do not usually provide descriptions of space and objects that exist within space. Thus, when descriptions are mentioned in the biblical narratives, they play an important role in the narrative.⁹² At the same time physical locations and geographical explanations can add to develop the plot of biblical narratives. The appearance of names of geographical locations in a story usually characterizes those places or events that take place there.⁹³ However, it is not easy to identify the precise function of space in a story. Amit says, “place is so significant that entire stories revolve around particular places,” and she continues, “[t]he reference to place is so significant that it may even be the leading figure of the story.”⁹⁴

All physical locations mentioned in a story are significant to the development of the plot. Bar-Efrat indicates that the narrator describes the movement of characters from one place to the other in order to develop space in a story.⁹⁵ Thus, specific names of places applicable to the plot are cited in a narrative. Bar-Efrat asserts, “... places in the narratives are not merely geographical facts, but are to be regarded as literary elements

⁹⁰ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 65.

⁹¹ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 184.

⁹² Ryken, *Words*, 60.

⁹³ Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 122.

⁹⁴ Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 125.

⁹⁵ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 185. According to Bar-Efrat, these places can be specific: a well, a house, or a city gate, and more general: towns, cities, or regions, in biblical narratives.

in which fundamental significance is embodied.”⁹⁶ Accordingly the reader of a biblical narrative can divide the plot of that story into scenes by examining the shifts of locations.⁹⁷

Setting is one of the most important elements to tell a biblical narrative like all other stories, which are formed by the elements of time and space. The function of these two elements, time and space, within the biblical narrative are closely related to each other. At the same time, the changes of time and space in a story indicate that the scenes are changed. Thus, time and space not only provide an important background and context of a story, but also create the subdivision of a setting structure of a story, such as events, scenes, and acts.

2.2.4 Character and Characterization

Characters are the people who are depicted by the narrator in a story. They speak and act in various ways which constitute the plot of the story. The narrator utilizes all the elements of narrative techniques to depict the characters according to the narrator’s ideological point of view.⁹⁸ Thus, characters often represent the meaning of the story and the reader can understand the ideological point of view of the narrator by the various activities of characters in the story. Accordingly, it is important for the reader to see how the narrator portrays characters in the narrative in order to understand the story.

Many different kinds of characters in a story are introduced and developed by the narrator. These characters can be categorized into two groups: major and minor characters. Major characters are the main characters that are round and complex within

⁹⁶ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 194.

⁹⁷ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 187.

⁹⁸ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 47.

the story. These characters are often called “round characters” and identified as “*full-fledged* characters” according to their role within the story.⁹⁹ Round characters are usually depicted with diverse features by the narrator in the story and may indicate a development or change of character over the course of the story.¹⁰⁰ Round characters are portrayed as the real people who are complex and difficult to anticipate, but they play an important role to make the plot of the story.

On the other hand, there are two more characters in a story: “flat characters” and “agents.”¹⁰¹ Flat characters are unsophisticatedly depicted in a story and they usually represent a certain category of person with only one or two features of their character. Thus, flat characters are not portrayed as specific personal features in the story. Agents, however, are introduced in a functionary role only within the story in order to develop the plot, to provide the setting, or to emphasize appearances of the major characters.¹⁰² Berlin asserts that agents do not have any value for characters in a story because the narrator does not provide any personal details for agents in a story.¹⁰³

However, it is not easy to make clear distinction among these three character types in a story. The narrator utilizes the means of characterization to indicate the difference between these character types in a story. Thus, narrative critics always pay attention to the characterization of the narrator. Bar-Efrat notes that “[characters] transmit the significance and values of the narrative to the reader, since they usually

⁹⁹ Berlin, *Poetics*, 23; Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 82; Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 112.

¹⁰⁰ Berlin, *Poetics*, 31–32; Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 71–72; Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 91.

¹⁰¹ Berlin, *Poetics*, 23–32.

¹⁰² Berlin, *Poetics*, 32; Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 71–72; Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 113.

¹⁰³ Berlin, *Poetics*, 32.

constitute the focal point of interest.”¹⁰⁴ In terms of the way of the characterization, the narrator uses direct characterization and indirect characterization in order to characterize these three types of characters. The narrator achieves direct characterization by means of description and declaration about the character’s thoughts, actions, or feelings. At the same time, the narrator reports the activities of characters to accomplish indirect characterization.

In terms of direct characterization, the narrator directly reveals the character’s inner thoughts and feelings. By revealing the character’s inner working the narrator directly shows his or her attitudes and responses to the character. The narrator also depicts the physical appearance of characters not only to make direct characterization for characters but also to develop the plot of the story. The narrator also indicates a character’s social status or ancestry as direct characterization which helps the reader to contextualize the character within the narrative.¹⁰⁵ The narrator also uses declaration for direct characterization by making an off-line comment which usually happens when the narrator evaluates the activities of a character in the biblical narrative.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the narrator utilizes direct characterization, namely declaration and description of characters, in order to portray characters. At the same time this direct characterization plays an important role to develop the plot directly and to give the reader a good insight and evaluation on the character in order to see the character correctly. The narrator’s direct characterization on the character generally provides the reader with the ideological viewpoint of the narrator. Sometimes the narrator reveals his or her ideological point of

¹⁰⁴ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 47.

¹⁰⁵ Berlin, *Poetics*, 34–36; Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 113; Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 89.

¹⁰⁶ Berlin, *Poetics*, 34.

view through God's direct characterization. Although the narrator also makes direct characterization through other characters within the story, direct characterization from other characters needs to be compared with the ideological point of view of the narrator in order to be accurate.

On the other hand, the narrator also portrays the character indirectly in the narratives. In the biblical narratives indirect characterization is much more common than direct characterization.¹⁰⁷ As mentioned above, the narrator makes indirect characterization by using external features of characters, namely, action, dialogue (or speech), and comparison between characters. Tate notes that “[d]irect dialogue conveys the internal psychological and ideological dimensions of a character and is much more dramatic than exterior narration.”¹⁰⁸ The contents and the styles of speaking of characters which are reported by the narrator in a story are used for the indirect characterization. It is important for the reader to read carefully every speech or dialogue in its own context in order to understand that character correctly. Moreover, the first words of a character are significant for indirect characterization. Alter asserts that “... at the beginning of any new story ... the initial words spoken by a personage will be revelatory, perhaps more in manner than in matter, constituting an important moment in the exposition of character.”¹⁰⁹

Another way of indirect characterization is through describing the actions of a character. Although actions are usually combined with a dialogue or a direct speech in biblical narratives, actions are also narrated without any speech or any dialogue. These

¹⁰⁷ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 64.

¹⁰⁸ Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 114.

¹⁰⁹ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 74.

speechless narrations about the actions of a character highlight character and function as unannounced commentary on a character's speech. Bar-Efrat points out that "action is the implementation of character, and individuals are disclosed through their deeds no less than through their words."¹¹⁰ However, as Longman points out, it is not easy to properly understand the motivation of a character through the narrator's description of actions for that character in a story.¹¹¹ For this reason, Amit warns the reader to read the description of characters' actions in its right context with proper examination of all evidence that is shown in a story by the narrator.¹¹²

The narrator also utilized the means of a comparison between characters in order to provide the reader a clearer and more proper understanding of a character in terms of characterization. By making a comparison between characters, the narrator highlights character traits. Thus, the correspondence of some features between two or more characters in the story assists the reader to see the characterization of each character. The narrator uses these similar aspects among the characters in order to depict one character from the characteristics of the other one by allusion.¹¹³ At this point the reader needs to consider this characterization more carefully and to permit it to improve the reading of the biblical narratives.

¹¹⁰ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 77.

¹¹¹ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 90.

¹¹² Amit, *Biblical Narratives*, 75. Following Alter, Amit notes that Alter proposes "a scale of characterization," because a direct description of character does not seem to be reliable. Alter describes a "scale of characterization" as a "scale of means, in ascending order of explicitness and certainty, for conveying information about the motives, the attitudes, the moral nature of characters" (Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 117). Amit points out that "this scale ranges from the lowest level, which is 'in the realm of inference,' via the middle categories, which are the 'weighing of claims' and 'relative certainty,' to the highest level, which is 'the reliable narrator's explicit statement'" (Amit, *Biblical Narrative*, 75).

¹¹³ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 87–88.

There are many ways the narrator portrays characters in the biblical narratives. The reader learns about the characterization and the ideological point of view of the narrator for each character in the story. The narrator reveals his or her ideological point of view to the reader through the description and interaction of characters. Thus, with the understanding of the narrator's ideological point of view as a primary goal of the methodology of the present study, characterization of the narrator both directly and indirectly will be featured as a significant element of the methodology.

2.2.5 Style

The story world described in the narrative is only created by the power of words. Without words it is impossible for the author and the narrator to bring his or her story to other people. However, every story is introduced in a different way because every author and narrator use his or her own style.¹¹⁴ Thus, in terms of narrative analysis, we as readers of biblical narratives need to investigate the styles of the biblical narratives in which the biblical authors utilize their own methods, and how these biblical authors use the diverse “linguistic possibilities.”¹¹⁵ According to Bar-Efrat, the examination of stylistic features in the biblical story reveals shades of meaning that are subtly described by the narrator through the way a story is told.¹¹⁶ Many narrative critics propose the definition of style and provide numerous examples of style.¹¹⁷ Among the various

¹¹⁴ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 95.

¹¹⁵ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 197.

¹¹⁶ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 198.

¹¹⁷ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 95–100. Longman asserts that among the many definitions of style the definition of Leech and Short is helpful: “Every writer necessarily makes choices of expression, and it is in these choices, in his ‘way of putting things,’ that style resides. ... Every analysis of style ... is an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer’s choice of language” (Leech and Short, *Style*, 19). Longman provides four stylistic features of the biblical narrative, namely, repetition, omission, irony, and dialogue. Bar-Efrat also suggests four styles of the biblical narrative, such as sound and rhythm, the meaning of the word, the repetition of words, and word order (Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 198–218). However, the present study will focus on the two stylistic features: repetition and omission.

examples of styles in the biblical narratives the present study will focus on the repetition and omission.

2.2.5.1 Repetition

Repetition is one of the most important stylistic devices in Hebrew narratives. Tate maintains “if the stylistic uniqueness of Hebrew narrative could be captured in one word, it would be repetition.”¹¹⁸ However, there are many different types of repetition in the biblical narratives, namely *Leitwort*, key words or phrases, motif, duplication, themes, repetition of sequence, and type scenes. Alter asserts that the technique of *Leitwort* does not treat the exactly same words in the story, but deals with the scope of meaning of the root of a word by repeating different cognate forms of the root within a small unit or across several units.¹¹⁹ At the same time, in the biblical narratives the authors repeat key words, phrases, or sentences in order to provide the thematic unity in larger sections.¹²⁰ Thus, it is important for a reader to examine *Leitwort* or key words in a story in order to understand the narratives thematically.

The next repetition style in the biblical narratives is motif, which is similar to *Leitwort*. However, *Leitwort* (key words) usually deals with the word level, but motif with the repetition of the action of the characters, image or the physical objects in the story. The narrator repeats a motif in the story in order to show the importance of that motif in the story.¹²¹ Tate also points out that when the reader faces narrative passages which include the same motif, the reader should carefully compare these passages in

¹¹⁸ Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 96.

¹¹⁹ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 95.

¹²⁰ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 92; Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 212–14; Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 119.

¹²¹ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 94–95.

order to understand each narrative passage properly.¹²² However, it is very important for the reader to remember that a motif in a story does not have any importance in itself until the proper connection is made within the story.¹²³ In other words, a motif may not be meaningful in itself outside the context of the narrative.

The third type of repetition in the biblical narratives is “duplication.” According to Bar-Efrat, duplication means that the same words or phrases are repeatedly used by the author within the same story.¹²⁴ When duplication occurs in the biblical narratives, the authors consecutively utilize the same word or phrase twice in a sentence. By using this method, the authors indicate the emphasis on the word or phrase. On the other hand, the authors also express duplication in different places within the story between other words, phrases or sentences. In this way they make the linkage between two passages which do not relate to each other.¹²⁵ At the same time duplication is often described by similar words or phrases within the story. When the readers see this kind of duplication in the story, they need to find the reasons why the author makes duplication in this way.¹²⁶ Sternberg states that it is very important for the reader to comprehend the story, when the narrator connects the means of duplication to other characters in the story.¹²⁷

In the biblical narratives, the authors frequently introduce the same themes by utilizing different characters in a different story, for instances the theme of the barren women, the obedience and rebellion of Israel during the wilderness wandering, and the

¹²² Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 119.

¹²³ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 45.

¹²⁴ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 211.

¹²⁵ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 98–100; Sternberg, *Poetics*, 387–93.

¹²⁶ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 96.

¹²⁷ Sternberg, *Poetics*, 387–93 (also see, Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 98–100).

change of “primogeniture.”¹²⁸ Alter points out that these themes are often associated with key word(s) or motifs, but these themes do not depend on the key word(s) or motif.¹²⁹ At the same time Tate maintains that these themes tend to organize meaning according to patterns that the author invites the reader to discover.¹³⁰ In terms of the repetition of sequence of actions, this form of repetition relies on actions in numerical series, usually three times or three times plus the fourth one, to create emphasis. A series of three may also point out that an action is complete, finished.¹³¹

Finally, the largest units of repetition in the biblical narratives are the *type-scenes*. Alter points out that type-scenes are “... dependent on the manipulation of a fixed constellation of predetermined motifs.”¹³² Alter advances the concept of type-scene as “... an episode occurring at a portentous moment in the career of the hero which is composed of a fixed sequence of motifs” in order to explain the biblical narratives which have similar contents and structure.¹³³ Type-scenes in the biblical narratives are only related to the life of the protagonist in the story. However, not all main characters in the biblical narratives are related to the type-scene. Alter also maintains that type-scenes in the story do not occur in the regular daily lives of heroes, but relate to the certain point of their lives, from the beginning to the end of their lives.¹³⁴ Type-scenes are narratives with recurrent motifs that the reader recognizes as conventional. Alter identifies and suggests some type-scenes as the biblical type-scenes in the Hebrew Bible as follows: “the annunciation ... of the birth of the hero to his barren mother; the encounter with the

¹²⁸ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 95.

¹²⁹ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 95.

¹³⁰ Tate, *Biblical Interpretation*, 119.

¹³¹ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 49.

¹³² Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 51.

¹³³ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 96.

¹³⁴ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 51.

future betrothed at a well; the epiphany in the field; the initiator trial; danger in the desert and the discovery of a well or other source of sustenance; the testament of the dying hero.”¹³⁵ Alter refers to the betrothal scenes in the Old Testament as one such type-scene.¹³⁶

Therefore, the biblical authors utilize the means of repetition in various ways, such as *Leitwort*, key word(s), duplication, motif, and type-scenes. However, these narrative techniques of repetition provide the reader both with elements of the cohesion of the biblical narratives and the particular emphasis of a story. Alter points out that repetition in biblical narratives provides the narrator some ability to convey the meaning of words, phrases, and passages by emphasizing a specific aspect of the narrative that would otherwise have gone unknown.¹³⁷ Thus, it is necessary for the reader to pay close attention to appearances of repetition in a story in order to understand the full extent of the intentionality of the biblical narrators.

2.2.5.2 Omission

Another stylistic feature of biblical narratives is omission which is almost the opposite of repetition. The biblical authors in their stories frequently omit some information that would be beneficial to the reader to understand the story. Many narrative critics give their attention to the study of omission in the biblical narratives and they label omission as “narrative reticence” or “gapping.”¹³⁸ Much of the work of Sternberg accentuates the major importance of gapping in Hebrew narratives. He

¹³⁵ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 51.

¹³⁶ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 52. The stories of the annunciation of the birth of here to the barren women appears in Gen 18:1–15, Judg 13:1, 1 Sam 1, and 2 Kgs 4:8–37.

¹³⁷ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 97.

¹³⁸ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 97; Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 114–30; Sternberg, *Poetics*, 235–37.

maintains that a system of gaps constitutes a literary work, and makes a significant argument that these omissions in biblical narratives are actually refined intentional omissions.¹³⁹ These omissions function as an important role for the reader to raise significant questions. At the same time these omissions may cause the reader to create different interpretations of the narrative because the missing parts in the story are consciously or unconsciously filled by the reader who has his or her speculations and who is strongly influenced by contemporary thoughts.¹⁴⁰ Sternberg also asserts that the narrator can omit a certain moment of a character's action, cause and effect relationships between some events, certain parts of plot structure, a character's motive for his or her activities, the narrator's definitive point of view on the characters, obvious characterization on characters, or relationships among characters.¹⁴¹

Thus, the stylistic feature of gaps is one of the most significant things in the biblical narratives for the readers to recognize. When any important information is missing in the story, the readers are required to get more involved in the story in order to speculatively fill in the gaps in biblical narratives. According to Sternberg, "gap-filling" is necessary for the readers, because the passage would not be continuous until the gap in the text is filled by the reader with some missing information. He says "gap-filling consists exactly in restoring the continuity that the narrator broke."¹⁴² However, the gaps in the text are filled in differently by different readers. Some conjectures are better than other conjectures and thus the reader needs to be careful to seek direct or indirect corroboration of the reader's hypotheses. Sternberg adds the second major function of

¹³⁹ Sternberg, *Poetics*, 186, 230.

¹⁴⁰ Sternberg, *Poetics*, 229.

¹⁴¹ Sternberg, *Poetics*, 233–35 (also see, Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 115).

¹⁴² Sternberg, *Poetics*, 236.

gaps in biblical narratives, rising “narrative interest: curiosity, suspense, and surprise.”¹⁴³ Sometimes gaps in the biblical narratives are even filled in later by the author, resolving the conflict introduced by the intentional omission.¹⁴⁴ The stylistic feature of omission is very significant for the readers to understand the biblical narratives, because this stylistic feature provides the readers the curial and pivotal information in the story and reveals the narrator’s ideological point of view. Thus, it is very important for the readers to examine some gaps in the biblical narratives in order to understand the biblical narratives properly.

2.3 Overview

Narrative analysis is a systematic analysis of the literary qualities of the text. In terms of biblical scholarship, narrative analysis focuses on the final form of the text as a unified whole and gives attention to the artistic value of the text. By paying close attention to narrative features, namely narration, plot, characterization, and setting, the present study will utilize narrative analysis as the methodology in order to examine the Hezekiah narratives in the Hebrew Bible. Such an approach to the Hezekiah narratives can have great value. However, one of the weaknesses of narrative analysis is the subjective character of the analysis of the text. Osborne notes that in narrative analysis “... the words as well as the text as a whole become autonomous from their original reference or meaning, and the readers produce their own meanings in the text.”¹⁴⁵ Recognizing this weakness of narrative analysis, the present study not only focuses on the important narrative features in the story of Hezekiah, namely characterization, plot,

¹⁴³ Sternberg, *Poetics*, 259.

¹⁴⁴ Tannehill, “Narrative Criticism,” 488–89.

¹⁴⁵ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 165.

narration, and setting, but also demonstrates the unity of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story, which traditional and older historical analysis often segmented into different sources like A, B1 and B2 in 2 Kgs 18–19. Studying the accounts of the reign of King Hezekiah as literature further helps us to focus on major emphases and not become preoccupied with peripheral details.

This dissertation also utilizes the canonical approach in order to understand the Hezekiah narratives in both the context of the accounts of the Hezekiah narratives and the context of each biblical book, namely Kings, Isaiah and Chronicles. The authors of these different biblical books portray King Hezekiah in different ways according to their ideological point of view.¹⁴⁶ Thus, the present study will examine the Hezekiah narratives by using a canonical-narrative analysis in order to identify the author's ideological point of view from all aspects of the story.

The present study deals with Hezekiah's narratives in three biblical passages: 2 Kgs 18–20, Isa 36–39, and 2 Chr 29–32. Each of these three accounts of Hezekiah's story is evaluated individually according to the methodology described above. The following examination will begin with the study of the level of narrative techniques such as narrations and the points of view, and then the present study will focus on the story world, namely settings, plot (events), and characterization. Finally, the Hezekiah story will be understood in the context of the entire book. Dealing with these three accounts of Hezekiah's story in their own context, the present study will compare the result of each examination in the conclusion.

¹⁴⁶ I use the term "authors" as the implied authors in the Hezekiah narratives in these three biblical books. For convenience, I will use the term 'author' as the implied author in my dissertation. If I need to mention the real author of each book, I will use the term "real author."

This research will use all aspects of the methodology rather than utilizing certain aspects of the methodology in order to understand the portrayal of Hezekiah in three separate biblical books. Although challenges exist in discretely dividing narration, plot, setting, and characterization from each other, since they all work together to tell the story, there are some advantages in understanding the narratives by considering each aspect of narrative art separately. As seen above, each literary feature plays an important role to indicate the narrator's point of view on characters and events in its own way. Thus, it is better to examine these literary features separately in order to understand the characterization of Hezekiah rather than to examine a story by a certain literary feature or by combining these literary features together. After examining these aspects of narrative art separately, this examination will provide the implications for the characterization of Hezekiah. Then in the concluding chapter this analysis will compare the characterization of Hezekiah in the three biblical accounts. Though there is some overlap in the following sections, the present study will try to minimize this overlap through the intentional focus utilized within each section.

Chapter 3: The Portrayal of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18–20

3.1 Introduction

Hezekiah's story in Kings is demarcated by the introductory regnal formula in 2 Kgs 18:1–12 and by the concluding regnal formula in 2 Kgs 20:20–21.¹ Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20 consists mainly of three narratives: Sennacherib's campaign against Judah (2 Kgs 18:13—19:37), Hezekiah's illness and recovery (2 Kgs 20:1–11), and the visit of the envoys of Merodach-baladan (2 Kgs 20:12–19). The narrator utilizes all of these narratives including the introductory and concluding regnal formulae in order to portray Hezekiah in his own way.²

¹ Long, *2 Kings*, 190–93. In 2 Kgs 18:1–2, the narrator introduces Hezekiah as king of Judah with the date of his accession, the length of his reign, the place of his reign, his age, the name of his mother, and a theological evaluation on him, which are the components of regnal formulae in Kings. Wiseman points out that introductory formulae for Judean kings consist of seven components: the king's name with his predecessor, usually father (2 Kgs 8:16, 25; 13:1; 14:1; 15:1; 16:1, 20; 22:1), the date of accession with a synchronism with the corresponding contemporary ruler in the other kingdom (2 Kgs 8:16, 25; 12:1; 13:1; 14:1; 15:1; 16:1), his age (1 Kgs 16:15; 2 Kgs 8:17, 26; 15:8, 13; 14:2; 15:2; 16:2; 21:1, 19; 22:1), the length of his reign (2 Kgs 8:17, 26; 12:1; 13:1; 14:2; 15:2; 16:2; 21:1, 19; 22:1), the place of his reign (2 Kgs 8:17, 26; 12:1; 13:1; 14:2; 15:2; 16:2; 21:1, 19; 22:1), the name of his mother (1 Kgs 15:2; 22:42; 2 Kgs 8:26; 12:1; 14:2; 15:2; 21:1, 19; 22:1), and a theological evaluation (2 Kgs 8:18, 27; 12:2; 13:2; 14:3–4; 15:3–5; 16:2b–4; 21:2–9, 20–22; 22:2). The age of a king on coming to the throne and the name of king's mother are given only for the kings of Judah except Jehoram (2 Kgs 8:17) and Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:2) who do not give their mother's name (Wiseman, *1 & 2 Kings*, 46–47). Wiseman asserts that the concluding formula in the book of Kings has six components: "citation of sources" (2 Kgs 12:19; 14:28; 15:6, 15, 38; 17:11; 21:17, 25), "additional historical notes" (2 Kgs 14:22, 28; 15:14, 37; 16:17–18), "notice of death" (2 Kgs 12:20; 14:19, 29; 15:6, 38; 16:20; 21:18), "notice of burial" (2 Kgs 12:21; 14:20, 29; 15:6; 16:20; 21:18, 26), "succession" (2 Kgs 12:21; 14:21, 29; 15:6, 38; 16:20; 21:18, 26) and "postscripts" (1 Kgs 15:32; 2 Kgs 10:36). Wiseman contends that the absence of the concluding formulae for Hoshea (2 Kgs 17:1–6), Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 23:35), Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:8–17) and Zedekiah (2 Kgs 24:18–19) can be understood as "invasion, capture and deportation" (Wiseman, *1 & 2 Kings*, 50–52; cf. Long, *1 Kings*).

At the end of the Hezekiah story (2 Kgs 20:20–21), the narrator reports Hezekiah's construction of the water tunnel and the concluding regnal formula which generally includes four elements: the source of reference, the notice of death, the place of burial and of succession. In 2 Kgs 20:20–21, however, there is no mention of the place of Hezekiah's burial. Rather, the narrator describes that "Hezekiah slept with his fathers" (2 Kgs 20:21), which means that Hezekiah's death was natural (Bostock, *Trust*, 146).

² As mentioned above, the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 are different from the other two accounts in Isa 36–39 and 2 Chr 29–32. Each biblical book presents the reign of Hezekiah its own way, which the present study will show.

The objective of this chapter is to describe the portrayal of Hezekiah in Kings by analyzing Hezekiah's narratives (2 Kgs 18–20).³ To achieve the goal, this chapter will utilize narrative analysis as described in the previous chapter. The present chapter will now turn to the examination of Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20.

3.2 Narrative Technique

The analysis of narrative technique is to examine narrative method, that is, the techniques and devices utilized by the narrator in the actual telling of the story.⁴ First of all, the present chapter will examine the narration of the narrator when he tells Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20. Then, the present study will deal with the narrator's evaluative points of view on Hezekiah when the narrator recounts the Hezekiah narratives.

3.2.1 Narration

A story is told by the narrator through the five modes of narration, namely "direct narrative," "dramatic narrative," "descriptive narrative," "declarative narrative," and "documentary narrative."⁵ In 2 Kgs 18–20, the narrator utilizes these five modes of narration in order to present the Hezekiah narratives. The narrator begins the introductory regnal formulae (2 Kgs 18:1–12) of King Hezekiah by descriptive narrative

³ As mentioned above, the present chapter will examine the Hezekiah narratives in the proto-Masoretic text of Kings, which is introduced in Appendix 1 of the present study. There are many phrases that are scribal accretions from the Isaiah account. The present chapter will exclude these accretions from the examination of the Hezekiah narratives in Kings, such as 2 Kgs 19:25a, 19:34b, 20:11b, 20:19b etc.

⁴ Bar-Efrat, "Some Observations," 157–60. Bar-Efrat distinguishes four different levels of the text: (1) "the verbal level," (2) "the level of narrative technique," (3) "the level of the narrative world," and (4) "the level of conceptual content." Following Bar-Efrat, Fewell suggests three major aspects of the text: (1) "the narrative techniques," (2) "the story world," and (3) "the verbal or grammatical level of the text." According to Fewell, the examination of the verbal or grammatical level of the text is to see particularly "repetitions, usages of figurative language, unusual grammatical and syntactical constructions, and groups of words falling into the same semantic range" (Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 80).

⁵ Boda, "Prayer," 270. Ryken asserts there are four modes of narration in the biblical narratives, namely "direct narrative," "dramatic narrative," "description," and "commentary" (Ryken, *Words*, 43). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Boda points out that there is the fifth mode of narrative in the biblical story, namely documentary narrative.

(2 Kgs 18:1–2) in order to introduce the date of Hezekiah’s accession, the length of his reign, the place of his reign, his age, and the name of his mother. Then, the narrator evaluates the reign of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:3 by declarative narrative.⁶ In 2 Kgs 18:4–11, the narrator summarizes the achievement of Hezekiah during his reign (2 Kgs 18:4–8) and the event of the fall of Samaria which occurred in the sixth year of King Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:9–11). Then, the narrator provides the reason for the fall of Samaria by declarative narrative in 2 Kgs 18:12. The narrator presents the Hezekiah narrative by dialogues between characters as dramatic narrative, and he also reports these narratives by direct narrative between dialogues. The narrator also utilizes documentary narrative in order to introduce the information of Sennacherib’s letters to Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 19:10–13.⁷ After reporting the speech of Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:10–13), the narrator relates that Hezekiah took the letters from the hand of the messengers, who were sent by Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:9b), and read them (2 Kgs 19:14a). The narrator explicitly mentions *הַסְּפָרִים* (“the letters”), which is the diplomatic activity of Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 18–19. The contents of these letters should be the words of Sennacherib, which are reported in 2 Kgs 19:10–13.⁸ Thus, the narrator employs documentary narrative in 2 Kgs 19:10–13. The narrator also provides the reason why the people did not answer the Rabshakeh by declarative narrative in 2 Kgs 18:36b. Then, the narrator ends Hezekiah’s narratives with the concluding formulae by descriptive narrative (2 Kgs 20:21) and with Hezekiah’s another achievement by direct narrative in 2 Kgs 20:20. Thus, the narrator uses five modes of narration in Hezekiah’s narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 as follows:

⁶ Boda points out that declarative narrative is “to provide an evaluation of or clarification for the story” with suspension of action (Boda, “Prayer,” 271).

⁷ Boda, “Prayer,” 270. Boda points out that documentary narrative in the biblical narratives appears in a speech form, which introduces list, correspondence or proclamations.

⁸ Hobbs maintains that the letters “... would certainly reinforce the spoken words of the Assyrian delegation” (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 277).

Narrative	Direct	Dramatic	Descriptive	Declarative	Documentary	
2 Kings	18:4		18:1-2	18:3		
	18:6-11			18:5		
	18:13-14a			18:12		
	18:14c-18	18:14b				
	18:36a	18:19-35		18:36b		
	18:37-19:2				19:10-13	
	19:8-9	19:3-7				
	19:14					
	19:35-20:1a	19:15-34				
	20:11-13	20:1b-10				
	20:20	20:14-19				
				20:21		
		29.1% ⁹	61.8%	3.1%	2.9%	3.1%

The narrator relates Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Kgs 18-20 by utilizing dramatic narrative (61.8%), direct narrative (29.1%), descriptive narrative (3.1%), declarative narrative (2.9%), and documentary narrative (3.1%). In Hezekiah's narratives, dramatic narrative is used the most by the narrator, which slows the movement of the story and prompts the reader's imagination to focus on dramatic scenes.¹⁰ Although most parts of the story are told by the narrator through dramatic narrative and direct narrative, the narrator also utilizes declarative narrative in order to reveal his evaluation of the character of Hezekiah, which is the most important element for the readers to understand the characterization of Hezekiah. At the beginning of the story, the narrator portrays

⁹ The percentages are based on verses.

¹⁰ Ryken, *Words*, 44.

Hezekiah in an extremely positive way by evaluating Hezekiah's reign positively through declarative narrative (2 Kgs 18:3, 5). At the same time the narrator provides the reason for the fall of Samaria by declarative narrative in 2 Kgs 18:12 in order to portray Hezekiah positively by making a contrast between the people of the Northern Kingdom and Hezekiah. The narrator also reports that the Jerusalemites obeyed the command of Hezekiah through declarative narrative (2 Kgs 18:36b), which indicates the positive characterization of Hezekiah.

The narrator presents the event of Hezekiah's capitulation in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 by direct narrative in order to minimize the negative characterization on Hezekiah by reporting the event quickly.¹¹ The narrator reports Hezekiah's words as direct speech, but this direct speech is placed between direct narratives in order to provide information and motivation for the following action of the story.¹² It is significant that the narrator does not present this event by dramatic narrative, because the narrator presents the majority of Hezekiah's three narratives through dramatic narrative. The narrator intentionally utilizes direct narrative rather than dramatic narrative to minimize Hezekiah's negative characterization by reporting the event quickly.

Thus, the narrator utilizes not only dramatic narrative involving the readers actively to understand the characterization of Hezekiah through dramatic scenes, but also declarative narrative directing the readers to understand the characterization of Hezekiah positively through the evaluation on him and providing some reasons for the

¹¹ Boda, "Prayer," 271. Boda points out that "a speech may be used for multiple purposes by a narrator," and then he provides seven purposes of speeches in ancient narratives: 1) the narrator utilizes speeches for advancing the plot of the story; 2) the narrator expresses his ideological messages by speeches; 3) the narrator provides another point of view through speeches; 4) characters are characterized by the narrator through speeches; 5) the narrator provides motivation for the following action through speeches; 6) the narrator also uses speeches to create the dramatic qualities of the story; 7) the narrator provides information through speeches.

¹² Boda, "Prayer," 267–84.

events. By using these modes of narration the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a pious king which we will see more in detail below.

3.2.3 The Evaluative Point of View of the Narrator

The narrator's point of view is important for the readers to understand the story and his portrayal of characters.¹³ The narrator demonstrates spatial omnipresence in Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20. The narrator is present everywhere and at all times as will be argued below. The narrator's spatial omnipresence also involves the narrator's omniscience.¹⁴ The narrator is not limited to narrated time, but stands above the narrated time of the story. The aspect of the narrator's omnipresence and omniscience shows that he has full authority over the story. The narrator is the one who is reliable and authoritative for the readers. Thus, his evaluative point of view on a character is trustworthy and provides a direction for the readers to understand the characterization of that character. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the narrator provides his evaluative point of view in numerous different ways. However, this section only deals with the explicit evaluations of the narrator on Hezekiah and his reign, which is a clear way to introduce the narrator's ideological point of view in the story due to overlap with other sections of the present study.¹⁵

In Hezekiah's narratives (2 Kgs 18–20), the narrator presents his evaluation for Hezekiah's reign at the beginning of the story (2 Kgs 18:3–8). He evaluates Hezekiah's reign by comparing it to the reign of David (2 Kgs 18:3) and by noting congruence with

¹³ Osborn, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 156. Osborn points out that "point of view guides the reader to the significance of the story and determines the actual shape that the author gives to the narrative." Berlin also asserts that the point of view of the narrator helps the reader to understand characterization by the narrator (Berlin, *Poetics*, 43).

¹⁴ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 17.

¹⁵ The present study will deal with the narrator's ideological point of view in detail below on the section of Characterization.

the standards of the Law of Moses (2 Kgs 18:6). The narrator states that *וַיַּעַשׂ הַיְשֵׁר בְּעֵינָי* (and he [Hezekiah] did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done”). In Kings, there are seven Judean kings who are compared with David: Solomon, Abijah, Asa, Amaziah, Ahaz, Hezekiah and Josiah.¹⁶ When these seven kings are compared with David, the narrator uses the same verb *עָשָׂה* (1 Kgs 3:3; 15:3; 15:11; 2 Kgs 14:3; 16:2; 18:3; 22:2). In this regard, Hull contends that “[a]n important aspect of the comparison of Hezekiah’s actions with David is the success both had in foreign affairs, a success that was based on their relationship with YHWH.”¹⁷ In Kings, David is portrayed more as a military leader than as a cultic reformer, but Hezekiah is depicted both as a cultic reformer (2 Kgs 18:4) and as a military leader with a success in foreign affairs (2 Kgs 18:7–8). Hull continues that “[w]hat we have found are a number of parallels between specific military successes of 2 Kings which is based on the relationship which both kings have with YHWH.”¹⁸ Doing what is right (*וַיַּעַשׂ הַיְשֵׁר*) is closely related to following the commandments of the LORD. In his evaluation of Hezekiah, the narrator also makes a connection between doing what is right and keeping the law of Moses in 2 Kgs 18:6. Thus, cultic reforms, foreign victories and remissive acts may be seen to be manifestations of obedience to the Law of Moses.

While making a comparison between David and Hezekiah, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a Davidic king in a spiritual as well as a genetic sense. The narrator depicts Hezekiah in a positive light which is important for characterizing him. In terms of the

¹⁶ Solomon and Josiah are told to have walked (*הלך*) as David did (1 Kgs 3:3; 2 Kgs 22:2), and Solomon’s and Abijah’s heart are not wholly true to the LORD as was David’s (1 Kgs 11:4; 15:3). In the reign of three kings, Asa, Amaziah and Ahaz, Judah is invaded by Israel (1 Kgs 15:17; 2 Kgs 14:11; 16:5).

¹⁷ Hull, “Hezekiah-Saint,” 206.

¹⁸ Hull, “Hezekiah-Saint,” 207.

narrator's evaluative point of view, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as acting in obedience to the LORD, like David.¹⁹

The narrator consistently evaluates Hezekiah in a positive way in 2 Kgs 18:5–6. In 2 Kgs 18:5, the narrator explicitly reports that בָּטַח אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשָׁח (“in the LORD God of Israel, he [Hezekiah] trusted”). In 2 Kgs 18:6, the narrator also declares that וַיִּשְׁמַר יְהוָה אֶת-מִשְׁפַּח מֹשֶׁה (“but he [Hezekiah] kept His commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses”). This evaluation is directly contrasted with the reason for the fall of Samaria in 2 Kgs 18:12, which is the evaluation of the narrator for the event of the destruction of the Northern Kingdom. Although Hezekiah's reign is not directly related to Israel, the narrator provides a short report of the fall of Samaria in 2 Kgs 18:9–12,²⁰ in order to portray Hezekiah as a pious king by means of contrast.²¹ Mullen points out that the short report of the fall of Samaria in 2 Kgs 18:9–12 “is clearly intended to contrast the action of Judah under Hezekiah with those of Israel.”²² The narrator reveals that the people of Israel were deported to Assyria because they did not listen to the LORD and did not obey the law of Moses (2 Kgs 18:12). This rationale clearly shows a contrast between the people of Israel and Hezekiah. By including the story of the fall of

¹⁹ Bostock, *Trust*, 24.

²⁰ In 2 Kgs 17, the narrator already offers the account of the final collapse of the Northern Kingdom. Second Kings 17 records the final destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians and the deportation of large segments of the people of the Northern Kingdom to various parts of the Assyrian empire (2 Kgs 17:1–6). In addition to this record, the narrator develops his theme of accountability in the history of Israel (2 Kgs 17:7–23). This is followed by a description of the community which was resettled in Samaria (2 Kgs 17:23–33) and an assessment of that community (2 Kgs 17:34–41). Alter asserts that there are extended passages of narration with no dialogue in Kings in order to provide a chronicle of public events. According to Alter, these narrations “are intended to chronicle wars and political intrigues, national cultic trespasses and their supposed historical consequences. The fictional imagination, which creates individualized personages grappling with one another and their circumstances to realize their destinies, is diluted in these passages” (Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 75).

²¹ Berlin, *Poetics*, 40–41. Berlin asserts that in the biblical narratives characters are frequently introduced or highlighted by means of contrast between two individual characters.

²² Mullen, “Crime and Punishment,” 244.

Samaria (2 Kgs 18:9–12), the narrator emphasizes the obedience of King Hezekiah and portrays him as a faithful king.²³

3.2.3.1 Implication for Characterization

The narrator characterizes Hezekiah in an extremely positive way through his evaluative point of view. Hezekiah is compared to David and portrayed as a Davidic king who obeyed the LORD by keeping the Law of Moses like David. The narrator also relates the short report of the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel who did not keep the Law of Moses, which is directly opposite to the evaluation on Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:6. Thus, the narrator explicitly portrays Hezekiah in a positive way at the beginning of the story in order to show the readers how to understand King Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20.

3.3 Story World

The Hezekiah story in 2 Kgs 18–20 is composed of the basic elements: setting, plot (events), and characters.²⁴ This section will examine these basic elements of the story in order to understand how the narrator portrays Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20. First of all, the present study will deal with the setting, and the plot of Hezekiah's narratives, and then will examine the characterization of Hezekiah.

3.3.1 Setting

As mentioned above, setting involves both spatial and temporal setting, which gives a context for the activities of the characters in the story.²⁵ Thus, studying setting is

²³ Bostock, *Trust*, 41. Bostock also asserts that the narrator includes the short report of the destruction of Samaria not only for emphasizing the obedience of Hezekiah by means of contrast, but also for adding “an anticipatory tension to the plot.”

²⁴ Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 35.

²⁵ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 138–45. According to Chatman, setting serves multiple functions: providing symbolic commentary on the action, revealing character, determining conflict and shaping atmosphere.

important for the readers to understand the characterization of Hezekiah because Hezekiah acts within that context. This section will identify the setting structure of Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20, which may help the readers to see the whole story of Hezekiah. Then, the present study will examine the spatial and temporal settings of the story in order to see the characterization of Hezekiah.

3.3.1.1 Setting Structure

The previous section revealed that the narrator tells Hezekiah's story (2 Kgs 18–20) by using five modes of narrative. The entire story of Hezekiah is also divided into many subunits in terms of acts, scenes, and events according to the relationship between characters within the story. In the first act (2 Kgs 18:1–12), the narrator summarises the twenty-nine years of Hezekiah's reign (2 Kgs 18:1–8) and reports the short story of the fall of Samaria (2 Kgs 18:9–12). Then, the narrator relates three stories of Hezekiah. The first story, the invasion of Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18:13–19:37), can be subdivided into six acts according to actions of the characters. In 2 Kgs 18:13–16, the narrator introduces Hezekiah's action to provide the tribute to Sennacherib at Lachish, and relates dialogue between the Rabshakeh and Hezekiah's representatives at the channel of the Upper Pool in 2 Kgs 18:17–36. Then, the narrator reports the reactions to the Rabshakeh's speeches in the fourth act (2 Kgs 18:37–19:7), and the action of the Rabshakeh after his speeches in 2 Kgs 19:8. In 2 Kgs 19:9–34, the narrator introduces the second threat in a letter form and Hezekiah's reaction, which happened in the palace of Hezekiah. In the seventh act, the narrator relates the end of the story of Sennacherib's invasion against Judah in 2 Kgs 19:35–37. In the second story, which provides details of Hezekiah's illness and recovery (2 Kgs 20:1–11), the narrator utilizes one act, which happened between Hezekiah and Isaiah. In 2 Kgs 20:12–19, the narrator utilizes two acts to present the

story of the envoys from Babylon. Then, the narrator ends the Hezekiah stories with Hezekiah's death and his successor as the eleventh act (2 Kgs 20:20–21) as postlude.

Thus, the setting structure of Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 is as follows:

I. Act One: Prelude

A. Scene One: The reign of Hezekiah

1. Event One: Hezekiah becomes king in Jerusalem (18:1–3)
2. Event Two: Hezekiah's cultic reforms (18:4–7a)
3. Event Three: Hezekiah rebels against Assyria (18:7b)
4. Event Four: Hezekiah's military affairs (18:8)

B. Scene Two: The fall of Samaria

1. Event One: Shalmaneser comes against Samaria (18:9)
2. Event Two: Shalmaneser captures Samaria (18:10)
3. Event Three: Shalmaneser exiles the Israelites to Assyria (18:11–12)

II. Act Two: Hezekiah and Sennacherib

A. Scene One: Hezekiah's payment of tribute to Sennacherib

1. Event One: Sennacherib captures the fortified cities of Judah (18:13)
2. Event Two: Hezekiah asks Sennacherib to withdraw (18:14a)
3. Event Three: Sennacherib imposes 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold (18:14b)
4. Event Four: Hezekiah pays the tribute to Sennacherib (18:15–16)

III. Act Three: Hezekiah's representatives and Sennacherib's representatives

A. Scene One: Hezekiah's representatives and Sennacherib's representatives meet

1. Event One: Sennacherib sends his representatives to Jerusalem (18:17a)
2. Event Two: Sennacherib's representatives stand at the channel of the upper pool (18:17b)
3. Event Three: Hezekiah's representatives meet Sennacherib's representatives (18:18)

B. Scene Two: A dialogue between Hezekiah's and Sennacherib's representatives

1. Event One: The Rabshakeh's speech (18:19–25)
2. Event Two: The speech of Hezekiah's representatives (18:26)
3. Event Three: The Rabshakeh's speech to Hezekiah's representatives (18:27)
4. Event Four: The Rabshakeh's speech to the people of Judah (18:28–35)
5. Event Five: The people's response: silence (18:36)

IV. Act Four: Reactions to the Rabshakeh's speeches

A. Scene One: Hezekiah's reactions to the Rabshakeh's speeches

1. Event One: Hezekiah's representatives come to Hezekiah (18:37a)

2. Event Two: Hezekiah's representatives report the Rabshakeh's speeches (18:37b)
 3. Event Three: Hezekiah tears his garments and covers himself in sackcloth (19:1a)
 4. Event Four: Hezekiah goes to the house of the LORD (19:1b)
 5. Event Five: Hezekiah sends his representatives to Isaiah (19:2)
- B. Scene Two: A dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah's representatives
1. Event One: Hezekiah's representatives bring the words of Hezekiah to Isaiah (19:3–4)
 2. Event Two: Isaiah brings the word of God to Hezekiah (19:5–7)
- V. Act Five: The Rabshakeh's action
- A. Scene One: The Rabshakeh's return
1. Event One: The Rabshakeh returns from Jerusalem to Libnah (19:8a)
 2. Event Two: Sennacherib fights against Libnah (19:8b)
- VI. Act Six: Hezekiah and Sennacherib
- A. Scene One: Sennacherib sends a letter to Hezekiah
1. Event One: Sennacherib returns (19:9)
 2. Event Two: Sennacherib sends a letter to Hezekiah (19:10–13)
- B. Scene Two: Hezekiah's response
1. Event One: Hezekiah reads the letter (19:14a)
 2. Event Two: Hezekiah goes to the house of the LORD (19:14b)
 3. Event Three: Hezekiah prays to the LORD (19:15–19)
- C. Scene Three: God's response to Hezekiah's prayer
1. Event One: Isaiah brings the words of God to Hezekiah (19:20–34)
- VII. Act Seven: The conclusion of the story of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative
- A. Scene One: The LORD attacks the camp of Assyria
1. Event One: The LORD sends his messenger (19:35a)
 2. Event Two: The LORD's messenger attacks the camp of Assyria (19:35b)
 3. Event Three: All the Assyrian army is killed by the LORD's messenger (19:35c)
- B. Scene Two: Sennacherib's return
1. Event One: Sennacherib returns to his home (19:36a)
 2. Event Two: Sennacherib lives in Nineveh (19:36b)
 3. Event Three: Sennacherib is killed (19:37)
- VIII. Act Eight: Hezekiah and Isaiah
- A. Scene One: God's words for Hezekiah
1. Event One: Isaiah comes to Hezekiah (20:1a)
 2. Event Two: Isaiah brings God's words to Hezekiah (20:1b)
- B. Scene Two: Hezekiah's response to the word of the LORD
1. Event One: Hezekiah's prayer to God (20:2–3)
- C. Scene Three: God's answer to Hezekiah's prayer

1. Event One: God promises to heal Hezekiah (20:4–6)
 - D. Scene Four: Isaiah heals Hezekiah
 1. Event One: Hezekiah's recovery from his illness (20:7)
 - E. Scene Five: A dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah
 1. Event One: Hezekiah asks a sign for his healing (20:8)
 2. Event Two: Isaiah brings two choices for the sign (20:9)
 3. Event Three: Hezekiah's answer (20:10)
 - F. Scene Six: The LORD's answer to Isaiah's prayer
 1. Event One: Isaiah prays to the LORD (20:11a)
 2. Event Two: The LORD answers the prayer of Isaiah (20:11b)
- IX. Act Nine: Hezekiah and the envoys from Babylon
- A. Scene One: The King of Babylon sends emissaries and a gift to Hezekiah
 1. Event One: The King of Babylon sends emissaries and a gift to Hezekiah (20:12)
 - B. Scene Two: Hezekiah shows his treasury
 1. Event One: Hezekiah shows all the house of his treasury (20:13)
- X. Act Ten: Hezekiah and Isaiah
- A. Scene One: A dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah
 1. Event One: Isaiah's first question (20:14a)
 2. Event Two: Hezekiah's first answer (20:14b)
 3. Event Three: Isaiah's second question (20:15a)
 4. Event Four: Hezekiah's second answer (20:15b)
 5. Event Five: Isaiah brings the word of the LORD (20:16–18)
 6. Event Six: Hezekiah's response to the word of the LORD (20:19)
- XI. Act Eleven: Postlude
- A. Scene One: Hezekiah's works for water-supply tunnel
 1. Event One: Hezekiah's works for water-supply tunnel (20:20)
 - B. Scene Two: Hezekiah's death and his successor
 1. Event One: Hezekiah's death and his successor (20:21)

This chart shows that the entire story of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20 can be divided into eleven acts, which are also subdivided into many scenes and events. These eleven subdivisions of acts including many other subdivisions of scenes and events provide a literary setting for Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20, which the narrator utilizes to communicate with the narratee. Now the present study turns to examine time and space within this setting structure, which is important for understanding the characterization of Hezekiah.

3.3.1.2 Time

The narrator moves the temporal setting forward in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in 2 Kgs 18:13—19:37. In Act One (2 Kgs 18:1–12), the narrator summarizes and comments on the twenty-nine years of Hezekiah’s reign in twelve verses by listing Hezekiah’s religious reforms and military contributions, including a short report of the event of the fall of Samaria, which occurred within the fourth to sixth year of King Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:9–10). In Act Two (2 Kgs 18:13–16), the narrator moves the temporal setting forward from the sixth year to the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, when Judah was attacked by Sennacherib king of Assyria.²⁶ Although Hezekiah tried to stop Assyrian army by paying the tribute that Sennacherib had demanded, Sennacherib continued to send his army to subdue Jerusalem in 2 Kgs 18:17.²⁷

Act Three (2 Kgs 18:17–36), Four (2 Kgs 18:37—19:7) and Six (2 Kgs 19:9–34) have the majority of verses of the entire story of Hezekiah. In these three acts the narrator continually moves his temporal setting forward, but slows down the narrated time by presenting dialogue between characters.²⁸ In these acts, one finds almost a 1:1

²⁶ In 2 Kgs 18:14–16, Hezekiah seemed to have surrendered to Sennacherib. The Rabshakeh, however, addressed that Hezekiah surrendered again in his speeches. Although the sequence of events in the Hezekiah narratives in Kings is uncertain, Gallagher believes that the Rabshakeh was sent by Sennacherib before Hezekiah offered his surrender at Lachish. Then, Hezekiah sent his messengers to Sennacherib and offered his surrender, which was made before the Rabshakeh left Jerusalem in 2 Kgs 19:8 (Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 161). The narrator, however, does not report this hypothesis in the Hezekiah narratives in the accounts of Kings and Isaiah.

²⁷ The narrator begins 2 Kgs 18:17 with the verb וַיִּשְׁלַח (“and then he sent”). According to Hobbs, the verb form וַיִּשְׁלַח is a term denoting diplomatic channels of communication, probably by letter (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 255).

²⁸ Since Stade’s article in 1886 (Stade, “Miscellen,” 156–89), many biblical scholars believe that there are several sources in the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18:13—19:37. Although they have been divided in many ways, there are two main divisions which are usually labelled A (2 Kgs 18:13–16) and B (2 Kgs 18:17—19:37). Source critics believe that there is a lapse between A and B in terms of the chronological order, because A summarizes the invasion of Sennacherib (Parrot, *Nineve*, 40; Galil, “Sennacherib versus Hezekiah,” 1–12). Thus they believe that there is a chronological break between A and B. However, Gallagher points out that “[w]e can only speculate on the compiler’s motives in his presentation of this material” and he continues that the compiler “... may have wanted A and B to be read as a chronological text ... the result has been a bad reputation for Sennacherib” (Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s*

ratio between narrated time and narration time by stating direct speeches of the characters. Slowing down the narrated time, the narrator draws the attention of the readers onto the dialogues between characters. In Act Four (2 Kgs 18:37—19:7) and Act Six (2 Kgs 19:9–34), the narrator emphasizes the words of Hezekiah and the word of the LORD in order to show the development of the character of Hezekiah. In Act Four (2 Kgs 18:37—19:7) the narrator introduces the dialogue between Hezekiah’s officials and Isaiah. Hezekiah sent his officials to Isaiah in order to ask him to pray for help concerning the Rabshakeh’s speeches (2 Kgs 19:1–4),²⁹ and then the narrator states the answer of the LORD through Isaiah (2 Kgs 19:5–7). In Act Six (2 Kgs 19:9–34), however, Hezekiah himself prayed to the LORD concerning the letter of Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 19:15–19 without any frustration. Thus, the narrator draws the readers’ attention to the character of Hezekiah by slowing down the narrated time in Act Six in order to show the development of Hezekiah’s character.

The narrator concludes the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in Act Seven (2 Kgs 19:35–37). In the conclusion, the narrator indicates the temporal phrase בַּלַּיְלָהּ הַהוּא (‘‘in that night’’), when the LORD answered the prayer of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:35). Then the story of the invasion of Sennacherib against Judah is concluded with the death of Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:37). In 2 Kgs 19:36, the narrator utilizes four verbs to describe the action of Sennacherib after the angel of the LORD’s attack. The narrator reports that

Campaign, 148). Some scholars read 2 Kgs 18:13–16 and 2 Kgs 18:17—19:37 chronologically. For a survey of such reading see Gonçalves, *L’Expedition*, 122–25; Kittel, *Geschichte*, 430–39; Rowley, ‘‘Hezekiah’s Reform,’’ 98–132; Scharbert, *Die Propheten Israels*, 288–94.

²⁹ Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 230. The title Rab-shakeh (‘‘the chief butler’’) occasionally written *rab šaqê*. Cogan and Tadmor assert that ‘‘mostly in ideogram GAL BI.LUL, was a high official whose duties were usually restricted to the court and the king’s person.’’ The title ‘‘Tartan’’ indicates an official who was closely related to the army of Assyria. The title ‘‘Rab-saris’’ is also connected to the army of Assyria as an officer with high rank in Assyrian army and with ‘‘some administrative powers’’ (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 256; cf. Gonçalves, *L’Expédition*, 397).

וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּנִינְוֶה (‘‘and then Sennacherib king of Assyria retreated and then he went and then he returned, and dwelt at Nineveh’’). The final verb וַיֵּשֶׁב (‘‘and then he dwelt’’)³⁰ implies that Sennacherib lived in Nineveh ‘‘over a period time’’ before he was killed.³¹

The narrator presents the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in the course of time. However, the narrator moves his temporal setting backward in the last two stories of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20, the story of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery and the story of the envoys from Babylon. In 2 Kgs 20:1, the narrator moves his temporal setting back before the time of Sennacherib’s invasion against Judah.³² The general reference to time, בְּיָמֵי הָהֵם (‘‘in those days’’) may be meant to indicate a chronological link with the events of Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah.³³ Thus, the narrator moves his temporal setting backward in the story of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery, and in the story of the envoys from Babylon.³⁴

The narrator presents the last two stories of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:1–19 as ‘‘flashbacks.’’³⁵ Ackroyd also suggests that the narrator arranges ‘‘... materials in a

³⁰ The term וַיֵּשֶׁב is *qal*, imperfect, third person masculine singular of יָשַׁב (‘‘to sit’’) with *waw* consecutive. The verb יָשַׁב is used for dwelling in the Bible. In Gen 13:6, the narrator of Genesis states that Abram and Lot could not dwell together by employing the infinitive form of the verb יָשַׁב twice.

³¹ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 282. Hobbs asserts that ‘‘compressing history in this manner is typical of biblical narrative.’’ He also criticizes that those who support ‘‘the two-invasion theory.’’ They believe that Sennacherib was killed very shortly after the invasion against Judah. However, the narrator does not state that in 2 Kgs 19:36.

³² Fewell, ‘‘Sennacherib’s Defeat,’’ 79–90. The death of Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 19:37 happens almost twenty years later from the event of Sennacherib’s invasion against Judah. Hobbs also asserts that Sennacherib was killed in approximately 680 B.C.E. (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 282).

³³ Ackroyd, ‘‘Interpretation,’’ 152–80. Jones also points out that the phrase, בְּיָמֵי הָהֵם (‘‘in those days’’), does not provide a precise dating, but relates the story vaguely to the previous story (Jones, *1 and 2 Kings*, 585).

³⁴ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 457. Sweeney asserts that the narrator relates the story of Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery and the story of the envoys from Babylon ‘‘as the background to YHWH’s deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib’s siege.’’

³⁵ Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 243.

significant rather than a merely chronological order.”³⁶ In the story of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery, the narrator reveals that Hezekiah received fifteen years of additional life (2 Kgs 20:6), which indicates that Hezekiah became ill in the fourteenth year of his reign because the narrator reports that Hezekiah reigned Judah for twenty-nine years (2 Kgs 18:2). The narrator also mentions that the LORD made a promise to Hezekiah to deliver him and the city of Jerusalem, and to defend the city of Jerusalem in 2 Kgs 20:6, which indicates that Hezekiah’s illness precedes the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story.³⁷ In the story of the Babylonian envoys, the narrator reports that Hezekiah showed the visitors from Babylon all the royal treasury, namely *וְאֶת־הַבְּשָׂמִים וְאֶת־הַטּוֹב וְאֶת־בֵּית הַסֵּמֶן וְאֶת־כֶּסֶף וְאֶת־הַזָּהָב וְאֶת־הַבְּשָׂמִים וְאֶת־הַטּוֹב וְאֶת־בֵּית הַסֵּמֶן* (“the silver and gold, the spices and the good oil, his armory and all that was found in his treasure-house”) in 2 Kgs 20:13. When the Babylonians visited, the silver and gold were still full in the treasure-house of Hezekiah, which directly contrasts the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story (2 Kgs 18:15–16), where the narrator explicitly reports that Hezekiah gave all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in Hezekiah’s treasure-house. Moving his temporal setting backward, the narrator signals the significance of the story of the sickness of Hezekiah and of the Babylonian envoys to the narratee. In the former story, the narrator emphasizes both Hezekiah, who was saved by the LORD from his fatal illness, and the city of Jerusalem which was saved by the LORD from Assyria, and in the latter, the narrator presents that the life of Hezekiah and of Jerusalem are limited.

³⁶ Ackroyd, “Interpretation,” 152–80. Ackroyd believes that the story of Hezekiah’s illness (2 Kgs 20:1–11) and the story of envoys of Babylon (2 Kgs 20: 12–19) are comments on the story of Sennacherib’s invasion against Judah (2 Kgs 18:13–19:37).

³⁷ Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 255; Bostock, *Trust*, 104–7. God’s promise to protect Hezekiah and Jerusalem does not make any chronicle order, because Hezekiah and Jerusalem were protected by the LORD in the preceding story (2 Kgs 18–19).

With regard to the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery, however, the narrator moves the setting of time forward in the story of foreign visitors, which is closely related to the previous story. In the story of the Babylonian envoys, the narrator also utilizes a time reference, *בְּעַת הַהִיא* ("at that time") in order to show that the story of foreign visitors is closely connected to the story of Hezekiah's recovery from his illness (2 Kgs 20:12).³⁸ In Act Nine (2 Kgs 20:12–13), the narrator explicitly reports that the king of Babylon sent a letter and a gift to Hezekiah because he heard that Hezekiah had been ill.

The narrator ends the entire story of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:20–21. In Act Eleven, the narrator summarizes the entire reign of Hezekiah, reporting one of Hezekiah's works, his death, and successor, Manasseh. In these two verses, he quickly passes the narrated time covering twenty-nine years of Hezekiah's reign. Thus, the movement of the narrator's temporal setting in the Hezekiah narratives (2 Kgs 18–20) are as follows:

Act	Temporal Setting	Act	Temporal Setting	Act	Temporal Setting
I	→	V	→	IX	→
II	→	VI	→	X	→
III	→	VII	→	XI	→
IV	→	VIII	←		

(→: Forward, ←: Backward)

3.3.1.2.1 Implication for Characterization

The narrator moves his temporal setting forward in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative (2 Kgs 18:13—19:37). In the last two stories of Hezekiah, however, the narrator moves it backward. Thus, the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery and the Babylonian envoys are introduced as flashbacks. By moving the temporal setting

³⁸ Gray, *I & II Kings*, 696. Gray sees this time reference as "an editorial gloss," but Hobbs correctly asserts that the time reference, *בְּעַת הַהִיא* ("at that time"), function as a connection between the previous story and the following one (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 294). Sweeney also asserts that the time reference, *בְּעַת הַהִיא* ("at that time"), relates the story of foreign visitors to the preceding story of Hezekiah's illness and his recovery (Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 423).

backward, the narrator draws the readers' attention to the story of Hezekiah's illness to highlight both Hezekiah, who was healed by the LORD, and Jerusalem, which was saved by the LORD through Hezekiah's prayer.³⁹ The situation of Hezekiah who faced the point of death seems to be a similar situation with Sennacherib who was killed by Adramelech and Sharezer in front of his god, Nisroch in the previous story. However, Hezekiah was given an additional fifteen years of life from the LORD, which indicates again that Hezekiah was the real victor of the battle between Assyria and Judah. At the same time the story of Hezekiah's illness indicates that the deliverance of the city and Hezekiah was closely related to the righteousness and prayer of Hezekiah.

The narrator also emphasizes the power of the LORD who saved Hezekiah, which clearly shows the opposition to the god of Sennacherib who could not save him when he was killed at the house of his god. On the other hand, the narrator also shows that Hezekiah is not eternal or perfect, but his life is limited. The narrator indicates that Hezekiah received only fifteen years of additional life (2 Kgs 20:6).

On the other hand, the narrator casts a shadow over the positive characterization of Hezekiah in the story of the envoys from Babylon (2 Kgs 20:12–19). In the story, the narrator presents the future deportation of the royal family and treasury. The narrator already shows that the life of Hezekiah was limited in the previous story (2 Kgs 20:1–11). Hezekiah was saved by the LORD, but the LORD only added the fifteen years to Hezekiah's life. At that time, the narrator treats Hezekiah's life with the life of Jerusalem. Then, in the story of the Babylonian envoys, the narrator shows that the city

³⁹ In 2 Kgs 20:6, the LORD promises to give fifteen years of addition life to Hezekiah which happens in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, because fourteen years of Hezekiah's reign and fifteen years of additional life make together the twenty-nine years of Hezekiah's reign which is mentioned by the narrator at the beginning of the story of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:2).

of Jerusalem will fall by the hand of Babylon. In this way, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah negatively in the story of the Babylonian envoys in Act Nine and Ten (2 Kgs 25).

Thus, the narrator utilizes the temporal setting, moving backward in the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery to draw the narratee's attention to these events, in order to portray Hezekiah as a good and faithful king. It also shows the LORD is a powerful God who can save his people from death and the city of Jerusalem from the hands of the Assyrians. On the other hand, the narrator diminishes the positive characterization of Hezekiah through the story of Babylonian envoys.

3.3.1.3 Space

The narrator provides the geographical setting in Hezekiah's story, and all the geographical settings in 2 Kgs 18–20 are closely related to Jerusalem. When Sennacherib seized all the fortified cities of Judah, he camped his army at Lachish in Act Two (2 Kgs 18:13–14).⁴⁰ The next geographical setting created by the narrator is the channel of the Upper Pool. Sennacherib's officials, with their army, stopped at the channel of the Upper Pool, which was the water supply for Jerusalem, which is significant for life in the city (2 Kgs 18:17).⁴¹ This location may symbolically play an important role in Hezekiah's story.⁴² Bostock asserts that “[i]t [the conduit] may

⁴⁰ Mayer asserts that the king of Assyria quickly returned to Nineveh from Judah, when Hezekiah and Sennacherib made the final agreement in 2 Kgs 18:14. Mayer maintains that the kings of Assyria usually returned to Nineveh quickly, thus the tribute usually arrived at Nineveh later than the kings (Mayer, *Politik und Kriegskunst*, 361–62). Mayer's suggestion seems inadequate, because Sennacherib did not completely conquer Judah at this time. The fact that Hezekiah sent his tribute to Sennacherib after Sennacherib returned to his country is unique in the writing of Assyrian inscription (Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 132). Thus, Sennacherib was in Lachish when Hezekiah brought his tribute to Sennacherib.

⁴¹ House, *1, 2 Kings*, 362.

⁴² The precise location of the “Upper Pool” is not certain (Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabild*, 171–83). Basically the location of the Upper Pool is understood by scholars in two ways: inside and outside of the city of Jerusalem. Burrows thoroughly studies various suggestions and concludes that the location of

symbolically indicate the life and death struggle that was about to be faced by Hezekiah.”⁴³ Thus, the protection of the conduit of the Upper Pool would be essential for the life of Jerusalem while the city is besieged for a long time. Providing this geographical setting the narrator indicates the seriousness of the situation in the story.⁴⁴

The narrator moves his geographical setting from the outside of Jerusalem (the conduit of the Upper Pool), to the inside (Hezekiah’s palace) in 2 Kgs 18:37. Hezekiah’s officials brought the words of Rabshakeh from the outside of the city to Hezekiah who was inside the city. Hearing his officials’ report, Hezekiah entered the temple of the LORD (2 Kgs 19:1), which functions as the center of the city. When Hezekiah heard the

the Upper Pool is on the eastern hill of Jerusalem as it reaches the Kidron Valley (Burrows, “Upper Pool,” 221–227). However, this location is problematic in military terms. The route of the Assyrians to Jerusalem would have been quite circuitous if it ends up at the Kidron Valley. At the same time the Kidron Valley is the lowest point in the city region which is hardly making the kind of boast recorded in the story (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 261). Bright suggests that “the pool was within the city walls” by arguing that the term, מסלה, is a place within the city of Jerusalem and not a “highway” (Bright, *History*, 283). However, the term, מסלה, translates “highway,” which it literally is and is never used for city streets (רחובות). More significantly the use of the term, שדה (“field”), is a clear reference to uncultivated land, open country. Gray also asserts that the meeting place between Ahaz and Isaiah in Isa 7:3 is “the conduit flowed into the Upper Pool, which must have been inside the city.” Gray understands the term, מסלה, not as a “highway” but an embankment that separated the Lower Pool from the Upper Pool which carries water from Hezekiah’s tunnel (Gray, *I & II Kings*, 678–80). Hobbs, however, correctly evaluates that “[t]here is also a problem of dating. Isaiah is depicted as going to precisely the same spot (Isa 7:3), but according to Gray the Upper Pool was built by Hezekiah some time later. If the activity of Hezekiah is depicted in Isa 22:9–11, then most of his construction was inside the city, and does not therefore correspond with the meeting place’s being in the open country” (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 261). Evans suggests that the meeting place between Assyrians and Judean is inside the city. He understands the verb, בוא, is not “to approach” but “to enter” (Evans, *Invasion*, 155). Thus, he reads 2 Kgs 18:17b as follows: וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיַּעֲמְדוּ בַחֲעֻלַת הַבְּרֶכֶת הָעֶלְיוֹנָה (“they went up and they entered Jerusalem and stood at the Upper Pool”). However, when we look at the terms, חֲעֻלָּה (“conduit”), מסלה (“highway”), and שדה (“field [open country]”), the location of the Upper Pool would be outside of the city of Jerusalem. At the same time if the army of Sennacherib is already inside of the city, then, why does Rabshakeh, one of the officials of Sennacherib, continually need to address Hezekiah to surrender Jerusalem to Sennacherib? Of course, following Honor, Evans suggests that the term, חיל כבד, does not mean a large army, but a military escort (Honor, *Sennacherib’s Invasion*). Thus, Evans asserts that “there is no besieging army at Jerusalem’s walls in this narrative” (Evans, *Invasion*, 151–55). However, the mission to Jerusalem is clearly a show of force to intimidate Hezekiah into surrender. At the same time, Evans does not deal with the term שדה, which mostly translates “field,” and means the “open country.” Thus, it is better to see the Upper Pool, the meeting place, as being outside of the city.

⁴³ Bostock, *Trust*, 78.

⁴⁴ Interestingly, in the conclusion of the entire story of Hezekiah in Act Eleven (2 Kgs 20:20–21), the narrator reports that Hezekiah brought the water into the city of Jerusalem by making the channel (2 Kgs 20:20), which is not directly related to the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story.

message of Sennacherib, which came from outside the city in Act Six (2 Kgs 19:9–13), he entered again into the temple of the LORD (2 Kgs 19:14), which portrays Hezekiah as a pious king who totally depended on the LORD.⁴⁵

In the last two stories (2 Kgs 20:1–19), however, Hezekiah just remained in his palace, even though he has faced the personal and national crisis. On the other hand, the narrator also changes his geographical setting from the inside of Jerusalem to the outside of the city in Act Two (2 Kgs 18:13–16), Act Seven (2 Kgs 19:35–37), and Act Nine (2 Kgs 20:12–13). The narrator reports the Rabshakeh's movement in Act Five (2 Kgs 19:8). He withdrew from Jerusalem to Libnah to report on the Jerusalem situation because his master had gone from Lachish to Libnah (2 Kgs 19:8). At the same time in Act Seven (2 Kgs 19:35–37) the narrator reports the situation of Sennacherib's army at Libnah (2 Kgs 19:35)⁴⁶ and then follows Sennacherib who returned to his country, Assyria (2 Kgs 19:36–37). The geographical setting extends beyond Jerusalem in Act Seven (2 Kgs 19:35–37) in order to report the humiliating death of Sennacherib, who

⁴⁵ Hull, "Hezekiah-Saint," 145.

⁴⁶ The place where the angel of the LORD attracted the camp of Assyria (2 Kgs 19:35) is not certain, because the narrator does not explicitly mention the place in the story. At the beginning of the second threat of Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:9), the narrator reports that Sennacherib again sent messengers to Hezekiah when he heard about Tirhakah. Within the story, the place that Sennacherib sent his messenger to Hezekiah was the same place where the army of Assyria was attacked by the angel of the LORD (2 Kgs 19:35), because the narrator does not make any change the geographical setting for the army of Assyrian. Since Stade (Stade, "Miscellen," 156–89), it has been suggested that there are three different sources for the story of invasion of Sennacherib against Judah, namely A (2 Kgs 18:13–16), B1 (2 Kgs 18:17–19:9a, 36–37) and B2 (2 Kgs 19:9b–35). Gallagher re-examines all the arguments for the two different sources for the same event (B1 and B2) and asserts that evidences for the two sources in 2 Kgs 18:17–19:37 are not convincing at all (Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 149–59). At the same time in 2 Kgs 19:9b the term, *וַיֵּשָׁב*, which is *qal*, imperfect 3rd person masculine singular of *שׁוּב* (to return) with *waw* consecutive, can be used as adverbial ("again") in this verse (Joüon, *Grammar*, 650). According to Joüon, when the verb, *שׁוּב*, is followed by a second verb, the verb, *שׁוּב*, is to denote the adverbial notion of *again* (Gen 26:18; Isa 6:13; Mal 1:4). In 2 Kgs 19:9b, the narrator used the verb *שׁוּב*, before the term *וַיֵּשָׁלַח*, which is also *qal*, imperfect 3rd person masculine singular of *שָׁלַח* ("to send") with *waw* consecutive. Thus, the reading of *וַיֵּשָׁב וַיֵּשָׁלַח* can mean "and he again sent." In this way, Sennacherib was in Libnah, when he sent his messenger to Hezekiah with his letter in 2 Kgs 19:9b. Thus, the place that the angel of the LORD attacked the army of Assyria in 2 Kgs 19:15 is Libnah where Sennacherib was fighting with Libnah (2 Kgs 19:8). Wiseman also asserts that Sennacherib was not at Jerusalem, but possibly in Libnah (Wiseman, *1 & 2 Kings*, 284).

was killed by Adramelech and Sharezer at the house of Nisroch, while he was worshiping his god (2 Kgs 19:37).

In terms of the geographical setting, the narrator clearly shows that the city of Jerusalem is very important in Hezekiah's story. The narrator presents many geographical settings in the story, but these geographical settings fall into two categories: inside Jerusalem and outside Jerusalem. Although many geographical settings belong outside Jerusalem, the main story happens inside Jerusalem in Act Four (2 Kgs 18:37—19:7), Act Six (2 Kgs 19:9–34), Act Eight (2 Kgs 20:1–11), and Act Ten (2 Kgs 20:14–19). The dialogue between the Rabshakeh and Hezekiah's officials in Act Three (2 Kgs 18:17–36) occurred at the conduit of the Upper Pool, outside of Jerusalem, but the narrator intentionally utilizes this geographical setting in order to indicate that the city was facing the life-threatening situation caused by Sennacherib. The narrator reports that he captured all the fortified cities of Judah and camped his army at Lachish (2 Kgs 18:13). Sennacherib wanted to conquer the city of Jerusalem, but he never got into the city. Rather, Sennacherib was increasingly distanced from the city throughout the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative. He first camped his army at Lachish in Act Two (2 Kgs 18:14–16) and he withdrew from Lachish to Libnah in order to fight against Libnah (2 Kgs 19:8).⁴⁷ Sennacherib again withdrew from Libnah to Nineveh (2 Kgs 19:35), for the angel of the LORD attacked the army of Assyria in Act Seven (2 Kgs 19:35).⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 649. According to Oswalt, the location of Libnah is uncertain, but most think it was to the north of Lachish, making the suggestion of a tactical withdrawal probable. Oswalt asserts that “Sennacherib was pulling back to the north to put Jerusalem on his flank rather than directly in his rear when he met the Egyptians.” In terms of the location of Libnah, previously it had been known as Tell es-Safi, which is about twelve and half miles north of Lachish, but recently some scholars, Aharoni and Turner, suggest that Libnah is Tell el-Bornat which is six miles north of Lachish (Aharoni, *Land*, 219; Turner, *Historical Geography*, 180).

⁴⁸ Evans convincingly asserts that the term, *נָסָה*, in 2 Kgs 19:8 shows “a withdrawal from hostilities” in terms of the context of warfare (Evans, “Historia or Exegesis,” 108–9). In 2 Kgs 19:8, the

Finally he entered into the temple of his god in Nineveh and was killed there (2 Kgs 19:37), which happened according to the word of the LORD (2 Kgs 19:6–7; 19:21–34).

Thus, the geographical setting in the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 is as follows:

Act	Scene	Geographical Setting	Jerusalem
I	A	Jerusalem→Judah	In→Out
	B	Samaria→Assyria (Halah and other cities of Medes)	Out
II	A	Lachish	Out
III	A-B	The channel of the Upper Pool	Out
IV	A	Hezekiah's Palace→The house of the LORD	In
	B	Isaiah's place	In
V	A	Lachish→Libnah	Out
VI	A	Libnah	Out
	B	Hezekiah's Palace→The house of the LORD	In
	C	Hezekiah's Palace	In
VII	A	Libnah	Out
	B	Sennacherib's Palace→The house of Nisroch	Out
VIII	A-B	Hezekiah's palace	In
	C	The Middle court	In
	D-F	Hezekiah's palace	In
IX	A	Babylon (Merodach-baladan's palace)	Out
	B	Hezekiah's palace	In
X	A	Hezekiah's palace	In
XI	A-B	Judah→Jerusalem	Out→In

3.3.1.3.1 Implication for Characterization

The narrator clearly shows that the city of Jerusalem is important to Hezekiah's story in terms of the geographical setting. The narrator relates that the LORD protected the city of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib, who tried to subdue Jerusalem, through Hezekiah's prayer in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story (2 Kgs 18:13—19:37).

Sennacherib never got into the city, but gradually withdrew from the city and finally was

narrator reports that *כי נסע מלכיש* ("that he [Sennacherib] withdrew from Lachish"), which means that Sennacherib could not subdue the city of Lachish. Evans also provides other references, 2 Kgs 3:27, in order to prove his suggestion. Evans also shows that the narrator utilizes the same verb when he relates that Sennacherib "withdrew" in 2 Kgs 19:36. Thus, Sennacherib withdrew from Lachish to Libnah and stayed there until the angel of the LORD attacked them in 2 Kgs 19:35 because Sennacherib did not conquer the city of Lachish.

killed at the temple of his god.⁴⁹ In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as an important character in order to protect the city within the story of Sennacherib's invasion against Judah. Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively as one who played an important role to save the city through his prayers.⁵⁰

This positive characterization is continually reported in the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery in connection with the geographical setting. In the story, the narrator reports the LORD's promise to protect the city from the hand of Assyria, when He gave his promise to heal Hezekiah from his fatal illness (2 Kgs 20:5–6). In the story, the life of Jerusalem and the life of Hezekiah are tied together. In 2 Kgs 20:6, the LORD promised that *הָאֲשִׁירָא וְזֶה הַיָּרֵךְ הַזֶּה* (“I will deliver you [Hezekiah] and this city [Jerusalem]”), when He promised to give fifteen additional years of life to Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:2–3). Here the LORD treated Hezekiah's recovery as saving the city of Jerusalem from the king of Assyria (2 Kgs 20:6).⁵¹ However, the narrator reports that the LORD's protection for the city is not only for Hezekiah's faithful deeds (2 Kgs 20:3), but also for the LORD Himself and David (2 Kgs 20:6b). The LORD said, *וְגִבַּרְתִּי עַל-הָעִיר*, (“and I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of David my servant”).⁵² In this way, the narrator continues the positive characterization of Hezekiah in terms of the LORD's protection of Jerusalem. Then, in the story of the

⁴⁹ Van der Kooij, “Das assyrische Heer,” 93–109; Liwak, “Die Rettung Jerusalems,” 137–66.

⁵⁰ In the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story, Hezekiah prayed several times by himself (2 Kgs 19:1, 15–20) and through the prophet Isaiah (2 Kgs 19:3–4). Then, the LORD answered these prayers and gave his promise to protect the city of Jerusalem through Isaiah (2 Kgs 19:6–7; 20–34). In 2 Kgs 19:35, the narrator also reports the action of the LORD, who killed the army of Assyria, immediately after the answer of the LORD to the prayer of Hezekiah.

⁵¹ Gallagher points out that Isaiah used the phrases “for My sake and for the sake of My servant David” in order to indicate that Jerusalem will be saved due to the dynasty of David rather than the present ruling class (Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 239).

⁵² Some commentators suggest that 2 Kgs 20:6b should be omitted, because 2 Kgs 20:6b is very similar to 2 Kgs 19:34 (Montgomery, *Kings*, 507). However, Hobbs correctly points out that 2 Kgs 20:6b should be understood in the context of the current story

Babylonian envoys (2 Kgs 20:12–19), the narrator reports Isaiah’s prediction for the fall of Jerusalem by Babylon (2 Kgs 20:16–18), which is caused by Hezekiah who showed the Babylonian delegation all the house of his tracery (2 Kgs 20:13). In this way, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah negatively in the last story.

Thus, in terms of geographical setting, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a faithful king by saving the city from Sennacherib through Hezekiah’s faithful actions, but his positive characterization gradually changes to the negative characterization throughout the Hezekiah narratives. In other words, the deliverance of Jerusalem in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story is limited,⁵³ as the life of Hezekiah is limited in the context of his sickness and recovery. The fifteen years of additional life that Hezekiah received will be covered in more detail in the section on characterization.

3.3.2 Plot (Events)

The plot of Hezekiah’s narratives (2 Kgs 18–20) is basically traced by means of the conflict that Hezekiah faced in the story, which indicates what generates the conflict and how that conflict is resolved.⁵⁴ Hezekiah’s story in 2 Kgs 18–20 consists of three narratives: Sennacherib’s campaign against Judah (2 Kgs 18:13—19:37), Hezekiah’s illness and recovery (2 Kgs 20:1–11), and the visit of the Babylonian envoys (2 Kgs 20:12–19).⁵⁵ As mentioned above, the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story chronologically occurs after Hezekiah’s recovery and the visitation of Babylonian envoys in terms of the time sequence.⁵⁶ The narrator does not relate Hezekiah’s story in chronological order,

⁵³ Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 246.

⁵⁴ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 103.

⁵⁵ Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 417. The narrator, however, does not always tell the story in chronological sequence, but prefers to arrange his story along “thematic, topical, or theological lines” as a meaningful order of events.

⁵⁶ House, *1, 2 Kings*, 373.

but arranges them in his own way in order to show his ideological point of view.⁵⁷ Thus this section will be utilized to trace the plot of Hezekiah's narratives in these three narratives by examining how to resolve the conflict that Hezekiah faced in order to see the characterization of Hezekiah.

3.3.2.1 Plot Structure

The narrator begins Hezekiah's narratives with a background commentary in 2 Kgs 18:1–12, which can be divided into two parts: Hezekiah's achievements (2 Kgs 18:1–8) and the fall of Samaria (2 Kgs 18:9–12). Hull argues that Hezekiah's story is "resumed" with the event of the fall of Samaria in 2 Kgs 18:9–12.⁵⁸ However, it is better to see the event of the destruction of Samaria as the background information for the Hezekiah narratives (2 Kgs 18:13–20:19), with the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative beginning with 2 Kgs 18:13. Hull sees the term *וַיְהִי*, which is the opening word of 2 Kgs 18:9, as functioning as a resumptive repetition linked back to the beginning of the account of Hezekiah's reign in 2 Kgs 18:1. Thus, he asserts that the story is resumed in 2 Kgs 18:9. However, the term *וַיְהִי*, which indicates a new beginning, can function to demarcate the shift of scene from Judah (2 Kgs 18:1–8) to Israel (2 Kgs 18:9–12). Later when he discusses the setting in the Hezekiah narratives, Hull himself sees 2 Kgs 18:9–12 "as background information."⁵⁹ Bostock also sees 2 Kgs 18:1–12 as a "background commentary."⁶⁰ Thus, the event of the fall of Samaria (2 Kgs 18:9–12) with 2 Kgs 18:1–8 functions as background information, and the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative begins

⁵⁷ Bostock, *Trust*, 81.

⁵⁸ Hull, "Hezekiah-Saint," 219. Hull contends that the word, *וַיְהִי*, signals the beginning of a unit. In 2 Kgs 18:9 the word, *וַיְהִי*, is used as a sign of a new unit. Thus, Hull asserts that the repeated word, *וַיְהִי*, is a form of resumptive repetition.

⁵⁹ Hull, "Hezekiah-Saint," 250.

⁶⁰ Bostock, *Trust*, 38. Hobbs also contends that 2 Kgs 18:9–12 sets the historical stage for the events which take place in the following story (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 246).

in 2 Kgs 18:13. Thus, the addition of 2 Kgs 18:9–12 not only provides background information for Hezekiah’s story, but also adds an anticipatory tension to the plot in order to depict Hezekiah as a pious king by contrasting him with the people of the Northern Kingdom, who did not listen to the LORD by disobeying the Law of Moses (2 Kgs 18:12).⁶¹

Providing the background information, the narrator introduces the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in 2 Kgs 18:13. The narrator states that Sennacherib invaded Judah in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah in order to conquer Judah, which indicates the beginning of the conflict between two main characters, Hezekiah and Sennacherib. The initial conflict is intensified by the actions of Sennacherib, who captured all the fortified cities of Judah in 2 Kgs 18:13b. Then the narrator reports the reaction of Hezekiah who sent his words to Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 18:14a. Hezekiah said that *חָטָאתִי שׁוּב מֵעָלַי אֵת אֲשֶׁר* *חָטָאתִי שׁוּב מֵעָלַי אֵת אֲשֶׁר* (“I have done wrong, return from me, whatever you impose on me I will bear”). Hezekiah cried to Sennacherib to return, asking him to impose a tribute. Then Sennacherib demanded Hezekiah to pay three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold in 2 Kgs 18:14b, which indicates the beginning of resolving the initial conflict between Hezekiah and Sennacherib. Hezekiah prepared and paid the tribute that Sennacherib demanded in 2 Kgs 18:15–16, which shows that the original conflict is resolved. However, Sennacherib did not leave Judah, rather he continued to carry out his plan to conquer Jerusalem, which indicates that the initial conflict could not be resolved through the payment from Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:15–16.

⁶¹ The narrator provides this as the reason why the people of the Northern Kingdom were exiled to Assyria, which is clearly opposed to the evaluation of the narrator on the reign of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:6.

In 2 Kgs 18:15, the narrator reports that Hezekiah only paid all the silver rather than all the silver and the gold which Sennacherib demanded (2 Kgs 18:15).⁶² Evans asserts that “this omission of gold from the tribute ... functions to explain why the Assyrian emissaries are sent to Jerusalem, despite tribute paid.”⁶³ The narrator does not mention “gold” in order to indicate that Hezekiah’s tribute did not fully meet Sennacherib’s demands. In this way, the narrator develops the plot and describes that Hezekiah’s initial solution has failed and that the conflict between Hezekiah and Sennacherib is intensifying again. At the same time, the narrator informs the reader that the initial solution through a human character, Hezekiah, has failed⁶⁴ and the story will reveal another solution, that is the divine solution of trust in the LORD.⁶⁵ Describing the failed action of Hezekiah, the narrator not only resumes the story of Hezekiah, but also propels the plot of the story.

The narrator continues with the fact that Sennacherib sent his officials with a substantial force in Act Three (2 Kgs 18:17). In this way, the narrator accelerates the conflict between Sennacherib and Hezekiah, which began in 2 Kgs 18:13. In terms of

⁶² Second Kings 18:15: וַיִּתֵּן חֶזְקִיָּהוּ אֶת־כָּל־הַכֶּסֶף הַנִּמְצָא בֵּית־יְהוָה וּבִאֲצֻרוֹת בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ (“And Hezekiah gave all the silver which was found in the House of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king’s house”). Many have interpreted the next verse, קָצַץ חֶזְקִיָּהוּ אֶת־דְּלָתוֹת הַיָּבֵל וְאֶת־הָאֲמֹנֹת אֲשֶׁר צָפָה חֶזְקִיָּהוּ מִלֶּךְ יְהוָה, (“Hezekiah cut off the doors of the temple of the LORD, and the doorposts which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid,” 2 Kgs 18:16) as implying the ‘gold.’ However, Evans correctly contends that “[i]n the DH the verb צָפָה refers to overlaying with gold in the temple (e.g., 1 Kgs 6:20–22) or in Solomon’s palace (1 Kgs 10:18). Second Kings 18:16 is the only time where the material in question is not listed. The lack of mention of the gold may be a narrative technique to distance Hezekiah from giving away the gold of the temple” (Evans, *Invasion*, 148).

⁶³ Evans, *Invasion*, 151.

⁶⁴ Seitz points out that the narrator emphasizes the character of Sennacherib rather than Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:13–16. Seitz notes that the narrator portrays Sennacherib dishonourably and arrogantly when he accepted Hezekiah’s tribute but still sought to conquer the city of Jerusalem (Seitz, “Account A,” 56). Bostock also suggests that “Hezekiah is to be seen as being ironic in his deference to Sennacherib and it should be viewed as part of a divine plan to deal finally with the Assyrian aggressor” (Bostock, *Trust*, 50).

⁶⁵ In the story of the invasion of Sennacherib against Judah, the term, בָּטַח (‘to trust’), is one of the important key words, which provides the theme of “trust” in 2 Kgs 18–19. Evans reveals that the verb, בָּטַח (‘to trust’), occurs nine times and is only used in the story of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:5, 19, 20, 21 [2x], 22, 24, 30; 19:10) in the entire narrative of Samuel-Kings (Evans, *Invasion*, 117).

plot, the failure of Hezekiah's tribute to conciliate Sennacherib heightens the tension.

The narrator reports that the Rabshakeh, along with a substantial force, came to Jerusalem and stood at the channel of the Upper Pool, which was the water supply for the city of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:17).⁶⁶ By reporting that Sennacherib's officials stood at the Upper Pool, the narrator indicates the real conflict between Sennacherib and Hezekiah.

The conflict generated by the Assyrians' action that resulted in their standing in the Upper Pool intensifies through the Rabshakeh's two speeches in Act Three.⁶⁷ In these two speeches, the Rabshakeh dishonored the LORD and Hezekiah. Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, who assumes the role of a counterpart to Hezekiah in the story, is the originator of the message of these two speeches.⁶⁸ The Rabshakeh said that Egypt was unable to rescue Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:21), and the people of Judah should not trust in the LORD, for Hezekiah made Him angry by removing the high places in His honor and limiting worship to one place (2 Kgs 18:22). In this regard, the Rabshakeh taunted Hezekiah and the LORD. The response of Hezekiah's three officials was to ask the

⁶⁶ Some scholars believe that the Rabshakeh came to Jerusalem with a small, military escort (Gonçalves, *L'Expédition*, 395; Hutter, *Hiskia König*, 88; Evans, *Invasion*, 153; Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion*, 75). Wildberger maintains that the Rabshakeh came to negotiate with Hezekiah not to besiege or to attack Jerusalem (Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 1396). However, the Rabshakeh came to negotiate and to besiege Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:27). The speeches that the Rabshakeh brought could be conveyed at any time. One of the reasons that a massive army came to Jerusalem is that the Rabshakeh came with two of Sennacherib's other officers: the Tartan and the Rabsaris who were high military officers (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 256). Thus, when they came, their armies came too. Sennacherib would not send these officers only to bring "inciteful messages" to the people of Jerusalem (Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 167).

⁶⁷ Biblical scholars understand the Rabshakeh's speeches differently. They are divided into three groups of opinion. One believes that the Rabshakeh's speeches are not authentic and are composed from the prophecy of Isaiah and from Deuteronomic language explaining the Promised Land (Smelik, "Distortion," 70–93; Ben Zvi, "Who Wrote," 79–92). Other scholars assert that the Rabshakeh's speeches are authentic (Cohen, "Neo-Assyrian Elements," 32–47; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 234). Cohen argues his position to compare the Rabshakeh's first speech to Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions. Others believe that the Rabshakeh's speeches were originally given by the Rabshakeh to the people of Jerusalem, but they were later revised by one or more editors (Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 167).

⁶⁸ Interestingly, the form of the first speech of the Rabshakeh appears to resemble prophetic speech (Miscall, *Isaiah*, 89). In his speech the Rabshakeh focuses on the military and religious reasons that Judah should surrender.

Rabshakeh to speak in Aramaic because they did not want Judahites to hear the words of the Rabshakeh (2 Kgs 18:26). However, the taunting of the Rabshakeh continued in Hebrew in his second speech (2 Kgs 18:27–35). The object of the Rabshakeh’s mocking in his second speech was still Hezekiah and the LORD, who were in the background and remained silent (2 Kgs 18:27–29). Hezekiah’s silence in the story is broken by hearing what the Rabshakeh said through his three representatives (2 Kgs 19:1). Responding to the report of his officials, Hezekiah tore his clothes and entered the temple, which indicates a deepening shadow over Judah and intensifies the conflict between Sennacherib and Hezekiah.⁶⁹ The narrator reports that Hezekiah and his officials covered themselves in sackcloth, which indicates their grief and frustrations over the speech of Rabshakeh.⁷⁰

In 2 Kgs 18:14–16, Hezekiah cried out to Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18:14) in order to resolve the original conflict, but he did not succeed. In 2 Kgs 19:2–4, however, Hezekiah asked Isaiah to pray for help to the LORD in order to resolve the initial conflict between Hezekiah and Sennacherib.⁷¹ Then, the narrator reports the answer of the LORD through Isaiah, which indicates the beginning point of the resolution of Hezekiah’s problem. Isaiah said that the LORD indeed had heard these blasphemies and that the Assyrian will return to his own land (2 Kgs 19:7).⁷² Although the fulfilment of

⁶⁹ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 249.

⁷⁰ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 34. In this ominous situation, Hezekiah approached the LORD by means of prayer. He entered the temple of the LORD (2 Kgs 19:1). Hezekiah also sent his officials to the prophet Isaiah in order to ask him to pray for help to the LORD (2 Kgs 19:2–4). However, the narrator does not provide details of Hezekiah’s prayer, but the narrator explicitly shows that Hezekiah, through his officials, asked Isaiah to pray. Here the prophet Isaiah prayed to the LORD for help on behalf of Hezekiah.

⁷¹ When Hezekiah asked Isaiah to pray for the LORD’s help, he wisely directed Isaiah’s attention to the blasphemy of the Rabshakeh rather than to the political affairs. This is the reason why the LORD acted against Sennacherib, Gallagher contends (Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 217).

⁷² Clements maintains that Isaiah’s response in 2 Kgs 19:6–7 do not agree with the attitude of Isaiah in 701. He asserts that “there is no justification at all for arguing that Isaiah had foretold the

this prediction is delayed, the narrator informs the readers that Sennacherib has left Lachish and the Rabshakeh has withdrawn from Jerusalem in Act Five (2 Kgs 19:8), which indicates a turning point in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story.

The initial conflict, however, between Hezekiah and Sennacherib is not resolved here, but continued. The tension between Sennacherib and Hezekiah is heightened again in Scene One of Act Six (2 Kgs 19:9–13).⁷³ However, the tension becomes weaker than before.⁷⁴ In Act Six, Sennacherib threatened Hezekiah by sending a messenger with a letter, which indicates the third conflict between Hezekiah and Sennacherib. The words of Sennacherib come directly to Hezekiah, not through the officials of both kings as the previous events in 2 Kgs 18:17—19:7. In this way, the narrator presents that Sennacherib could not send his army back to Jerusalem, because he heard that the king of Cush set out to do battle against him (2 Kgs 19:9).⁷⁵ Thus, Sennacherib only sent his letter to threaten Hezekiah continually.⁷⁶ In his letter, Sennacherib warns Hezekiah that the LORD deceives him. Sennacherib said אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה אֶלְיָהוּ (“let not your God deceive you [Hezekiah]”) in 2 Kgs 19:10. Sennacherib also provided the earlier victories of Assyria over other nations in order to emphasize the inability of the LORD to deliver Judah from his hand. When Hezekiah heard the words of Sennacherib, Hezekiah also went to the house of the LORD in order to bring Sennacherib’s blasphemy.⁷⁷

miraculous defeat of Sennacherib’s assault on Jerusalem in 701 B.C.” (Clements, *Isaiah*, 51; also see, Gonçalves, *L’Expédition*, 538–39).

⁷³ Beuken, *Isaiah II*, 361.

⁷⁴ Šanda, *Die Bücher der Könige*, 291. Šanda asserts that there is no evidence in the text that Hezekiah panicked or was afraid. Thus, in this tension, Hezekiah had confidence in the LORD. Šanda points out that Hezekiah’s prayer clearly displays his confidence in the LORD. Gallagher also maintains that the tensions between Hezekiah and Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 19:9–37 are an exaggeration (Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 151).

⁷⁵ Vogt, *Der Aufstand Hiskias*, 48–50.

⁷⁶ Fewell, “Sennacherib’s Defeat,” 82.

⁷⁷ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 276. The narrator contrasts the character of Sennacherib with the LORD in Sennacherib’s letter. In 2 Kgs 19:10, Sennacherib said that אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה אֶלְיָהוּ (“do not let your God deceive

Interestingly the narrator does not describe the feeling or reaction of Hezekiah to the words of Sennacherib, but just reports that Hezekiah entered into the house of the LORD (2 Kgs 19:14). In this regard, the narrator indicates not only Hezekiah's confidence in the LORD's promise to return and to remove Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 19:7, but also that Sennacherib's threat is getting weak.⁷⁸ Fewell also asserts that the form of a letter and Hezekiah's response show that the threat of Sennacherib has de-escalated considerably.⁷⁹ Although Sennacherib uses the form of a letter, the contents of the letter are very similar and even are more emphatically expressed than the Rabshakeh's speeches.⁸⁰ Sennacherib's letter directly addressed Hezekiah and focused on the character of the LORD.⁸¹ Thus, the threat of Sennacherib continues and the original conflict is not resolved here. However, the narrator diminishes the threat of Sennacherib

you [Hezekiah]"). Sennacherib spoke to Hezekiah concerning the LORD's inability to save Jerusalem. The same matter was brought by the Rabshakeh in his second speech (Isa 36:18–20). In 2 Kgs 18:32, the field commander, however, referred to this inability of the LORD in order to criticize Hezekiah. He said, וְאַל-תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר אֲחִיכֶם ("but do not listen to Hezekiah because he misled you"). He addressed the people of Jerusalem concerning Hezekiah who said "the LORD will deliver us." Thus, although the content of these two speeches is the same about the inability of the LORD to save the city of Jerusalem from the hand of Assyria, the main purpose of these two speeches are different. In the Rabshakeh's speech, the main goal was to separate the Jerusalemites from Hezekiah, but the purpose of Sennacherib's letter was to separate Hezekiah from the LORD (Childs, *Isaiah*, 275). In the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, these two characters, the LORD and Sennacherib, play "symmetrically opposing roles" (Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 82). The Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative begins with the presence and power of Sennacherib who is the origin of the crisis, but the story ends with the death of Sennacherib. At the end of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, the narrator states that the army of Sennacherib was killed by the messenger of the LORD (2 Kgs 19:35) and Sennacherib returned to his country (2 Kgs 19:36) and was killed by his own sons in front of his own god (2 Kgs 19:37) according to the word of the LORD in 2 Kgs 19:7. In this way the narrator emphasizes the LORD's power over Sennacherib who had depicted the LORD as the powerless God. The narrator utilizes the device of ironic reversal in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative. Sennacherib as the strong one was killed while Hezekiah, the weak one survives. The destroyer becomes destroyed and the taunter, taunted. Sennacherib who has defeated all the gods of all the nations was killed in front of his god, who does not have any ability to save him.

⁷⁸ Šanda, *Die Bücher der Könige*, 291.

⁷⁹ Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 82.

⁸⁰ Beuken, *Isaiah II*, 361. In the message of Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 19:10–13 (Isa 37:10–13), Beuken states, "[t]he pretention of Assyrian supremacy is even stronger: 'the kings of Assyria' (v. 11: plural) and 'my fathers' (v. 12) instead of 'the king of Assyria' (36:18, 20 [2 Kgs 18:33, 35]: singular) and 'my hand' (36:19f [2 Kgs 18:34f]); 'all the lands' (v. 11) instead of 'his, these, their land(s)' (36:18, 20 [2 Kgs 18:33, 35]). The threat itself is similarly more acute, 'destroying them utterly' (v. 11) having no counterpart in the previous address."

⁸¹ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 270. Hobbs notes that "as most commentators acknowledge, the object of Sennacherib's ridicule is now not Hezekiah, but Yahweh."

by the response of Hezekiah and by not mentioning the high rank of Sennacherib's representatives or his army in 2 Kgs 19:9.⁸²

In his prayer, Hezekiah clearly contrasts the claims of the LORD as creator of heaven and earth and Lord of history, with Sennacherib the powerful ruler and conqueror of the world. The narrator makes Hezekiah's prayer as a climax of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative. Hezekiah proclaimed that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that the LORD alone is God (2 Kgs 19:19).⁸³ The LORD alone will prevail. Then the narrator reports that the LORD answered Hezekiah through Isaiah (2 Kgs 19:20). In His answer, the LORD made a promise to give salvation to Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:32–34) by providing an agricultural sign (2 Kgs 19:29–31), which indicates that the conflict begins to resolve.

In Act Seven (2 Kgs 19:35–37), the narrator tells about the fulfilment of the word of the LORD, which was given to Hezekiah as the LORD's answer for his prayer (2 Kgs 19:14–19). The narrator reports that one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrian soldiers were killed by the angel of the LORD (2 Kgs 19:35) and Sennacherib was killed by the hand of his own people in front of his god (2 Kgs 19:37).⁸⁴ The death of Assyrian

⁸² Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 81–82.

⁸³ With this call for deliverance an appeal is made for the LORD's reputation to be defended. In the Deuteronomistic history a similar appeal has happened twice, during confrontations between champions of the LORD and foreign threats. One is David's fight with Goliath (1 Sam 17:46) and the other is Elijah's struggle with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18:37). Hobbs asserts that "it is perhaps at this point in the prayer and, indeed, in the narrative that the fortunes of Judah begin to change" (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 278).

⁸⁴ Many scholars believe that the number of dead Assyrians in 2 Kgs 19:35 is not correct, because the number is too high. Thus, several scholars suggest how to understand the number of dead Assyrians. Horn understands the number in 2 Kgs 19:35 as 5,180 by reading the text as "180 and 5,000" (Horn, "Sennacherib's Campaign" 27–28; also see Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign," 233). Feigin also suggests that the number in 2 Kgs 19:35 was 185 men, because \aleph standing for $\psi\aleph$. Feigin believes that the 'aleph was later misunderstood as 'eleph (Feigin, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 88–117; also see Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 239). Von Soden asserts that the number is understood as "sehr viele," because unrealistically high numbers appear in other biblical text (von Soden, "Sanherib," 154–55). Others

soldiers is described in simple terms, but the death of Sennacherib is emphatically told by providing additional detail on the situation and place setting. Seitz also points out that the death of Sennacherib seems to get the attention of the narrator more than the death of Assyrian soldiers.⁸⁵ The fact that the narrator emphasizes the death of Sennacherib is reasonable because it is Sennacherib who is the chief antagonist of Hezekiah. Thus, in reporting Sennacherib's death, the narrator indicates that the original conflict between Sennacherib and Hezekiah has been resolved in Act Seven.⁸⁶

After resolving the original conflict, the narrator reports the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery, and the story of the Babylonian envoys in 2 Kgs 20. The narrator relates these two stories in order to describe the fate of Hezekiah, who is the chief antagonist against Sennacherib. In Act Seven (2 Kgs 19:35–37), the narrator reports the shameful death of Sennacherib, and now the narrator relates the end of Hezekiah's life to the readers.⁸⁷ Initially, it appears that Hezekiah will not live, but die (2 Kgs 20:1a), which indicates the initial conflict of Hezekiah in the story of Hezekiah's illness. This initial conflict is intensified by the word of the LORD in 2 Kgs 20:1b. Hezekiah, however, refused to accept God's word; rather he asked the LORD to change what seems to be a logical sequence of events just as in the previous events. Here Hezekiah directly prayed to the LORD for himself at his palace. Hezekiah again cried to the LORD in order to resolve the initial conflict that Hezekiah faced. The narrator reports that God immediately answered the prayer of Hezekiah by giving a promise to heal Hezekiah and to add fifteen years of life in 2 Kgs 20:4–6, which indicates the beginning

understand the number symbolically. Rudolf asserts that the number symbolically means that "ich, Jahwe, bin (dein) Gott." The sum of these words is 185 (Rudolf, "Zum Text," 214).

⁸⁵ Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 252–53.

⁸⁶ Bostock, *Trust*, 78.

⁸⁷ House, *1, 2 Kings*, 373.

of the resolution for Hezekiah's initial conflict. The narrator relates that Hezekiah continued to live under God's blessing, while Sennacherib was killed under God's judgement. The life of Hezekiah, however, will not last forever, but only an additional fifteen years, which indicates the limitation of Hezekiah.

In 2 Kgs 20:12–19, the narrator describes his final judgment on Hezekiah. In the beginning of the story, the narrator introduces the event in a peaceful way (2 Kgs 20:12–13), which functions as the background information for the story of the Babylonian envoys. The narrator shows that this peaceful situation has slowly changed through the dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:14–15. Isaiah came and asked two questions concerning the visitors,⁸⁸ and Hezekiah answered telling Isaiah from where they came (2 Kgs 20:14) and what they saw (2 Kgs 20:15).⁸⁹ Reporting the dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah, the narrator indicates the occasioning incident which is the beginning of the conflict between Hezekiah and Isaiah. In biblical narratives, when the prophet of the LORD comes to ask something, it means that there is something wrong. When Saul finished making the offering, Samuel arrived and asked *מה עשית* (“what have you done?”) in 1 Sam 13:11. Although Saul went out to greet Samuel, Samuel's response to Saul was harsh by asking a question. Samuel's question is accusatory and indicates that Saul perpetrated a great wrong.⁹⁰ Saul reasonably gave his

⁸⁸ Isaiah asked three questions in 2 Kgs 20:14–15, namely *מה אמרו האנשים האלה* (“what did these men say?”) and *מאין באו אליך* (“from where did they come to you?”), and *מה ראו בביתך* (“what did they see in your house?”), but Hezekiah answered the second and third questions: *מארץ רחוקה באו מבבל* (“from a distant land, they came from Babylon”) and *כל אשר בביתי ראו לא יהיה דבר אשר לא הראיתם באוצרתי* (“they have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them”).

⁸⁹ Ironically Hezekiah answered the second and third question, but he did not answer Isaiah's first question. Whether Hezekiah forgets the first question or not, the narrator reports only the last two answers here, which indicates that what the envoys of Babylonia saw is more important than what they said. The narrator already reports that Hezekiah showed everything in his house to the envoys from Babylon in 2 Kgs 20:13.

⁹⁰ Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 99.

reason why he offered the sacrifice, but Samuel did not change his attitude to Saul.

Samuel said *לֹא שָׁמַרְתָּ לֹא נִסְכַּלְתָּ לֹא שָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־מִצְוַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ* (“you acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you”) in 1 Sam 13:13a. At the same time, Samuel asked a question to Saul, when Saul came back from the battle with the Amalekites. In 1 Sam 15:14, Samuel asked *וְנִמָּה קוֹל־הַצֹּאן הַזֶּה בְּאָזְנֵי וְקוֹל הַבָּקָר אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שֹׁמֵעַ* (“what then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?”), which indicates that Saul did not obey the LORD who commanded Saul to destroy the Amalekites including all the animals (1 Sam 15:3). Thus, when a man of God comes to ask a question, it means that some significant things come next. The same thing happens in the Hezekiah story. When the Babylonian envoys returned to their country, Isaiah came to Hezekiah and asked questions. After hearing Hezekiah’s answers, Isaiah brought the word of the LORD about the exile of the royal family to Babylon in 2 Kgs 20:17–18.⁹¹ Here the narrator dramatically changes his attitude, reporting the prophetic announcement of the exile, which indicates a climax for the story of the Babylonian envoys.

It is important to note that Isaiah’s prediction in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 does not refer to the exile of Judah in 587 B.C.E., but the exile of Jehoiachin with the royal family to Babylon in 597 B.C.E. Although House asserts that the prediction of Isaiah in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 is fulfilled in the fall of Judah in 587 B.C.E.,⁹² many scholars correctly point out that the prediction of the exile of Hezekiah’s descendents to Babylon is fulfilled in the exile of Jehoiachin in 597 B.C.E. (2 Kgs 24:13–14).⁹³ Nelson also maintains that the

⁹¹ Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 246.

⁹² House, *I, 2 Kings*, 375.

⁹³ Gray, *I & II Kings*, 702; Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 246; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 454–59, 505–11; Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 295; Montgomery, *Kings*, 510.

prediction of Isaiah “falls short of being an unambiguous prediction of Judah’s demise.” He continues that “[i]t is too soon in the plot for that!”⁹⁴ Isaiah clearly predicted that all that is in Hezekiah’s house will be carried away (2 Kgs 20:17) and some of Hezekiah’s descendents also will be taken into Babylon (2 Kgs 20:18). However, Isaiah did not mention actual military defeat or the fall of Judah, which is explicitly reported in the judgement of the narrator of 2 Kings on the reign of Manasseh in 2 Kgs 23:26–27.⁹⁵ Thus, in the context of the DH, the prediction of Isaiah in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 seems to indicate the event of the deportation of Jehoiachin in 597 B.C.E., not the exile of Judah in 587 B.C.E.

This intensified conflict is de-escalated by Hezekiah’s response in 2 Kgs 20:19. Hezekiah accepted what Isaiah has brought in 2 Kgs 20:17–18, which shows the piety of Hezekiah who accepted the word of the LORD.⁹⁶ Interestingly, the narrator does not report any further information about the story of the Babylonian envoys, which is very unusual for Hezekiah. In the previous narratives, Hezekiah prayed to the LORD by himself or through Isaiah, when he faced difficulty. The narrator does not indicate that Hezekiah prayed or asked Isaiah to pray for him concerning the prediction for the exile of the royal family in the future, which may indicate that the future of Judah is sealed. Also note that there is no prayer or intercession until the city of Jerusalem falls in 2 Kgs 25.⁹⁷ The narrator ends the whole story of Hezekiah with indicating the dark future of

⁹⁴ Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 246.

⁹⁵ In 2 Kgs 23:27, the narrator relates that *וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה גַּם אֶת־יְהוּדָה אֲסִיר מֵעַל פְּנֵי כַּאֲשֶׁר הִסְרֹתִי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל* (“and the LORD said, ‘I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, “My name shall be there””).

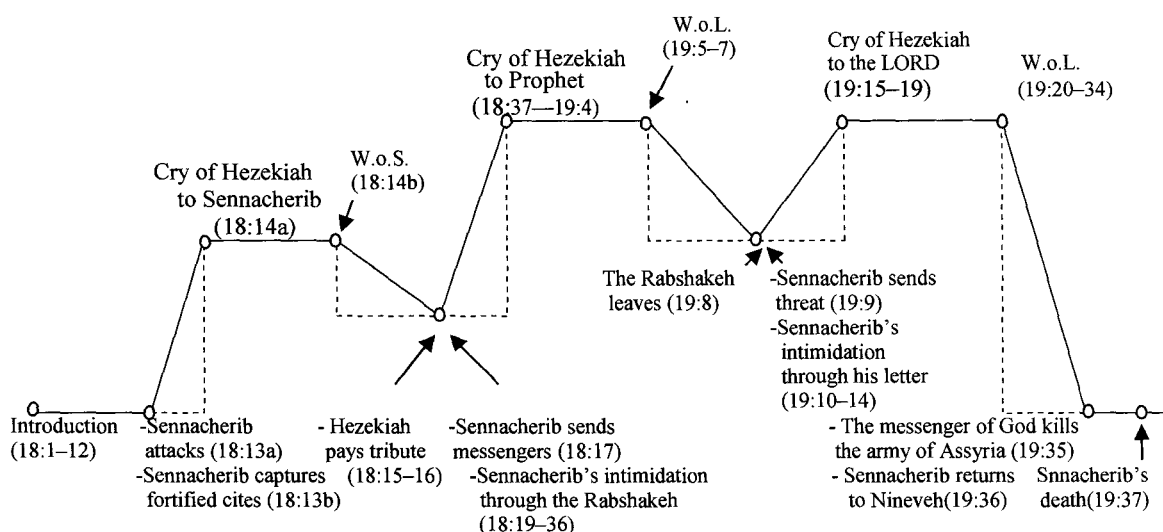
⁹⁶ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 455–56; Ackroyd, “Interpretation,” 177–79; Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 66. Many scholars see the response of Hezekiah as positive way.

⁹⁷ Seitz, *Word Without End*, 199–200. Seitz asserts that Hezekiah did not allow praying for his descendents, because the LORD’s decision will not be changed. Seitz uses the example of Jeremiah who

Judah, which was caused by Hezekiah.⁹⁸ The narrator, however, states in Act Ten that this dark future will occur after the death of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:14–19).

The narrator concludes the entire story of Hezekiah with the concluding formula in Act Eleven (2 Kgs 20:20–21), which reports the source of reference for Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:20), the notice of death and the succession of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:21).⁹⁹

Thus, the diagram of the plot structure of the story of Hezekiah is as follows:¹⁰⁰

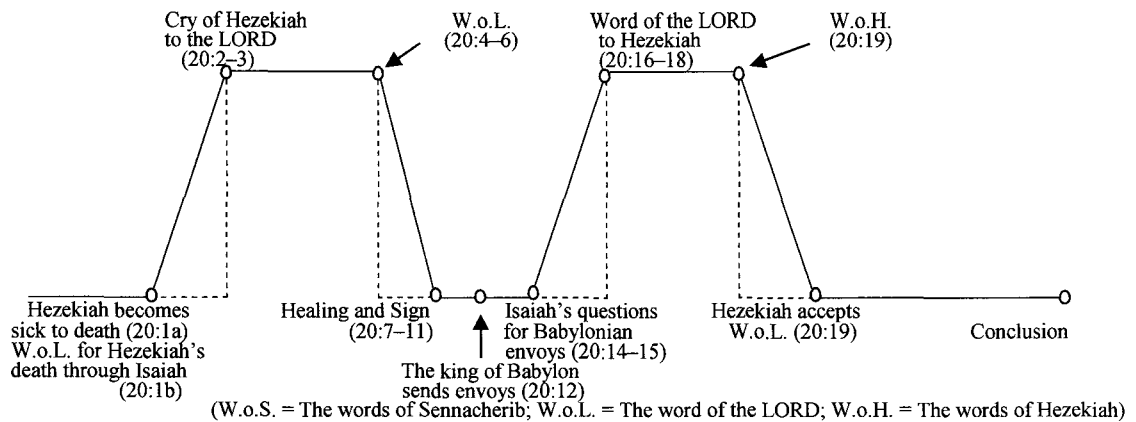


was commanded not to pray for the people of Judah (Jer 7:16). However, Seitz's suggestion is directly opposite to the prayer of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:2–3, where Hezekiah prayed to the LORD for his fatal illness. In 2 Kgs 20:1, the LORD explicitly said that Hezekiah will die and shall not live, and this is the LORD's decision for Hezekiah's life. However, the LORD changed his decision through the prayer of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:5–6.

⁹⁸ Bostock, *Trust*, 298.

⁹⁹ In Kings, the concluding formula consists of four elements: the source of reference, the notice of death, the place of burial, and the succession. However, in the story of Hezekiah the narrator does not report the burial place of Hezekiah. The narrator states that *וַיִּשְׁכַּב הֶזְקִיָּהוּ עִם־אֲבוֹתָיו* ("when Hezekiah lay down to rest with his ancestors") in 2 Kgs 20:21.

¹⁰⁰ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 92. I basically follows Longman's diagram modifying some points.



The plot type of the entire story in 2 Kgs 18–20 is not certain, because the story of the Babylonian envoys ends with the prediction of the exile of the royal family into Babylon (2 Kgs 20:17–18). However, the narrator does not explicitly mention the fall of Judah, but gives the reader hints which point to that event. The narrator of Kings already mentioned carrying off the treasure and taking hostages in 2 Kgs 14:14. In 2 Kgs 20:17–18, the narrator indicates that royal treasure will be carried into Babylon and Hezekiah's sons will be taken and become eunuchs in Babylon, which does not occur during the life of Hezekiah. In terms of the character of Hezekiah, the prediction of Isaiah seems to have no effect on the life of Hezekiah, but it becomes a tragedy for the future of Judah. Thus, although the first two narratives conclude with a happy ending, it can be said that the plot style of the entire story may be a potential tragedy, which ends with a dark future for Judah. In terms of the characterization of Hezekiah, however, the narrator portrays him as being the cause of the deportation of the royal family to Babylon, not as being the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem in the story of Kings. The narrator only reports that the exile of Judah was caused by Manasseh, the grand-son of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 23:26). The narrator, however, portrays Hezekiah negatively as the one who caused the future event of exile of the royal family in the last story of Hezekiah.

3.3.2.1.1 Implication for Characterization

The diagram shows not only that the plot of the entire story of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20 is complex, but also that the narrator characterizes Hezekiah both positively and negatively. The diagram indicates that there are five climaxes in the Hezekiah narratives, and in these five climaxes, Hezekiah plays a significant role. In the first four climaxes, he plays an active role to cry out to other characters in order to resolve the conflict that he faced, but in the last climax, he plays a passive role to hear the word of the LORD. The three climaxes in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative indicate that the character of Hezekiah positively develops. In the first climax, Hezekiah cried out to Sennacherib in order to resolve the conflict (2 Kgs 18:14), but Hezekiah failed to resolve the original conflict. Hezekiah did not pray to the LORD nor ask Isaiah to pray for help to the LORD. The narrator relates that Hezekiah directly went to Sennacherib and asked him to return by admitting his sins and by promising to pay a tribute, which indicates Hezekiah's human effort without any spiritual assistance. However, Hezekiah's human endeavors failed.

Then Hezekiah cried out to Isaiah to pray to the LORD in order to resolve the conflict (2 Kgs 19:3–4). When Hezekiah realized that his second attempt failed, he directly cried out to the LORD concerning the threat of Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:20–34). These three climaxes clearly show that the narrator is developing the character of Hezekiah as a faithful king who trusts in and depends on the LORD. Resolving the original conflict, Hezekiah initially tried through human means, then he tried through Isaiah, and finally he directly went to the LORD in order to ask Him to resolve the original conflict. Although these three climaxes are de-escalated by the responses of the other characters, Sennacherib and the LORD, the first two cases do not resolve the

original conflict, but the last one (2 Kgs 19:20–34) is ultimately the only effective ending to the original conflict between Hezekiah and Sennacherib. In the last response of the LORD, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah as a faithful king whose prayer was heard and answered by the LORD.

The positive characterization of Hezekiah is continued in the second story of Hezekiah. In the second story, the climax of the story is also Hezekiah's cry out to the LORD and is de-escalated by the response of the LORD, which indicates another positive characterization. The word of the LORD in the second story can be summarized as the protection of the LORD for Hezekiah and the city of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 20:4–6). Although Hezekiah did not enter the house of the LORD when he prayed in the second story, the narrator relates that the LORD answered Hezekiah's prayer not only to give the fifteen years of additional life, but also to protect the city of Jerusalem, which Hezekiah did not ask for in his prayer. In this way, the narrator more positively portrays Hezekiah than in the previous story.

In the last story of Hezekiah, however, the narrator relates the story of Hezekiah differently. The climax of the last story is not the cry of Hezekiah, but the word of the LORD. The climax is de-escalated by the response of Hezekiah to the LORD (2 Kgs 20:19), rather than the response of the LORD as in the previous narratives. This plot structure may indicate that the narrator portrays Hezekiah differently. Although the narrator characterizes Hezekiah as a faithful king who accepted the word of the LORD at the end of the story (2 Kgs 20:19),¹⁰¹ the narrator implies that the future exile of the royal family into Babylon is caused by Hezekiah's reaction to the Babylonian envoys

¹⁰¹ The reading of the Proto Masoretic Text is וַיֹּאמֶר חִזְקִיָּהוּ אֶל־יְשַׁעְיָהוּ טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ (‘‘then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ‘The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good’’).

through dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah, which indicates the narrator's negative characterization of Hezekiah. Although the narrator ends the story of the Babylonian envoys with Hezekiah's acceptance of Isaiah's prediction in 2 Kgs 20:19, he generally characterizes Hezekiah negatively in the last story.¹⁰²

The narrator already reported the positive characterization on Hezekiah at the beginning of the story (2 Kgs 18:3–8), which functions as the introduction. In this way the narrator guides the readers of the story to see the character of Hezekiah in a positive way. At the same time the whole story of Hezekiah ends with a concluding formula that describes Hezekiah's key building project, the water tunnel. Plot structure indicates that the narrator portrays Hezekiah not only as an active character who initiated solutions to conflicts by crying out to other characters, but also as a positive character who received gracious responses from the LORD in words and deeds. Thus, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah as a good and faithful king, echoing the narrator's evaluation of Hezekiah at the beginning of the story (2 Kgs 18:1–12).

3.3.3 Characterization

Characterization in the biblical narratives is accomplished in two ways: direct characterization and indirect characterization. The former is achieved through the statements offered by the narrator or a character in the story, and the latter is revealed through the words and deeds of the character.¹⁰³ The present study now analyzes the character of Hezekiah by utilizing these two methods in order to understand the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20.

¹⁰² The narrator also does not mention the name of Hezekiah concerning the exile of the royal family in 597 B.C.E. In 2 Kgs 24:12, the narrator relates that Jehoiachin, his family and officials surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. The narrator accuses Manasseh as being the cause for the destruction of Jerusalem in 2 Kgs 23:26.

¹⁰³ Amit, *Biblical Narrative*, 74.

3.3.4.1 Introduction to the Reign of King Hezekiah

The narrator directly characterizes Hezekiah in positive terms in Act One (2 Kgs 18:1–8). The narrator reports his evaluation of the whole reign of Hezekiah with religious and military actions. As mentioned above, the narrator’s evaluative point of view reveals that Hezekiah is portrayed in an extremely positive way in 2 Kgs 18:1–12. The theological evaluations of the narrator in 2 Kgs 18:3–6 cause the readers to shift their attention from the level of the narrated events to the narrator.¹⁰⁴ Bar-Efrat asserts that the narrator’s theological judgments and explanations decrease the emotional involvement of the readers and help the readers to understand the narrative in the way that the author intends.¹⁰⁵ In this way, the narrator introduces the motives of Hezekiah and influences the attitude of the narratee (the readers) towards him. Thus, in Act One (2 Kgs 18:1–8), the narrator characterizes him as a good king who faithfully follows the LORD during his reign. The narrator also portrays Hezekiah as the most faithful king among the Judean kings in 2 Kgs 18:5.

In 2 Kgs 18:3, the narrator portrays him by a comparison with David regarding not only their common relationship to the LORD, but also their cultic actions and military victories.¹⁰⁶ The narrator, however, uses only one verse out of three chapters to

¹⁰⁴ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 29. In 2 Kgs 18:3, the narrator states that *וַיַּעַשׂ הַיְשׁוּר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר כָּלל דָּוִד אָבִיו עָשָׂה דְּיָד אָבִיו* (“he [Hezekiah] did what was right in the eyes of the LORD according to all that David his father had done”); in 2 Kgs 18:5, *וְאֶחָדָיו לֹא־הָיָה כָּמֹהוּ בְּכָל מְלָכֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לְפָנָיו* (“there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, or among those who were before him”); in 2 Kgs 18:6, the narrator relates that *לֹא־פָּזַר מֵאֲחֻזָּיו וְיִשְׁמַר מִצִּוְתָיו אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה* (“he did not turn away from Him and His commandments that the LORD had commanded Moses”).

¹⁰⁵ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 31.

¹⁰⁶ Hull, “Hezekiah-Saint,” 207.

report on Hezekiah's religious reforms, which provides the readers a unique perspective of the story of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20.¹⁰⁷

The narrator's portrayal of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:6 is directly contrasted to that of the people of Israel who have transgressed all that Moses had commanded them (2 Kgs 18:12). The narrator intentionally reports the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 2 Kgs 18:9–12 in order to positively emphasize Hezekiah as a pious king by means of contrast.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, by reporting the fall of Samaria, the narrator also indicates that Judah will have the same fate that the Northern Kingdom had faced.¹⁰⁹ By retelling the event of Samaria's fall, the narrator prepares the coming Babylonian disaster in 2 Kgs 20:12–19, which will be caused by the action of Hezekiah.¹¹⁰ In this way, the narrator insinuates the limitation of Hezekiah who is portrayed in an extremely positive way in 2 Kgs 18:1–12. Thus, in Act One and Two (2 Kgs 18:1–12), the narrator characterizes Hezekiah in extremely positive ways by utilizing several techniques (comment, theological evaluation, and contrast), but he also insinuates the limitation of the pious king Hezekiah through the event of Samaria's fall (2 Kgs 18:9–12), which is very important for the readers to understand the characterization of Hezekiah.

3.3.4.2 The Invasion of Sennacherib

The narrator characterizes Hezekiah as a good king in the introductory section. In the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, the narrator also portrays him positively, but presents him as a round character, which means that the narrator develops his character

¹⁰⁷ Of course, there are two more oblique references to Hezekiah's religious reformation in 2 Kgs 18:16, 22. In Hezekiah's narratives in Chronicles there are three chapters of Hezekiah's religious reforms. At the same time, in Isaiah there is no evaluation on Hezekiah or the explanation of Hezekiah's reforms.

¹⁰⁸ Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 236. Berlin maintains that in the Old Testament characters are frequently revealed or emphasized by means of contrast (Berlin, *Poetics*, 40–41).

¹⁰⁹ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 245–46.

¹¹⁰ Konkel, *1 & 2 Kings*, 598. In 2 Kgs 16, the narrator already reported that Judah had the similar sins that Israel sinned against the LORD.

within the story.¹¹¹ At the beginning of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative (2 Kgs 18:13–16), the narrator characterizes Hezekiah negatively.¹¹² The first word of Hezekiah in the story is his confession of sin to Sennacherib. In 2 Kgs 18:14, Hezekiah said that אָשָׁא חָטְאתִי שׁוּב מֵעָלַי אֵת אֲשֶׁר-חָתַתְנָן עָלַי אֲשָׁנָה (“I have sinned; turn back from me, and whatever you place on me I will bear”). The narrator directly reports Hezekiah’s own speech in order to characterize him negatively.¹¹³ Hezekiah confessed his sin and claimed responsibility for the crisis of Judah.¹¹⁴ Here Hezekiah did not make his confession to the LORD or the prophet, but to Sennacherib, his enemy, who is portrayed as the conquer, the destroyer, the taunter, and the one who threatens in the story.¹¹⁵ The narrator does not report that Hezekiah entered into the temple of the LORD to pray to the LORD for help or sent his officials to Isaiah in order to ask him to pray to the LORD. This initial action of Hezekiah is unusual because the narrator evaluates him in an extremely positive way in 2 Kgs 18:3–8. According to the narrator’s evaluation in Act One, one would expect Hezekiah to pray first to the LORD for help as in the event in Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery (2 Kgs 20:1–3), rather than send his messenger to Sennacherib, confess his sin

¹¹¹ Amit, *Biblical Narrative*, 72.

¹¹² Ben Zvi, “Malleability,” 85–88.

¹¹³ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 116. According to Alter, an important means of indirect characterization is the discourse of the character themselves. Evans, however, understands Hezekiah’s words in 2 Kgs 18:14 as a positive characterization of him. Evans says that the story in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 “clearly functions to characterize Hezekiah positively, presenting him as a valorous king,” because Hezekiah’s speech in 2 Kgs 18:14 is to save Judah from the hand of Sennacherib. Thus, Evans believes that what Hezekiah said in 2 Kgs 18:14 is not “a true revelation of his character” (Evans, *Invasion*, 126).

¹¹⁴ Evans, *Invasion*, 126. According to Evans, “[a]lthough Hezekiah’s confession seems straightforward enough, it is not a true revelation of his character.” Patterson and Austel also note that “Hezekiah’s ‘confession’ employs known diplomatic parlance” (Patterson and Austel, “1, 2 Kings,” 909).

¹¹⁵ Sennacherib is a flat character in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative. The narrator portrays Sennacherib as the contrast character with Hezekiah. In 2 Kgs 18:31, the Rabshakeh brought the words of his master, Sennacherib, that אַל-תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּיךָ (“do not listen to Hezekiah”) and עֲשׂוּ-אַחֵי בְרִיבָה וְיָצְאוּ אֵלַי (“make peace with me [Sennacherib] and come out to me”). The Rabshakeh stirred up the Jerusalemites to listen to Sennacherib rather than to trust in Hezekiah. The purpose of the Rabshakeh’s speeches is to shift the loyalty of the Jerusalemites from Hezekiah, to Sennacherib.

and promise to pay tribute in order to ask Sennacherib to return. However, the narrator does not portray Hezekiah in that way.

At the same time the narrator reports Hezekiah's actions in 2 Kgs 18:15–16, characterizing him negatively. Hezekiah took all the silver from the temple of the LORD and from his own palace, and gave it to Sennacherib.¹¹⁶ By paying tribute to the Assyrian king, Hezekiah attempted to stop the march of the Assyrian army against Jerusalem.¹¹⁷ The narrator, however, explains that Hezekiah's actions did not meet with success as Sennacherib continued to send his army to Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:17). In 2 Kgs 18:7, the narrator evaluates that *בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-יַעַז אִשְׁכֵּי־ל* (“in all that he undertook he was successful”),¹¹⁸ because *יְהוָה עִמּוֹ* (“the LORD was with him [Hezekiah]”). However, Hezekiah's initial response to Sennacherib's invasion against Judah failed, which may indicate that the LORD was not with Hezekiah in these actions.

Several scholars, however, understand the character of Hezekiah positively in 2 Kgs 18:14–16.¹¹⁹ Evans maintains that in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 “we have a very positive

¹¹⁶ Na'aman, “The Deuteronomist,” 44. Na'aman has thoroughly examined some narratives where Judean kings gave royal treasures from the temple of the LORD and the palace in order to survive a military crisis. Criticizing Mullen's study, Na'aman asserts that “these notices consistently serve as part of the ‘punishment’ for numerous rulers who failed to remove the high places” (Na'aman, “The Deuteronomist,” 44; also see, Evans, “Prophecy Influencing History,” 150). Na'aman points out that these Judean kings gave their treasure differently. Evans also has examined two Judean monarchs (Asa and Ahaz) who acted similarly to Hezekiah. Evans concludes that “the comparison of the accounts of these three kings in the DH would seem to suggest that appropriating the temple treasuries was not necessarily a deplorable action” (Evans, *Invasion*, 128).

¹¹⁷ Evans, *Invasion*, 127. Evans interprets Hezekiah's actions positively. He asserts that Hezekiah's action “... could show that Hezekiah was a faithful king, willing to sacrifice everything at his disposal to preserve his people, the holy city and even the sanctuary from destruction” (Evans, *Invasion*, 127).

¹¹⁸ The word *יִשְׁכֵּל* which is *hiphil*, imperfect, third person masculine singular of *שָׁכַל* (“to have success” in *qal*), can mean “to understand,” “to have insight,” “to make wise,” or “to achieve success” in the *hiphil* (*HALOT*, 1328). However, in the context of 2 Kgs 18:7 the meaning of the verb *שָׁכַל* as “to have success” is more suitable, because the narrator reports that Hezekiah's action or the result of his actions (*יִשְׁכֵּל*) is caused by the LORD who was with Hezekiah (*יְהוָה עִמּוֹ*) in 2 Kgs 18:7. At the same time, the list which the narrator mentions in 2 Kgs 18:7–8 is the successful acts of Hezekiah during his reign.

¹¹⁹ Long asserts that such payment of all the silver does not indicate Hezekiah's submission to Sennacherib, but Hezekiah's plan to remove “military pressure on Jerusalem” and to protect Jerusalem

characterization of Hezekiah.”¹²⁰ Evans sees the action of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:15–16 where he took treasures from the temple and his palace to give to Sennacherib as “a self-sacrificial act” in order to protect Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib.¹²¹ Konkel also points out that Hezekiah’s words and actions in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 do not negate his faith in the LORD who made it possible.¹²² It would be possible to see the characterization of Hezekiah positively in the context of the theological evaluation of the narrator in Act One (2 Kgs 18:1–8), which is extremely positive. Evans points out that there is no evidence to mark Hezekiah’s actions clearly as negative or positive.¹²³ Although the theological evaluation in 2 Kgs 18:3–8 is provided to set up a tension in the whole story of Hezekiah, Hezekiah’s words and deeds in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 would characterize him negatively, because the result of Hezekiah’s initial action was failure, which is not common in the context of Kings. There are three more Judean kings who utilized treasures from the temple and the palace in order to overcome a military crisis in Kings, namely Asa, Jehoash, and Ahaz.¹²⁴

In the reign of Asa and Ahaz, royal treasures were used to bribe a foreign king in order to receive military support. When Asa was attacked by Israel, he asked the king of

from Sennacherib (Long, *2 Kings*, 205). Brueggemann also maintains that Hezekiah’s action to give royal treasure is not understood as negative, but positive, because Hezekiah is a good king and he wants to remove the army of Sennacherib from Judah (Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings*, 494; also see, Evans, “Function,” 39).

¹²⁰ Evans, *Invasion*, 126. Evans concludes that 2 Kgs 18:14–16 clearly functions “to characterize Hezekiah positively presenting him as a valorous king.”

¹²¹ Evans, “Function,” 31–47.

¹²² Konkel, “Hezekiah,” 111.

¹²³ Evans, *Invasion*, 128.

¹²⁴ The narrator of Kings reports seven Judean kings who are directly mentioned with the royal treasures when they faced a military crisis: Rehoboam (1 Kgs 14:25–28), Asa (1 Kgs 15:17–19), Jehoash (2 Kgs 12:18–19), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:11–14), Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:7–9), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:15–16), and Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:10–13). (Na’aman, “The Deuteronomist,” 37–53).

Aram for help by providing his treasure as a bribe in 1 Kgs 15:18.¹²⁵ Ahaz also gave his treasures to the king of Assyria, when Ahaz faced a military crisis by the alliance of Israel and Aram in 2 Kgs 16:8. The result of Asa and Ahaz was success and they overcame a national crisis through a foreign king to whom Asa and Ahaz asked for help providing royal treasures. The other two Judean kings, Jehoash and Hezekiah, directly gave the royal treasures to a foreign king who attacked Judah. Jehoash gave his treasures to Hazael king of Aram who captured Gath and turned to attack Jerusalem (2 Kgs 12:17–18). Jehoash's actions were successful and Hazael withdrew from Jerusalem (2 Kgs 12:18). Hezekiah also gave royal treasures to Sennacherib, who captured the fortified cities of Judah (2 Kgs 18:15–16), in order to make Sennacherib turn back, but the result of Hezekiah's response was failure. Na'aman asserts that Jehoash and Hezekiah paid their treasures in order to avoid a threat to the city of Jerusalem.¹²⁶

Hezekiah is the only king who did not achieve his goal among these four Judean kings who utilized royal treasures to resolve a military crisis. The result of Hezekiah is very difficult to understand because Hezekiah is also the first king who removed high places among these four Judean kings (2 Kgs 18:4). After examining the texts of the despoliation of the treasury in Kings, Mullen concludes that these Judean kings were punished through plundering the treasures because they did not remove high places. Mullen also points out that Hezekiah is excluded from this rule because he removed high places (2 Kgs 18:4).¹²⁷ However, Mullen's view is not easy to follow because the plan of these Judean kings succeeded even though they did not remove high places, while the

¹²⁵ In 1 Kgs 15:18–19, when Asa faced a crisis which was caused by Baasha who attempted to conquer Ramah, Asa took all treasures from the temple and the palace and gave to Benhadad of Damascus in order to motivate him to break his treaty with Baasha and attack him, which can indicate “a lack of trust in the power of Yahweh to deliver his nation” (Mullen, “Crime and Punishment,” 237–39).

¹²⁶ Na'aman, “Deuteronomist,” 41–48.

¹²⁷ Mullen, “Crime and Punishment,” 244–46.

plan of Hezekiah failed though he removed high places. Evans also criticizes Mullen by arguing that his view is doubtful because the narrator evaluates them positively.¹²⁸

Na'aman also points out that the fact that the despoliation of Judean kings was viewed as punishment because they did not remove high places is not acceptable, because these Judean kings have different circumstances: Asa and Ahaz voluntarily gave royal treasures, and Jehoash and Hezekiah provided royal treasures in order to avoid a military crisis.¹²⁹ However, Na'aman and Evans do not mention the failure of Hezekiah's action. Hezekiah, who removed the high places and who was evaluated in an extremely positive way by the narrator, is the only king who did not achieve his goal. Hezekiah's initial failure is not easy to accept, because the narrator reaches the evaluation that the LORD was with Hezekiah and he was successful in all that he undertook during his reign (2 Kgs 18:7).¹³⁰ Although the narrator does not explicitly make any negative evaluation about the initial response of Hezekiah to the invasion of Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 18:14–16, the narrator may portray Hezekiah negatively, because Hezekiah not only responded to Sennacherib in a human way, as mentioned above, but also failed to stop the march of Sennacherib through his initial reaction.¹³¹

This understanding does not mean there is a contradiction between the positive evaluation of the narrator in 2 Kgs 18:7 and the negative characterization in 2 Kgs 18:14–16, because the character of Hezekiah is changing and developing throughout the

¹²⁸ Evans, "Function," 32–36.

¹²⁹ Na'aman, "Deuteronomist," 41–48.

¹³⁰ The words of the narrator in 2 Kgs 18:7 are the evaluation for the whole reign of Hezekiah, rather than a certain period or time, because the narrator evaluates the whole reign of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:1–8. The narrator also explicitly mentioned that Hezekiah reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem in 2 Kgs 18:2. Thus, 2 Kgs 18:7 should be understood as the narrator's evaluation for the entire reign of Hezekiah.

¹³¹ Leithart, *1 & 2 Kings*, 255. Leithart asserts that "[i]t is not an auspicious start, and we suspect that the writer's enthusiasm for Hezekiah's piety may have been exaggerated." It is also possible that the narrator portrays Sennacherib negatively through reporting the failure of Hezekiah's action in 2 Kgs 18:14–16. However, the narrator does not relate his evaluation on Sennacherib either.

story. At the same time the summary statement of the narrator in 2 Kgs 18:1–8 is probably concerning the whole reign of Hezekiah. As mentioned above, in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative the character of Hezekiah develops from negative characterization to positive characterization.

Three messages from Sennacherib, two in speech form and one in a letter form, now follow. In these three messages, the character of Hezekiah is developing. Hezekiah is described in a disrespectful way in terms of his title. The Rabshakeh called Judah's king "Hezekiah" five times without a royal title.¹³² The omission of Hezekiah's title by an official deputation suggests disrespect towards Hezekiah. The Rabshakeh, however, referred to Sennacherib as the king or the great king.¹³³ Bostock maintains that the use of such a title, the great king, for Sennacherib in proximity to Hezekiah without any title suggests "the notion of the superiority of Sennacherib over Hezekiah."¹³⁴ The fact that the Rabshakeh referred to Hezekiah without title is very normal in light of the military situation.¹³⁵ The narrator also refers to Hezekiah without his royal title in 2 Kgs 18:37.¹³⁶ Revell suggests that the three officials of Judah regard their king, Hezekiah, "as if already dethroned by the Assyrians."¹³⁷ In 2 Kgs 18:36, however, the narrator references Hezekiah as "the king," which indicates that he was still acknowledged as king by the Jerusalemites. On the other hand, the narrator calls Hezekiah "King Hezekiah" again in 2 Kgs 19:1, where Hezekiah also tore his clothes like his representatives in 2 Kgs 18:37.

¹³² Second Kings 18:19, 22, 30, 31, 32.

¹³³ Second Kings 18:19, 23, 28, 31, 33.

¹³⁴ Bostock, *Trust*, 52.

¹³⁵ According to Revell, "[a] foreign king is referred to by name in the speech of nonsubjects ... as is typical of spoken reference to any king" (Revell, *Designation*, 150).

¹³⁶ In 2 Kgs 19:3, the officials of Hezekiah brought the words of Hezekiah to Isaiah, but they called Hezekiah without his title. However, it does not mean to disregard the Hezekiah's status, but such language indicates deference to Isaiah who is representing God (Revell, *Designation*, 131).

¹³⁷ Revell, *Designation*, 124. At the same time Revell points out that by referring to Hezekiah without the title, the Rabshakeh indicated "a significant psychological element to his argument on the weakness of Hezekiah, and the futility of opposing the king of Assyria" (Revell, *Designation*, 131).

Here the title of Hezekiah might be omitted following the situation of the previous verse, but the narrator refers to Hezekiah as king in order to present the action of Hezekiah positively.¹³⁸

The Rabshakeh also made negative comments about Hezekiah, claiming that Hezekiah was in alliance with Egypt in 2 Kgs 18:21. The fact that Hezekiah himself was involved in relying upon Egypt can affect the way in which the character of Hezekiah is viewed in the narrative. The Rabshakeh's negative comments about Hezekiah can be seen as characterizing him negatively in the story. Evans, however, correctly points out that "when other characters make comments in a narrative, the reader is forced to weigh claims to determine characterization."¹³⁹ Evans then asserts that "the comments of Rabshakeh are clearly unreliable and function more to characterize the Assyrians as misguided than to throw some doubt on Hezekiah's character."¹⁴⁰ Seitz also points out that the Rabshakeh's comments on Hezekiah cannot prove that Hezekiah allied himself with Egypt, because the narrator portrays the Rabshakeh as a blasphemer in the story.¹⁴¹ Thus, the negative comments on Hezekiah by the Rabshakeh in 2 Kgs 18:21 are not acceptable for understanding the characterization of Hezekiah in the story.

The narrator also develops Hezekiah's character through his response to the two Assyrian threats. When he heard the report of his officials regarding the speeches of the Rabshakeh in 2 Kgs 19:1, Hezekiah tore his garments and covered himself in

¹³⁸ Bostock, *Trust*, 60. The contrast between these two characters is also made by their title. In these three speeches, Sennacherib is called "king" (מֶלֶךְ) six times (2 Kgs 18:19, 23, 28, 30, 31; 19:11), but Hezekiah is called "king" only once (2 Kgs 19:10) out of seven verses (2 Kgs 18: 19, 22, 29, 30, 31, 32; 19:10). Even the Rabshakeh calls Sennacherib, his master, הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר ("the great king, the king of Assyria") twice in 2 Kgs 18:19, 28. In the Rabshakeh's speeches, Sennacherib is directly contrasted with Hezekiah.

¹³⁹ Evans, *Invasion*, 129–30.

¹⁴⁰ Evans, *Invasion*, 130.

¹⁴¹ Seitz, *Destiny*, 73.

sackcloth.¹⁴² He then entered the house of the LORD, and also sent his officials and the elders of the priests to Isaiah while covered in sackcloth. Hezekiah's actions clearly show his panic and mourning over the calamitous situation.¹⁴³ However, when Hezekiah heard the second Assyrian threat expressed through the letter (2 Kgs 19:10–13), his response was different from the first. He entered the house of the LORD, but he did not tear his garments or cover himself in sackcloth. He also did not send anyone to Isaiah to ask him to pray.¹⁴⁴ The narrator does not state that Hezekiah was panic-stricken or mournful while in this situation. Rather the narrator explicitly recounts Hezekiah's prayer which he directly prayed to the LORD.¹⁴⁵ Since Hezekiah heard the first oracle of Isaiah, which reassured him of the eventual retreat of the Assyrian army, Hezekiah now prays directly to the LORD.¹⁴⁶

These two responses clearly show the development of the characterization of Hezekiah in terms of faith in the LORD. Bostock points out that Hezekiah's direct approach to the LORD means that "[t]he reader is probably meant to notice an increase in faith, a greater confidence, even boldness in approaching God."¹⁴⁷ By reporting Hezekiah's prayer, the narrator depicts Hezekiah as a true and faithful descendent of

¹⁴² Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 217. Hezekiah's reaction of tearing his garments and to wear sackcloth is a response to the blasphemy (cf. Matt 26:65).

¹⁴³ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 249. On the other hand, Hezekiah's response also indicates his piety through him seeking divine help. This reaction was appropriate for Hezekiah because of his hopeless situation (Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 217).

¹⁴⁴ Boda, "Complaint to Contrition," 192. Boda asserts that a request for prayer is often really "a prayer to the LORD asking for a message."

¹⁴⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 99–100. Childs and other scholars assert that the prayer of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 19:15–19 is similar to other petitions and complaint psalms (Gonçalves, *L'Expédition*, 463; Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 419–22; Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabild*, 195–98; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 235–36).

¹⁴⁶ Smelik, "Distortion," 70–93. Smelik also argues that Hezekiah does not need the intercession of Isaiah in this second trip to the house of the LORD, and he is now reassured by Isaiah that Sennacherib will withdraw.

¹⁴⁷ Bostock, *Trust*, 64. In his prayer, Hezekiah uses five imperatives to ask the LORD to act: הִטָּח ("incline"), שְׁמַע ("hear"), פָּקַח ("open"), רָאָה ("see"), and שְׁמַע ("hear"). In the prayer of Hezekiah, these five imperatives utilized closely together provide a sense of imminence.

David in line with the expectations of Solomon. Bostock asserts that in his prayer Hezekiah prays on the ground of the Davidic covenant and is rewarded with the protection of the city of Jerusalem, because of Hezekiah's praying and faithfulness.¹⁴⁸ Clements also points out that "[t]he divine covenant with David and his dynasty in 2 Sam 7 and the dedication of Solomon's temple are clearly important events in the history of the relationship between YHWH and Israel."¹⁴⁹ Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as the one who followed the true and faithful descendent of David who was a king loyal to the LORD. These two responses of Hezekiah clearly show that he is developing in terms of faith in the LORD from weak to strong.

The narrator also reports an oracle against Sennacherib for Hezekiah's benefit as an answer to his prayer and as an encouragement of his faith (2 Kgs 19:21–34).¹⁵⁰ This oracle is regarding the fate of the Assyrian king and his army. Interestingly, the initial challenge of Sennacherib is met by Hezekiah, but it is the LORD with whom Sennacherib must ultimately deal. The narrator clearly indicates the superiority of the LORD over Sennacherib in the story, where the LORD is described as the creator of heaven and earth (2 Kgs 19:15).¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Bostock, *Trust*, 65.

¹⁴⁹ Clement, *Isaiah 1–39*, 284. Clement points out that "apart from the prayer of Hezekiah the only prayer found on the lips of kings in the Deuteronomistic History are those of David in 2 Sam 7:18–29 and Solomon in 1 Kgs 8:23–53."

¹⁵⁰ Many scholars believe that the words that Isaiah brought to Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 19:20–31 were not Isaiah's words (Stade, "Miscellen," 156–89; Honor, *Sennacherib's Invasion*, 74; Gonçalves, *L'Expédition*, 486; Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 423; Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabild*, 204; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 236, 243). There are four points for this suggestion: first, the beginning part does not relate to the situation of 701 B.C.E.; second, there is some repetition between 2 Kgs 19:20 and 2 Kgs 19:21, which indicates that the words of Isaiah were added to the original story; third, the LORD's conquest of Egypt in 2 Kgs 19:24 occurred in the reign of Esarhaddon; fourth, 2 Kgs 19:25 indicates the later development in the history of Israel. In 2 Kgs 19:20, however, the narrator reports that it was Isaiah who brought the word of the LORD to Hezekiah. Second Kings 19:20 clearly attributes 2 Kgs 19:21–30 to Isaiah.

¹⁵¹ Kolakowski, *Religion*, 174. These two human characters who are introduced at the very beginning of the story (2 Kgs 18:13), are the main characters in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative. There is a clear contrast between them, which helps to define their portrayal. In contrast to Sennacherib,

The narrator portrays Hezekiah as a faithful and humble king before the LORD. However, Hezekiah's characterization is portrayed in different ways in the story. He is initially portrayed negatively and then his character develops into a more positive one throughout the story. Finally Hezekiah receives a victory from the LORD, which indicates that the LORD proved Hezekiah's faith and saw him as a faithful king. At the same time, this miraculous victory clearly shows the power of the LORD over Sennacherib, who claimed that the LORD is not able to save Judah from the hand of Assyria.

3.3.4.3 The Illness and Recovery of Hezekiah

The narrator depicts Hezekiah as a man of faith and prayer in 2 Kgs 20:1–11. There are three main characters in this narrative: Hezekiah, Isaiah, and the LORD. The narrator focuses the story mainly on the interaction between Hezekiah and the LORD. The role of Isaiah is to be an intermediary between these two characters.¹⁵² In the story the narrator depicts Hezekiah as a man of action despite his illness, and portrays the inner character of Hezekiah through his prayer, which is very important to provide strong evidence regarding the attitude of a character.¹⁵³ Although the narrator depicts Hezekiah as the one who is close to Isaiah, he is also depicted as the one who is close to

the narrator portrays Hezekiah as the one who is humble and deferential to the LORD. At the same time, the narrator depicts the LORD as the one who has the power to control the situation. The LORD can cause Sennacherib to hear a rumour and cause him to return to his own land. Sennacherib is no match for the LORD, who is the creator and brings Sennacherib into submission.

¹⁵² Hull, "Hezekiah-Saint," 453. Hull points out that the actions of the prophet Isaiah are mostly concerned with communication between Hezekiah and the LORD (2 Kgs 20:1, 4, 7, 9, 11). In terms of the characterization of the LORD, the narrator introduces the LORD as the protagonist in the whole story of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18–20), depicting the LORD as the one who solves the problems that Hezekiah has had in the story. However, the LORD does not physically appear on stage, but stays behind the scene and uses his messengers in order to resolve the conflicts that Hezekiah has faced. In the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, the narrator portrays the LORD as a symmetrical opposite character to Sennacherib

¹⁵³ Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 117. According to Alter, "with the report of inward speech, we enter the realm of relative certainty about character: there is certainty, in any case, about the character's conscious intentions, though we may still feel free to question the motive behind the intention."

Hezekiah's prayer for the LORD Himself, Hezekiah was still treated as a faithful king by God's hearing of his prayer.

The narrator also indicates that the LORD rapidly answered Hezekiah's prayer. In 2 Kgs 20:4, the narrator reports, וַיְהִי יִשְׁעֵיהֶוּ הַצָּר הַחַיִּכְנָה וַדְּבַר-יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו ("and before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him").¹⁵⁸ In Isa 38:4, however, the narrator does not relate the first half of 2 Kgs 20:4. Cohn points out that the important point made by the narrator is that the LORD spoke to Isaiah so speedily just after finishing Hezekiah's prayer to the LORD.¹⁵⁹ Thus, the narrator states that the LORD immediately answered Hezekiah's prayer, showing that he was characterized positively in this story.¹⁶⁰

In 2 Kgs 20:8, the narrator also reports that Hezekiah asked for a sign that he would be healed and enter the temple. Then, he received a sign from the LORD (2 Kgs 20:11). When Isaiah cried out to the LORD to turn the shadow backwards ten steps, the LORD returned the shadow exactly as Hezekiah had asked in 2 Kgs 20:10. Hobbs asserts that Hezekiah's requesting of a sign indicates his "unbelief."¹⁶¹ However, requesting a sign does not always mean unbelief but can indicate confirmation in the Bible. In Isa 7:14, the LORD provided a sign to Ahaz, when he refused to ask for a sign to confirm the promises of the LORD to save Judah (Isa 7:8). Here the LORD gave a

¹⁵⁸ The MT text for 2 Kgs 20:4 has הָעִיר ("the city") rather than הַצָּר ("the court"), but the word for "city" is a corruption of the word meaning "courtyard." See also Appendix 1 for this reading. Hull also points out that the temple is an important place in the Hezekiah narratives. At the same time the main principle underlying the structure of Kings has to do with the house of David and his dynasty, and with the LORD and the temple (Hull, "Hezekiah-Saint," 145).

¹⁵⁹ Cohn, *2 Kings*, 141.

¹⁶⁰ Bostock, *Trust*, 119. In terms of the title of Hezekiah, the narrator calls Hezekiah without any title such as "king" in 2 Kgs 20:1–11. In the previous story, Hezekiah is referred to both with the title and without it, which shows whether Hezekiah is respected or not. In the present story, however, the narrator describes Hezekiah without any title, which shows that the readers should focus their attention on the man Hezekiah rather than on the position of Hezekiah as a king of Judah.

¹⁶¹ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 296.

sign to Ahaz as a confirmation for the word of the LORD.¹⁶² In Isa 7:12, Ahaz said, לֹא אֶשְׂאֵל וְלֹא־אֶנְסֶה אֶת־יְהוָה (“I will not ask [a sign], nor will I test the LORD”). Ahaz understood requesting a sign as testing God. Thus, Ahaz refused to ask for a sign which Isaiah indicated as the LORD’s confirmation for His word in Isa 7:4–9. In Deut 6:16, Moses also addressed this issue to the people of Israel. He commanded that לֹא תִנְסּוּ אֶת יְהוָה (“do not test the LORD your God”). In the context of Deut 6:16, testing the LORD means breaking the commandments of the LORD (Deut 6:17).¹⁶³ Thus, testing the LORD indicates the people’s doubt or unbelief in the word of the LORD.¹⁶⁴

However, Childs points out that “[w]ithin the prophetic corpus ... a sign is a special event, either ordinary or miraculous, that serves as a pledge by which to confirm the prophetic word.”¹⁶⁵ In 1 Sam 2:27–33, Eli received the word of the LORD for a threat against his whole house. The sign for this prediction is the death of Eli’s two sons on the same day (1 Sam 2:34). Here, the sign is to give Eli a confirmation of the fulfilment of the LORD’s word.

Thus Hezekiah’s request of a sign is not showing his unbelief, but confirming the promises of the LORD which were made by the LORD in 2 Kgs 20:5–6. The narrator does not portray Hezekiah negatively through his requesting for a sign in 2 Kgs 20:8.

¹⁶² Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 96.

¹⁶³ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11*, 355. Although the people of Israel quarreled with Moses about drinking water in Exod 17:1–7, the narrator evaluates that they put the LORD to the test (Exod 17:2, 7) by doubting the fact that the LORD was with them (Exod 17:7). However, in Deut 6:16–17 the meaning of the testing seems to be changed into the breaking the commandments (Deut 6:17). Mayes also notes that “testing ... the faithfulness of God to his covenant [Exod 17:7] ... is not otherwise found in Deuteronomy” (Mayes, *Deuteronomy*, 179).

¹⁶⁴ Wright points out that “‘testing’ of Yahweh flows from a lack of belief in Yahweh’s word and comes despite the fact that this people has witnessed Yahweh’s previous faithfulness” (Wright, *Deuteronomy*, 102). Thompson also asserts that testing the LORD is “an impertinence and contrary to faith” (Thompson, *Deuteronomy*, 125).

¹⁶⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 65.

Rather, the narrator depicts him positively in asking for a sign as the confirmation for the promises of the LORD.

Hezekiah only mentioned the first two promises of the LORD, when he asked for a sign in 2 Kgs 20:8. Hezekiah requested a sign for his healing and entrance into the temple of the LORD. In 2 Kgs 20:7, however, the narrator already reported that Hezekiah recovered from his illness, which seems to be a contradiction between these two consecutive verses.¹⁶⁶ In 2 Kgs 20:7, the narrator relates that Hezekiah recovered (נִרְחַי) through the application of a poultice of figs according to what Isaiah said. In 2 Kgs 20:8, the narrator states that Hezekiah requested a sign for his recovery (אֶרְפָּא) from illness. In these two verses, the narrator utilizes two different verbs קָרָה (2 Kgs 28:7) and אֶרְפָּא (2 Kgs 20:8) in order to indicate Hezekiah's recovery. Hull suggests a solution for the relation between 2 Kgs 20:7 and 8 by understanding the two verbs קָרָה and אֶרְפָּא differently.¹⁶⁷ Hull points out that these two verbs, קָרָה and אֶרְפָּא, alternate in the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery. In 2 Kgs 20:1 and 7, when Isaiah brought the word of the LORD to Hezekiah concerning his death and when the narrator reports Hezekiah's

¹⁶⁶ The interrelation between 2 Kgs 20:7 and 2 Kgs 20:8 has been debated by scholars and many suggestions have been made. First, Ruprecht suggests that the last term of 2 Kgs 20:7, נִרְחַי, which is *qal* imperfect third person masculine singular of קָרָה, could be read as a jussive, because Isa 38:21, which is the corresponding text with 2 Kgs 20:7, read it (נִרְחַי) as a jussive (Ruprecht, "Die ursprüngliche Komposition," 33–66). However, this reading is just harmonization, which is opposed by Williamson. He strongly opposes such reading because the terms נִרְחַי (2 Kgs 20:7) and תִּחְיֶה (2 Kgs 20:1) stand as a self-contained narrative unit (Williamson, "Hezekiah," 47–52). Second, some scholars believe that 2 Kgs 20:7 was partially original text and then later expended by an insertion. Rofé asserts that the original text was only 2 Kgs 20:1 and 7, and 2 Kgs 20:2–6 and 2 Kgs 20:8–11 were inserted later (Rofé, *The Prophetic Stories*, 137–38). McKenzie, who follows Gonçalves sees 2 Kgs 20:6 and 8–11 as a later addition (McKenzie, *Trouble with Kings*, 106–7). Others understand that 2 Kgs 20:6 is originally followed by 2 Kgs 20:8, thus, 2 Kgs 20:7 is a later addition. Cogan and Tadmor believe that 2 Kgs 20:7 is "a second tradition, one in which Isaiah appears as a healer and wonder-worker, in the style of Elijah and Elisha" (Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 255). However, Hobbs points out that seeing the image found in 2 Kgs 20:7 as "secondary" is not satisfactory, because the theme of "sickness" is a common theme in the account of 2 Kings (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 287). Fourth, many commentators maintain that 2 Kgs 20:1–7 and 2 Kgs 20:9–11 have their own textual traditions and that they have been combined together by 2 Kgs 20:8 (Montgomery, *Kings*, 508; Gray, *I & II Kings*, 696; Jones, *I & 2 Kings*, 584).

¹⁶⁷ Hull, "Hezekiah-Saint," 469–71.

recovery, the verb *הִיָּח* was used. On the other hand, in 2 Kgs 20:5 and 8, the verb *רָפָא* was used when Isaiah brought the word of the LORD to Hezekiah a second time (2 Kgs 20:5) and when Hezekiah asked for a sign (2 Kgs 20:8). Then, Hull maintains that the verb *הִיָּח* denotes Hezekiah's physical recovery, while the verb *רָפָא* indicates Hezekiah's recovery of a relationship with the LORD. Hull understands the meaning of the verb *רָפָא* metaphorically.¹⁶⁸

However, it is not easy to accept Hull's metaphorical meaning of the verb *רָפָא*, because in 2 Kgs 20:5 the verb *רָפָא* means physical recovery. Although the verb *רָפָא* denotes metaphorical meanings in some places (Pss 103:3; 147:3; Jer 6:14; 30:17; 33:6),¹⁶⁹ it is not the case in the present context. Rather the verb *רָפָא* can denote both Hezekiah's physical recovery (2 Kgs 20:5) and his restoration of relationship with the LORD (2 Kgs 20:8).¹⁷⁰ Interestingly, Hezekiah mentioned the first two promises of the LORD (2 Kgs 20:5–6), when he asked for a sign from the LORD in 2 Kgs 20:8, namely Hezekiah's healing and his entrance into the temple. These two promises may go together as one, rather than treating them as two separated promises of the LORD. In 2 Kgs 20:5, Isaiah brought these two promises by using the participle and imperfect verb forms. Isaiah said *יְהוָה בֵּית תַּעֲלֶה בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי תַעֲלֶה בֵּית יְהוָה* (“behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD”).¹⁷¹ In 2 Kgs 20:8, Hezekiah asked his question by utilizing the imperfect and *waw* relative with the suffix conjugation verb

¹⁶⁸ Hull employs the metaphorical meaning of the verb *רָפָא* from the works of Stoebe, who points out the various metaphorical meaning of the verb *רָפָא* (Stoebe, “*רָפָא*,” 1254–59).

¹⁶⁹ Stoebe, “*רָפָא*,” 1254–59. Stoebe asserts that in these verses the verb *רָפָא* can be understood as carrying the metaphorical meaning.

¹⁷⁰ Brown, *Divine Healer*, 31. Brown warns us that it is dangerous to overstate the dichotomy between spiritual and physical. In terms of the verb *רָפָא*, Brown points out that seeing this verb as “the ‘either physical or spiritual’ dichotomy” is practically faulty.

¹⁷¹ The term *רָפָא* is *qal* participle masculine singular of *רָפָא* (“to heal”) and the term *תַּעֲלֶה* is *qal* imperfect second person masculine singular of *עָלָה* (“to go up”).

forms. Hezekiah said *מה אוח כִּי־יִרְפָּא יְהוָה לִי וְעָלִיתִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בֵּית יְהוָה* (“what will be the sign that the LORD will heal me *and then I shall go up* to the house of the LORD the third day?”).¹⁷² Hezekiah switched the adverbial phrase, *בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי*, with the verb *עָלָה* in 2 Kgs 20:8 in order to link it more closely with the first verbal sentence. Thus, Hezekiah’s question regarding his healing seeks after an indication of his perfect recovery or purification from his condition in order that Hezekiah might go up to the temple of the LORD.¹⁷³ Hezekiah’s main concern here was to enter into the temple. That is why Hezekiah asked for a sign for his healing and for his entrance into the temple of the LORD. At the same time when Isaiah brought the LORD’s promises (2 Kgs 20:5), he emphasized the time of Hezekiah’s entrance into the temple. He intentionally put the adverbial phrase, *בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי* (“on the third day”) before the term *תַּעֲלֶה* (“you shall go up”) in order to highlight the time. However, Hezekiah reversed the order of these phrases in 2 Kgs 20:8 in order to emphasize the fact that he entered into the temple of the LORD. There is no contradiction between 2 Kgs 20:7 and 2 Kgs 20:8; rather Hezekiah’s request for a sign in 2 Kgs 20:8 shows his strong desire to enter into the temple of the LORD, which indicates a positive characterization of Hezekiah.

Thus, the narrator continually depicts Hezekiah positively in the story of his illness and recovery. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as a righteous king by the LORD

¹⁷² The term *רָפָא* is *qal*, imperfect third person masculine singular of *רָפָא* (“to heal”) and the term *וְעָלִיתִי* is *qal* perfect first person common singular of *עָלָה* (“to go up”) with *waw* relative.

¹⁷³ Kasher, “Story,” 41–55. However, Kasher’s suggestion has a different basis. He sees the verb *חָיָה* as “remaining alive” or “not dying” in 2 Kgs 20:1 and 7 rather than Hezekiah’s recovery. He asserts that “Isaiah the Prophet succeeded through the use of the fig poultice to prevent a turn for the worse in the medical situation of Hezekiah.” However, Kasher’s suggestion seems to avoid the meaning the verb *חָיָה*. As mentioned above, the verb *חָיָה* means Hezekiah’s recovery from his illness in the present context (Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 381).

who heard and provided fifteen years of additional life.¹⁷⁴ Hezekiah is also characterized as a pious king who eagerly sought the LORD by asking a sign to enter into the house of the LORD. In the story, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively through his faithful words and deeds. On the other hand, the narrator indicates the limitation of Hezekiah through the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery. He only received fifteen years of additional life from the LORD. He cannot live forever but received an extended limited amount of life, which indicates the limitation of human character. Hezekiah's limitation is more explicitly reported in the next story.

3.3.4.4 The Envoys From Babylon

The narrator tells the story of the Babylonian envoys in order to reflect on the theme of delayed judgment and eventual exile of the royal family into Babylon in 2 Kgs 20:12–19.¹⁷⁵ Although the narrator does not explicitly evaluate Hezekiah's action for showing his treasures to the Babylonian visitors either negatively or positively, the prediction of Isaiah seems to be a negative characterization of Hezekiah. The narrator depicts him positively in the previous narratives, but the oracle that Isaiah delivered may indicate that Hezekiah was at fault whether he acted knowingly or not, and that the last judgment which will fall on the kingdom of Judah was caused by Hezekiah's actions.

Many scholars accept this interpretation for various reasons. Kaiser, for instance,

¹⁷⁴ In Prov 15:29, the LORD hears the prayer of the righteous: וְהַפֶּלֶא צְדִיקִים יִשְׁמָע ("but He hears the prayer of the righteous"). Thus, the LORD may see Hezekiah as a righteous man.

¹⁷⁵ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 296–97. Childs also asserts that "[t]he very fact that the narrator of the chapter is unwilling to proceed in these directions should check the need for supplying reason. The writer's emphasis falls on establishing a link from one event to another. The judgment that was shortly to occur was not by accident or even directly evoked by the king's misdeed, but unfolded according to a divine plan" (Childs, *Isaiah*, 287). At the same time, examining the Elisha-Joash narrative (2 Kgs 13:14–19), Bostock points out that "the important point ... is that the king performed an action that was used in a symbolic way to illustrate the message of the prophet. Like Joash, it seems that Hezekiah is unaware of the future effects of his action. ... It may be that the writer is using the display of the treasures by Hezekiah as a convenient means by which Isaiah can introduce the downfall of Judah, and the reader is meant to understand the viewing of the treasures by the Babylonians as a symbolic anticipation of the future, or even an initiation of it" (Bostock, *Trust*, 133).

understands Isaiah's prediction in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 as a punishment on Hezekiah because Isaiah found Hezekiah arrogant.¹⁷⁶ Begg also points out that Hezekiah's showing of all the treasures in his palace indicates his willingness to give his treasures to the Babylonians, which may show that Hezekiah has departed from the LORD. Thus, Begg understands Hezekiah's behavior as a very deplorable action, which deserves punishment.¹⁷⁷ At the same time, Gerbrandt believes that Hezekiah's display of royal treasures shows the conclusion or confirmation of an agreement with Babylon. Gerbrandt also asserts that Isaiah was in opposition to such alliances, and brought a judgment oracle against him as punishment.¹⁷⁸

However, these negative interpretations seem to be hard to accept, because the narrator does not report Hezekiah's motive in showing his treasures to the Babylonian visitors in 2 Kgs 20:12–13, which is the core of these negative interpretations. Seitz also claims that there is no connection between Hezekiah's action and Isaiah's prediction because the narrator does not mention Hezekiah's motivation for displaying his treasure, and because Isaiah's questions are not quite related to his prediction.¹⁷⁹ Mbuwayeasang who follows E. J. Young,¹⁸⁰ contends that Isaiah's prediction is not a prophetic judgment, but a general announcement of a future event.¹⁸¹ Bostock also points out that the actions of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:12–13 are not right or wrong, but are recorded "as a type or

¹⁷⁶ Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 412.

¹⁷⁷ Begg, "Deuteronomistic History," 27–38.

¹⁷⁸ Gerbrandt, *Kingship*, 86–87.

¹⁷⁹ Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 262.

¹⁸⁰ Young, *Isaiah*, 536. Young maintains that "[w]e must not think that Hezekiah's folly was the cause of this captivity. It was not the cause, but rather the occasion." He uses the terms, "Behold!" and "days are coming," to support his suggestion.

¹⁸¹ Mbuwayeasang, "Defense of Zion," 175–76. Mbuwayeasang asserts that Isaiah's prediction in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 is not a prophetic judgement oracle for an individual, but for prophetic predictions concerning the future, because Isaiah does not mention Hezekiah's particular sin here. Mbuwayeasang uses the phrase יָמֵי בָּאִים ("the days are coming") to prove her suggestion.

parable of what will transpire and are used by the narrator to furnish a stage on which Isaiah may pronounce the oracle from YHWH.”¹⁸² However, these positive interpretations for Hezekiah’s action in 2 Kgs 20:12–13 and Isaiah’s prediction in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 are also not easy to accept, because the context of Isaiah’s oracle in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 shows that Isaiah’s prediction is related to the action of Hezekiah. Although the narrator does not explicitly mention Hezekiah’s motive in showing his treasures to foreign visitors, Isaiah’s prediction in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 is still understood to be associated with the behaviour of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:12–13. Thus, the narrator may portray Hezekiah negatively by associating Isaiah’s oracle with Hezekiah’s action to show his treasures to the Babylonian envoys.¹⁸³

However, at the end of the story (2 Kgs 20:19) the narrator diminishes his negative characterization on Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:12–18), which differs from the reading of Isa 39:8.¹⁸⁴ The reading of 2 Kgs 20:19 is this: וַיֹּאמֶר הַזְּקֵנָהוּ אֶל־יִשְׁעֵיהֶוּ טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דְּבַרְתָּ (“then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ‘The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good’”). Konkel asserts that the second half of 2 Kgs 20:19 in the Masoretic text, וַיֹּאמֶר הַזְּקֵנָהוּ אֶל־יִשְׁעֵיהֶוּ טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דְּבַרְתָּ (“for he thought, ‘Is it not so, if there shall be peace and truth

¹⁸² Bostock, *Trust*, 133.

¹⁸³ According to Bostock, the story of the envoys from Babylon in 2 Kgs 20:12–19 consists of three different parts: 2 Kgs 20:12–13, 14–15, and 16–18 (Bostock, *Trust*, 121). Although these three parts seem to deal with different subject matter, the narrator presents these three units by utilizing *waw* relative verb forms. The beginning of the second and third unit begins with a *waw* plus imperfect verb, which indicates “sequentiality of action in narrative” (Heller, *Narrative Structure*, 430). Second Kings 20:14 begins with the term וַיָּבֹא, which is *qal* imperfect third person masculine singular of בוא (“to come”) with *waw* relative, and 2 Kgs 20:16 begins with the term וַיֹּאמֶר, which is *qal* imperfect third person masculine singular of אָמַר (“to say”) with *waw* relative. At the same time the narrator also introduces each character by utilizing *waw* relative + imperfect verbs when each character begins his speech in the story of the envoys from Babylon: Hezekiah’s speeches in 2 Kgs 20:14, 15, and 19, and Isaiah speeches in 2 Kgs 20:14, 15, and 16. This sequentiality is understood as “chronological” and “logical” sequentiality (Gibson, *Syntax*, 95). The form of a *waw* relative plus prefix conjugation verb is also characterized by “progression” (Van der Merwe et. al., *Biblical Hebrew*, 165).

¹⁸⁴ Isaiah 39:8 - וַיֹּאמֶר הַזְּקֵנָהוּ אֶל־יִשְׁעֵיהֶוּ טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דְּבַרְתָּ וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי יִהְיֶה שְׁלוֹם וְאֱמֶת בְּיָמָי (“then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ‘The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good.’ For he thought, ‘For there will be peace and truth in my days’”).

in my days?")), was added later to the proto Masoretic text.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the text for 2 Kgs 20:19 is this: וַיֹּאמֶר הַזְּקֵנָהוּ אֶל־יְשַׁעְיָהוּ טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ ("then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, 'The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good'"). The Kings account does not have the inner thought of Hezekiah, which found in the Isaiah account (Isa 39:8b).

After hearing the word of God that Isaiah brought in 2 Kgs 20:17–18, Hezekiah responded that טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ ("the word of the LORD which you have spoken is good"). Hezekiah viewed the word of the LORD as good (טוֹב), which may portray him as an example of piety.¹⁸⁶ However, Hezekiah's response was quite unusual in the context of the entire story of Hezekiah. As shown in the previous story (2 Kgs 20:1–11), Hezekiah had the courage to ask the LORD to change His mind, when he believed that he had good grounds for doing so. In 2 Kgs 20:19, Hezekiah did not react to Isaiah's prediction for the dark future of Judah. He did not pray to the LORD or ask Isaiah to pray for him. At the same time Hezekiah did not tear his clothes or cover himself in sackcloth, and he did not enter into the temple of the LORD either. In contrast to the previous narrative, Hezekiah simply accepts the word of the LORD.

However, Hezekiah's response in 2 Kgs 20:19 does not characterize him negatively, rather Hezekiah's reaction shows that he was willing to accept the decision of the LORD for the destiny of Judah when it is clear that there is no possibility of reversing the will of the LORD. Interestingly, during the last one hundred years of Judah before the exile (2 Kgs 21–25), there is no instance of prayer for removing that judgment,

¹⁸⁵ Konkel, "Source," 462–82. The text of Alexandrinus (A) renders the MT of Kings, but the text of Vaticanus (B) does not render 2 Kgs 20:19b in the MT, and the text of Lucian (boc2e2) renders differently. At the end of the story each manuscript has different readings. Konkel points out that 2 Kgs 20:19b in the MT is expanded, which is derived from the reading of Isaiah, because "[t]hey are in keeping with the theology and sentiments of the poem which point to the possibility of life and hope in spite of judgment."¹⁸⁵ Williamson also asserts that the extended texts in the MT of Kings become a marker in the second half of Isaiah in Isa 48:22 and Isa 57:21 (Williamson, *Book*, 210).

¹⁸⁶ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 455–56.

which may indicate that the destiny of Judah is fixed and the fate of Judah will not be changed.¹⁸⁷ In 2 Kgs 22:19, the narrator reports that Josiah humbled himself before God, tore his clothes and wept before God, when he heard the LORD's judgment on Judah.¹⁸⁸ Although the LORD heard Josiah, the LORD's judgment on Judah is not removed, but delayed (2 Kgs 22:20). In the Hezekiah story, this delay was already given to Hezekiah in Isaiah's prediction (2 Kgs 20:17–18). Additionally, the narrator does not mention the name of King Hezekiah regarding the event of the deportation of Jehoiachin with the royal family and the fall of Judah in 2 Kgs 21–25. In this way the narrator depicts Hezekiah positively who accepted the divine will without asking for its reversal or reduction of its effectiveness.

This positive characterization in 2 Kgs 20:19 does not change the negative characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:12–18, because the narrator does not report any change in Isaiah's prediction. Although the narrator ends the story of Babylonian envoys with the positive characterization of Hezekiah, he characterizes Hezekiah negatively in this story.

As mentioned above, the narratives of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20 are not intended to be read chronologically following the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative. Rather Hezekiah's narratives in Kings should be read logically following the previous story. These two narratives show the final stage of Hezekiah's reign and of the city of Jerusalem. Although the narrator portrays Hezekiah in a very positive way in the introduction to his reign (2 Kgs 18:3–6), it is not necessary to see Hezekiah positively in every single event (2 Kgs 18–20). As mentioned above, the narrator depicts Hezekiah as

¹⁸⁷ Bostock, *Trust*, 145.

¹⁸⁸ However, the narrator does not mention Josiah's prayer or the content of his prayer, but he just reports the action of Josiah.

a round character who is complex in the story. In the story of the envoys from Babylon, although Hezekiah is portrayed positively at the end of the story, the narrator generally characterizes him negatively throughout the story by reporting Hezekiah's action as relating to the prediction of Isaiah.¹⁸⁹ In this way, the narrator shows the limitation of a human king Hezekiah. In the previous stories, he received the LORD's protection from a military crisis and from a mortal sickness through his faithful actions. However, the LORD's protection is limited, not eternal. In the last story, Hezekiah is depicted as a cause for the LORD's judgement on Judah by his response to the Babylonian envoys. Although the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively in the entire Hezekiah narratives, he gradually indicates the limitation of Hezekiah through the stories of Hezekiah's illness and the Babylonian envoys.

¹⁸⁹ Some scholars suggest that Hezekiah's response to the visitors from Babylon in showing his treasures is either wrong or foolish. Seitz asserts that if Hezekiah's actions are thought to be the reason for the judgment oracle, then possibly he may be seen as being boastful of his economic strength (Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 262). In 2 Sam 24 the judgment on David for ordering a census of the people might be seen as a parallel, but the nature of David's sin is unclear. Brueggemann sees the reaction of Hezekiah as foolish from a pragmatic point of view. Although he admits that there is no explicit theological judgment on the narrator, Brueggemann asserts that Hezekiah must be proud, dependent on his treasures, and is boasting of his wealth and effectiveness. He suggests that Hezekiah has turned away from the LORD to more familiar forms of security following his implicit theological verdict (Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, 311). However, there is no such verdict in the story. At the same time, the narrator does not report the mind of Hezekiah to the reader. On the other hand, it is worth comparing the records of previous visits to kings in the books of Samuel and Kings to see how other kings reacted and whether there is any comment of the narrator upon their reactions. The envoys from foreign kings recorded in the books of Samuel and Kings appear in the visit of Hiram's servant to Solomon after Solomon's succession to the throne (1 Kgs 5:15 [1]). This visitation continues to make an apparently fruitful relationship and peace between the two of them (1 Kgs 5:16–26 [2–12]). Solomon also receives the visit of the queen of Sheba for his wisdom. However, things are not the same as in Solomon's day. Provan points out that Jerusalem is no longer seen as the home of the wise and wealthy Solomon with his great material resources (Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, 264–65). At the same time there is no reason why Hezekiah should be suspicious of his visitors from Babylon because of the story of the visit of the queen of Sheba. Thus, there is no reason to see the actions of Hezekiah as wrong in the story in terms of the moral and political affairs in the dynasty of David.

3.3.4.5 Conclusion of the Reign of King Hezekiah

The narrator quickly concludes the story of the reign of King Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:20–21). Besides Hezekiah's death, the narrator only reports Hezekiah's building project in which he improved the water supply of the city of Jerusalem. As mentioned above, the original conflict between Hezekiah and Sennacherib is intensified by the action of the Rabshakeh who takes over the conduit of the Upper Pool which is the water supply for the city of Jerusalem. The narrator symbolically uses the action of the Rabshakeh in order to show that Hezekiah is going to face a life and death struggle; the protection of the water supply is significant for the life of the city. Interestingly, the narrator only reports Hezekiah's great work for providing a lasting source of water into the city of Jerusalem without mentioning his many other achievements. The achievement of Hezekiah's water supply into the city of Jerusalem may be important from an historical and geographical perspective, but it is hard to see the relationship with the previous three narratives in terms of the theological viewpoint of the narrator.

The narrator also reports the death of Hezekiah, which is a regular closing formula for the reign of kings in Kings. The narrator reports the source of reference, the notice of death, and the succession, but he does not mention the place of Hezekiah's burial.¹⁹⁰ The narrator just reports that וישָׁכַב חִזְקִיָּהוּ עִם־אֲבוֹתָיו ("Hezekiah slept with his fathers") in 2 Kgs 20:21.¹⁹¹ The phrase "slept with his fathers" is literally "lies down with his fathers," which is the one of the most common euphemisms in the Old

¹⁹⁰ In terms of the burial place, Ahaz is the last king of whom it is said that he "was buried with his fathers in the city of David" in 2 Kgs 16:20. Manasseh and Amon were buried in the garden of their own house (2 Kgs 21:18; 21:26). Josiah is buried in his own tomb in 2 Kgs 23:30.

¹⁹¹ Bostock, *Trust*, 146. Bostock understands this phrase as the natural death of Hezekiah.

Testament to convey the meaning “to die.”¹⁹² When David died of old age, the narrator reports that *וַיִּשְׁכַּב דָּוִד עִם־אֲבוֹתָיו* (“David slept with his fathers”) in 2 Kgs 2:10, which shows that “David died in peace and not violently in war.”¹⁹³ Omanson and Ellington assert that the phrase “slept with his fathers” indicates “burial in a place that is physically close to the dead person’s parents, grandparents and other forbears.”¹⁹⁴ However, this is inconsistent with the details of the death of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, as reported by this idiomatic phrase, but his actual burial place is not the same as his ancestors. In 2 Kgs 21:18, the narrator explicitly states that *וַיִּשְׁכַּב מְנַשֶּׁה עִם־אֲבוֹתָיו* (“Manasseh slept with his fathers”) and *וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּגַן־בֵּיתוֹ בְּגַן־עֶזְא* (“was buried in his palace garden, the garden of Uzza”).¹⁹⁵ Manasseh died but was not buried in the city of David where Judean kings were buried. Thus, the phrase “slept with his fathers” does not simply mean “buried physically beside his fathers.”

In the case of Hezekiah his burial place is doubtful, because the narrator does not explicitly provide this detail in 2 Kgs 20:21. It is very interesting that Ahaz, the predecessor of Hezekiah, is the last Judean king of whom the narrator states his burial as “was buried with his fathers in the city of David” (2 Kgs 16:20). After Ahaz there is no mention about “the city of David” as a burial place for Judean kings. Even the great King Josiah was buried *בְּקִבְרוֹ* (“in his own tomb”) in 2 Kgs 23:30.¹⁹⁶ In the conclusion

¹⁹² First Kings 2:10; 11:43; 14:20, 31; 15:8, 24; 16:6, 28; 22:40, 50; 2 Kgs 8:24; 10:35; 13:9, 13; 14:16, 29; 15:7, 22, 38; 16:20; 21:18; 24:6.

¹⁹³ Omanson and Ellington, *1–2 Kings*, 73.

¹⁹⁴ Omanson and Ellington, *1–2 Kings*, 40.

¹⁹⁵ Amon, the son of Manasseh, was also buried in his grave in the garden of Uzza in 2 Kgs 21:26. However, the narrator does not report that he slept with his fathers. Gray asserts that Uzza is understood as a Canaanite deity (Gray, *I and II Kings*, 710).

¹⁹⁶ Some scholars understand this phenomenon in the later Judean kings. Provan asserts that this is the sign of changing redactor (Provan, *Hezekiah*, 135–37). Bin-Nun sees this phenomenon as the actual change of funeral culture (Bin-Nun, “Formulas,” 414–32).

(2 Kgs 20:21), however, the narrator briefly reports Hezekiah's death as "Hezekiah slept with his fathers" which indicates Hezekiah's normal death.

In sum, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively and negatively in the entire story. In the three narratives, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a round character by changing and developing his character within the story. At the beginning of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, Hezekiah is portrayed negatively in the event of Hezekiah's tribute to Sennacherib. Hezekiah's action is not successful in turning Sennacherib away, which may be seen as a negative characterization of Hezekiah. Then, the narrator shows that the character of Hezekiah is changed and developed positively by reporting Hezekiah's response to the two Assyrian threats. In Hezekiah's first response to the Rabshakeh's speeches, Hezekiah showed his panic and mourning over the calamitous situation. In his second response, however, he was not panicked or frustrated by the situation, but he entered the temple and prayed there. In this scene, the narrator explicitly reports the prayer of Hezekiah in order to characterize him as a faithful king. At the same time, the narrator portrays him as the one who receives a victory from the LORD, which shows that the LORD considered him as a faithful king. In this regard the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a faithful and humble king before the LORD in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative.

The narrator continues to characterize Hezekiah positively in the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery. At the beginning of the story (2 Kgs 20:1) the narrator states that Hezekiah will die soon, which is the same situation with Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 19:37. However, Hezekiah prayed to the LORD and received fifteen years of additional life, which shows his positive characterization. However, this additional life is not eternal but limited. The narrator shows this limitation by reporting the story of the

foreign visitors, which causes the exile of the royal family at the hands of the Babylonians. The narrator does not explicitly evaluate Hezekiah's action for showing his treasures to the Babylonian visitors, whether right or wrong, but the context seems to characterize Hezekiah negatively in associating it with the prediction of the deportation of the royal family. Then, the narrator ends the pericope about the Babylonian envoys with a positive characterization of Hezekiah by reporting his willingness to accept the word of the LORD. However, the negative characterization of Hezekiah is not changed by the response of Hezekiah to the prediction of Isaiah. In this way, the narrator indicates the limitation of Hezekiah in the last story of Hezekiah. Then, the narrator characterizes him positively again in the conclusion of the Hezekiah narratives. The positive characterization of Hezekiah is also expressed in the context of Kings, to which the present study will now turn.

3.4 The Hezekiah Narratives in the Book of Kings

The present study has dealt with the Hezekiah narratives in the context of 2 Kgs 18–20 in the previous sections. The narrator, however, does not present Hezekiah's story (2 Kgs 18–20) as an isolated story, but he reports it as a part of the story of the kings of Judah and Israel, which is generally recognized as a part of the Deuteronomistic History.¹⁹⁷ In the Kings account, the narrator relates a continuous story of Israel from Solomon to the fall of the city of Jerusalem and the temple of the LORD by the king of Babylon with the account of the release of Jehoiachin.¹⁹⁸ Thus, it is necessary to see the Hezekiah narratives in the context of the whole book of Kings.

¹⁹⁷ The present study utilizes the term "Deuteronomistic History," but many scholars are doubtful whether it really pertains or whether it is an inference of modern redaction analysis. For a recent study see Knoppers, "Deuteronomistic History," 119–34; Davies, *Ancient Israel*, 131; Provan, "On 'Seeing' the Trees," 153–73; Knauf, "Deuteronomistic Historiography," 388–98.

¹⁹⁸ Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 1.

In Kings, however, the narrator does not relate a single theme or concern, but reports multiple themes and concerns, namely the centralization of worshiping God, the retribution of the LORD, the fulfilment of prophecy, the loyalty to the covenant, and the permanence of the Davidic dynasty.¹⁹⁹ The narrator unites these themes and concerns by means of a loose link in Kings. Barton asserts that the Kings account is not understood as “a work written to explore a theme.”²⁰⁰ Thus, the present section will deal with some themes which closely relate to Hezekiah’s story in 2 Kgs 18–20 in order to see the story in the context of Kings. At the same time the present study will explore the function of the story in Kings.

3.4.1 The Hezekiah narratives in the context of Kings

As mentioned above, in 2 Kgs 18–20, the narrator presents the reign of Hezekiah as a faithful king who totally trusts in the LORD. The theme is clearly expressed in the story of Sennacherib’s invasion against Judah (2 Kgs 18:13—19:37) and Hezekiah’s illness and recovery (2 Kgs 20:1–11).²⁰¹ At the beginning of the story (2 Kgs 18:5–6), the narrator already reports this theme. In 2 Kgs 18:5a, the narrator evaluates that **בַּטָּח** **אֱלֹהֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל** (“he [Hezekiah] trusted in the LORD God of Israel”). Even the narrator characterizes him as the most faithful king among the Judean kings. He continually states that **וְאַחֲרָיו לֹא־הָיָה כְּמֹהוּ בְּכָל־מַלְכֵי־יְהוּדָה וְאֲשֶׁר־הָיוּ לְפָנָיו** (“and after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah or who were before him”). In 2 Kgs 18:5, the

¹⁹⁹ Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 1. Weinfeld suggests nine theological themes which indicate the Deuteronomistic theology. These nine themes are: (1) the struggle against worshiping idols; (2) the centralization of worshiping God; (3) election, exodus, and covenant; (4) the monotheism; (5) obedience to the Law of Moses and loyalty to the covenant; (6) the inheritance of the land; (7) retribution; (8) the fulfilment of prophecy; (9) the permanence of the Davidic dynasty.

²⁰⁰ Barton, “Historical Criticism,” 3–15.

²⁰¹ Long, *2 Kings*, 194; Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 146–47.

narrator utilizes the term בָּטַח (“to trust”) in order to portray Hezekiah positively.²⁰² The term, בָּטַח, however, only appears in the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–19, which makes it difficult to connect this theme to the entire book of Kings.²⁰³ Thus, it is necessary to seek other themes which connect the story of Hezekiah to other stories in Kings.

The first theme that will be explored is the central worship of the LORD. The narrator reports that הוּא הָסִיר אֶת־הַבַּמֹּת וְשָׁבַר אֶת־הַמִּצְבֹּת וְכָרַת אֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרָה (“he [Hezekiah] removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah”) in 2 Kgs 18:4a, which is the first case of the narrator’s claim that Hezekiah “did right in the eyes of the LORD according to all that David his father had done” (2 Kgs 18:3). Destroying idols of the gods is not reported in three narratives of Hezekiah, but removing the high places is mentioned in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative. In 2 Kgs 18:22, the Rabshakeh said הֲלוֹא־הוּא אֲשֶׁר הָסִיר הַזִּקְיָהוּ אֶת־בְּמֹתָיו וְאֶת־מִזְבְּחֵיהֶם (“is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away?”). Here the Rabshakeh accused Hezekiah of making the LORD angry because he removed the high places. However, the

²⁰² The verb בָּטַח (“to trust”) is found nine times, and does not appear in the entire narrative of Samuel-Kings (2 Kgs 18:5, 19, 20, 21 [2x], 22, 24, 30; 19:10). Thus, the narrator distinctly utilizes the verb בָּטַח in the Hezekiah story in order to characterize him as the one who trusted in the LORD (Hobbs, 2 *Kings*, 146–47). The other eight occurrences appear in the speeches of the Rabshakeh against Hezekiah. In 2 Kgs 18:19–20 the Rabshakeh asked the Judean officials a question regarding whom they “trusted.” He also suggested that Egypt can be “trusted,” employing the verb בָּטַח three times (2 Kgs 18:21 [2x], 24). At the same time in 2 Kgs 18:22, the Rabshakeh sought to show that the Judean’s “trust” in the LORD did not have any foundation in terms of the religious basis, because Hezekiah removed high places and altars. In this way the Rabshakeh dismissed the Judean’s “trust” in the LORD. Once again, in 2 Kgs 18:30, Rabshakeh demanded that the people of Judah resist Hezekiah, who encouraged them to “trust” in the LORD. In the final appearance of the verb בָּטַח in 2 Kgs 19:10, the Assyrians spoke directly to Hezekiah. However, the attention of the Assyrians’ speech now shifts to the LORD and the argumentation changes accordingly. They are not trying to prevent Hezekiah from ‘trusting’ in the LORD. Rather they try to shake Hezekiah’s confidence by saying that the LORD whom Hezekiah “trusts” will deceive him. The Rabshakeh uses the term בָּטַח eight times in his speech in order to dishonor Hezekiah, which seems to be a negative characterization for Hezekiah. However, the Rabshakeh’s words are not true, because the LORD, in whom Hezekiah trusted, showed His power over Assyria in 2 Kgs 19:35–37. Thus, through his evaluation, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively as a faithful king who “trusts” in the LORD (2 Kgs 18:5).

²⁰³ Second Kings 18:5, 19, 20, 21 [2x], 22, 24, 30; 19:10.

claim of the Rabshakeh is not right, because the LORD chose Jerusalem as His worship center (Deut 12:5–14; 14:23–25; 15:20; 16:2; 17:8, 10; 18:6; 26:2; 31:11).²⁰⁴ In Kings, the high places (בָּמוֹת) were the locations where idols were worshiped by the people of Israel, which symbolizes “polytheism” in Israel.²⁰⁵ Thus, the term בָּמוֹת (“high places”) indicates both a refusal of Jerusalem as the center of worship for Israel and the act of disobedience to the LORD who showed his standards through the hand of Moses (Deut 12:5–14).

Removing בָּמוֹת (“high places”) in 2 Kgs 18:4 establishes a connection between Hezekiah and Josiah, who also removes high places in the entire land of Israel (2 Kgs 23:15, 19).²⁰⁶ On the other hand, Hezekiah’s action to abolish the high places distinguishes Hezekiah from his father Ahaz, who offered sacrifices at the high places (2 Kgs 16:4) and from his son Manasseh, who rebuilds the high places (2 Kgs 21:3). Furthermore the narrator states that the act of Manasseh bears the blame for Judah’s fall (2 Kgs 21:10–15; 23:26–27). In this regard, Hezekiah and Josiah, who both demolish the high places, are disassociated from the other Judean kings who lived before the reign of Hezekiah and tolerated the high places (1 Kgs 22:44; 2 Kgs 12:4; 14:4).²⁰⁷

The first king who is related to the high places in Kings is Solomon. In 1 Kgs 3:3, the narrator reports that רַק בְּבָמוֹת הוּא מִזְבֵּחַ וּמִקְטִיר (“only he [Solomon] sacrificed and burned incense in high places”). The narrator explicitly states that Solomon still sacrificed in high places and the people of Israel also offered sacrifices at the high places. In 1 Kgs 3:2, the narrator explains that כִּי לֹא־נִבְנְהָ בַיִת לַשֵּׁם יְהוָה עַד הַיָּמִים הָהֵם (“because

²⁰⁴ Weinfeld thoroughly studies these texts in order to show a connection between Deuteronomy and Kings (Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 320–63).

²⁰⁵ House, *1, 2 Kings*, 75.

²⁰⁶ Long, *2 Kings*, 195.

²⁰⁷ Long, *2 Kings*, 195.

there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days”), which is “a deuteronomic excuse for Solomon.”²⁰⁸ This explanation, however, does not change the evaluation of the reign of Solomon, because the narrator reports that Solomon worshiped the LORD at Jerusalem in 1 Kgs 3:15. Thus, the narrator rebukes Solomon by reporting his act of worshiping at high places.²⁰⁹ The narrator utilizes the term רק (“only” or “except”) in 1 Kgs 3:2–3. Gunn asserts that the term רק in 1 Kgs 3:3 signifies the ironical feature of the story, and reads 1 Kgs 3:2–3 as a negative characterization of Solomon.²¹⁰ McConville also points out that the term רק expects “its use subsequently in Kings whenever high praise for a king is modified by the notice that he did not extirpate high-place worship.”²¹¹ In Kings the term רק is used for five righteous kings by the narrator to indicate the ironical feature of the narrative in terms of the high places (בָּמוֹת). In 2 Kgs 12:2, the narrator evaluates King Jehoash as a good king, but in 2 Kgs 12:3 the narrator states that the people of Judah still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places because the high places were not taken away. Here the narrator begins 2 Kgs 12:3, with the term רק. In the same way, Kings Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:3), Azariah (2 Kgs 15:3), and Jotham (2 Kgs 15:34) are evaluated as good kings, but the narrator still reports that they did not take away the high places, utilizing the term רק (2 Kgs 14: 3; 15:4, 35). The narrator employs the term רק only for the Judean righteous kings who did not remove

²⁰⁸ McConville, “Narrative,” 33–39. Noth also asserts that 1 Kgs 3:2 is a late addition to the Deuteronomic History in order to reduce the condemnation upon Solomon reported in 1 Kgs 3:3, by changing it to the people of Israel (Noth, *Deuteronomic History*, 127–28). Nelson also points out that 1 Kgs 3:2 “provides a justification for his apparent violation of the law of Deuteronomy” (Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 32–33).

²⁰⁹ McConville, “Narrative,” 34–37.

²¹⁰ Gunn, “Directions,” 71–72. Gunn asserts that “[i]t is inviting to read thus the evaluations of David and Solomon in Kings, where the little word ‘except’ or ‘only’ (*raq*) harbors tremendous subversive possibilities.”

²¹¹ McConville, “Narrative,” 43.

the high places in order to present the reign of these kings ironically like the reign of Solomon.

On the other hand, the narrator also links other kings with the high places, namely Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:31–33), Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:4) and Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:3). The narrator evaluates these three kings as wicked kings without utilizing the term קָר , because they were evil kings.²¹² Thus, these instances clearly show that the term קָר is utilized for good Judean kings by the narrator in Kings in order to signify the ironical feature of the story.

In 1 Kgs 3:5–15, the narrator states that Solomon received wisdom from the LORD as a reward for his asking for this gift. The narrator, however, purposely reports Solomon's high-place worship before the narrative of his prayer for wisdom in order to show the fault of Solomon.²¹³ In this way, the narrator guides the reader to read the entire story of Solomon negatively. In spite of the numerous successes of Solomon, his reign is characterized as failing to keep what David made. After Solomon's death, the United Kingdom of Israel is divided into two kingdoms and the "rest from enemies" which David enjoyed ends (1 Kgs 11:9–25). Thus, the successes of Solomon's reign in Kings are extremely ambivalent.

The narrator expresses this evaluation of the reign of Solomon through the word of the LORD in 1 Kgs 11:11–13. The LORD said ten tribes will be taken from Solomon

²¹² In 1 Kgs 22:44, the narrator reports that the reign of Jehoshaphat was right in the eye of the LORD, but he did not remove the high places. However, the narrator does not employ the term קָר , rather he begins this verse with the term כִּי ("Surely" or "Indeed").

²¹³ The narrator reports two more actions of Solomon before he reports Solomon's prayer. In 1 Kgs 3:1, the narrator relates that Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, which may indicate the starting point of a "return to Egypt," which is forbidden by the LORD in Deut 17:6. At the same time the narrator reports the palace of Solomon was built before the house of the LORD in 1 Kgs 3:1. The narrator explicitly states that the house of the LORD was built for seven years (1 Kgs 6:38), and that the palace of Solomon was built for thirteen years (1 Kgs 7:1). Solomon's priority to build his palace first and the length of time he spent on building the palace, shows the flawed kingship of Solomon.

and given to his servant, but only one tribe will be remain under the rule of Davidic kings (1 Kgs 11:13, 36). At the same time the narrator also provides the reason for this evaluation in 1 Kgs 11:10. The narrator reports that Solomon disobeyed the commandment of the LORD to not seek after other gods (1 Kgs 11:10). Solomon built high places for other gods (2 Kgs 11:7) and offered sacrifices to other gods at the high places (1 Kgs 11:4). In 1 Kgs 11:13, however, the narrator reports that לַמַּעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי וְלַמַּעַן יְרוּשָׁלַם (“for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem”) the LORD will not tear the whole kingdom from Solomon. In other words the LORD will continue the Davidic monarchy, which is very similar to His promise to David in 2 Sam 7. The narrator confirms the LORD’s promise to keep the Davidic monarchy and his kingdom through the term כָּל־הַיָּמִים (“always”) in 1 Kgs 11:36, where the LORD promised that Davidic kings would have a lamp *always* before Him in Jerusalem. Interestingly this promise is clearly shown in the story of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:34; 20:6).²¹⁴ The narrator evaluates and condemns Solomon on account of his unfaithfulness at the high places in light of the LORD’s promise to David in 2 Sam 7.

However, this promise is only for the kingdom of Judah, not for the kingdom of Israel. Nelson points out that the double kingdoms in the history of Israel may indicate the differences between the fulfillment for the southern kingdom as opposed to the non-fulfillment for the northern kingdom.²¹⁵ In 1 Kgs 11:39, the LORD said His promise cannot be broken. Thus, in Kings, the promise of the LORD is continually enjoyed by the Davidic kings in Jerusalem. Although the Judean kings are evaluated as good or

²¹⁴ When the LORD answered the prayer of Hezekiah concerning the invasion of Sennacherib, He said “I will defend this city to save it for my own sake and for my servant David’s sake” (2 Kgs 19:34). In 2 Kgs 20:6, the LORD promised that “I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.” The LORD saved Jerusalem and the life of Hezekiah for His own sake and His servant David’s sake.

²¹⁵ Nelson, *Double Redaction*, 108–9.

wicked kings, the Davidic dynasty continues to exist. Even some Judean kings, who offered sacrifices at the high places, are evaluated as good kings until the reign of Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:4).²¹⁶ In terms of the high places, Hezekiah is the first king who removed them and led his people to worship God at Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:4, 22). The narrator's evaluation for Hezekiah is purely positive. The narrator reports that there was none like Hezekiah either before or after him (2 Kgs 18:5). Thus, the narrator portrays him positively as the one who finally removed the high places where the people of Israel sinned against the LORD by serving other gods. At the same time the narrator explicitly shows that the LORD continually keeps His promise to David (2 Sam 7) through the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story (2 Kgs 18:13—19:37) and the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery (2 Kgs 20:1–11). Even the narrator refers to the LORD as the God of David in 2 Kgs 20:5, which makes a connection between the story of Hezekiah and ideal king David.²¹⁷ In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as an extremely positive king in the entire context of Kings, through the actions of removing the high places and by virtue of receiving the fulfillment of the LORD's promise to David to keep his dynasty.

In terms of the Davidic dynasty, the narrator also portrays Hezekiah positively in the Hezekiah story. As seen above, the narrator ends the story of the Babylonian envoys with the prediction of the exile for the royal family in 2 Kgs 20:12–19, which implies the narrator's negative characterization of Hezekiah. However, the narrator positively characterizes Hezekiah in the context of the last hundred years of the history of the Davidic dynasty. The prediction of Isaiah concerning the exile of royal family into

²¹⁶ Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 274–89.

²¹⁷ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 291. Hobbs asserts that the narrator clearly connects 2 Kgs 20:5 with “Davidic concepts.” He utilizes the phrases נְגִיד־עַמִּי (“prince of my people”) and אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אָבִיךָ (“God of David your father”) in order to introduce “some Davidic concepts.”

Babylon in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 is fulfilled in the event of the deportation of Jehoiachin in 2 Kgs 24:13.²¹⁸ At the end of the book of Kings, the narrator reports that Jehoiachin is released from the prison (2 Kgs 25:27), which indicates not only hope for the Davidic dynasty, but also the faithfulness of the LORD who keeps the promise of the LORD to David (2 Sam 7:16).²¹⁹ Moreover, the narrator indicates that the fault of Hezekiah which caused the exile of Jehoiachin is forgiven by the LORD. In this way, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively by reporting the release of Jehoiachin at the end of the book of Kings.

3.4.2 The Function of the Hezekiah Narratives in Kings

The story of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20 plays an important role in terms of the structure of the book of Kings. As mentioned above, the Hezekiah story stands at a crucial point in Kings. Hezekiah's story may show the beginning of a return to one kingdom of Israel, because the Kingdom of Judah is the only one left. In 2 Kgs 17, the narrator reports the fall of Samaria, which may indicate the end of the Divided Kingdom. The narrator explicitly states that the LORD removed the Northern Kingdom of Israel because the people of Israel served other gods at the high places (2 Kgs 17:11). The narrator blames Jeroboam for the Northern Kingdom's religious and political decline (2 Kgs 17:21–23).²²⁰ The LORD took the ten tribes of Israel from Solomon and gave them

²¹⁸ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 510.

²¹⁹ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 367.

²²⁰ House, *1, 2 Kings*, 341. In the book of Kings, the narrator utilizes the name of Jeroboam to condemn the sin of the kings of Israel. The narrator utilizes the phrase *חַטֹּאת יִרְבֵּעָם* (“the sin of Jeroboam”): Ahab (1 Kgs 16:31), Jehu (2 Kgs 10:29), Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 13:2), Jeroboam II (2 Kgs 14:24), Zechariah (2 Kgs 15:9), Menahem (2 Kgs 15:18), Pekahiah (2 Kgs 15:24), and Pekah (2 Kgs 15:28). The narrator also uses the phrase, *בְּדַרְךְ יִרְבֵּעָם* (“in the way of Jeroboam”): Baasha (1 Kgs 16:2), Zimri (1 Kgs 16:19), and Ahaziah (1 Kgs 22:52). The narrator does not explicitly mention the name of Jeroboam to evaluate Nadab in 1 Kgs 15:26, but the narrator says, Nadab walked in the ways of his father (*בְּדַרְךְ אָבִיו*), Jeroboam. The narrator also mentions the name of Jeroboam when he indicates the sin of Joram, kings of Israel (2 Kgs 3:3).

to Jeroboam to establish the Northern Kingdom of Israel. However, Jeroboam built the high places, made calf images, and led his people to offer sacrifices there (2 Kgs 12:31–33). The institution of the high places by Jeroboam became the main sin for the entire Northern Kingdom of Israel (2 Kgs 17:21–23). The situation of the Southern Kingdom is very similar to the Northern Kingdom in terms of idolatry (2 Kgs 16:3–4). Ahaz and his people served other gods by offering sacrifices at the high places. However, this situation is dramatically changed during the reign of Hezekiah by removing the high places and idols (2 Kgs 18:4). Hezekiah is the first king among the Judean kings, after Solomon, who took away the high places and guided the people of Israel to worship in Jerusalem, where the LORD chose to be worshipped (2 Kgs 18:22). Thus, the narrator introduces Hezekiah as the one who restored Jerusalem as the central worship place by removing the high places.

With regard to the international political situation, the narrator makes a transition from Assyria to Babylon through Hezekiah's story.²²¹ Assyria is the most violent foreign enemy for the Divided Kingdom.²²² Kings of Israel, Menaham (2 Kgs 15:19–20) and Pekah (2 Kgs 15:29) were attacked by Tiglath-Pileser III king of Assyria. Then, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was defeated by Assyria (2 Kgs 17:6; 18:9) and the Kingdom of Judah was also attacked by Sennacherib, the king of Assyria (2 Kgs 18:13). As mentioned above, the LORD saved Hezekiah and Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib for His own sake and His servant David's sake. After the Hezekiah's

²²¹ Evans, *Invasion*, 194.

²²² House, *1, 2 Kings*, 45. House points out that “[t]his ambitious, seemingly relentless nation terrorized Palestine from the mid-eighth century B.C. to the late seventh century B.C. Assyria's power was especially devastating to Israel, since Assyria conquered and destroyed the entire nation in 722 B.C.”

narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20, Assyria never appears again as the enemy of Judah.²²³

However, in the Chronicles account the narrator reports that Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, was exiled to Babylon by the army of Assyria (2 Chr 33:11). Interestingly, the narrator arranges the story of the Babylonian envoys as the last story of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:12–19).²²⁴ More importantly the narrator ends the story with the prediction of the exile to Babylon (2 Kgs 20:17–18). McConville maintains that “Kings is arguably *all about* a loss of identity, of which loss of land is finally a function.”²²⁵ Thus, the story of Hezekiah shows the main purpose of the book of Kings. In 2 Kgs 18:9–12, the narrator reports the destruction of Samaria by Assyria and in 2 Kgs 20:17–18, the narrator predicts the deportation of the royal family into Babylon.

The narrator situates the story of Hezekiah between that of two wicked Judean kings, Ahaz and Manasseh. The narrator also states in the similar ways for the last one hundred fifty years of the history of Judah.²²⁶ The narrator also tells the history of the early Judean kings in a similar way.²²⁷ Provan asserts that “[r]elatively good kings do rule in the gaps between the wicked kings (1 Kgs 15:9—22:50; 2 Kgs 12:1—15:38).”²²⁸ The style of a mixture of wicked and good in the history of Judah which is evaluated by their religious policy, shows that the narrator does not simply portray the history of Judah positively. Rather the narrator depicts the Judean kings realistically in order to

²²³ Although the narrator mentions Assyria again in 2 Kgs 23:29, Assyria is not introduced as the enemy of Judah, rather as the enemy of Egypt.

²²⁴ Babylon also has power over several centuries like Assyria. Babylon, however, influences Judah the most. Babylon becomes the dominant nation in the ancient world after conquering Nineveh in 612 B.C.E. (Bright, *History of Israel*, 323).

²²⁵ McConville, “Narrative,” 34.

²²⁶ Ackroyd, “Biblical Interpretation,” 147–59.

²²⁷ The narrator evaluates Hezekiah’s predecessors in Divided Kingdom as follow: Rehoboam wicked (1 Kgs 14:22), Abijah wicked (1 Kgs 15:3), Asa good (1 Kgs 15:11), Jehoshaphat good (1 Kgs 22:43), Jehoram wicked (2 Kgs 8:18), Ahaziah (2 Kgs 8:27), Joash good (2 Kgs 12:2), Amaziah good (14:3), Azariah (Uzziah) good (2 Kgs 15:3), Jotham good (2 Kgs 15:34), and Ahaz wicked (2 Kgs 16:2).

²²⁸ Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*, 11.

show the LORD who kept His promise to David. The religious situation of Judah was initially very similar to the north (1 Kgs 14:22–24; 15:3–5), but the history of Judah is not like the history of Israel. The Judean kings succeed to the throne according to Davidic line, but the Northern Kingdom succeeds to the throne by usurping the throne. In Hezekiah's story the narrator explicitly reports this theme. The LORD saved Hezekiah and Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib and from his illness for the LORD's own sake and for His servant David's sake. In this way the narrator does not need to portray the Judean kings as good kings intentionally; rather he just states what happened during the history of Judah and Israel in terms of political and religious matters. Thus, the narrator relates good things and bad things in Kings. In the story of Hezekiah, the narrator also states Hezekiah's failure in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 and his success to save his life and the city of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib by the LORD in 2 Kgs 18:17—20:11.

Thus, in the context of 2 Kgs 18–20, the story of Hezekiah emphasizes Hezekiah's trust in the LORD, but in the context of the entire book of Kings Hezekiah's story stresses the LORD who was faithful to His promise to David (2 Sam 7). In this way, Hezekiah's story plays an important role to indicate God's faithfulness to His promise through political and religious matters.

3. 5 Summary

The narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively in 2 Kgs 18–20 by utilizing many narrative techniques. The narrator utilizes declarative narrative in order to indicate the positive characterization on Hezekiah through his evaluative point of view. The narrator also actively involves the readers to understand the characterization of Hezekiah through dramatic narrative (61.6%). Due to the positive evaluation on the reign of Hezekiah, the

narrator presents the event of Hezekiah's capitulation in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 by directive narrative in order to minimize Hezekiah's negative characterization by reporting the event quickly.

In terms of the evaluative point of view, the narrator, who is omnipresent and omniscient, evaluates Hezekiah positively at the beginning of the story (2 Kgs 18:3–8), which is crucial for the narratee (the readers) to understand the character of Hezekiah. The narrator evaluates that Hezekiah is the most faithful king to the LORD among the Judean kings (2 Kgs 18:5). Hezekiah carried out religious reform (2 Kgs 18:4), and faithfully observed the Law of Moses like David (2 Kgs 18:6) so that the LORD blessed Hezekiah and his reign (2 Kgs 18:7–8).

The narrator moves the temporal setting forward in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story, but in the last two narratives in 2 Kgs 20, the narrator moves his temporal setting backward. Moving backward the temporal setting, the narrator stresses the character of Hezekiah who received fifteen years of additional life through Hezekiah's prayers. On the other hand, the narrator also emphatically portrays Hezekiah as a positive character through the geographical setting. In terms of the geographical setting of the Hezekiah story, the city of Jerusalem is emphasized as where Hezekiah lived in and the main events of the Hezekiah story happen. Sennacherib came to Lachish with his army from Nineveh, capturing the fortified cities of Judah in order to conquer Jerusalem. He got close to the city of Jerusalem, but he was never inside of the city as the LORD promised to Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:28, 32–33). Only Sennacherib's officials with his letter were entering into Jerusalem, but Sennacherib moves farther away from the city of Jerusalem as the story progresses. Then, he was shamefully killed by his own sons at the house of his own god in Nineveh (2 Kgs 19:37). The life of the city of Jerusalem and the life of

Hezekiah go together in the story. To save the city of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib means to protect Hezekiah from the hand of Sennacherib. In terms of the geographical setting, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by saving Jerusalem from Sennacherib, who was shamefully murdered in the farthest location from Jerusalem.

The Hezekiah story in 2 Kgs 18–20 has a complex plot structure. In the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story, the narrator consists of three climaxes which are related to the words of Hezekiah. In 2 Kgs 18:14a, Hezekiah confessed his sin to Sennacherib and promised to pay tribute in order to stop the march of Sennacherib against Jerusalem. However, Hezekiah's effort did not succeed; rather the conflict was more intensified. In 2 Kgs 18:37—19:4, Hezekiah cried out to Isaiah asking him to pray for help. Then, the LORD answered the prayer of Isaiah by promising to make Sennacherib return home and die (2 Kgs 19:5–7). This prediction initially seemed to be fulfilled in 2 Kgs 19:8. However, the conflict was not resolved, but continuous throughout Sennacherib's sending of his letter to Hezekiah. In 2 Kgs 19:20–37, Hezekiah directly cried out to the LORD for help and then, the LORD responded to Hezekiah by His word and deed. In these three climaxes, the narrator develops the characterization of Hezekiah. Firstly, Hezekiah tried to resolve the conflict by himself and then through Isaiah. Finally Hezekiah directly asked to the LORD to resolve the original conflict.

In the next narrative, Hezekiah also directly cried out to the LORD to resolve the problem (2 Kgs 20:2–3). However, in the last story of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:12–19), Hezekiah received the word of the LORD concerning the exile of the royal family into Babylon in the future. In terms of plot structure the character of Hezekiah plays an important role. The narrator depicts Hezekiah as the one who cried out to other characters to resolve the conflict, and who received the responses from the other

characters which indicates the beginning points of resolving the conflict. At the same time, although Hezekiah was not affected by this prediction, the plot type of the entire story can be considered a potential tragedy, because the story of Hezekiah ends with the future fall of Judah.

As mentioned above, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah as the most faithful king among the Judean kings. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as a round character whose character is complex within the story. In his first response to the invasion of Sennacherib Hezekiah paid tribute to Sennacherib from the temple of the LORD in 2 Kgs 18:14–16, which seems to be a negative characterization on Hezekiah because Hezekiah's initial response failed and the original conflict is getting intensified.

Developing the story, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a faithful king who trusts in the LORD by seeking Him through Isaiah and by himself. The narrator also approves Hezekiah as a good king by the response of the LORD to Hezekiah through the LORD's word and deed. The LORD promised to protect Jerusalem from Sennacherib and then He saved Jerusalem by defeating the army of Assyrians and by killing Sennacherib in the house of his own god in Nineveh. At the same time the LORD promised to heal Hezekiah from his illness and then He provided him fifteen years of additional life.

The story of Hezekiah plays an important role in the entire context of Kings. The narrator stresses Hezekiah's trust in the LORD within the story in 2 Kgs 18–20 by utilizing the term **בטח** eight times only in the story of Hezekiah. However, the theme of the central worship of the LORD is emphasized in the context of the whole Book of Kings. The narrator evaluates that Hezekiah was the first king who removed the high places. Although there were many righteous Judean kings before the reign of Hezekiah, none of them removed the high places, but offered sacrifices there. At the same time the

narrator arranges the story of Hezekiah between wicked kings in order to show the LORD's faithfulness to the promise to David. The LORD continued the Davidic dynasty in spite of the wickedness of Judean kings, which is very opposite to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The LORD did not preserve Jeroboam's dynasty, but the LORD permitted the change of the dynasty in the Northern Kingdom. At the same time the narrator indicates the change of the international political situation from Assyria to Babylon through Hezekiah's story. The first story of Hezekiah is directly connected to Assyria and the last narrative is related to Babylon. Thus, the narrator shows a transition from Assyria to Babylon through Hezekiah's narratives. The narrator not only portrays Hezekiah as a pious king who trusts in the LORD, but also shows a transition between Assyria and Babylon through the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 in terms of international political issues.

Chapter 4: The Portrayal of King Hezekiah in Isaiah 36–39

4.1 Introduction

Hezekiah's story in Isa 36–39 is the third narrative insertion in the larger poetic work of Isaiah.¹ This narrative unit is composed of three stories involving Isaiah and Hezekiah: Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (Isa 36–37), Hezekiah's illness, recovery, and psalm (Isa 38), and a delegation from Babylon (Isa 39).² All of these narratives, except Hezekiah's psalm (Isa 38:9–20), are also found in 2 Kgs 18–20. Although many scholars often debate the origin of Hezekiah's story in both accounts, the goal of this chapter is not to look at the relationship between these two biblical accounts, but to understand the portrayal of King Hezekiah in Isa 36–39 through narrative analysis. The present chapter will examine Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 in order to understand how the narrator portrays him in the story.

4.2 Narrative Technique

4.2.1 Narration

While the narrator utilizes five modes of narrative in 2 Kgs 18–20, in Isa 36–39 the narrator employs four modes of narrative: direct narrative, dramatic narrative, declarative narrative and documentary narrative.³ Using these four modes of narrative,

¹ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 22. Watts asserts that the first two narrative sections, Isa 7:1–17 and Isa 20, fit in the context of eighth-century B.C.E. Sweeney also contends that Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 are “an easily identifiable block” by their forms and contents. Sweeney points out that “[i]t [Isa 36–39] is distinguished by its narrative form and by its concern with events pertaining to the reign of King Hezekiah, whereas the preceding and following material is poetic and lacks specific reference to historical persons or events” (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 454).

² Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 465–506. Sweeney maintains that the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in Isa 36–37 is demarcated by an introductory וְהָיָה (“and it came to pass”) in Isa 36:1 and by the temporal formula בְּיָמֵי הָהֵם (“in those days”) in Isa 38:1, and the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery in Isa 38 is demarcated by the temporal formula בְּיָמֵי הָהֵם (“in those days”) in Isa 38:1 and בְּעַת הַהוּא (“at that time”) in Isa 39:1. These temporal formulae in Isa 38:1 and Isa 39:1, and an introductory וְהָיָה (“and it came to pass”) in Isa 36:1 indicate the beginning of the new unit in Hezekiah's story.

³ Boda, “Prayer,” 270.

the narrator relates the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39. However, the narrations in Isa 36–39 are very similar to the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20, except the psalm of Hezekiah (Isa 38:9–20). In Isa 38:9–20, the narrator introduces Hezekiah’s writing concerning his sickness and recovery. Before reciting the writing of Hezekiah, the narrator identifies his quotation as *מִכְתָּב לְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בְּחִלּוֹ נִחַי מִחֲלִי* (“a writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he was sick and survived his sickness”).⁴ The narrator explicitly mentions *מִכְתָּב לְחִזְקִיָּהוּ* (“the writing of Hezekiah”), which is a document composed by Hezekiah.⁵ The narrator utilizes Hezekiah’s writing as a documentary narrative. Thus the narrator utilizes four modes of narration in order to relate Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 as follows:

Narrative	Direct	Dramatic	Declarative	Documentary
Isaiah	36:1–3	36:4–20	36:21b	37:10–13
	36:21a			
	36:22—37:2	37:3–7		
	37:8–9			
	37:14	37:15–35		

⁴ The title in Isa 38:9 resembles “the historical superscriptions of the Psalter” (Goswell, “The Literary Logic,” 170–71). The preposition *ב* in *בְּחִלּוֹ* is translated as “after” (RSV), but Seitz tackles this understanding by rendering the preposition *ב* as “when” (Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 258). Seitz asserts that it is better to render the preposition *ב*, as “when” because Hezekiah’s psalm in Isa 38:10–20 includes not only Hezekiah’s thanksgiving for healing but also Hezekiah’s distress, lamentation, and request for healing. Seitz understands that in his psalm Hezekiah gradually shifted his temporal perspective “from sickness to health rather than placing all the emphasis on the recovery as a past reality” (Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 258).

⁵ Most scholars believe this writing is Hezekiah’s psalm (Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 586). The term *מִכְתָּב* (“writing”), however, does not appear in the title of any other psalms. Thus, some scholars (Gesenius, Young, and Oswalt) suggest that the term *מִכְתָּב* is a scribal error for the term *מִקְתָּם* (“lament psalm”), because the last consonant *ב* and *ם* are very similar (Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 682). The term *מִקְתָּם* (“lament psalm”) is utilized in Pss 56–60. However, it is not easy to identify Hezekiah’s psalm as a lament psalm, because the title and the content of the psalm do not support this suggestion. The title explicitly reveals that this writing was composed after Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery. On the other hand, Isa 38:19–20 reveals Hezekiah’s triumphant note for assurance, which indicates the thanksgiving psalm (Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 291).

	37:36—38:1a	38:1b–8		38:9–20
	39:1–2	38:21–22		
		39:3–8		
	16.7% ⁶	65%	0.5%	17.8%

The chart shows that the narrator utilizes four modes of narrative, when he relates the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39. The narrator does not employ descriptive narrative due to omitting the introduction (2 Kgs 18:1–12) and the conclusion (2 Kgs 20:20–21) of Hezekiah’s narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20. In this way, the narrator removes both his evaluation on the reign of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:3 and the reason for the event of the fall of Samaria in 2 Kgs 18:12, which are related by declarative narrative. The narrator employs only one declarative narrative in Isa 36:21b, which is the reason for the silent of Jerusalemites before the Rabshakeh. In this way, the narrator actively involves the reader to understand the characterization of Hezekiah by omitting his evaluation on Hezekiah and the reason for the event of the fall of Samaria.⁷

On the other hand, the narrator tells most of Hezekiah’s narratives by utilizing dramatic narrative in Isa 36–39 like the Kings account (2 Kgs 18–20). The narrator utilizes dramatic narratives in 65 verses out of 90 verses (65%). In this way, the narrator draws the readers’ attention to dialogues between the characters within the story.

The narrator also employs two documentary narratives in Isa 37:10–13 and Isa 38:9–20. As mentioned in the previous chapter, in Isa 37:10–13 (2 Kgs 19:10–13), the

⁶ The percentages are based on verses.

⁷ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 482. Sweeney maintains that “the discrepancies between the Isaiah and Kings versions of this narrative suggest that Isaiah 36–39 was.... modified to idealize Hezekiah prior to its placement in the Book of Isaiah ... The modifications tend to remove any sense of wrongdoing or lack of faith on Hezekiah’s part.”

narrator presents Sennacherib's letter to Hezekiah as documentary narrative. The narrator also relates Hezekiah's psalm by documentary narrative in Isa 38:9–20. The narrator arranges Hezekiah's psalm between dramatic narratives (Isa 38:1b–8 and Isa 38:21–22), which is very common in the biblical narratives,⁸ in order to reveal Hezekiah's emotional response to his sickness and recovery.⁹

The narrator portrays Hezekiah by employing dramatic narratives the most in Isa 36–39, as the narrator of Kings does in 2 Kgs 18–20. In the Isaiah account (Isa 36–39), however, the narrator does not provide any evaluation or theological comments, which is very important for the readers to understand the characterization of Hezekiah, which are found in 2 Kgs 18:3–12. The narrator just portrays Hezekiah through the dramatic scenes in Isa 36–39. Thus, the readers use their imagination to see the characterization of Hezekiah by giving their attention to the dramatic scenes. In this way, the narrator involves the readers more actively to understand the characterization of Hezekiah.

On the other hand, the narrator in Isa 36–39 utilizes documentary narrative within the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery in order to introduce Hezekiah positively through his personal feelings and confessions concerning his sickness unto death. Thus, although the narrator presents the same stories of Hezekiah, the characterization of Hezekiah in Isa 36–39 is different from Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20, which we will see in more detail below.

⁸ Boda, "Prayer," 272. Boda asserts that "documentary narrative takes on the form of speech, especially in records of correspondence and proclamation." He continues that documentary narrative "appears in dramatic narratives of the Bible."

⁹ Goswell, "Literary Logic," 170–76. Goswell understands that the narrator inserts Hezekiah's psalm due to the dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah in Isa 38:21–22.

4.2.2 The Evaluative Point of View of the Narrator

One of the important things for the narrator's characterization is to understand the point of view of the narrator who tells the story.¹⁰ As mentioned in the previous chapter, the narrator is omnipresent and omniscient in Hezekiah's narratives. The narrator is everywhere and at all times. However, the narrator does not cover the entire reign of Hezekiah in Isaiah, but tells only three stories of Hezekiah, which occurred during the fourteenth year of Hezekiah. Although Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 mainly deal with the same stories in Isa 36–39, the Kings account covers the entire reign of Hezekiah by the introduction (2 Kgs 18:1–12) and conclusion of the story (2 Kgs 20:20–21). In 2 Kgs 18:3–8, the narrator evaluates Hezekiah's reign in an extremely positive way. In Isa 36–39, however, the narrator does not explicitly provide any evaluation for Hezekiah's reign, but only relates three stories about him.¹¹ Thus, Isa 36–39 is not separated, but should be understood in the context of the entire Book of Isaiah, which we will see in more detail later.¹²

¹⁰ Berlin, *Poetics*, 43.

¹¹ As mentioned above, the narrator introduces his evaluative point of view through many narrative techniques in biblical narratives, but this section only deals with the narrator's explicit evaluation of Hezekiah because of overlap with other sections.

¹² Many scholars have debated the role of Isa 36–39 in the context of the entire Book of Isaiah. In his article, "The Unity of the Book of Isaiah," Clements asserts that the structure of the book indicates "signs of editorial planning." He states that Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 have been inserted before Isa 40, assisting the reader in making a transition from the Assyrian period (Isa 1–35) to the Babylonian period (Isa 40–66). He also asserts that the prophecies of Isaiah in Isa 40–55 are summarized and found in Isa 35. Thus, Clements concludes that Isa 35 makes a suitable conclusion for the first half of the book (Clements, "The Unity of the Book," 117–29). Seitz, who closely follows the view of Clements, develops the understanding of the structure of the book. For Seitz, Isa 36–39 is a crucial point for understanding the overall structure of Isaiah. He asserts that the events of 701 B.C.E. delay the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies of doom, but they also provide hope for Zion's final destiny and lead to a redaction of Isa 1–35. By viewing Isa 36–39 as an editorial device designed to integrate Isa 1–35 with Isa 40–66, Seitz dates Isa 36–39 to the pre-exilic period and then understands the compiler of Isa 40–66 as having done his work with these linking chapters in mind. From this conclusion, he suggests that the inclusion of Isa 36–39 shows that the traditions have developed in such a way as to make clear the contrast between the responses of Ahaz (Isa 7–8) and Hezekiah (Isa 36–39). In addition, the appeal to "former things" in Isa 40–55 (Isa 41:22; 43:18; 46:9; 48:3) forges a connection between Isa 1–39 and Isa 40–55. In his view, although

Unlike the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20, the narrator does not explicitly report his evaluation on Hezekiah. However, it does not mean that the narrator does not provide his evaluative point of view in the Hezekiah narratives in the Isaiah account. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the unrecognizable ways of the narrator's evaluative point of view will be dealt with in other sections of this chapter. Thus, the reader should understand the characterization of Hezekiah in Isa 36–39 by examining the passage within its immediate context and in the context of the entire Book of Isaiah, which we will see in detail below.

4.3 Story World

The previous section dealt with the technique and the aspect of the narrator who relates Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39. Now the present study turns to the story world. As mentioned above, a story basically consists of three elements: setting, plot (event), and characters.¹³ The present chapter will examine these three elements in Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 in order to understand the characterization of Hezekiah. First, the present study will deal with the setting of Hezekiah's narratives, and then the plot of the story will be examined. Last, the present study will look at the characterization of Hezekiah within the story in Isa 36–39.

“former things” are not specific isolated prophecies in Isa 1–39 to which Second Isaiah refers, the motif itself is rooted in Isa 1–39, especially in the Hezekiah-Isaiah narratives (Isa 36–39). The last point he makes is about the role that Zion's destiny has played in the Hezekiah-Isaiah narratives and in the extension of the tradition of Isaiah beyond so-called First Isaiah's material. Thus, Third Isaiah parts operate from the same working perspective, that is, that of Zion (Seitz, *Destiny*). Conrad utilizes two royal narratives (Isa 6–7, 36–39) and the war oracles (Isa 10, 41, 43–44) in Isaiah in order to bind together the whole book of Isaiah. He also points out that the prose sections are completely absent in Isa 1–5, and after Isa 39. Thus, Conrad asserts that at the beginning of the book and toward its end there appears to be an implied audience of “survivors” that speaks of itself in the 1st person plural. For Conrad, the implied community of survivors is portrayed as presently waiting for the future, which is the final manifestation of the LORD's plan to establish peace in the entire world and to restore Zion to its promised glory (Conrad, “The Royal Narratives,” 67–81).

¹³ Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 35.

4.3.1 Setting

The setting of the story provides the basic context within which characters and plot (events) develop. Thus setting also plays an important role in understanding the characterization of characters.¹⁴ In Isa 36–39, the narrator develops his characterization of Hezekiah within the setting of the narratives. Thus, it is necessary for the readers, who want to see the characterization of Hezekiah, to examine the setting of Hezekiah’s narrative (Isa 36–39). The present study will deal with the setting of the story by examining the setting structure and temporal and geographical setting of Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39. In terms of the setting, Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 are almost a verbatim repeat of Hezekiah’s narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20. Thus, the present study only deals with some information with which the previous chapter did not deal.

4.3.1.1 Setting Structure

As mentioned above, the narrator employs four modes of narration in order to present three stories of Hezekiah in Isa 36–39. Although the narrator relates the same stories in the Kings account, he presents them differently. In the Isaiah account, the narrator only reports three Hezekiah stories. The introduction (Act One: 2 Kgs 18:1–12), the conclusion (Act Eleven: 2 Kgs 20:20–21), and the story of Hezekiah’s capitulation in Act Two (2 Kgs 18:14–16) of the Kings account are not included in Isaiah. The narrator begins the Hezekiah narratives with the introduction of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story (Isa 36:1). Also, the narrator inserts Hezekiah’s psalm in Isa 39:9–20 with a change to the order of the story. He rearranges the dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah at the

¹⁴ Rhoads and Michie, *Mark as Story*, 63. Rhoads and Michie point out that setting serves many functions: “generating atmosphere, determining conflict, revealing traits in the characters who must deal with problems or threats caused by the settings, offering commentary ... on the action, and evoking associations and nuances of meaning present in the culture of the readers.”

end of the story (Isa 38:21–22). In Isa 38:20, Hezekiah ended his psalm by mentioning “the house of the LORD,” which indicates Hezekiah’s motives. Then, the narrator reports “the house of the LORD” again with Hezekiah’s asking for a sign in Isa 38:22. Thus, Isa 38:21–22 is closely related to Hezekiah’s psalm (Isa 38:9–20) thematically, rather than to the earlier event in Isa 38:1–8.¹⁵ Konkel asserts that “[t]he poem is an addition to the story to make it serve as a transition to the message of hope for Jerusalem.”¹⁶ The narrator intentionally reworks Hezekiah’s story in Kings in order to emphasize the theme of the city of Jerusalem in the Isaiah account. Williamson maintains that the narrator omits the LORD’s promise to go up to the temple (2 Kgs 20:5, 8) because Hezekiah’s psalm included this reference in Isa 38:19–20.¹⁷ Ackroyd also points out that Hezekiah’s experience to be healed from his fatal illness was metaphorically used for indication of the exile in Jeremiah.¹⁸ He understands Hezekiah’s sickness and death in Hezekiah’s psalm as the LORD’s judgment and exile. Thus, Hezekiah’s psalm indicates the future restoration for the people of the LORD in Zion. In Isa 38:19–20, Hezekiah clearly sang the restoration of the LORD’s people who worshiped Him in the temple of the LORD. Then, the narrator put Hezekiah’s request for a sign to go up to the temple of the LORD in Isa 38:22. Thus, the narrator intentionally inserts Hezekiah’s psalm into the dialogue between Hezekiah and Isaiah. The specific changes will be examined further below. Thus, Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 can be divided into many small subunits as following:

¹⁵ Following Hauge, Goswell points out that “the textual arrangement in Isaiah be seen as reflection ‘a certain material interest’ rather than being viewed as evidence of ‘editorial clumsiness’”(Goswell, “Literary Logic,” 183; cf. Hauge, “Some Aspects,” 1–29)

¹⁶ Konkel, “Source,” 478–79.

¹⁷ Williamson, *Book*, 206–7.

¹⁸ Ackroyd, “Death of Hezekiah,” 219–26.

- I. Act One: The introduction of the story of Hezekiah-Sennacherib
 - A. Scene One: Sennacherib attacked Judah
 - 1. Event One: Sennacherib captures the fortified cities of Judah (36:1)

- II. Act Two: Hezekiah's representatives and Sennacherib's representatives
 - A. Scene One: Hezekiah's representatives and Sennacherib's representatives meet
 - 1. Event One: Sennacherib sends the Rabshakeh to Jerusalem (36:2a)¹⁹
 - 2. Event Two: Sennacherib's representatives stand at the channel of the Upper Pool (36:2b)
 - 3. Event Three: Hezekiah's representatives meet the Rabshakeh (36:3)
 - A. Scene Two: A dialogue between Hezekiah's representatives and the Rabshakeh
 - 1. Event One: The speech of the Rabshakeh (36:4–10)
 - 2. Event Two: The speech of Hezekiah's representatives (36:11)
 - 3. Event Three: The speech of the Rabshakeh to Hezekiah's representatives (36:12)
 - 4. Event Four: The speech of the Rabshakeh to the people of Judah (36:13–20)
 - 5. Event Five: The response of the people (36:21)

- III. Act Three: Reactions to the Rabshakeh's speeches
 - A. Scene One: The reaction of Hezekiah to the Rabshakeh's speeches
 - 1. Event One: Hezekiah's representatives return to Hezekiah (36:22a)
 - 2. Event Two: Hezekiah's representatives recount the Rabshakeh's speeches (36:22b)
 - 3. Event Three: Hezekiah tears his garments and covers himself in sackcloth (37:1a)
 - 4. Event Four: Hezekiah goes to the house of the LORD (37:1b)
 - 5. Event Five: Hezekiah sends his representatives to Isaiah (37:2)
 - B. Scene Two: A dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah's representatives
 - 1. Event One: Hezekiah's representatives bring the words of Hezekiah to Isaiah (37:3–4)

¹⁹ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 482. In Isa 36–37, the narrator reports only the Rabshakeh as the representative of Sennacherib, whereas the narrator of 2 Kgs 18–19 introduces three delegates of Sennacherib, the Tartan, the Rab-saris, and the Rabshakeh, who correspond to three representatives of Hezekiah, Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah (2 Kgs 18:18). Sweeney asserts that “[i]n the context of Kings, the appearance of three representatives of Sennacherib balances those of Hezekiah and indicates that Hezekiah and Sennacherib are the major actors of the narrative. But in the context of Isaiah, the inclusion of only the Rabshakeh as the messenger of Sennacherib balances the role of Isaiah as the messenger of YHWH, thereby identifying YHWH and Sennacherib as the major actors of the narrative and relegating Hezekiah to a subsidiary role.” Sweeney also provides the reasons why the narrator of Isa 36–37 mentions only the Rabshakeh as the representative of Sennacherib. Sweeney contends that “[w]ithin the context of Kings, which focuses on the monarchs, it is easy to understand why Hezekiah would be given a prominent role. But in the context of the Book of Isaiah, it is difficult to understand why Hezekiah would be given any role at all, unless he was taken over from the Kings narratives.” Then Sweeney asserts that the LORD is the major character of Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39.

2. Event Two: Isaiah brings the word of God to Hezekiah's representatives (37:5–7)

IV. Act Four: The acts of the Rabshakeh

- A. Scene One: The return of the Rabshakeh
 1. Event One: The Rabshakeh returns from Jerusalem to Libnah (37:8a)
 2. Event Two: Sennacherib fights against Libnah (37:8b)

V. Act Five: Hezekiah and Sennacherib

- A. Scene One: Sennacherib sends a letter to Hezekiah
 1. Event One: Sennacherib hears concerning the king of Cush (37:9)
 2. Event Two: Sennacherib sends a letter to Hezekiah (37:10–13)
- B. Scene Two: Hezekiah's response
 1. Event One: Hezekiah reads the letter (37:14a)
 2. Event Two: Hezekiah goes to the house of the LORD (37:14b)
 3. Event Three: Hezekiah prays to the LORD (37:15–19)
- C. Scene Three: God's response to Hezekiah's prayer
 1. Event One: Isaiah brings the words of God to Hezekiah (37:20–35)

VI. Act Six: The conclusion of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative

- A. Scene One: The LORD attacks the camp of Assyria
 1. Event One: The LORD sends his messenger (37:36a)
 2. Event Two: The messenger attacks the camp of Assyria (37:36b)
 3. Event Three: All the Assyrian army is killed by the messenger of the LORD (37:36c)
- B. Scene Two: Sennacherib returns
 1. Event One: Sennacherib returns to his home (37:37a)
 2. Event Two: Sennacherib lives in Nineveh (37:37b)
 3. Event Three: The death of Sennacherib (37:38)

VII. Act Seven: Hezekiah and Isaiah

- A. Scene One: God's words for Hezekiah
 1. Event One: Isaiah comes to Hezekiah (38:1a)
 2. Event Two: Isaiah brings God's words to Hezekiah (38:1b)
- B. Scene Two: Hezekiah's response to the words of God
 1. Event One: Hezekiah's prayers to God (38:2–3)
- C. Scene Three: God's answer to Hezekiah's prayer
 1. Event One: God promises to heal Hezekiah (38:4–6)
 2. Event Two: Isaiah's sign for Hezekiah from the LORD (38:7–8)
- D. Scene Four: Hezekiah's psalm
 1. Event One: The title and the setting of the psalm (38:9)
 2. Event Two: Hezekiah's plight (38:10–15)
 3. Event Three: Hezekiah's appeals to the LORD (38:16–18)
 4. Event Four: The conclusion of the psalm (38:19–20)

- E. Scene Five: A dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah²⁰
 - 1. Event One: Isaiah heals Hezekiah (38:21)
 - 2. Event Two: Hezekiah asks a sign to go up to the house of the LORD (38:22)

VIII. Act Eight: Hezekiah and the envoys from Babylon

- A. Scene One: Merodach-Baladan sends his messengers to Hezekiah
 - 1. Event One: The King of Babylon sends messengers to Hezekiah (39:1)
- B. Scene Two: Hezekiah receives the envoys from Babylon
 - 1. Event One: Hezekiah shows his treasury (39:2)

IX. Act Nine: Hezekiah and Isaiah

- A. Scene One: A dialogue between Hezekiah and Isaiah
 - 1. Event One: Isaiah's first question (39:3a)
 - 2. Event Two: Hezekiah's first answer (39:3b)
 - 3. Event Three: Isaiah's second question (39:4a)
 - 4. Event Four: Hezekiah's second answer (39:4b)
 - 5. Event Five: Isaiah brings the word of the LORD (39:5–7)
 - 6. Event Six: Hezekiah's response to the word of the LORD (39:8)

This setting structure shows that three stories of Hezekiah in Isa 36–39 are subdivided into many small subunits, which are very similar to the setting structure of the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20.²¹ These subdivisions create a literary setting for the story (Isa 36–39), and the narrator relates Hezekiah's story to the narratee by utilizing this literary setting.

²⁰ Tov asserts that Isa 38:21–22 were transferred from the Kings account to the Isaiah account. He says that “[t]he question in v. 22 ..., which is not followed by an answer, betrays its secondary nature,” and “... Isa 38:21–22 is in the nature of an addition that can still be recognized by an examination of 1QIsa^a” (Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 341).

²¹ The entire story of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20 begins and ends with a descriptive narrative by the narrator (2 Kgs 18:1–2; 20:21), which functions as a part of the introduction and the conclusion of Hezekiah's story. In Isa 36–39, however, the narrator just begins Hezekiah's narratives by relating the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative (Isa 36–37). There is not an introduction or conclusion for the entire story of Hezekiah. Omitting the introduction and the conclusion of the story, the narrator clearly shows that the main concern of the narrator is not to report the reign of King Hezekiah. Rather he utilizes three stories of Hezekiah in order to connect the first half of the book (Isa 1–35) to the second half of the book (Isa 40–66). Ackroyd also asserts that the three stories of Hezekiah in Isa 36–39 form a literary transition from the Assyrian and Babylonian segments of the Book of Isaiah (Ackroyd, “Isaiah 36–39,” 152–80).

4.3.1.2 Time

The narrated time of Hezekiah's story in Isa 36–39 spans several years, from the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah to the death of Sennacherib. The temporal setting of Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 covers the whole reign of Hezekiah, but Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 basically happened in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah (Isa 36:1).²² Although the last two stories do not have explicit temporal references, these three stories of Hezekiah happened around the same year of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, because the narrator states that Hezekiah receives fifteen years of additional life from the LORD (Isa 38:5).²³

In Act One (Isa 36:1), the narrator sets the time for the story: **וַיְהִי בְּאַרְבַּע עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה** וַיָּבֹאוּ הַכַּשְׂדִּיִּים לְמֶלֶךְ הַחֻזְקִיָּהוּ (“now it came about in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah”). Then, the narrator chronologically moves his temporal setting forward within the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, which is the same with 2 Kgs 18–19.

In Scene One of Act Seven (Isa 38:1), however, the narrator moves his temporal setting backward like Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20.²⁴ The narrator ends the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative with the event of Sennacherib's death which occurs sometime later after Sennacherib's invasion against Judah. Then, at the beginning of the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery, the narrator sets the time during the fourteenth

²² Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 455.

²³ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 288–89. According to Hobbs, in contrast to the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, the last two stories are vaguely dated. He says, “Hezekiah's sickness is **בְּיָמֵי הָהֵם** ‘in those days’ (v 1), but it is clear from the narrative that this is around the time of the invasion. The fifteen years added to his life plus the fourteen years before the invasion complete the twenty-nine for the full reign ... The visit of Merodach Baladan's delegation is also imprecisely dated (**בְּעַת הַהֵיאָ** ‘at that time’). Synchronizing this information with other dates known of the Babylonian period is not easy, and estimates for the date of the visit varies from 714 B.C. to 703 B.C.” Grogan also points out that “[t]he phrase ‘in those days’ uses different words but with similar meaning to ‘at that time,’ which opens ch. 39. In fact, all these events probably occur within about two years” (Grogan, “Isaiah,” 717).

²⁴ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 455.

year of Hezekiah's reign. The temporal reference בְּיָמֵי הָהֵם ("in those days") in Isa 38:1a is ambiguous, but the narrator reports that the LORD added to Hezekiah's life fifteen years (Isa 38:5). The fourteen years of Hezekiah's reign and the fifteen years of additional life make together twenty-nine years, which is the same as the whole reign of Hezekiah.²⁵ Thus, in Isa 38:1a, the phrase, בְּיָמֵי הָהֵם ("in those days"), indicates the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah which is the same year of Sennacherib's invasion against Judah (Isa 36:1).

Additionally, the narrator explicitly reports that the LORD will protect the city of Jerusalem as a future event in Isa 38:6.²⁶ The narrator says: וּמִכַּף מֶלֶךְ-אַשּׁוּר אֶצִּילְךָ וְאֶחַת הָעִיר וְהָאֶרֶץ וְהָאֲשֵׁר עִלֶּיךָ הָאֵלֹהִים וְהָאֲשֵׁר עִלֶּיךָ הָאֵלֹהִים ("and I [the LORD] will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city"). Thus, the story of Hezekiah's sickness in Isa 38 must precede the invasion of Sennacherib against Jerusalem in Isa 36–37 chronologically.

In this way the narrator shifts his temporal setting backward from the year of Sennacherib's death (Isa 37:38) to the fourteenth year of Hezekiah (Isa 38:1).²⁷ The shift of temporal setting backward between Isa 37:38 and Isa 38:1 plays an important role for the readers as a flashback. By shifting the temporal setting, the narrator draws the readers' attention to the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery in Isa 38. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as a pious king who receives fifteen years of additional life

²⁵ The Isaiah account does not have this time reference, but the Kings account and the Chronicles account clearly show that Hezekiah was king in Jerusalem for twenty-nine years (2 Kgs 18:2; 2 Chr 29:1).

²⁶ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 455. Sweeney adds that "[I]kewise, the account of Merodach-baladan's embassy in ch. 39 presupposes Hezekiah's illness, but it must precede the account of the 701 [B.C.E.] siege of Jerusalem chronologically since Merodach-baladan's embassy could not have visited after 703 [B.C.E.] when Merodach-baladan was finally driven from his throne by Sennacherib."

²⁷ As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the narrator reports that Sennacherib returned to his country and lived some period time by utilizing the term וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּנִינְיָה ("and then he [Sennacherib] lived at Nineveh") in Isa 37:37 (Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 282).

when he was mortally ill (Isa 38:5), which indicates that Hezekiah was victorious over Sennacherib as the rival character in the story (Isa 37:38).

At the same time the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively by recounting the humiliating death of Sennacherib in Isa 37:38. In 2 Kgs 19:37, the narrator reports that Sennacherib was killed by Adramelech and Sharezer, but in Isa 37:38, the narrator explicitly mentions that Sennacherib was killed by his own sons, Adramelech and Sharezer.²⁸ Here the narrator presents the death of Sennacherib as “the double irony.”²⁹ The narrator relates that Sennacherib, who dishonored the LORD in his letter by declaring that the LORD would not protect His people, was not protected not only from his own god, but also from his own sons (Isa 37:38).³⁰ In this way, the narrator of Hezekiah’s narrative in Isa 36–39 portrays Sennacherib negatively in order to portray Hezekiah positively by utilizing the contrast between these two rival characters.³¹

The narrator moves the temporal setting forward within the story of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery. By inserting Hezekiah’s psalm in Isa 38:9–20, the narrator moves the temporal setting forward at the time of Hezekiah’s recovery from his illness.³² In the

²⁸ Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 239–40. Cogan and Tadmor assert that Sennacherib was killed by one son rather than by two sons, but the narrator explicitly reports that Sennacherib’s two sons killed Sennacherib (Isa 37:38).

²⁹ Hom, *Characterization*, 178.

³⁰ Cohn, *2 Kings*, 139. Cohn also indicates this irony in his observation on the death of Sennacherib.

³¹ Hom, *Characterization*, 178. Hom points out that the narrator of Hezekiah’s narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 insignificantly reports the death of Sennacherib without identifying his murderers, but the Isaiah account significantly reports the death of Sennacherib by indicating the murderers as Sennacherib’s sons, which has a “strong coherence with the rest of the Hezekiah narrative” in terms of the narrator’s characterization on Hezekiah.

³² Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 503. The meaning of the technical term מִתְפַּלֵּל remains largely unclear. Craigie summarizes six interpretations of the term מִתְפַּלֵּל (Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 154): (a) “an inscription, inscriptional poem” (implied by Greek Old Testament, Theodotian, and Targum); (b) “a golden psalm” (from the noun כֶּהָן [“gold”] as in some early rabbinical interpretations); (c) an epithet of David, “humble, blameless” (Symmachus, Jerome); (d) “a silent prayer” (Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, 38); (e) “an atonement psalm” (from Akk. *katāmu* (“to cover[atone]”)); (f) the name of an early collection of psalms. Watts summarizes that scholars have identified Isa 38:9–20 as a petition, a song of sickness, and a thanksgiving

title of Hezekiah's psalm (Isa 38:9), the narrator sets a time reference for the psalm, *בְּחִלְתּוֹ וַיְחִי מִחֲלָיו* ("when he had been ill and recovered from his illness"). The title shows that Hezekiah composed his psalm after recovering from his illness. Then, in Scene Five of Act Seven (Isa 38:21–22), the narrator reports a dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah concerning the healing of Hezekiah's illness. The narrator moves the temporal setting backward again from the time of Hezekiah's recovery to the time of Hezekiah's illness.³³ This temporal shifting is the same as the previous temporal one between Isa 37:38 and Isa 38:1a. By shifting the temporal setting, the narrator draws the readers' attention to the dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah in Isa 38:21–22, which deals with Isaiah's treating Hezekiah's sickness (Isa 38:21) and Hezekiah's requesting a sign to go up to the house of the LORD (Isa 38:22).³⁴ The narrator arranges these two verses after Hezekiah's psalm in order to portray Hezekiah's piety³⁵ and to emphasize the theme of the city of Jerusalem.³⁶ The narrator reports two signs in Isa 38:1–22, while the Kings account indicates one sign, when Hezekiah asked for healing and entering the house of

song (Watts, *Psalm*, 118–31). More recently some scholars classifies Isa 38:9–20 as a confession of trust (De Boer, "Notes," 170–86), hymn of praise (Seybold, *Gebet*, 147–53), and a psalm of thanksgiving (Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 451). Although many scholars have classified Hezekiah's psalm differently, following Wildberger, Sweeney correctly asserts that Isa 38:9–20 is "fundamentally a THANKSGIVING SONG in that the elements of COMPLAINT and PRAISE lend themselves to the overall intention to express gratitude to YHWH for deliverance from calamity" (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 495). Watts and Goswell also understand Hezekiah's psalm as a thanksgiving psalm which includes both Hezekiah's lament and praise in order to indicate his thanksgiving to the LORD for deliverance (Watt, *Psalm and Story*, 120–1; Goswell, "Literary Logic," 170–75).

³³ Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 451.

³⁴ Some scholars understand Isa 38:21–22 as a later addition to the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery in Isa 38:1–20, because these two verses appear immediately after the promise of the LORD who will give fifteen years of additional life to Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20. However, the Kings account does not include Hezekiah's thanksgiving psalm in Isa 38:9–20. At the same time in 2 Kgs 20:8–11, the narrator reports the conversation about the sun dial. Thus, Young suggests that "Isaiah has placed them after the psalm of praise does not indicate that they are misplaced; they merely serve to bring about a suitable conclusion to the entire account" (Young, *Isaiah*, 529). Oswalt also asserts that "[t]here the information contained in these two verses is integrated into the narrative at the appropriate points and in ways which in fact strengthen the narrative" (Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 690).

³⁵ Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 451.

³⁶ Konkel, "Source," 479–80.

the LORD. In Isa 38:7, the narrator provides the sign of the LORD conforming that the LORD made a promise to Hezekiah in Isa 38:5–6. The LORD promised to Hezekiah to add fifteen years of life (Isa 38:5) and to protect the city of Jerusalem and Hezekiah from the hand of Assyria (Isa 38:6).

In the second sign (Isa 38:22), the narrator states that Hezekiah asked a sign for entering the house of the LORD, which indicates “the reference to Hezekiah again being able to go to the Temple for worship.”³⁷ Reporting Hezekiah’s request for a sign, the narrator brings the piety of Hezekiah to the fore. Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a pious king, placing the dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah after Hezekiah’s psalm, which indicates that the narrator moves his temporal setting backward.³⁸

The narrator moves the temporal setting forward in the last story of Hezekiah in Isa 39:1–8. In Isa 39:1, the narrator indicates a time reference, בְּעֵת הַהוּא (“at that time”), which indicates the time after Hezekiah has recovered from his illness. By utilizing this time reference, the narrator relates the story of the Babylonian envoys. The narrator also provides the reason why the king of Babylon sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah. The narrator reports that the king of Babylon heard of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery. Thus, the time reference in Isa 39:1 indicates the time after Hezekiah’s recovery from his sickness. In this way, the narrator moves his temporal setting forward between the story of Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery (Isa 38:1–22) and the story of the delegation from Babylon (Isa 39:1–8). The narrator continually moves his temporal setting forward

³⁷ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 53.

³⁸ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 493. Sweeney maintains that “[t]he inclusion of Hezekiah’s psalm in vv. 9–20 ... downplay[s] the role of the prophet in order to emphasize Hezekiah’s piety as the motivating factor in YHWH’s decision to cure the king.” At the same time Sweeney asserts that the dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah in Isa 38:21–22 clearly shows both the recovering of Hezekiah and his gratitude to the LORD.

within the story of the Babylonian envoys. Thus, the movement of the temporal setting in the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39 is as follows:

Act	Temporal Setting	Act	Temporal Setting	Act	Temporal Setting
I	→	IV	→	VII ³⁹	← → ←
II	→	V	→	VIII	→
III	→	VI	→	IX	→

(→: Forward, ←: Backward)

4.3.1.2.1 Implication for Characterization

The narrator moves the temporal setting forward in the first story of Hezekiah in Isa 36–37. As mentioned in the previous chapter, however, the narrator relates the last two stories as “flashbacks.”⁴⁰ Thus, the narrator draws the readers’ attention to these two stories. In the story of Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery in Isa 38, the narrator shifts his temporal setting backward twice. Shifting the temporal setting, the narrator draws the readers’ attention to the story of Hezekiah’s sickness which portrayed him positively who received fifteen years of additional life from the LORD through his prayer. In this way, the narrator contrasts Hezekiah with the rival Sennacherib who did not receive any protection from his own god or his own sons. Hezekiah, however, was protected by the LORD. Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively as the one who received the protection of the LORD from mortal illness.

At the same time, the narrator depicts Hezekiah as the faithful king who really wanted to go up to the house of the LORD through shifting the temporal setting in Isa 38:21–22. Thus, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah as a positive king, whose life was extended for fifteen years by the LORD through his prayer, and who really wanted to

³⁹ In Scene One of Act Seven (Isa 38:1), the narrator moves his temporal setting backward, and then he moves his temporal setting forward until the end of Scene Five of Act Seven (Isa 38:20). In Scene Six of Act Seven (Isa 38:21–22), the narrator moves his temporal setting backward again.

⁴⁰ Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 243.

serve the LORD by requesting a sign to go to the house of the LORD in Isa 38:22. At the same time, the narrator also draws the readers' attention to the story of the Babylonian envoys in Isa 39 as a flashback, where the narrator diminishes the positive characterization of Hezekiah. In Isa 39, the narrator depicts Hezekiah as one who causes the fall of Jerusalem. In this way, the positive characterization of Hezekiah is diminished by the narrator in the story of envoys from Babylon in order to indicate the limitation of Hezekiah. Thus, the narrator moves his temporal setting backward in the last two stories not only to emphasize the characterization of Hezekiah both positively and negatively, but also to show the limitation of the human character, Hezekiah, which we will see in more detail later.

4.3.1.3 Space

Space is also another important element in creating a setting and providing a basic context for developing characters and plot.⁴¹ As mentioned in the previous chapter, the three narratives of Hezekiah occur in the city of Jerusalem. The geographical setting of Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 is the same as the Kings account. In 2 Kgs 18–20, however, in terms of the geographical setting, the narrator begins his story in Jerusalem,⁴² but in Isa 36–39, the narrator begins his story in the fortified cities of Judah, which Sennacherib seized in Act One (Isa 36:1). Then, the narrator moves his geographical setting to Lachish in Act Two, where Sennacherib camped his army for the battle against Jerusalem (Isa 36:2). From Lachish, Sennacherib sent the Rabshakeh to

⁴¹ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 160.

⁴² In the Kings account, the narrator begins the narratives by reporting that Hezekiah became king in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:1–2). Then, the narrator evaluates Hezekiah's reign through his reforms and his obedience of the Law of Moses (2 Kgs 18:3–8).

Jerusalem to Hezekiah, but the narrator reports that the Rabshakeh stood at the channel of the Upper Pool outside of the city in Act Two.⁴³

The place that the Rabshakeh stood is important for Jerusalem's water supply.⁴⁴ The channel of the Upper Pool also plays a significant role for the royal narratives in Isaiah. Where the Rabshakeh stood is exactly the same spot as when Isaiah confronted Ahaz (Isa 7:2).⁴⁵ Blenkinsopp points out that the same geographical location "draws the reader's attention to the parallelism between the two critical moments of history and the conduct of the two kings, obliged by the course of events to make fateful decisions on behalf of their people."⁴⁶ The word of the LORD that Isaiah brought against the people who trusted the Assyrians instead of the LORD is all coming true with a vengeance. Isaiah utilized the image of a flood to show the coming of the Assyrians in Isa 8:7–8. He said that the Assyrians would flood Judah right up to its neck, and that very flood tide was now swirling around them. Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, had faced only two northern countries: Israel and Syria, but Hezekiah faced a much larger and more deadly enemy: Assyria. However, their reactions to their enemies were very different. Ahaz did not trust the LORD, but Hezekiah totally trusted the LORD. Utilizing the same geographical setting, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by contrasting him with his father Ahaz, which we will see more in detail later.

⁴³ There is much debate on the location of the Upper Pool, see footnote 41 of the previous chapter.

⁴⁴ Brief remarks on the place where the Rabshakeh stood in Isa 36:2 (Isa 7:3) and 2 Kgs 18:17 are in Gonçalves' works (Gonçalves, *L'Expédition*, 432, 437). In Isa 7:3, the narrator more precisely reports the location of "Upper Pool" than Isa 36:2.

⁴⁵ Isaiah 7:3: וְצֵאתָ לִקְרַאת אָחָז וְשָׂאָר יְשׁוּב בְּנֵי אֶלְקִיָּצָה תַעֲלֶיחַ הַבְּרֶכֶת הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה אֶל־מִסְלַח שְׂדֵה כּוֹבֵס ("go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the fuller's field"). The prophet Isaiah was commanded by the LORD to go to the end of the conduit of the Upper Pool on the highway to the fuller's field which is the same place that the Rabshakeh stands in Isa 36:2.

⁴⁶ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 470.

In terms of geographical setting, the narrator indicates that the city of Jerusalem was protected from the hand of Sennacherib by taking him far away from the city. At the same time, the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery is related by the narrator utilizing the same geographical setting. However, when the word of the LORD came to Hezekiah through Isaiah, the narrator does not report the geographical setting for this event (Isa 38:4). In 2 Kgs 20:4, the narrator explicitly mentions the geographical setting when the word of the LORD came to Isaiah. The narrator states that Isaiah received the word of the LORD at *הַחֲצַר הַתְּיִבְנָה* ("the middle court"),⁴⁷ which indicates that the LORD quickly responds to the prayer of Hezekiah.⁴⁸ In Isa 38:4, however, the narrator relates that *וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ לֵאמֹר הֲלוֹךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל־חֶזְקִיָּהוּ* ("then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah saying, 'go and you shall say to Hezekiah'"). The Isaiah account indicates that the LORD more quickly responded to Hezekiah's prayer in Isa 38:4–5 than the Kings account (2 Kgs 20:4–5). In 2 Kgs 20:4–5, the narrator relates that the prophet Isaiah had not gone out of the middle court, which indicates that Isaiah left the inner court. The LORD also commanded Isaiah *שׁוּב* ("return") in 2 Kgs 20:5, which suggests that "Isaiah had already left the king's presence."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Omanson and Ellington, *1–2 Kings*, 1220. Omanson and Ellington understand that the term *הָעִיר* ("city") in the Masoretic text in 2 Kgs 20:4 is a corruption of the term *הַחֲצַר* ("courtyard"). Konkel also asserts that the phrase *לֹא יָצָא* ("he had not gone out") in the Masoretic text of Kings is added to make sense of the new reading. Thus, Konkel believes that the proto-Masoretic text does not have this phrase (Konkel, "Sources," 475–76). The narrator reports that *וַיְהִי וְדְבַר־יְהוָה תָּהִי אֵלָיו* ("and then Isaiah was in the middle court and the word of the LORD came to him") in 2 Kgs 20:4. See also Appendix of the present study for more details on this issue.

⁴⁸ House, *1, 2 Kings*, 373; Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 50.

⁴⁹ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 496.

Although Young suggests that the account of Isa 38:4–5 indicates that Hezekiah received the word of the LORD after “long and severe struggles,”⁵⁰ Sweeney correctly asserts that “[t]he longer version in Kings suggests some delay in YHWH’s response to Hezekiah’s prayer.”⁵¹ In Isa 38:5, the LORD commanded Isaiah *הֵלֵךְ* (“go”), which indicates that Isaiah did not leave the inner court yet. Thus, the narrator modifies the Kings accounts in order to emphasize that Hezekiah’s prayer was immediately answered by the LORD. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah more positively in Isa 38:4–5 than the Kings account.

In Isa 37:38, the narrator relates that Sennacherib was shamefully killed by his own sons in the house of his own god. However, Hezekiah received the protection of the LORD, when he prayed to the LORD for help in the house of the LORD (Isa 37:14) or in his palace (Isa 38:2), which indicates the piety of Hezekiah whose prayer was heard by the LORD. In this way, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively by contrasting him to Sennacherib, who was killed in the house of his own god while he was worshiping his god. Additionally, the narrator portrays Hezekiah more positively to modify Hezekiah’s illness and recovery in the Kings account.⁵² The narrator ends the story with Hezekiah’s petition for a sign in Isa 38:22, which appeared in the middle of the story in the Kings account (2 Kgs 20:7–8).⁵³ In 2 Kgs 20:6, the narrator reports the

⁵⁰ Young, *Isaiah*, 511. Following Calvin, Young asserts that it is difficult to know how much time elapses between Isaiah’s departure and return to Hezekiah. He continues that the word of the LORD does not come to Hezekiah immediately, but after “long and severe struggles.”

⁵¹ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 496.

⁵² Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 493–94.

⁵³ In terms of Isa 38:21–22, Oswalt maintains that Isa 38:21–22 was added later “to harmonize with the Kings account.” However, he does not mean that “the writer of the Isaiah account was copying the Kings version and accidentally left out a few details which he then added at the end upon discovering his errors.” He continues that “the Isaiah version seems to have been deliberately abbreviated at several points to make room for the psalm” (Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 690).

motivation of the LORD who healed Hezekiah. The LORD said, לְמַעַן יִלְמְעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי (“for my sake and the sake of my servant David”). In Isaiah, the narrator withholds the motivation of the LORD and places Hezekiah’s request for a sign after the thanksgiving psalm in order to portray him positively.⁵⁴ Thus, in Isaiah, Hezekiah was healed by the LORD through Hezekiah’s prayer. The narrator also portrays Hezekiah as a pious king who eagerly entered into the house of the LORD, by removing the motivation of the LORD to heal Hezekiah and by placing Hezekiah’s request for a sign at the end of the story. In this regard, the narrator characterizes him positively, not only removing the motivation of the LORD for healing Hezekiah but also by indicating Hezekiah’s faithfulness in entering the house of the LORD.

The last story of Hezekiah in Act Eight (Isa 39:1–2) begins at the palace in Babylon where the king of Babylon heard of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery, sent messengers and a gift to Hezekiah in terms of the geographical setting (Isa 39:1). Then, the narrator moves his geographical setting back to Hezekiah’s palace in order to report Hezekiah’s reactions to those who came from Babylon (Isa 39:2) and to report a dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah concerning the Babylonian envoys (Isa 39:3–8). The movement of the geographical setting in the last story of Hezekiah in Isa 39 is from the palace of the king of Babylon to the palace of Hezekiah, which is quite different from the previous two stories.⁵⁵ The first story begins and ends at the location of

⁵⁴ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 497.

⁵⁵ On the other hand, Hezekiah’s story in 2 Kgs 18–20 begins and ends in the city of Jerusalem by reporting the introductory and concluding formulae. In 2 Kgs 18:1–2, the narrator states that Hezekiah became king of Judah in Jerusalem when he was twenty-five years old. In 2 Kgs 20:20–21, the narrator reports that Hezekiah died and his son, Manasseh, became king of Judah in his place. The narrator does not mention the city of Jerusalem, but it is easy to assume that Manasseh became king of Judah in Jerusalem. At the same time the narrator relates Hezekiah’s building project which provided the water to the city of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 20:20).

Sennacherib, although the story does not exactly begin and end at the same place. In the same way, the second story begins and ends at Hezekiah's palace. The last story, however, begins and ends at totally different places. The narrator begins the story at the palace of the king of Babylon and ends at the palace of Hezekiah. According to the geographical setting of the previous two narratives, the last story might have ended at the palace of the king Babylon or in the land of Babylon, but the narrator ends the story in Jerusalem. In this way, the narrator indicates a sign of hope for the people of Judah by finishing the story in Jerusalem rather than in Babylon in terms of the geographical setting.

The readers (the narratee) can expect a dark future, because Isaiah predicted that Judah will be carried to Babylon in Isa 39:6. In terms of the prediction of Isaiah, the Isaiah account in Isa 39:6–7 is different from the Kings account (2 Kgs 20:17–18). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the prediction of Isaiah in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 is fulfilled by the event of the deportation of Jehoiachin in 597 B.C.E. (2 Kgs 24:13–14), rather than the event of the fall of Judah in the context of Kings.⁵⁶ The Isaiah prediction in Isa 39:6–7 is fulfilled by the event of the fall of Judah in 587 B.C.E., because the Book of Isaiah only mentions the exile to Babylon in 587 B.C.E. Thus, the prediction of Isaiah in Isa 39:6–7 is not applied to King Jehoiachin only, but to “the Davidic dynasty in general,”⁵⁷ for the second half of the Book of Isaiah (Isa 40–66) promises the fall of Judah and the exile of the people of Judah into Babylon.

⁵⁶ Nelson, *First and Second Kings*, 246.

⁵⁷ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 509. Watts maintains that the prediction of Isaiah in Isa 39:6–7 is the prediction of the exile of Babylon, “especially the events of 598 B.C. when Jehoiachin and his family were taken away by Nebuchadnezzar with everything else of value from Jerusalem's palace” (Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 66). However, the observation of Watts is not right in the context of the Book of Isaiah. Many scholars correctly point out that the prediction of Isaiah in Isa 39:6–7 indicates the event of the fall of Judah in 587

In this regard, the geographical setting in the last story functions not only as showing the future hope for the people of Judah, but also as a connection between the Hezekiah story, including the first half of the book (Isa 1–39), and the second half of the book (Isa 40–66). Thus, the geographical setting of the narrator in Hezekiah’s story (Isa 36–39) is as follows:

Act	Scene	Geographical Setting	Jerusalem
I	A	Judah	Out
II	A-B	Lachish→The channel of the Upper Pool	Out
III	A	Hezekiah’s Palace→The house of the LORD	In
	B	Isaiah’s place	In
IV	A	Lachish→Libnah	Out
V	A	Libnah	Out
	B	Hezekiah’s Palace→The house of the LORD	In
	C	Hezekiah’s Palace	In
VI	A	Libnah	Out
	B	Sennacherib’s Palace→The house of Nisroch	Out
VII	A-B	Hezekiah’s palace	In
	C	Isaiah’s place	In
	D-E	Hezekiah’s palace	In
VIII	A	Babylon (Merodach-baladan’s palace)	Out
	B	Hezekiah’s palace	In
IX	A	Hezekiah’s palace	In

4.3.1.3.1 Implications for Characterization

The narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively in his narratives in Isa 36–39. The narrator portrays Hezekiah positively in contrast to his father, Ahaz, by utilizing the same geographical setting for the dialogue between the Rabshakeh and Hezekiah’s representatives. The narrator also shows that the city of Jerusalem was protected by the LORD from the hand of Sennacherib through Hezekiah’s prayer. Sennacherib wanted to subdue Jerusalem but never entered the city. He went back to his country and was

B.C.E. (Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 477; Beuken, *Isaiah II*, 412; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 697). Seitz also asserts that the prediction of Isaiah (Isa 38:6–7) indicates “the exile and the end of the Davidic monarchy,” which is caused by Hezekiah’s reactions with the envoys from Babylon (Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 262).

shamefully killed by his own son in front of his own god. In this regard, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by contrasting him with Sennacherib. Hezekiah received the LORD's protection from the hand of Assyria when he prayed to the LORD at the temple, but Sennacherib did not receive any protection from his god, when he was killed by his own sons in the house of his god while he was worshiping his god. Even though Hezekiah prayed to the LORD outside of the temple when he was mortally ill, Hezekiah was heard and healed by the LORD.

At the same time, the narrator depicts Hezekiah as a pious king who eagerly wanted to enter the house of the LORD after his recovery in order to characterize him positively. Although Hezekiah is portrayed negatively in the story of the Babylonian envoys, the narrator shows the future hope for the people of Judah by ending the whole story of Hezekiah with the palace of Hezekiah in Isa 39 in terms of the geographical setting.

4.3.2 Plot

The plot is a meaningful chain of a united sequence of events which builds to a climax and involves the reader in the story world.⁵⁸ As mentioned in the previous chapter, in biblical narratives the narrator does not always tell the story in chronological order. Hezekiah's narratives in Isaiah are not formed in chronological order. Rather the narrator states the story of Hezekiah according to his own literary and theological reasons.⁵⁹ Wildberger asserts that "[t]he three individual units of material are joined by the use of the formulas 'in those days' in 38:1 and 'in that time' in 39:1 in order to leave

⁵⁸ Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 158.

⁵⁹ House, *1, 2 Kings*, 373. Sweeney also points out that "the present form of the narrative initially presents Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem, but retrospectively presents Hezekiah's illness and Merodach-baladan's embassy as events that occurred prior to the siege" (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 455).

one with the impression—certainly intended—that these narratives deal with one connected set of events.”⁶⁰ Sweeney also points out that Hezekiah’s sickness and the Babylonian envoys constitute the background for the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in terms of the narrator’s point of view.⁶¹ Now, the present study will examine the plot structure and type of the three Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39.

4.3.2.1 Plot Structure

Hezekiah’s story in Isa 36–39 begins with direct narrative in Isa 36:1–3. Unlike Hezekiah’s narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20, Isa 36:1–3 does not provide any background information. In 2 Kgs 18:1–12, the narrator utilizes the regnal formulae for Hezekiah’s reign and reports the event of the destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in order to introduce the whole story of Hezekiah by portraying him in extremely positive ways. In Isaiah, however, the narrator directly reports the event of Sennacherib’s invasion against Judah which occurred during the fourteenth year of Hezekiah’s reign. The narrator reports that Sennacherib attacked Judah and captured fortified cities (Isa 36:1), which indicates the beginning of the tension between two human characters: Hezekiah

⁶⁰ Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 364. Wildberger also points out that “[t]his impression is bolstered by the fact that Hezekiah is promised, in 38:6, not only that he will get better but that the city will be rescued as well; it is also strengthened by 39:1, which observes that the delegation came from Merodach to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery.”

⁶¹ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 455.

and Sennacherib.⁶² This conflict is intensified by the Rabshakeh being sent by Sennacherib to Hezekiah in order to solicit Hezekiah's surrender in Isa 36:2–21.⁶³

In the first speech (Isa 36:4–10), the Rabshakeh spoke מַה הַבְּטֹחֶיךָ הַיְהוָה אֱשֶׁר בְּטָחָתָּךְ (‘‘what is this confidence that you have?’’). By this question, the Rabshakeh asked Hezekiah to explain his ‘‘stubborn refusal to surrender.’’⁶⁴ The central theme of the Rabshakeh's first speech is the theme of trust (בְּטָחָה), which was used four times by the field commander in Isa 36:4–10.⁶⁵ The Rabshakeh tries to shake the trust of Hezekiah and of Jerusalemites through military (Egypt) and religious (the LORD) reasons. The Rabshakeh said that Egypt is not able to help Judah; rather the people of Egypt can hurt the people of Jerusalem (Isa 36:6). He also declared that the people of Judah should not trust in the LORD, because Hezekiah has destroyed the high places and altars where the LORD was worshiped (Isa 36:7). Even the Rabshakeh taunted Judah by saying that Judah could not defend herself, even if Assyria gave Judah two thousand horses (Isa 36:8).⁶⁶

⁶² Fewell understands the two major characters in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative as the LORD and Sennacherib (Fewell, ‘‘Sennacherib's Defeat,’’ 82–83). Sweeney also asserts that the major characters of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative are the LORD and Sennacherib who appeared only incidentally. Sweeney continues that ‘‘[t]he main action of the narrative is conveyed by subsidiary figures, including the Rabshakeh, Hezekiah, the Judean officers, the prophet Isaiah, the Assyrian messengers, and the angel of YHWH’’ (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 465).

⁶³ For scholars' opinions on the authenticity of the Rabshakeh's speeches, see Smelik, ‘‘Distortion,’’ 70–93; Ben Zvi, ‘‘Who Wrote,’’ 79–92; Cohen, ‘‘Neo-Assyrian Elements,’’ 32–47; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 234; Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 170–71.

⁶⁴ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 27.

⁶⁵ The root, בָּטַח (‘‘to trust’’), is used by the Rabshakeh in Isa 36:5, 6, 7, and 9. In his first speech, the Rabshakeh told the Jerusalemites that Hezekiah trusted in both God and Egypt. In Isaiah, the theme of trust also appeared. In Isa 31:1, Isaiah says that ‘‘Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.’’ Thus, both Isaiah and the Rabshakeh indicate that Judah trusted in Egypt's army. Ben Zvi, however, points out that Isa 31:1 and the Rabshakeh's speech ‘‘... do not represent the same line of tradition or authorship’’ (Ben Zvi, ‘‘Who Wrote,’’ 85). Other scholars are also on the same side (Childs, *Isaiah*, 84; Smelik, ‘‘Distortion,’’ 70–93; Smelik, *Converting the Past*, 111–12).

⁶⁶ Webb, *Isaiah*, 148.

Then, he claimed that it is the LORD who sent Assyria to destroy Judah (Isa 36:10).⁶⁷ It is not quite certain whether the Rabshakeh was aware of the prediction of Isaiah that the LORD would punish the people of Judah by the hands of Assyrians (Isa 8:7–8; 10:5–6). The Rabshakeh’s claim seems to be “pure propaganda,” because he viewed the LORD as a powerless god in his speeches (Isa 36:18–20) though he claimed to have this god backing him (Isa 36:10).⁶⁸ However, the people of Judah were surely aware of Isaiah’s words that the LORD would punish His people through the Assyrians. Thus, when the people of Judah heard the Rabshakeh’s words in Isa 36:10, they realized that the Rabshakeh’s words echoed Isaiah’s words. In this regard, the narrator reports the words of the Rabshakeh in order to indicate a sign of doom for Judah.⁶⁹ In his first speech, the Rabshakeh wants to break down the hope of Jerusalem by threatening Hezekiah and his people through military and religious reasons in order to conquer Jerusalem.⁷⁰

The Rabshakeh’s threatening is intensified in his second speech (Isa 36:13–20). While the first speech focused on the “trust” of Jerusalem, the second speech whether the LORD or anyone can “deliver” the city of Jerusalem from the hand of Assyria. In his

⁶⁷ The Rabshakeh shared the point of view of Isaiah who understood Assyria as the instrument of the LORD to judge Judah in Isa 10:5–6 (Smelik, *Converting the Past*, 112; Childs, *Isaiah*, 84; Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabid*, 166–68; Ben Zvi, “Who Wrote,” 79–92). Kaiser also asserts that the Rabshakeh’s words that the LORD commanded the Assyrian army to invade Judah could not indicate an Assyrian point of view because the kings of Assyria took to war in service to their god Ashur (Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 307). However, Smelik points out that the propaganda in a war situation usually adopts the enemy’s mentality and mentions the enemy’s belief. (Smelik, “Distortion,” 70–93).

⁶⁸ Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 395. Wildberger points out that if we ask “[h]ow could the Rabshakeh claim to be there on a mission from Yahweh, and that right after he had just pointed out to the Jerusalemites that Yahweh was just as powerless as all the other gods?,” we miss the point of the Rabshakeh. “He is certainly not saying that Yahweh or the gods of the people are powerless, but only that they had not rescued their subjects from Assyria and that they might have had their own good reasons for not doing so.” House also asserts that “this sort of propaganda about other countries’ deities abandoning their adherents was a standard Assyrian ploy when they invaded and conquered another nation” (House, *1, 2 Kings*, 363.)

⁶⁹ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 637.

⁷⁰ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 28.

second speech, the field commander utilizes the term נצל (“to deliver”) eight times in order to show the theme of “deliverance.”⁷¹ The Rabshakeh proclaimed that Hezekiah cannot deliver the people of Jerusalem (Isa 36:14), because the LORD will not deliver Jerusalem (Isa 36:20). Through his second speech, the field commander tried to separate the people of Judah not only from their leader, Hezekiah, but also from their God, the LORD.⁷² The Rabshakeh portrays Hezekiah as a powerless king and the LORD as a powerless god like other nations’ gods (Isa 36:18–20).⁷³ The Rabshakeh encouraged the people of Judah even to receive Sennacherib as their leader (Isa 36:16–17).⁷⁴ In this way, the Rabshakeh attempted to prompt Hezekiah and the people of Judah to surrender.⁷⁵ Thus, Sennacherib’s threats to Hezekiah are intensified in the second speech of the Rabshakeh.

The result of this threatening is shown by the reaction of Hezekiah and his officers. Hezekiah and his officers tore off their clothes when they heard the speeches of the Rabshakeh (Isa 36:22—37:1). The action of tearing off their clothes indicates their helpless situation. At the same time, Hezekiah covered himself in sackcloth and his officers also wore sackcloth (Isa 37:1–2). The action of covering oneself in sackcloth

⁷¹ Isaiah 36:14, 15 [2x], 18 [2x], 19, 20 [2x]. Gallagher asserts that “[t]he theme of trust continues ... but it diminishes in importance. A new theme, that of ‘saving’ ... becomes more prominent. The verb is fairly common in Biblical Hebrew. One may find it in Deuteronomic (e.g. Dt. 23:15) and Prophetic writings (e.g. Is. 5:29, Jer. 39:17)” (Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 173).

⁷² Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 372.

⁷³ Gonçalves, *L’Expédition*, 386–87; Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabild*, 127; McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 14; Childs, *Isaiah*, 87; Duhm, *Das Buch*, 236.

⁷⁴ In Isa 36:16, the Rabshakeh promised that everyone could eat from his vine and fig tree and drink from his own cistern (cf. 2 Kgs 18:31). The Rabshakeh’s promise indicates a good life to come which is promised by the prophets (Zech 3:10) and the peace and prosperity which is experienced in the reign of Solomon in 1 Kgs 5:5 (Smelik, “Distortion,” 70–93). However, Camp sees the Rabshakeh’s promise as blasphemy, because it is the LORD who has the right to make such an offer (Camp, *Hiskija und Hiskijabild*, 124–25).

⁷⁵ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 467.

symbolizes their grief and their “sense of futility and helplessness in this situation.”⁷⁶

This scene shows that Hezekiah and his officers were deeply frustrated by the Rabshakeh’s speeches, which indicates the climax of the story in terms of the plot. In this helpless situation, Hezekiah asked the prophet Isaiah to pray for help to the LORD (Isa 37:4). The narrator indicates that Hezekiah utilized three great resources: the LORD, the prophet of the LORD, and the prayer, in order to resolve this helpless situation. In Isa 37:1, Hezekiah entered the house of the LORD and then he sent his officers to the prophet of the LORD (Isa 37:2) to ask him to pray to the LORD (Isa 37:4).⁷⁷

In Isa 37:6–7, the LORD granted a promise to Hezekiah through Isaiah, which indicates the beginning of the resolution of Hezekiah’s helpless situation.⁷⁸ The LORD promised that Sennacherib will return to his land and will be killed by the sword there. In this way, the plot of the story is de-escalated by the promise of the LORD through Isaiah. The promise of the LORD seems to be fulfilled immediately by the withdrawal of the Rabshakeh from the channel of the Upper Pool and by Sennacherib’s departure from Lachish to Libnah (Isa 37:8).⁷⁹ However, the final fulfilment of this promise is reported

⁷⁶ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 34.

⁷⁷ When Hezekiah sent his officers to Isaiah, Hezekiah describes the situation of Jerusalem as an image of a difficult birth. In Isa 37:3 (2 Kgs 19:3), Hezekiah says לֹא־יָכוֹל אִין לִלְדָהּ (“for children have come to birth, and there is no strength to give birth”). The metaphor which Hezekiah utilized is not certain. Darr suggests that the woman who gave birth represent the leadership of Judah and the children are the people of Jerusalem. She also points out that those who knew Isa 66 could see the powerless woman as the city of Jerusalem (Darr, “No Strength,” 219–56).

⁷⁸ Ben Zvi, “Isaiah 1, 4–9,” 95–111. Ben Zvi points out that the dating of Isa 1:4–8 to 701 B.C.E. is uncertain. Thus, Isa 1:4–8 should not be used as evidence against the genuineness of the oracles of Isaiah for salvation in Isa 37:6–8 (2 Kgs 19:6–8). Ben Zvi maintains that the oracle in Isa 1:4–9 could apply to any historical situation and was not intended to a specific historical situation. Gonçalves also asserts that the contents of Isa 1:4–8 do not contradict Isa 37:6–7 (Gonçalves, *L’Expédition*, 538–39).

⁷⁹ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 649. According to Oswalt, the location of Libnah is uncertain, but most think it was to the north of Lachish, making the suggestion of a tactical withdrawal probable (Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 649). Oswalt asserts that “Sennacherib was pulling back to the north to put Jerusalem on his flank rather than directly in his rear when he met the Egyptians.” In terms of the location of Libnah, previously it had been known as Tell es-Safi, which is about twelve and half miles north of Lachish, but

at the end of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative (Isa 37:37–38). Thus, Hezekiah's helpless situation is not totally resolved in Isa 37:8. Rather, Hezekiah's situation continues to be influenced by Sennacherib in Act Five (Isa 37:9–35).

In Isa 37:9, Sennacherib sent a letter to Hezekiah through his messengers, which shows that the threat of Sennacherib is getting weak. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Sennacherib could not send his army back to Jerusalem this time, because he heard that the king of Cush was marching against him.⁸⁰ However, the original conflict between Hezekiah and Sennacherib continues through the contents of Sennacherib's letter. Unlike his previous threatening, Sennacherib directly threatened Hezekiah through his letter in Isa 37:10–13. In his letter, Sennacherib questioned the ability of the LORD to deliver Judah from the hand of Assyria. He attacked Hezekiah's trust in the LORD and his hope of safety for the city of Jerusalem by listing his earlier victories over other nations. Sennacherib again portrayed the LORD as a powerless god like the gods of the other nations in order to make him surrender the city of Jerusalem to Assyria.

When Hezekiah received the letter, he read it and entered the house of the LORD and spread it before God and prayed to Him (Isa 37:14–20). Hezekiah's response is quite different from the previous one. He did not tear off his clothes or cover himself in

recently some scholars, Aharoni and Turner, suggest that Libnah is Tell el-Bornat which is six miles north of Lachish (Aharoni, *Land*, 219; Turner, *Historical Geography*, 180).

⁸⁰ Vogt, *Der Aufstand Hiskias*, 48–50. In Isa 37:8 (2 Kgs 19:8), the narrator reports that Sennacherib left Lachish to fight against Libnah. The main problem is that the narrator indicates that Sennacherib captured all the fortified cities of Judah in Isa 36:1. Moreover, in the Kings account, Hezekiah surrendered to Sennacherib at Lachish (2 Kgs 18:13–16). Then, why would Sennacherib continue to fight against Libnah? Gray suggests that Sennacherib fought against Libnah first in his invasion against Judah, but the editor purposely rearranged the order of events in order to harmonize two different sources (Gray, *I & II Kings*, 679, 685). However, it is not easy to follow, because the appearance of the name of cities in Isa 36:2 (2 Kgs 18:17) and Isa 37:8 (2 Kgs 19:8) does not mean they harmonized two different sources. Gallagher suggests that "Lachish was a logical starting point for the main invasion of Judah. Libnah, which was probably blockaded earlier in the war, would have felt the main thrust of the Assyrian army when it made its return sweep from the south to the north" (Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 220–21).

sackcloth; rather he entered the house of the LORD and prayed to the LORD. In the previous case, Hezekiah asked Isaiah to pray for help to the LORD, but here Hezekiah himself prayed to Him for help, which indicates the second climax of the story.

This climax of the story is slowly de-escalated by the answer of the LORD through Isaiah in Scene Three of Act Five (Isa 37:20–35). The theme of the word of the LORD in Isa 37:20–35 is the deliverance of Judah from the hand of Assyria. The LORD promised Hezekiah that He will protect the city of Jerusalem from Sennacherib. The answer of the LORD to Hezekiah’s prayer consists of three parts. In Isa 37:20–29, Isaiah predicted that Assyria will be ruled by the LORD. In the first part of His answer, the LORD spoke to Hezekiah concerning the Assyrians through Isaiah’s mouth. Sennacherib has oppressed Judah and mocked Hezekiah and his God, but the LORD will soon change everything. Additionally, the LORD promised to make Sennacherib return to his home land by the same way he came (Isa 37:29).

In Isa 37:30–32, Isaiah was talking about a sign for Hezekiah, which is a natural event that will happen when Sennacherib returns. However, this sign indicated that the people of Judah will survive this difficult situation and increase their number in the land of Judah, “replanting fields and vineyards.”⁸¹ Through this sign, Isaiah predicted that Judah will be healed and grow up out of the city of Jerusalem.⁸² In Isa 37:33–35, Isaiah spoke that the city of Jerusalem will be protected by the LORD.⁸³ Isaiah continued that the Assyrians will not surround Jerusalem or shoot an arrow against it (Isa 37:33). These

⁸¹ Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 42.

⁸² House, *1, 2 Kings*, 370.

⁸³ Van der Kooij suggests that the LORD’s prediction for the city of Jerusalem in 2 Kgs 19:32 does not contradict Sennacherib’s annals. The words of Isaiah (2 Kgs 19:32) that Sennacherib could not besiege the city of Jerusalem is proved by Sennacherib’s annals that he merely blocked the city (Van der Kooij, “Das assyrische Heer,” 95–99). Liwak shares van der Kooij’s view in his article (Liwak, “Die Rettung Jerusalems,” 154–55).

words assured Hezekiah that the Assyrian threat will not be carried out, which means that the prayers of Hezekiah would be answered. In this way, the LORD proved that the LORD is greater than the gods of previously defeated lands. Besides, the LORD is also more powerful than Sennacherib and his god Nisroch, which is showed at the end of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story. Isaiah also makes a brief statement of the LORD's commitment to the city of Jerusalem (Isa 37:35). Thus, through Isaiah's prediction the narrator shows not only that Hezekiah's prayers were answered, but also that the threats of Sennacherib are resolved.

Before finishing the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, the narrator reports the death of Sennacherib's army in Isa 37:36. The messenger of the LORD killed one hundred eight-five thousand Assyrian soldiers one night, which causes the departure of Sennacherib.⁸⁴ Then, Sennacherib returned to Nineveh, his capital (Isa 37:37), and was shamefully killed by his own sons when he was worshipping his god, Nisroch (Isa 37:38), which indicates the final stage of Sennacherib. Reporting Sennacherib's returning and death, the narrator shows that the LORD's promises through Isaiah are completely fulfilled.⁸⁵ At the same time Sennacherib's death indicates the end of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative.

The narrator reports Hezekiah's illness and recovery in Isa 38. The story begins with the "direct narrative,"⁸⁶ which declares that Hezekiah becomes mortally ill (Isa

⁸⁴ For the suggestions of biblical scholars of the number in Isa 37:36 (2 Kgs 19:35) see Yurco, "Sennacherib's Third Campaign," 221–40; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 239; von Soden, "Sanherib," 149–55; Rudolf, "Zum Text," 201–15.

⁸⁵ Reporting the death of Sennacherib at the end of the story, the narrator clearly makes a connection between Sennacherib's action in Judah and his death in Nineveh (Gallagher, *Sennacherib's Campaign*, 252). Thus, the death of Sennacherib is understood as the result of his blasphemy in Judah.

⁸⁶ Boda, *Prayer*, 270. According to Boda, "direct narrative" means "simply reporting of the events usually in third person."

38:1a). This declaration indicates the conflict of Hezekiah that Hezekiah faced. This conflict is intensified by the word of the LORD which Isaiah brought to Hezekiah in Isa 38:1b. The LORD commanded him to “set your house in order” through Isaiah (Isa 38:1b). Gous points out that the command of the LORD (Isa 38:1b) provided Hezekiah a chance to find his successor for the Davidic house, because Hezekiah did not have a child at that time.⁸⁷ The circumstances of Hezekiah were hopeless and Isaiah told Hezekiah that the end was near. Goswell asserts that the narrator shows the theme of “house” at the beginning and end of the Hezekiah narrative in Isa 38 through the LORD’s command (Isa 38:1) and Hezekiah’s request (Isa 38:22). The focus, however, has shifted from Hezekiah’s “household” (Isa 38:1) to the LORD’s house (Isa 38:22).⁸⁸

Then, Hezekiah prayed to the LORD concerning his hopeless circumstances in Isa 38:2–3. In his previous prayer (Isa 37:14–17), Hezekiah robustly prayed to the LORD, but here Hezekiah’s prayer was just “a muted cry for help,”⁸⁹ which indicates the climax of the story of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery. Like the previous story, Hezekiah directly prayed to the LORD in order to resolve the conflict that Hezekiah faced.

This climax of the story of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery is also de-escalated by the answer of the LORD to Hezekiah’s prayer in Isa 38:5–6.⁹⁰ The LORD made a promise to add fifteen years of additional life to Hezekiah. The LORD also promised to

⁸⁷ Gous, “Role and Function,” 15.

⁸⁸ Goswell, “Literary Logic,” 175.

⁸⁹ Webb, *Isaiah*, 154. The narrator reports that Hezekiah did not actually ask for healing in his prayer in Isa 38:2–3. Williams asserts that Hezekiah did not explicitly ask for healing in his prayer because there were not many cases of healing in the Bible (Williams, “Dial and Boil,” 32–33). However, it is easy to understand that Hezekiah requested healing in his prayer (Goswell, “Literary Logic,” 168–70).

⁹⁰ The narrator reports the word of the LORD as a 1st person statement in Isa 38:5. The LORD said that *שמעתי את־הפלִתָּךְ רֵאִיתִי אֶת־דַּמְעֹתֶיךָ* (“I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears”). In this regard, the narrator emphasizes that the LORD heard the prayer of Hezekiah.

defend and deliver the city of Jerusalem. The narrator states that Hezekiah received not only additional life, but also God's protection for Jerusalem. Moreover, the LORD also provided a sign for Hezekiah in order to confirm His promises. By the LORD's answer, the conflict of Hezekiah begins to be resolved. Then, the narrator inserts Hezekiah's psalm in order to show Hezekiah's recovery from his illness.⁹¹ In his psalm, Hezekiah looks back at his illness and his recovery. Thus, Hezekiah's psalm shows that the conflict of Hezekiah was completely resolved (Isa 38:9–20).⁹² However, the narrator does not end the story with Hezekiah's psalm. Rather, the narrator reports a dialogue between Hezekiah and Isaiah (Isa 38:21–22). In Isa 38:21, Isaiah healed Hezekiah and Hezekiah also asked for a sign if he should go up to the house of the LORD in Isa 38:22. The narrator puts these two verses at the end of the story to provide background to what has been reported.⁹³ Konkel also points out that the narrator reshapes Hezekiah's story in Kings to emphasize the theme of future Jerusalem in Isa 38:21–22.⁹⁴ In this regard, the narrator reworks the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery in Kings (2 Kgs 20:5–8) to indicate the narrator's concern for the future city of Jerusalem, as mentioned above.

⁹¹ Hezekiah's psalm (Isa 38:9–20) clearly differs in its form from the previous part (Isa 38:1–8) and the following part (Isa 38:21–22), and lacks a syntactical connective to combine Hezekiah's psalm to Isa 38:1–8. However, Sweeney correctly points out that "the conjunctive *waw*-consecutive formulation of vv. 21–22 provides the syntactical links that work vv. 9–20 into the overall narrative form" (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 490).

⁹² Barré understands Hezekiah's psalm (Isa 9–20) as the climax of the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery in the Isaiah account (Barre, *Lord*, 232). However, it is better to see Hezekiah's psalm as the result, because it indicates Hezekiah's thanksgiving for the LORD's healing.

⁹³ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 691. The narrator utilizes a dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah in Isa 38:21–22 to provide background information for the previous events. In Isa 38:21, the narrator indicates that whatever the sickness may have been, one of its symptoms was a boil and that the healing was accomplished by the application of a poultice of figs. In Isa 38:21, the narrator explains the providing of the sign in Isa 38:7 and the reference to the temple of the LORD in Isa 38:20. In Isa 38:22, the narrator states that Hezekiah asked for a sign for going up to the temple of the LORD. Hezekiah said, *מָה אֵימָת כִּי אֶעֱלֶה בְּיַת הַיְהוָה* ("what is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?"). Tov asserts that "Isa 38:21–22 were placed at their present position because of the occurrence of the phrase 'the House of the LORD' in v. 20 (recurring in v. 22)" (Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 341).

⁹⁴ Konkel, "Source," 478–80.

In Isa 39, the narrator reports the third narrative of Hezekiah, the story of the envoys from Babylon. This story, however, begins in a different way. In the previous two stories, the narrator directly introduces the conflict of the story in Isa 36:1 and Isa 38:1. In the third story, the narrator begins it with direct narrative, which sets the scene for the story (Isa 39:1–2). In Isa 39:1, the narrator reports that the king of Babylon sent his messengers with a gift to Hezekiah. When Hezekiah received the Babylonian envoys, he showed everything in the house of his treasure (Isa 39:2). These things provide the background information for the following dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah (Isa 39:3–8).⁹⁵

Isaiah came to Hezekiah and asked him about the Babylonian envoys, which indicates the beginning of the conflict.⁹⁶ Isaiah asked three questions: *מָה אָמְרוּ* (“what they said”), *מֵאֵין יָבֵאוּ* (“where they came from”), and *מָה רָאוּ* (“what they saw”). When Hezekiah received the envoys from Babylon and showed his treasury in Isa 39:2, he was happy.⁹⁷ However, his emotions changed when Isaiah came to ask some questions. After hearing the response of Hezekiah for his questions, Isaiah brought the word of the LORD to Hezekiah concerning the future of Judah (Isa 39:5–7). Isaiah predicted that Judah will suffer in the Babylonian captivity. Isaiah said whereas Hezekiah showed everything in his house to the Babylonian envoys, all his house will be transported to

⁹⁵ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 506.

⁹⁶ Beuken, *Isaiah II*, 409. Beuken asserts that “the narrative originally refers to a conflict between the prophet and the king concerning the sympathetic reception given to the Babylonian envoys who had come to negotiate an alliance.” Although Beuken’s suggestion is possible, he does not provide any literary evidence for his suggestion within Hezekiah’s narrative. As mentioned in the previous chapter, when the man of God comes to ask some questions in the Bible, it means that there is something wrong (cf. 1 Sam 13:11; 15:14).

⁹⁷ Isaiah 39:2a: *וַיִּשְׂמַח עֲלֵיהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ הֶזְקִיָּהוּ* (“and then Hezekiah was pleased with them [the envoys from Babylon]”). The term *וַיִּשְׂמַח* is *qal* imperfect third person masculine singular of *שָׂמַח* (to rejoice, to be pleased) with *waw* relative.

Babylon (Isa 39:6). At the same time some of Hezekiah's descendents will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (Isa 39:7). Isaiah's prediction creates a climax for the third story of Hezekiah.

The narrator continues to report Hezekiah's response to Isaiah's prediction in Isa 39:8. Hezekiah willingly accepted the word of the LORD, which demonstrates his piety.⁹⁸ In Isa 39:8a, Hezekiah said טוב דבר־יהוה ("the word of the LORD is good"), which indicates Hezekiah's willingness to accept the word of the LORD.⁹⁹ Then, the narrator reports Hezekiah's words in Isa 39:8b.¹⁰⁰ Hezekiah said, כִּי יִהְיֶה שְׁלוֹם וְאַמְתָּ בְיָמַי ("that there will be peace and security in my days"). Oswalt understands Hezekiah's reaction in Isa 39:8 negatively, because "Hezekiah is not the promised 'child'; he is not infallible." And Oswalt continues that "Judah's hope rests in One who is yet to come."¹⁰¹ Many scholars, however, interpret Isa 39:8 in a positive way.¹⁰² Wildberger asserts that the terms שְׁלוֹם ("peace") and אַמְתָּ ("security") in Hezekiah's words refer to "present condition of 'salvation.'"¹⁰³

Scholars have considered Isa 39:8 as to whether the words of Hezekiah show if he is selfish or not. Sweeney, however, contends that this speculation of scholars misses the point. He says that "Hezekiah recognizes that there will be disaster, but that it will come later. ... the king's response indicates his confidence that YHWH will enable

⁹⁸ Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 66.

⁹⁹ Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 296.

¹⁰⁰ Beuken, *Isaiah II*, 413. Beuken suggests two things concerning the interpretation of Isa 39:8b. First, the repetition of the term וַיֹּאמֶר ("and he said") in Isa 39:8 does not imply that Isa 39:8b is "an unattached interpolation." Second, omitting the determinative "(and he said) to Isaiah" does not mean that "Hezekiah's remark ... constitutes a self-interested side reflection which the king conceals from the prophet."

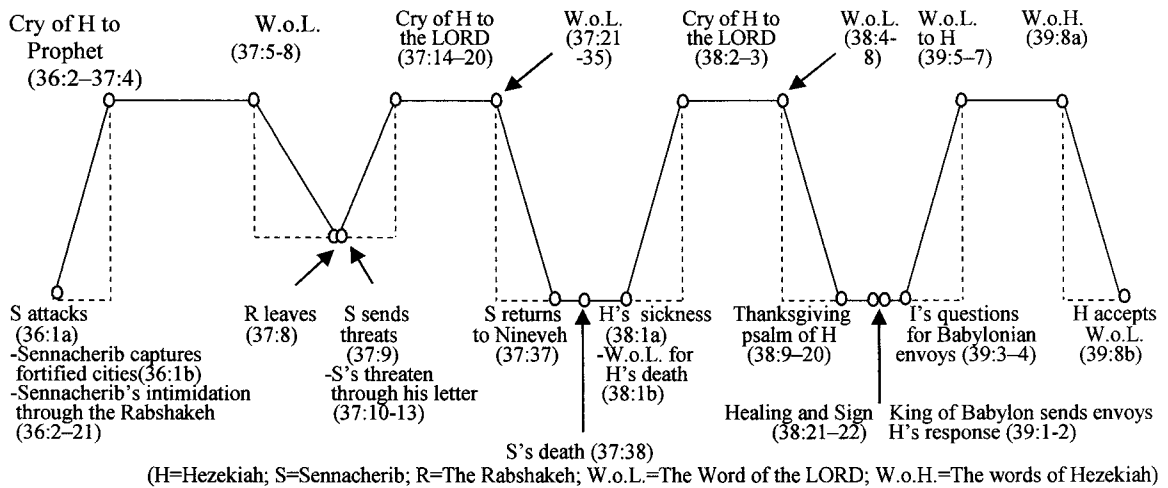
¹⁰¹ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 697.

¹⁰² Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 697. Also see Ackroyd, "Interpretation," 152–80; Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 478; Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 296; Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 66; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 510.

¹⁰³ Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 478.

Judah to succeed.”¹⁰⁴ Then, Sweeney concludes that the words of Hezekiah in Isa 39:8 demonstrate his faith.¹⁰⁵ Thus, the story ends with Hezekiah’s words to Isaiah and to himself.

The diagram of the plot structure for Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 is as follows:



This diagram clearly shows that there is no introduction for the entire story of Hezekiah.

The narrator begins the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative by directly introducing a conflict. The story of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery also has the same plot structure. However, the last story has background information for the story in Isa 39:1–2. At the same time the narrator does not reach any conclusion for the entire story. In the Kings account (2 Kgs 18–20), the narrator begins Hezekiah’s narratives with an introduction and ends with a conclusion.

¹⁰⁴ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 510.

¹⁰⁵ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 510. Beuken also suggests that in Isa 39:8b, the narrator introduces a new topic, because Isa 39:8b is introduced by the narrator through the introductory וַיֹּאמֶר (“and he said”). Beuken asserts that “[t]he phenomenon of ‘resumptive וַיֹּאמֶר within direct discourse’ is frequent in the Hebrew Bible and can have a variety of functions and antecedents. ... The statement of v. 8b may have been provided with a second introduction in order to indicate that it deals with a completely different topic, one which has a much broader significance than the narrative context of the discussion with the prophet allows” (Beuken, *Isaiah II*, 413).

The plot type of Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 is a potential tragedy like 2 Kgs 18–20, because the narrator ends Hezekiah's narratives with the prediction of the Babylonian exile through Isaiah (Isa 39:6–7).¹⁰⁶ Although the first two Hezekiah narratives have a happy ending, the last story of Hezekiah does not have a happy ending. In the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, the narrator concludes the story by reporting the shameful death of Sennacherib, which shows the final victory of Hezekiah over his rival. In the second story, the narrator reports that Hezekiah received fifteen years for his life, when he had become mortally ill. Thus, the second story of Hezekiah also has a happy ending. In the last story, the narrator depicts Hezekiah as a pious king who willingly accepted the word of the LORD. Hezekiah said טוב דְּבַר־יְהוָה (“the word of the LORD is good”) in Isa 39:8. Hezekiah's words in Isa 39:8, however, do not make any change for the prediction of Isaiah concerning the Babylonian exile for Hezekiah's descendants in Isa 39:6–7. The narrator ends the story of the Babylonian envoys with this dark future of Judah, which indicates a potential tragedy.

The first two stories, however, begin with a difficult situation. The Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative begins by Sennacherib's invasion of Judah. Sennacherib captured the fortified cities of Judah and wanted to conquer Jerusalem. At the beginning of the first story, the circumstances are quite dark, but at the end of the story the circumstances are positive because the city of Jerusalem was saved by the LORD through the faithfulness of Hezekiah. The beginning of the second story is also the same

¹⁰⁶ Although Hezekiah does not influence the prediction of Isaiah, Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 are not comedy meaning that “the action begins in prosperity, descends into potentially tragic events, and rises to a happy ending” (Ryken, *Words*, 360). In the Kings account, the prediction of Isaiah in 2 Kgs 20:17–18 indicates the event of the deportation of Jehoiachin in 597 B.C.E., but in the Isaiah account, Isaiah's prediction in Isa 39:6–7 refers to the fall of Judah in 587 B.C.E. (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 508).

circumstance with the first story. Hezekiah faced his death at the beginning of the story, but he received fifteen years of additional life. In the last story, however, the circumstances are positive at the beginning but ends with potentially tragic events in the future. In this way, the narrator draws the readers' attention to the last story, which ends with the Babylonian exile, in order to prepare for the second half of the Book which deals with the theme of return. Thus, Hezekiah's story in Isa 36–39 may be called a potential tragedy in terms of plot type.

4.3.2.1.1 Implications for Characterization

The plot of Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 shows that Hezekiah plays an important role in resolving the conflicts. In the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story, Hezekiah cried out to Isaiah to pray to the LORD concerning Sennacherib, and then Hezekiah directly cried to the LORD. In the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, he also directly cried out to the LORD for help. These three climaxes are de-escalated by the LORD's responses to Hezekiah's prayers. In this way, the narrator characterizes him positively because his prayers are answered by the LORD.

In the first three climaxes the role of Hezekiah is a speaker, but in the last one he is a recipient for the word of the LORD. Hezekiah asked the prophet Isaiah to pray to the LORD for help in the first climax. In the second and third one, however, Hezekiah directly prayed to the LORD for help. At the same time the first three climaxes are resolved by the word of the LORD, which comes through Isaiah. Thus, this plot structure clearly shows that the narrator portrays Hezekiah as the positive character who receives the word of the LORD as the answer to his prayer. The narrator also indicates

Hezekiah's piety through Hezekiah's response to Isaiah's prediction in Isa 39:5–7.¹⁰⁷ Hezekiah said that “the word of the LORD is good,” when he receives the word of the LORD through Isaiah. In this way the climax of the story of Babylonian envoys is de-escalated. Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah's piety through Hezekiah's words at the end of the story, which we will see in more detail below.

4.3.3 Characterization

The character of Hezekiah is one of the main characters in Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39. The character of Sennacherib and the LORD do not appear on the stage; rather they only spoke and acted through their representatives, Isaiah (the angel of the LORD) and the Rabshakeh (a letter). Hezekiah, however, appears as a real person on the stage, which indicates the shift of dominance and power that takes place between Sennacherib and the LORD through the personified character of Hezekiah.¹⁰⁸

4.3.3.1 The Characterization of Hezekiah in Isa 36–39

The narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively in Hezekiah's story in Isa 36–39, which is very similar to the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20. As mentioned above, although these two accounts are very similar, they are not identical. Thus the characterization of Hezekiah in Isa 36–39 is not the same as the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–20. The present study will deal with the characterization of

¹⁰⁷ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 456. Sweeney asserts that Hezekiah's response to Isaiah's prediction indicates Hezekiah's “ideal piety.” He continues that “[t]he condemnation by Isaiah does not affect Hezekiah personally, but it serves as a means to exemplify his piety again when he humbly accepts the judgment in 39:8.”

¹⁰⁸ Fewell, “Sennacherib's Defeat,” 83–86.

Hezekiah in Isa 36–39 by examining the different presentation of the narrator in the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39.¹⁰⁹

First of all, the narrator in Isa 36–39 does not report any evaluation for the character of Hezekiah, which is very significant for the reader to understand the characterization of Hezekiah. In 2 Kgs 18:1–8, the narrator evaluates Hezekiah in extremely positive ways by reporting Hezekiah’s religious reforms (2 Kgs 18:4), his complete trust in the LORD (2 Kgs 18:5), and his obedience to the commandments of the LORD (2 Kgs 18:6). In Isa 36–39, the narrator does not state the event of the fall of Samaria either, which was reported by the narrator in 2 Kgs 18:9–12 as part of the introduction in 2 Kgs 18–20. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the narrator states the short report of the fall of Samaria in order to portray Hezekiah positively by making a comparison between Hezekiah and the people of Israel.

In 2 Kgs 18:12, the narrator evaluates that the Northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the hand of Assyria because they did not keep the commandments of the LORD, which is the total opposite evaluation of the narrator for Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:1–8. In 2 Kgs 18:6, the narrator explicitly points out that Hezekiah did not turn away from the LORD and kept the commandments of the LORD. At the same time, the

¹⁰⁹ Many scholars study the origin of the text between these two parallel texts because 2 Kgs 18–20 and Isa 36–39 are very similar. But there is still no agreement among them (See, Ackroyd, “Isaiah 36–39,” 3–21; Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 360–1); rather three main views currently exist. The argumentation was given by W. Gesenius (Gesenius, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, 932–36) first, and has been accepted since. However, there is no consensus on this issue. The situation can be explained basically in one of three ways. 1) The story of Sennacherib’s invasion belonged originally to 2 Kings and was then added as an appendix to Isaiah 1–35, which could have happened quite late (see, Kaiser, “Der Verkündigung,” 304–15). 2) The narratives were fashioned, from the beginning, as an appendix to Isaiah and were also inserted into Kings, because they contained considerable important information about political events (see, Ackroyd, “Isaiah 36–39,” 3–21). 3) The accounts of Hezekiah originally formed their own separate writing, but then found their way into both Isaiah and Kings.

narrator reports the short story of the fall of Samaria, indicating the misfortune of the Judahites who will have the same fate as the people of the north.

In Isa 36–39, however, the narrator does not report these positive evaluations and the negative indication of the character Hezekiah, but the narrator just begins the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative (Isa 36:1) without any theological comments as normally utilized by the narrator of Kings.¹¹⁰ However, in Isa 36–39 the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively and negatively by internal and external characterization within the Hezekiah narratives,¹¹¹ which were indicated in the previous chapter.

In Isa 36:1, the narrator introduces the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative by reporting Sennacherib’s capture of all fortified cities of Judah in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah.¹¹² Then, the narrator continually states the action of Sennacherib who sent the Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem in order to make Hezekiah surrender the city of Jerusalem to Sennacherib. The narrator in Isa 36–39 does not report Hezekiah’s paying a tribute to Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 18:14–16, which portrays Hezekiah negatively, as shown in the previous chapter.

¹¹⁰ Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 367. Kaiser points out that “II Kings 18.13, with its parallel Isa. 36.1, clearly belongs to the annalistic passage II Kings 18.13–16, which has not been included in the book of Isaiah.” Unlike the account in 2 Kgs 18–20, there is no background commentary in Isa 36–39. In 2 Kgs 18:1–12, the narrator reports the background information for the entire story of Hezekiah which informs the narratee for the positive characterization of Hezekiah. However, the narrator omits this background commentary in Isa 36–39 and directly begins the story with the introduction of the event of Sennacherib’s invasion against Judah (Isa 36:1).

¹¹¹ Ryken, *Words*, 72–73. The narrator portrays a character in a story either internally through the words of the characters themselves, externally through the words of the narrator and the words, or actions of another character. In Isa 36–39, although the narrator does not report his evaluation of Hezekiah, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah externally and internally within the story. Sweeney also contends that “the removal of the narrative framework pertaining to the reign of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:1–12 and 20:20–21 ... [results in] an idealized portrayal of Hezekiah in the Isaiah version of the narrative” (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 456).

¹¹² In Isa 36:1, the narrator begins the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative with the terms *וַיְהִי בְאַרְבַּע* (“and then it happened in the four”), but the parallel text in 2 Kgs 18:13 reads only *וּבְאַרְבַּע* (“and in the four”). Wildberger asserts that the term *וַיְהִי* is used as “the ‘hypotrophic’ use of *וַיְהִי* when dates are supplied” (Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 371).

Many scholars understand differently the omission of Hezekiah's tribute to Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 18:14–16. First of all, Seitz asserts that the omission of Hezekiah's tribute payment to Sennacherib is logical in the Isaiah account (Isa 36–37); after besieging several Judean cities, the Rabshakeh was sent by Sennacherib to persuade Hezekiah and to make his citizens capitulate.¹¹³ Then Seitz concludes that “[r]ather than viewing [2 Kgs] 18:14–16 as a more historical, annals citation, tradition-historically prior to accounts B1–B2, I see it as a later addition motivated by concerns indigenous to the Book of Kings.”¹¹⁴

Second, the more common view is to accept the primacy of the accounts of 2 Kgs 18–20 and to assume that 2 Kgs 18:14–16 was deliberately omitted by the Isaiah redactor. This position is taken by Williamson, who largely follows Gonçalves.¹¹⁵ Gonçalves' argument consists of three points.¹¹⁶ 1) The specific date at the beginning of an event within a particular reign like 2 Kgs 18:13 is attested elsewhere in the Deuteronomic history rather than within prophetic narratives.¹¹⁷ 2) He maintains that the agreement of 2 Kgs 18:13 with 2 Kgs 18:14–16 in focusing upon the whole country rather than upon Jerusalem, as in the stories that follow, is significant. 3) Second Kings

¹¹³ Seitz, *Destiny*, 54–58. Campbell also assumes that the account of Hezekiah's capitulation is added to the 2 Kings account (See, Campbell, *Prophet and Kings*, 196). Seitz argues that 2 Kgs 18:14–16 (Account A) is intrusive and is not more historical than the rest of the account (2 Kgs 18:17–19:37), which is often divided into two (Account B1 and B2).

¹¹⁴ Seitz, *Destiny*, 60. However, Seitz's position has been criticized by Williamson on several grounds, especially the consideration that the parallel that Seitz has found in 2 Kgs 16:5, 7–9 involves 18:13 as a significant element. Williamson also asserts that 2 Kgs 18:13 serves to bind more closely with 2 Kgs 18:14–16 and to suggest that the paragraph as a whole was framed with the wider concerns of the Deuteronomic History in view (see, Williamson, *Book*, 200).

¹¹⁵ Williamson, *Book*, 199.

¹¹⁶ Gonçalves, *L'Expédition*, 355–61 (cf. Williamson, *Book*, 198–200).

¹¹⁷ In the first argument, Gonçalves believes that the chronological structure of Hezekiah's narratives was written first within the Deuteronomistic History. Hughes also suggests that the fifteen years of Hezekiah's additional life after his sickness in 2 Kgs 20:6 (Isa 38:5) is calculated on the basis of the narrator's report of the total duration of the reign of Hezekiah mentioned in 2 Kgs 18:2 (Hughes, *Secrets*, 212).

18:14–16 needs 2 Kgs 18:13 as an introduction, while the longer stories do not need the information that is found in 2 Kgs 18:13.

Among these three arguments the first one may be the strongest one, and the second argument may be opposed by the observation of Seitz that the omission of 2 Kgs 18:14–16 is logical. At some point there is going to be a change of focus from the land of Judah to its capital city. That could come equally well after 2 Kgs 18:13 as after 2 Kgs 18:16. However, it does not prove that 2 Kgs 18:14–16 originated there. At the same time, the third argument of Gonçalves is not conclusive.

Konkel also suggests that 2 Kgs 18:14–16 is omitted in the Isaiah account due to emphasizing the theme of the city of Jerusalem.¹¹⁸ He asserts that the expansions, abbreviations, and omissions in the Isaiah account are to indicate a theme of Jerusalem. Thus, 2 Kgs 18:14–16, which indicates “the destruction of Jerusalem,” does not fit the narrator’s concern for Hezekiah’s story in Isaiah, thus the narrator omits 2 Kgs 18:14–16. Wildberger also suggests that the event in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 does not fit for the eschatological meaning of Hezekiah’s story in Isaiah.¹¹⁹ In this regard, 2 Kgs 18:14–16 was removed from the Isaiah account.

Another suggestion is that Isa 36 originally had the event which is found in 2 Kgs 18:14–16, but this account had been accidentally removed through haplography. This suggestion has been preferred by Childs,¹²⁰ and then adopted by some scholars.¹²¹ One more theoretical possibility is that the accounts in Kings and the accounts in Isaiah both

¹¹⁸ Konkel, “Source,” 478.

¹¹⁹ Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 371.

¹²⁰ Childs, *Assyrian Crisis*, 69–70.

¹²¹ See, Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 274; Mullen “Crime and Punishment,” 231–48.

drew upon an independent source and both narrators tailored their material to suit their respective viewpoint.¹²²

Although it is quite difficult to come to a firm conclusion about this matter, I believe that the accounts of the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39 come from the accounts in 2 Kgs 18–20 and then the narrator intentionally omits the account of Hezekiah’s capitulation. Thus, the narrator in Isa 36–39 not only characterizes Hezekiah as a positive king but also indicate the theme of the future of Jerusalem by omitting the event of Hezekiah’s capitulation in 2 Kgs 18:14–16. The lack of a parallel text to 2 Kgs 18:14–16 in Isa 36 is certainly significant, if the accounts in Isa 36–39 are to be read as it now stands.

Hezekiah, however, is portrayed as a negative character through the speeches of the Rabshakeh as mentioned in the previous chapter by calling Hezekiah and Sennacherib unequally,¹²³ and by depicting Hezekiah as a deceiver and a misleader.¹²⁴ He is also depicted as a cultic breaker and an incapable king in order to force Hezekiah to surrender the city of Jerusalem.¹²⁵ Thus, the Rabshakeh negatively portrays Hezekiah in his speeches. However, these negative characterizations are not true characterizations, but Assyrian propaganda to take the city of Jerusalem.

¹²² Bostock, *Trust*, 45.

¹²³ The Rabshakeh referred to Hezekiah without title five times in his speeches (Isa 36:4, 7, 15, 16, 18), but the Rabshakeh called his master Sennacherib המלך (“the king”) or המלך-הגדול (“the great king”) five times (Isa 36:4, 8, 13, 16, 18). Cohen points out that the Assyrian monarchs usually called the king of Assyria “the great king” in their official correspondence and public speeches (Cohen, “Neo-Assyrian,” 32–48).

¹²⁴ In Isa 36:14, the Rabshakeh said to the Jerusalemites אל-ישא לכם הזקיהו (“do not let Hezekiah deceive you”), and in Isa 36:18, אל-ישא לכם הזקיהו (“let not Hezekiah mislead you”). The Rabshakeh characterizes Hezekiah negatively here in order to separate the Jerusalemites from Hezekiah.

¹²⁵ In Isa 36:7, the Rabshakeh said that Hezekiah removed the high places and altars of the LORD. At the same time the Rabshakeh said that Hezekiah could not provide riders when Sennacherib gives two thousand horses in Isa 36:8.

This incorrect characterization of the Rabshakeh on Hezekiah is corrected by the response of the Jerusalemites who did not answer the Rabshakeh following Hezekiah's command (Isa 36:21),¹²⁶ which indicates the loyalty of Jerusalemites to their king Hezekiah.¹²⁷ The narrator continually corrects the wrong characterizations of the Rabshakeh through the answer of the LORD to Hezekiah's prayer.¹²⁸ By reporting the reaction of Jerusalemites and the responses of the LORD, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah as a good and pious king by correcting the wrong characterization made by the Rabshakeh.

At the end of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, the narrator reports the death of Sennacherib (Isa 37:38), which indicates the final stage of the rival character of Hezekiah, as mentioned in the previous chapter.¹²⁹ The narrator states that the army of

¹²⁶ Evans makes a connection between Isa 36:21 (2 Kgs 18:36) and Hezekiah's speech to his people in 2 Chr 32:7–8. Evans suggests that the content of the speech "was created by the Chronicler" (Evans, "Historia or Exegesis?" 114).

¹²⁷ In Isa 36:21, the narrator does not utilize the term, הָעָם ("the people"), which is found in 2 Kgs 18:36. Cogan and Tadmor assert that the fact that Hezekiah commanded the Judahite to be silent is problematic, because it was impossible to know that the Rabshakeh want to talk to the Judahite. However, Isa 36:21 omits the term הָעָם, so the narrator indicates the subject as Hezekiah's three officials. The verb in Isa 36:21 is וַיִּתְקַדְּשׁוּ which is *hiphil* imperfect third person masculine plural of חָשַׁב ("to be silent") with *waw* relative. The verb in 2 Kgs 18:36 is וַיִּתְקַדְּשׁוּ which is *hiphil* perfect third person plural with simple *waw*. Cogan and Tadmor also suggest that the verb וַיִּתְקַדְּשׁוּ indicates the new beginning of a subunit, because it is the imperfect with *waw* relative (Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 233). However, it is better to see Isa 36:21 as the response of the people to the speech of the Rabshakeh, which begins in Isa 36:13. In Isa 36:13, the narrator explicitly mentions that the Rabshakeh addressed his speech to יְהוּדִיָּה ("Judahite"). Thus, it is better to see the subject of the verb וַיִּתְקַדְּשׁוּ in Isa 36:21 as the people of Judah. At the same time, the narrator clearly mentions the names of Hezekiah's three officials in the very next verse (Isa 36:22), which is also begun by an imperfect verb with *waw* relative. In this way, the new beginning of a subunit is Isa 36:37.

¹²⁸ In his response to the Rabshakeh's speeches, Hezekiah sent his officials to Isaiah in order to ask him to pray to the LORD in Isa 37:3–4. In his second response to the words of Sennacherib, however, Hezekiah himself prayed to the LORD (Isa 37:15). At the same time Hezekiah also prayed to the LORD concerning his illness (Isa 38:3) and then the LORD answered him (Isa 38:5–6).

¹²⁹ Sennacherib is a flat character in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in Isa 36–37. The narrator portrays him as the antagonist of Hezekiah. The narrator changes the rival character of Sennacherib from Hezekiah to the LORD throughout the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative. In the speeches of the Rabshakeh, Sennacherib is directly contrasted to Hezekiah. The Rabshakeh stirs up the Jerusalemites to listen to Sennacherib rather than to trust in Hezekiah. Thus, the purpose of the Rabshakeh's speeches is to shift the loyalty of the Jerusalemites from their leader, Hezekiah, to the king of

Sennacherib was killed by the messenger of the LORD (Isa 37:36)¹³⁰ and Sennacherib returned to his country (Isa 37:37) and was killed by his own sons in front of his own god (Isa 37:38) according to what the LORD said in Isa 37:7.¹³¹ The narrator reports Sennacherib's humiliating death. At the same time the narrator relates that the death of Sennacherib took place after his return from Jerusalem,¹³² and that Sennacherib's death was not natural but he was shamefully killed by his own sons. In 2 Kgs 19:37, the narrator mentions that Sennacherib was killed by Adramelech and Sharezer, but Isa 37:38, the narrator exposes that Adramelech and Sharezer were Sennacherib's sons. In this way, the narrator ironically describes the death of Sennacherib. The narrator states that Sennacherib was murdered by his own sons when he was worshiping his god, which is clearly opposite to Hezekiah who received fifteen years of additional life from the LORD, when he prayed to Him in Isa 38:6.

The narrator utilizes the device of ironic reversal in the Hezekiah narratives between Hezekiah and Sennacherib in order to portray Hezekiah positively. Sennacherib as the strong one was killed while Hezekiah as the weak one survives. The destroyer

Assyria, Sennacherib. In the Sennacherib letter, however, Sennacherib is directly contrasted with the LORD Himself, who is the protagonist and the real opposite of Sennacherib in the story. The LORD Himself also identifies Sennacherib as His opponent in the story (Isa 36:23). The LORD also said that the LORD will make Sennacherib return because of his raging against me (אלי) in Isa 37:29. In the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, these two characters, the LORD and Sennacherib, play "symmetrically opposing roles" (Fewell, "Sennacherib's Defeat," 79–90).

¹³⁰ In Isa 37:36, the narrator omits the beginning phrase of 2 Kgs 19:35, ויהי בלילה ההוא ("and it came to pass that night"). Sweeney, however, asserts that this omission in the Isaiah version does not mean that the LORD delayed in going into action of the promised deliverance (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 482).

¹³¹ The LORD answered the prayers of Isaiah in Isa 37:6–7 and Hezekiah in Isa 37:20–35. In Isa 37:7, the LORD said that אל-ארצו והפלתיו בהרב בארצו ("behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land. And I will make him fall by the sword in his own land"). In Isa 37:34, the LORD said again that בדרך אשר-בא בך לשוב ("by the way that he came, by the same he shall return").

¹³² Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 670. In fact, Sennacherib died in twenty years later, but the narrator telescopes the event of Sennacherib's death in order to portray the LORD powerfully who kept His promise concerning Jerusalem and Sennacherib.

becomes destroyed and the taunter, taunted. Sennacherib defeated all the gods of all the nations, but was killed in front of his god, who does not have any ability to save his people. By reporting the ironic death of Sennacherib, the narrator indicates not only the dishonorable death of Sennacherib, but also the positive characterization of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah's positive characterization is also shown in his response to the words that Isaiah brought to Hezekiah in Isa 38:1.¹³³ When he heard the word of the LORD concerning his death, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD. In Isa 38:3, Hezekiah prayed that *אָנָה יְהוָה זְכֵר־נָא אֶת אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאֵמֶת וּבְלֵב שָׁלֵם וְהַטּוֹב* (“remember now, O LORD, I beseech you, how I have walked before you in truth and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight”). Hezekiah himself said that he has lived before the LORD with his whole heart and has done what is good in the sight of the LORD, which clearly shows that Hezekiah presented himself as a positive character before the LORD. This positive characterization is proven by the LORD's answer to Hezekiah's prayer. The LORD declared *שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶחְדָּפְלָתְךָ* (“I have heard your prayer”), and *הִנְנִי יוֹסֵף עַל־יָמֶיךָ חֲמֵשׁ עָשָׂר שָׁנָה* (“behold, I will add fifteen years to your life”). The LORD heard Hezekiah's prayer and provided fifteen years of additional life to Hezekiah, which indicates that the LORD proved what Hezekiah said in his prayer was true.¹³⁴

¹³³ The forms of Hezekiah's narrative in 2 Kgs 20:1–11 and Isa 38 are different. Many scholars assert that the narrator of Isa 38 modifies the version of 2 Kgs 20:1–11 (Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 400; Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 288; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 496). Thus, it is better to deal the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery separately.

¹³⁴ Goswell points out that Hezekiah received the LORD's promise to extend Hezekiah's life rather than to heal Hezekiah from his fatal illness, which means that “Hezekiah has more time to ‘set [his] house in order’ and presumably the prophetically mediated command of v. 1b is still operative” (Goswell, “Literary Logic,” 169).

In Isa 38:5, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively who was immediately healed by the LORD.¹³⁵ The narrator states that הִנְנִי יוֹסֵף עַל־יָמֶיךָ חֲמֵשׁ עָשָׂר שָׁנָה (“behold, I am adding upon your days fifteen years”) in Isa 38:5, whereas the narrator reports that הִנְנִי רוֹפֵא לָךְ בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי תַעֲלֶה בֵּית יְהוָה וְהִסַּפְתִּי עַל־יָמֶיךָ חֲמֵשׁ עָשָׂר שָׁנָה (“behold, I am healing you, on the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD and I shall add upon your days fifteen years”) in 2 Kgs 20:5–6. The account of 2 Kgs 20:5–6 shows some delay in the LORD’s response to Hezekiah in that the LORD will heal Hezekiah only after three days, but the account of Isa 38:5 does not have this statement. Thus, the Isaiah version indicates that the LORD responded to Hezekiah more quickly than the Kings version which shows that the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively by modifying the account of 2 Kgs 20:5–6.

Furthermore, in Isa 38:5, the narrator does not report any reference to Hezekiah’s entering into the house of the LORD in order to emphasize that Hezekiah’s piety is not motivated by his recovery. The narrator also removes the LORD’s motivation to heal Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:6. In 2 Kgs 20:6, the narrator relates that the LORD will heal Hezekiah לְמַעַנִּי וּלְמַעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי (“for my sake and the sake of my servant David”).¹³⁶ By omitting the Kings version, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively who is saved by the LORD through his piety which is not motivated by his recovery.¹³⁷

The narrator not only omits some parts of the account of 2 Kgs 20:1–11, but also composes the story of Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery differently. The narrator posits

¹³⁵ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 496.

¹³⁶ Gallagher asserts that Isa 37:35 (2 Kgs 19:34) is closely related to the context of the Book of Isaiah. The phrase “for My sake and for the sake of My servant David” fits the attitude of Isaiah toward the leaders of Judah well. Gallagher maintains that Isaiah “wanted to emphasize that the present rulers were not the reason why Jerusalem would be saved, but rather because of the far more upright founder of the dynasty” (Gallagher, *Sennacherib’s Campaign*, 239).

¹³⁷ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 497.

Isaiah's application of the treatment and Hezekiah's request for a sign that he shall go up to the house of the LORD in 2 Kgs 20:7–8 at the end of the story (Isa 38:21–22).¹³⁸ The narrator intentionally presents Isaiah's treatment for Hezekiah after Hezekiah showed his piety in his psalm in Isa 38:9–20 in order to indicate his piety was not motivated by his recovery.¹³⁹ Furthermore, in Isa 38:7, the narrator presents that the sign comes from the LORD Himself through the LORD's speech, whereas the Kings version introduces this sign through Isaiah's speech. In 2 Kgs 20:9, the narrator begins with the term *ישׁעיהו* ("and Isaiah said"). In this regard, the narrator of Isaiah characterizes Hezekiah more positively by omitting and modifying the Kings version.

The narrator also inserts Hezekiah's psalm in Isa 38:9–20 in order to portray him positively by revealing his thoughts.¹⁴⁰ The narrator indicates that Hezekiah expressed the experiences of his terrible affliction by using the phrase *אני אֶמְרתי* ("I, I thought") at the beginning of his psalm. The phrase, *אני אֶמְרתי* ("I, I thought"),¹⁴¹ in Isa 38:10–11 is a common expression for the one who is praying in a song of thanks to look back upon the distress from which he has been snatched (Ps 31:23; 41:5; 116:11), and reminisces

¹³⁸ In 2 Kgs 20:8, the narrator reports that Hezekiah requested a sign that he shall be healed and entered into the house of the LORD, but in Isa 38:22, the narrator relates that Hezekiah asked for a sign that he shall ascend to the temple of the LORD.

¹³⁹ Watts maintains that "[t]he psalm's inclusion at this point ... heightens the impression of Hezekiah's meekness, humility, and piety. Comparative studies of inset hymns in the Bible ... observe that they are commonly used to characterize the piety of the speaker: so Hannah (1 Sam 2), David (2 Sam 22–23), Jonah (Jonah 2), and Daniel (LXX additions to Dan 3) as well as Hezekiah are depicted as speaking psalms to show their religious devotion" (Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 57–8).

¹⁴⁰ Young, *Isaiah*, 516.

¹⁴¹ The term *אֶמְרתי* is *qal*, perfect, first person common singular of *אמר* ("to say"). However, the verb *אמר* also means "to think." In Gen 17:17 the narrator reports the response of Abraham, when he heard the LORD promise to give Sarai a son in Gen 17:15–16. The narrator relates that *ויצחק ויאמר* ("and then he [Abraham] laughed and then he said"). However, here Abraham did not say to God, but to himself, because in the very next verse (Gen 17:18) the narrator relates that Abraham said to God by utilizing the same verb form, *ויאמר*. Thus, the reports of the narrator in Gen 17:17, *ויצחק ויאמר*, means that Abraham laughed and thought. In Isa 38:11, Hezekiah simply uses the verb *אֶמְרתי* ("I thought"), omitting the first person common singular of the personal pronoun *אני* ("I"), which is emphatically used.

“about the thought that came to his mind when the threat was acute.”¹⁴² Hezekiah describes his sickness as being at the gates of *Sheol* in Isa 38:10, which emphasizes that Hezekiah supposed his sufferings would inevitably lead to death. Even he regards himself as being already in the underworld.

However, Hezekiah was not simply reporting his sickness, but tied up his death with the separation from the LORD in Isa 38:11. Hezekiah said that לֹא־אֶרְאֶה יְהוָה (“I shall not see the LORD, even the LORD in the land of living”), which indicates “the true piety of the king.”¹⁴³ To see the LORD means to see Him as He is revealed in the world through His deeds, because man cannot see the LORD. Thus, for Hezekiah, Young asserts, to see the LORD means that Hezekiah rejoices in the LORD and in His works as one approaches the LORD in worship.¹⁴⁴ Thus, in Isa 38:11, Hezekiah’s main concern was not his death itself, but separation from the LORD. If Hezekiah could see the LORD when he dies, he would not fear death. Thus, revealing his thought in Isa 38:11, Hezekiah showed himself to be a truly pious king, which is internal characterization of Hezekiah.

At the end of his psalm, Hezekiah presented himself as the living one who praised the LORD (Isa 38:19). Hezekiah said that הִי הוּא יוֹרֵךְ כְּמוֹנֵי הַיּוֹם (“the living, the living, he praises you, as I [do it] today”). The term הִי is employed twice at the

¹⁴² Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 453. Wildberger asserts that “such reflections about the past are introduced at times by (I, I thought) ... These parallels remove all doubt about whether one should translate (I, I thought) in a present tense in 38:10 (and 11), which applies as well to the other perfect forms that are in the passage.”

¹⁴³ Young, *Isaiah*, 519. Hezekiah utilized the term הִי twice, which is found in Isa 12:2 and 26:4. However, it is not an error, but is used to intensify the thought of Hezekiah, which is accomplished by the modifying phrase, בְּאֶרֶץ הַחַיִּים (“in the land of the living”), which indicates the LORD is the trustworthy one who is able to deliver from fear.

¹⁴⁴ Young, *Isaiah*, 518. Watts also points out that “[s]eeing the face of God’ is used as a formula for the experience of cultic worship in the temple” (Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 593).

beginning, which is used for emphasis. Hezekiah emphasized the living one in Isa 38:19a. Thus, this verse may be rendered as “the living one, even the one who lives again, he praises you.” Then Hezekiah showed himself as an example for the living one who praises the LORD. Hezekiah explicitly mentioned that *קְמוּנִי הַיּוֹם* (“as I [do it] today”).¹⁴⁵ Hezekiah himself is a living one, who indeed lives again, because Hezekiah received the promise of the LORD through Isaiah, and he praised the LORD. Indicating himself as the living one, Hezekiah presented himself as the pious king who praised the LORD when he recovered from his fatal illness by the hand of the LORD. The narrator internally characterizes Hezekiah positively by showing Hezekiah’s eagerness to praise the LORD as a living one.

Concluding his psalm, Hezekiah continually expressed his piety. In Isa 38:20, Hezekiah sang that *וּנְגִנְתֵינוּ בְּבֵית יְהוָה* (“and we will sing all the days of our life, at the house of the LORD”),¹⁴⁶ which is the statement of Hezekiah for his confidence in the LORD who will save Hezekiah from death (Isa 38:20a).¹⁴⁷ Here, Hezekiah wished to identify himself with others by changing from a singular to plural subject to include other people who also sing. For Hezekiah, the singing was not just singing, but religious worship of praise, because it was performed in the temple of the LORD where the singers lived. Interestingly Hezekiah mentioned again the term *חַי* (“life”),¹⁴⁸ which was used twice in Isa 38:19 in order to present himself as a pious king. At the same time Hezekiah also mentioned the house of the LORD, which will appear in

¹⁴⁵ Wildberger understands that the phrase *קְמוּנִי הַיּוֹם* (“as I [do it] today”) means that “as I do it now, after I have experienced the healing” (Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 464).

¹⁴⁶ The term *וּנְגִנְתֵינוּ* is the plural form of a feminine noun *נְגִינָה* which is the music of stringed instruments.

¹⁴⁷ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 689.

¹⁴⁸ Isaiah 38:20 has the term *חַיֵּינוּ* which is masculine plural form of *חַי* (“life”) with a first person common plural personal suffix.

the request of Hezekiah in Isa 38:22. In Isa 38:19, Hezekiah utilized the preposition על before the phrase בֵּית יְהוָה (“the house of the LORD”), which is utilized as signifying the elevation of the house of the LORD as though to say “up to the house of the LORD.” In Isa 38:22, the narrator reports Hezekiah’s request for a sign in order to indicate Hezekiah’s piety at the end of the story of Hezekiah’s illness and recovery.¹⁴⁹ Hezekiah asked Isaiah for a sign, saying, מָה אוֹת כִּי אֶעֱלֶה בֵּית יְהוָה (“what sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?”), which indicates that “the sentence contributes only the reference to Hezekiah again being able to go to the temple for worship.”¹⁵⁰ In 2 Kgs 20:8, Hezekiah asked two questions, but here there is only one question that is a question for the sign to go to the temple. Although the narrator ends the story with this open question, the narratee can get the positive characterization of Hezekiah from the narrator.

Thus, Hezekiah expressed his vow at the end of his psalm (Isa 38:20): “we shall ascend to the house of the LORD, and there praising the LORD all the days of our life.” In Hezekiah’s psalm in Isa 38:9–20, Hezekiah is portrayed as a pious king who eagerly worships the LORD at the house of the LORD all the days of his life.¹⁵¹ For this reason, Hezekiah asked the LORD to save him from the death. Thus, the narrator inserts Hezekiah’s psalm to characterize Hezekiah positively by showing his eagerness to praise the LORD at the temple all the days of his life with his religious community.

¹⁴⁹ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 497.

¹⁵⁰ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 53. In the story of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20:8, the narrator reports Hezekiah’s two questions. He asked מָה אוֹת כִּי יִרְפָּא יְהוָה לִי וְעֲלִיתִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בֵּית יְהוָה (“what will be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?”).

¹⁵¹ Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 341.

As mentioned above, the narrator intentionally inserts Hezekiah's psalm before Isaiah's action to heal Hezekiah in Isa 38:21.¹⁵² The narrator relates that Hezekiah received only the promise and the sign that Hezekiah will be healed in Isa 38:5–8. Then, the narrator presents Hezekiah's thanksgiving psalm which indicates Hezekiah's confidence in the LORD's promise to heal before the medical treatment is affected.¹⁵³ Thus, the narrator purposely inserts Hezekiah's psalm before the statement of Isaiah's medical treatment in Isa 38:21 in order to characterize Hezekiah positively.¹⁵⁴

The narrator also portrays Hezekiah positively through Hezekiah's words in Isa 39:8. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as one who humbly submits to the judgment of the LORD in Isa 39:8a.¹⁵⁵ Then, the narrator provides the reason for Hezekiah's response (Isa 38:8a) by revealing Hezekiah's inner thought in Isa 39:8b.¹⁵⁶ In Isa 39:8b, Hezekiah said *כִּי יִהְיֶה שְׁלוֹם וְאֱמֶת בְּיָמַי* (“for there will be peace and truth in my days”), which indicates Hezekiah's thankfulness to God who will not bring His punishment upon Hezekiah immediately.¹⁵⁷ The surface meaning of Hezekiah's thought seems to be understood as the selfish behavior of Hezekiah, which indicates Hezekiah's self-satisfied peace in his own life despite what will happen to his descendants. Thus, several scholars interpret Hezekiah's words in Isa 39:8 in a negative way.

¹⁵² In Isa 38:21b, the narrator reports Isaiah's medical treatment. Isaiah said, *וַיִּמְרְצוּ עָלָיו מִשְׁתֵּי בַיִשׁ וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו חֶמְצָא וַיִּשְׂאוּ דֶבְעָה וַיִּקְלְחוּ בָהֶם* (“let them take a cake of figs, and apply it to the boil, that he may recover”). Isaiah expressed his hope that Hezekiah may recover by the term *וַיִּתֵּר* (“and he [Hezekiah] may recovered”), which is the jussive form of the verb *תִּירָה* with simple *waw*.

¹⁵³ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 497.

¹⁵⁴ Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 451; Seitz, *Destiny*, 166–9; Williamson, *The Book*, 207.

¹⁵⁵ Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 437. Watts also understands Hezekiah's response in Isa 39:8a as “Hezekiah's piety” (Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 66).

¹⁵⁶ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 295. The reading of 2 Kgs 19:19b was influenced by the reading of Isa 39:8b. Thus, the Proto Masoretic text does not have the second half of 2 Kgs 19:19b. See also appendix 1 for the reading of 2 Kgs 19:19.

¹⁵⁷ Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 478. According to Wildberger, the terms *שְׁלוֹם* (“peace”) and *אֱמֶת* (here: “security”) refer “to the present condition of ‘salvation.’” He also explains that “though the term for ‘security’ is from the root *בטח*, there is no difference in the meaning of the two terms [*בטח* and *אמת*].”

Studying three terms, שָׁלוֹם (“peace”), אָמֶת (“security”) and טוֹב (“good”) in the context of Kings, Hull contends that “[t]he only way to read the response of this specific YHWH word as good news in the surface text is to read the second statement as cynical: the news is good since it does not affect my own time when peace will continue”¹⁵⁸ However, Hull just examines the words of Hezekiah in Kings, but he does not deal with Hezekiah’s words in the context of Isaiah, which is quite different.¹⁵⁹ Even, Nelson suggests that there is no good reason to see Hezekiah’s response of submission as a positive characterization for him, because Hezekiah already knows that the Kingdom of Judah will face the judgement of the LORD like the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 2 Kgs 17.¹⁶⁰ However, in Isaiah, the narrator does not report the fall of Israel, while the Kings account explicitly reports that event in 2 Kgs 17:1–41 (2 Kgs 18:9–12). Thus, in the Isaiah account, it is not easy to follow those who interpret the response of Hezekiah negatively.¹⁶¹

However, Hezekiah’s thought does not necessarily indicate cynicism or egoism. Ackroyd understands Hezekiah’s thought as “a kind of auspicious pronouncement designed to avert disaster.”¹⁶² Young also suggests that the thought of Hezekiah in Isa 39:8b is understood not as Hezekiah’s egoism, but as “a general utterance of the king made with respect to his own relation to the punishment to come upon his

¹⁵⁸ Hull, “Hezekiah-Saint,” 528.

¹⁵⁹ Even, the text of Isa 39:8 is different from the text of 2 Kgs 20:19. Second Kings 20:19 does not have the second half of the verse in proto Masoretic text. See more information for this reading in Appendix 1.

¹⁶⁰ Nelson, *Kings*, 246.

¹⁶¹ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 697.

¹⁶² Ackroyd, “Interpretation,” 152–80. Ackroyd employs the words of David in 2 Sam 18:27 in order to compare Hezekiah’s words to those of David. Also see Nelson, *Kings*, 246.

descendents.”¹⁶³ At the same time Hezekiah’s thoughts also show his acceptance of the prediction of Isaiah, which indicates that the national calamity will not come immediately. The fact that the narrator reveals Hezekiah’s inner thought is not only to portray him positively, but also to show us why the second half of the book follows Hezekiah’s narratives.¹⁶⁴ The narrator reports that in Hezekiah’s day there is peace which is the blessing of the LORD through Hezekiah’s thought at the end of the Hezekiah story. Then, the narrator also states the future blessings of Hezekiah’s descendents, the people of God, who will return from the exile in the following chapters.¹⁶⁵

However, although the narrator positively portrays Hezekiah by reporting his inner thought at the end of the story, it does not mean that the narrator removes or changes the negative characterization of Hezekiah in the story. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the LORD’s judgment on Judah in Isa 39:6–7 is caused by the action of Hezekiah in Isa 39:2.¹⁶⁶ The narrator does not make any comment or evaluation for this event, even though he characterizes Hezekiah positively at the end of the story. Although the negative characterization of Hezekiah is diluted by reporting Hezekiah’s response to the word of the LORD, the negative characterization is continued. In this way, the narrator indicates the limitation of the human character Hezekiah, who was positively characterized in the previous narratives.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Young, *Isaiah*, 539.

¹⁶⁴ Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 437.

¹⁶⁵ Young, *Isaiah*, 539.

¹⁶⁶ Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 295.

¹⁶⁷ Oswalt asserts that “picture here is essentially negative. Hezekiah is not the promised ‘child’; he is not infallible. Judah’s hope rests in One who is yet to come” (Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 697).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the narrator does not tell Hezekiah's narratives following a chronological sequence of events. The story of the Babylonian envoy, which happened after the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery, occurred before the event of Sennacherib's invasion against Judah in Isa 36–37.¹⁶⁸ Thus, the narrator intentionally arranges the Hezekiah narratives in order to demonstrate a literary reason.¹⁶⁹

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah in a positive way as a round character that develops his character within the story in 2 Kgs 18–20. In Isa 36–39, the narrator also characterizes Hezekiah positively, but he presents the Hezekiah narratives in his own way by omitting, inserting, and modifying the Hezekiah narratives of 2 Kgs 18–20. He omits the event of Hezekiah's tribute to Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 in order to remove the negative characterization of Hezekiah. On the other hand, the narrator adds Hezekiah's psalm in Isa 38:9–20 to characterize him positively by revealing his feelings and thoughts when he was healed by the LORD. At the same time, the narrator also modifies some parts of Hezekiah's narratives not only to portray him positively but also to demonstrate the literary structure of Isaiah. Thus, the narrator intentionally omits, inserts, and rephrases Hezekiah's narratives in order to portray Hezekiah as a pious king.

¹⁶⁸ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 455; Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 692.

¹⁶⁹ Ackroyd, "Interpretation," 152–80. According to Ackroyd, the present arrangement may be due to a lack of chronological information, but it would appear more likely that the arrangement, whether or not chronological information was available, has some deliberate purpose. Bostock also points out that "[i]t is widely accepted that they [Hezekiah's illness and recovery and the visit of the envoys of Babylonians] do not follow the siege chronologically, but have been placed here for literary and theological reasons" (Bostock, *Trust*, 81).

4.3.3.2 The Characterization of Hezekiah in Isaiah

In 2 Kgs 18–20, the narrator begins Hezekiah’s narratives with the introductory formula (2 Kgs 18:1–8) and ends it with the concluding formula (2 Kgs 20:20–21) to demarcate Hezekiah’s reign. Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 are told without any introduction or conclusion. Reporting Hezekiah’s narratives without the introduction and conclusion, the narrator embeds Hezekiah’s narratives in the Book of Isaiah. Thus, Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 are not separated from the other parts of Isaiah, but should be read in the context of the whole Book of Isaiah. The present study will be utilized to see the characterization of Hezekiah in Isaiah. First we will see the relationship between Hezekiah’s narratives (Isa 36–39) and the other parts of the book, and then the present study examines the characterization of Hezekiah in the royal narratives.

4.3.3.2.1 The Hezekiah Narratives in the Context of Isaiah

Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 are not isolated from the other parts of the book, but they are closely related to the context of the entire Book of Isaiah. However, many scholars disagree about their understanding of the relationship between Hezekiah’s narratives (Isa 36–39) and the other parts of the book in terms of the composition. Until the end of twentieth century, the understanding of the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39 was very simple. Since the early nineteenth century, the overwhelming agreement has been that Isa 36–39 was transferred from the Kings account and put in the present position as “a historical appendix.”¹⁷⁰ Then, in the late

¹⁷⁰ Williamson, *Book*, 205. However, there were some scholars who did not agree with this generalization. Gonçalves lists these scholars in his book, *L’Expédition de Sennachérib* (Gonçalves, *L’Expédition*, 343) and Laato also lists these scholars in his book (Laato, *Immanuel*, 271–96).

twentieth century, many scholars recognize the importance of Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 in terms of the composition of the entire Book of Isaiah.¹⁷¹ Melugin asserts that Second Isaiah was influenced by First Isaiah, including the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39.¹⁷² Answering the question: “Why did the redactor not place the prophetic utterances of chapter 40–55 in the context of the ministry of a sixth century prophet?” Melugin said that the redactor of Isaiah was interested in making a connection between the word given to Isaiah in Isa 1–39 and the exile to Babylon in Isa 40–55. For this reason the redactor juxtaposed Isa 40–55 to Hezekiah's story in Isa 36–39.¹⁷³

Following Melugin, Ackroyd has studied the functional role of Hezekiah's narratives in order to explain the sequence of Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39, which are not arranged in chronological sequence.¹⁷⁴ Ackroyd argues that Hezekiah's narratives (Isa 36–39) are closely related to the second half of the book.¹⁷⁵ Ackroyd's explanation does not apply to Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20, which have the same order. Clements also points out that Hezekiah's story is a response to issues in First Isaiah, such as the remnant (Isa 37:31–32), the fate and destiny of Jerusalem (Isa 37:35), and the exile (Isa 39:5–7).¹⁷⁶ By developing Ackroyd's 1974 work,¹⁷⁷ Groves

¹⁷¹ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 544.

¹⁷² Melugin, *Formation*, 177. Melugin also asserts that “the closest thing to a setting for chs. 40ff. is the prophecy of Isaiah to Hezekiah concerning the exile to Babylon.”

¹⁷³ Melugin, *Formation*, 178.

¹⁷⁴ Ackroyd, “Isaiah 36–39,” 152–80. Motyer also points out that the narrator is not concerned “to trace the history of helplessness or the manoeuvring of faithlessness but to bring us to the point where he will demonstrate what faith can do and how realistic it is in the hard political crises of life” (Motyer, *Isaiah*, 279).

¹⁷⁵ Ackroyd argues that Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 clearly make a contrast between Hezekiah and Ahaz (Isa 6:1–9:1) in terms of faithfulness. Ackroyd also suggests that Hezekiah's narratives (Isa 36–39) present him as an example of the pious king before the disaster of the Babylonian exile (Ackroyd, “Isaiah 36–39,” 152–80).

¹⁷⁶ Clements, “Beyond Tradition History,” 95–113.

¹⁷⁷ Groves extensively uses Ackroyd's 1974 study (Ackroyd, “Interpretation,” 392–52), which was republished in his book, *Studies in the Religions* (Ackroyd, “Interpretation,” 152–80).

makes a connection between Hezekiah's story and the first half of the Book of Isaiah.¹⁷⁸ Conrad also recognizes Ackroyd's works¹⁷⁹ and focuses on 'fear not' oracle in the royal narrative of Ahaz and Hezekiah by pointing out many structural similarities between these two royal narratives.¹⁸⁰ Conrad asserts that "fear not" oracle in Ahaz's story (Isa 10:24–27) is fulfilled by the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story and the Assyrian boasts in Ahaz's story (Isa 10) also reappears in the Rabshakeh's speeches. Conrad's suggestion is developed by Smelik who finds the connection between Isaiah's oracle in Ahaz's story (Isa 10) and the Rabshakeh's speeches in Hezekiah's story (Isa 36–37).¹⁸¹ Smelik also summarizes the previous scholars' observations for the understanding of Isa 36–39 in their present context.¹⁸² One of his five main points, which is very important concerning the relationship between the Hezekiah narratives and other parts of Isaiah, is that the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39 play an important role in bridging between the first half and the second half of the book. Pointing to the fulfilment of the word of the LORD, Seitz provides the reasons why the Book of Isaiah came to be linked to the prophet

¹⁷⁸ Groves, *Actualization*, 191–201.

¹⁷⁹ Ackroyd, "Isaiah 36–39," 152–80. Ackroyd's article was originally published in the book, *Von Kanaan bis Kerala*, in 1982 (Ackroyd, "Isaiah 36–39," 3–21).

¹⁸⁰ Conrad, "Royal Narratives," 67–81.

¹⁸¹ Konkel, "Source," 462–82. On the other hand, Williamson suggests that "Smelik, Groves, and Conrad were unaware of each other's work (to judge from absence of citation)" (Williamson, *Book*, 191).

¹⁸² Smelik, "Distortion," 70–93. Smelik suggests five points concerning the Hezekiah narratives. First, Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 are exceptional in the context of the Deuteronomistic History because it is the only place where Isaiah's prophecies are separately recorded in the books of the Latter Prophet. Second, Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 are exceptional in the context of the Deuteronomistic History because they contain poetic elements. Third, the narrative of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery is "better composed" in Isa 38 than in 2 Kgs 20:1–11. Fourth, Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 function as an editorial bridge between the preceding parts and the following parts of Isaiah. Fifth, the order of Hezekiah's narratives is more logical in the context of Isaiah. Smelik explains that in Isa 38:6, the LORD said that He will save Hezekiah and the city of Jerusalem from the hand of Assyria, which already happened in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in Isa 36–37. Thus, the last two narratives of Hezekiah would take place before the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in terms of the chronological order. Smelik asserts that the present unexpected order in Hezekiah's story is perfectly fitted in the context of Isaiah, because Hezekiah's story leads directly to the Babylonian period which occurs in Isa 40 and following chapters. Then Smelik concludes that "the present arrangement of the Hezekiah-narratives is only understandable from the perspective of the book of Isaiah, not from that of Kings."

Isaiah, which Ackroyd asked. Seitz says “because Isaiah spoke of the assault on Zion by Babylon (39:5–7), and because he also spoke of God’s abiding protection over that same Zion (37:35).”¹⁸³ Seitz explains that when the first one is fulfilled, Isa 40:1 can have the LORD speak in the setting of the divine council of judgment that had been carried out in the next verse (Isa 40:2). Concerning the second, the fact that the LORD is the active force in the promise of restoration for a remnant from Jerusalem in Isa 37:32, will be the core of the issue of Isa 40–66.¹⁸⁴ For Seitz, Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 are very important for understanding the second half of the book (Isa 40–66).

Hezekiah’s narratives are closely related to the preceding and following chapters of the Book of Isaiah. Thus, it is necessary to see the main themes, terms, and plot of Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39, which echo throughout the entire Book of Isaiah.

First of all, the Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 relate to the preceding chapters of the book. In his book, *Reading Isaiah*, Conrad makes six points of comparison between Isa 36–39 and Isa 7.¹⁸⁵ First, Conrad points out that both royal narratives begin “by indicating that an invading army has entered the territory and represents a threat to the city of Jerusalem.” The narrator begins the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative with a similar phrase that the narrator utilizes in Ahaz’s narrative (Isa 7:1). In Isa 36:1, the narrator reports that Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them all. In Isa 7:1, the narrator states that during the reign of Ahaz the kings of Aram and Israel came up against Jerusalem, but they could not capture it. The narrator utilizes the similar introductory

¹⁸³ Seitz, *Destiny*, 45.

¹⁸⁴ Seitz, *Destiny*, 44–45.

¹⁸⁵ Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, 38–39.

phrases in order to introduce the royal narratives, but the situations of these two royal narratives are different. The allied forces of Aram and Israel failed to conquer Jerusalem, while the army of Assyria succeeded in capturing the fortified cities of Judah, which indicates that Hezekiah's situation was more difficult than the situation of Ahaz.

Second, both narratives focus on the same geographical setting: "the conduit of the Upper Pool on the highway to the Fuller's field" (Isa 7:3; Isa 36:2). At the beginning of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative the narrator reminds the narratee of the previous royal narrative in Isa 7 by reporting the same place where Ahaz and Isaiah met. The narrator reports that the Rabshakeh was standing *בְּחֵעֶלֶת הַבְּרֵכָה הָעֶלְיוֹנָה בְּמִסְלַח שְׂדֵה כֹּבֵס* ("at the conduit of the Upper Pool on the highway to the Fuller's field") in Isa 36:2, which is the fateful meeting place where Ahaz rejected the prophetic counsel (Isa 7:3). In Isa 36, the fateful spot finds not king and prophet, but the Rabshakeh, an Assyrian official, and Hezekiah's three representatives, Hilkiyah, Shebna, and Joah. Although the people who were at these scenes are different, the location is exactly the same. Reporting the place where the Rabshakeh stood in Isa 36:2, the narrator evokes the narratee of the earlier scene of threat against the city of Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah's father, Ahaz (Isa 7).

Third, in both narratives, the narrator reports the great distress of the Judean kings: Ahaz and Hezekiah. The narrator states that the heart of Ahaz and the hearts of his people trembled as trees of the forest when they heard that the Aram had allied itself with Ephraim. In Hezekiah's narratives, Hezekiah tore down his clothes when he heard the reports of his officers concerning the Rabshakeh's speeches. Fourth, the narrator also brings a "fear not" oracle to both Judean kings: Ahaz in Isa 7:4–9 and Hezekiah in Isa

37:6–7. Fifth, both narratives offer a sign to both kings as confirmation of the word of the LORD (Isa 7:11; 37:30). However, the responses of these two kings are so different. Ahaz refused to ask a sign nor asked the prophetic counsel in the national crisis, while Hezekiah responded in prayer (Isa 37:1–4, 14–21), sought prophetic counsel (Isa 37:2–4) and asked for a sign.¹⁸⁶ In this way, Hezekiah’s narratives are closely related to Ahaz’s story by means of contrast between Hezekiah and Ahaz. Finally, the narrator reports the sparing of the king and Jerusalem, but this is followed by the prediction of Isaiah that terrible disaster will come to Judah in Isa 7:15–25 and Isa 39:6–7.¹⁸⁷

Groves also makes some connections between Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 and the previous chapters of the book of Isaiah.¹⁸⁸ Groves asserts that the names of Hezekiah’s officers, Shebna and Eliakim (Isa 36:3), are found in Isa 22:15–22 as the subject of a separate narrative. At the same time, personal names which appear in Hezekiah’s narrative are also found in the Book of Isaiah. The name of Hezekiah

¹⁸⁶ Ackroyd also observes some points of comparison between these two royal narratives in Isaiah. First, both royal narratives begin with historical notes in Isa 6:1 (Isa 7:1) and in Isa 36:1. Second, both royal narratives occurred at the same place, the water conduit near the highway in Isa 7:3 and Isa 36:2. Third, both royal narratives show prophetic signs in Isa 7:11, 14 and Isa 37:30 and 38:7, 22. Fourth, both royal narratives utilize the same clause *קנאת יהוה צבאות תעשה זאת* (“the zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this”) in Isa 9:6 and Isa 37:32. Fifth, the reference to the *במעלות אָהוּ* (“on the stairway of Ahaz”) in Isa 38:8 shows a clear link between these two royal narratives (Ackroyd, “Isaiah 36–39,” 152–80).

¹⁸⁷ Conrad also points out some differences between these two royal narratives, which play a significant role within the narrative itself. Now he deals with Ahaz’s narratives more widely. Conrad makes eight points: 1) the narrator reports that the enemy of Judah could not conquer Jerusalem in Isa 7:1, but in Isa 36:1 the narrator states that Sennacherib took all the fortified cities of Judah; 2) the destruction brought by the army of Assyria is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prediction in Isa 7:14–25; 3) some aspects of the Rabshakeh’s speeches recall the previous threats of the LORD (Isa 36:10 and Isa 10:5–6; Isa 36:18–20 and Isa 10:8–11); 4) the prediction of Isaiah concerning the eventual downfall of the king of Assyria in Isa 10:15–19 is fulfilled in Isa 37:36–38; 5) Hezekiah’s actions to accept and to request a sign clearly contrast with Ahaz’s rejection of a sign in Isa 7:12; 6) the contrast between Hezekiah and Ahaz concerning the relationship to the prophet Isaiah; 7) the contrast between these two kings in terms of faithfulness; 8) the ideal king who was predicted in Isa 8:23–9:6 is partly fulfilled in the person of Hezekiah, because both narratives utilize the same expression: “the zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this” in Isa 9:6 and Isa 37:32 (Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, 41–46).

¹⁸⁸ Groves, *Actualization*, 191–201.

appears only at the beginning of the book (Isa 1:1), but the name of the prophet Isaiah appeared in the first part of Isaiah (Isa 1:1; 2:1; 7:1–8; 20:1–6), who is an important character for the connection between Hezekiah and the LORD. The name of the Cushite king of Egypt, Tirhakah (Isa 39:7) is found in Isa 18–19. Merodach-Baladan, the king of Babylon in Isa 39:1 is also found in Isa 13–14 and Isa 21.¹⁸⁹

He also points out that the term בָּטַח (“to trust”) and the title the LORD “the Holy One of Israel” appears several times in Isaiah. The narrator uses the term בָּטַח fifteen times more in Isaiah in different forms.¹⁹⁰ Groves also emphasizes that the theme of Egypt echoes Isaiah’s anti-Egyptian oracles in Isa 19–20. He also asserts that in Isa 37:16, 32, and 39:5, the narrator includes the term צְבָאוֹת (“Hosts”) with the divine name יְהוָה (“the LORD”), while in the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20, the term צְבָאוֹת does not appear (2 Kgs 19:15, 31, 20:16). However, some of the points of Groves’ suggestions are weak. For example, the term בָּטַח , it is very common in the context of the entire Book of Isaiah, while in 2 Kgs 18–20, this term is very significant. Although Groves focuses on the first half of the Book of Isaiah, his suggestions are not limited to the first half of the book; rather his observations cover the entire Book of Isaiah. Thus, the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39 are related to both the first and the second half of the Book of Isaiah.

¹⁸⁹ In Isa 37:20, the narrator also mentions the kingdoms of the land which are found in the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the foreign countries in Isa 15–23 and as the “coastlands” and the “border lands” of Isa 40–48 and Isa 60–66. At the same time in his prayer, Hezekiah asked for deliverance that $\text{וְיָדְעוּ כָּל-מַמְלְכוֹת הָאָרֶץ כִּי-אַתָּה יְהוָה לְבַדְּךָ}$ (“and all kingdoms of the land shall know that you are the LORD, you alone”) in Isa 37:20, which is the central theme of Isa 40–48. In Isa 37:23, the title for the LORD, “the Holy One of Israel,” is utilized, which is employed so often in Isaiah as an almost identifying marker for the LORD (Isa 1:3; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 41:14; 43:3; 43:14; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 54:5; 60:14).

¹⁹⁰ Isaiah 12:2; 14:30; 26:3, 4; 30:12; 31:1; 32:9, 10, 11, 17; 42:17; 47:8, 10; 50:10; 59:4.

While one can see connections to the first half of Isaiah, scholars also suggest that Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 are closely related to the second half of the book. Ackroyd argues that Isa 39 looks forward to the Babylonian exile, because this theme is explicitly mentioned in Isa 39:6–7. He asserts that this theme lies behind some of the other parts of more allusive language. In Isa 39:3, the envoys from Babylon are introduced as ones who came from a “far country,” which is found also in Isa 43:6.¹⁹¹

By examining the word of the LORD in Isa 37:23–29, Groves provides a list which shows the close relationship between Hezekiah's story and the following chapters.¹⁹² First, Isa 37:26 reminds one of Deutero-Isaiah in terms of theme, form, and phraseology. However, Williamson points out that “there is a difference between the Deutero-Isaianic theme of God announcing his intentions beforehand and the unparalleled thought of the present verse that he has actually performed in this way long ago.”¹⁹³ Second, in Isa 37:25, the king of Assyria boasts of himself saying that he has dried up all the rivers of Egypt. If this is an Exodus motif, this verse may be compared with Isa 51:10, where the same verb is used. However, in Isa 51:10, it was “the sea,” not “the streams of Egypt,” which were dried up at the Exodus. Third, in Isa 37:27, the image of grass is used for showing what is transient “as transient and easily blighted,” which refers in the opening oracle of Deutero-Isaiah in Isa 40:6–8. However, Groves' vocabulary links are weak, because Isa 40:6–8 probably reflects Isa 28:1–4. Fourth, Groves also compares the mention of idols in Hezekiah's prayer in Isa 37:16–20 with Deutero-Isaiah. Like Groves' fourth argument, there is no reason to limit the comparison

¹⁹¹ Ackroyd, “Interpretation,” 152–180

¹⁹² Groves, *Actualization*, 198–99. Ackroyd also points out that Isa 37:23–29 is “at certain points closely related to Deutero-Isaiah,” however, he does not deal with it extensively (Ackroyd, “Isaiah 36–39,” 152–80).

¹⁹³ Williamson, *Book*, 195.

to these texts. Fifth, following Kaiser, Groves compares the phrase “for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David” in Isa 37:35 with the phrase “for my own sake” in Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 43:25; 48:9; 55:5) and the phrase “for the sake of my servant David” in Kings (1 Kgs 11:13, 34; 15:2; 2 Kgs 8:9).

Among the five suggestions of Groves, I cannot accept his second and third arguments, which connect the vocabulary connection between Hezekiah’s narratives and Deutero-Isaiah. I think his arguments are simply wrong because the text does not speak in that way. However, the thematic link between Isa 39 and Isa 40 are very important to understand the relationship between Hezekiah’s narratives (Isa 36–39) and the second half of the book (Isa 40–66). In the same way, Groves’ fourth and fifth points are also significant to see the connection of Hezekiah’s narratives to the following chapters.

Thus, it is necessary to see the thematic relationship between Isa 36–39 and the second half of the book. The narrator reveals the theme of the remnant and survivors in Isa 37:4 and Isa 37:31–32, which is one of the main themes in Isa 1–33.¹⁹⁴ Although Sennacherib treated the LORD as the gods of other nations, Hezekiah addressed the LORD as God of Israel and the God of all the kingdoms of earth. When Hezekiah prayed for deliverance from the hand of Assyria, he prayed that “all kingdoms of the land shall know that you are the LORD, you alone” (Isa 37:20). This confession is also presented in Isa 13–27 and is the central theme of Isa 40–48.¹⁹⁵ The story of the Babylonian envoys in Isa 39 finds full development in First Isaiah (Isa 13–14, 21), which describes the time of Babylon’s history. Isaiah predicted that some of Hezekiah’s

¹⁹⁴ Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 401–2.

¹⁹⁵ Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 250–51.

descendants will be taken to Babylon and become servants of the king Babylon, who plays a significant role in Second Isaiah (Isa 40–53).¹⁹⁶

The Rabshakeh also used the word עֲצָה (“plan”) in Isa 36:5 in order to attack Hezekiah’s military strategy. The term עֲצָה (“plan”) appears repeatedly in Isaiah.¹⁹⁷ In Isaiah, the narrator shows the LORD’s plan that He followed “begins with destruction of the land and leads to Cyrus’s rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple,”¹⁹⁸ which is deeply related to the main theme of the book: “Yahweh’s interests in and devotion to the city of Jerusalem.”¹⁹⁹ In this main theme of the book, Hezekiah’s story in Isa 36–39 plays an important role to show the LORD’s concern for the city of Jerusalem.

In Isa 37:35, the LORD promised to Hezekiah to save the city of Jerusalem. He also provided the reason why the LORD will save Jerusalem from the hand of Assyria. He said וְגִנֹּחֵי עַל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ לְמַעַנִי וּלְמַעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי (“and I will defend this city to save it for my own sake and for the sake of David, my servant”). Kaiser asserts that the phrase לְמַעַנִי (“for my own sake”) and וּלְמַעַן דָּוִד עַבְדִּי (“for the sake of David, my servant”) are later redactional additions, because the phrase “for my own sake” appears in Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 43:25; 48:9; 55:5), but the phrase “for the sake of David, my servant” is found in Kings (1 Kgs 11:13, 34; 15:4; 2 Kgs 8:9). Kaiser sees Isa 37:34 as the concluding formula and asserts that the word of the LORD has been concluded at the end of Isa 37:34.²⁰⁰ However, it is not later redaction, but the response of the LORD to Hezekiah’s prayer. In Isa 37:20, Hezekiah prayed that וְעַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוֹשִׁיעֵנו מִיַּדוֹ וַיִּדְעוּ

¹⁹⁶ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 546.

¹⁹⁷ The feminine noun עֲצָה appears once in the Hezekiah story (Isa 36:5), but this word appears seventeen times more in the entire Book of Isaiah (Isa 5:19; 8:10; 11:2; 14:26; 16:3; 19:3, 11, 17; 25:1; 28:29; 29:15; 30:1; 40:13; 44:26; 46:10, 11; 47:13).

¹⁹⁸ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 545.

¹⁹⁹ Konkel, “Hezekiah,” 192.

²⁰⁰ Kaiser, *Isaiah 13–39*, 395.

כָּל-מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ כִּי-אַתָּה יְהוָה לְבַדְּךָ (“so now, O LORD our God, save us from his [Sennacherib] hand, that all kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are the LORD”). Hezekiah asked the LORD to save Jerusalem and then he provided the reason why the LORD should deliver the city of Jerusalem from the hand of Assyria: the honor of the LORD. In saving the city of Jerusalem the world would see that the LORD was faithful to His promises, and that the LORD was able to protect His people from the hands of a powerful enemy.²⁰¹ At the same time it is not just for the LORD’s own sake to save Jerusalem, but the LORD delivered Jerusalem because of the response of the people. In Ezek 36:22, Ezekiel said similar words to the house of Israel as to the LORD, saying לֹא לְמַעַנְכֶם אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה בַיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי אִם-לְשֵׁם-קְדוֹשִׁי (“I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake”). Ezekiel revealed that the LORD will deliver the people of Israel from the exile in order to prove his own godhood. Oswalt points out that the repentance of the people of Israel plays a significant role in both cases.²⁰² In Ezekiel and in Isaiah the LORD revealed that the deliverance of the city of Jerusalem is caused by His faithfulness to His own character, but “without these human responses there is no deliverance.”²⁰³ The narrator clearly shows this through the word of the LORD in Isa 38:6. The narrator again reports the promise of the LORD to deliver the city of Jerusalem, but the LORD revealed that I will defend this city because I have heard Hezekiah’s prayer and have seen his tears in Isa 38:5. Thus, although there is no mention

²⁰¹ Young, *Isaiah*, 503.

²⁰² Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 666.

²⁰³ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 667.

about Hezekiah's response in Isa 37:35, the LORD delivered Jerusalem through the faithful response of Hezekiah.²⁰⁴

Thus, Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 are explicated in the context of the entire book. The narrator relates Hezekiah's story to the Book of Isaiah thematically and literarily. The narrator not only presents Hezekiah's story deeply embedded in the context of Isaiah, but also characterizes him in the context of the Book of Isaiah, to which the present study now turns.

4.3.3.2.2 The Characterization of Hezekiah in the "Royal Narratives"

As mentioned above, the narrator relates Hezekiah's story to Isa 36–39 in the context of the entire Book of Isaiah. Among many other things, Hezekiah's narratives are closely related to Ahaz's story in Isa 7, which are called "royal narratives."²⁰⁵ The narrator in Isa 36–39 connects Hezekiah's story to Ahaz's story through the words of Isaiah in Isa 38:8. Isaiah said that the LORD will make the shadow move backwards ten steps on the stairway of Ahaz. Isaiah employed the phrase *בַּמַּעְלֹחַ אֶחָז* ("on the stairway of Ahaz") in order to indicate the instrument for measuring the shadow. Without reporting this phrase, the narrator just states that the LORD made the shadow move back ten steps when Isaiah cried out the LORD in the proto Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 20:11.

²⁰⁴ On the other hand, the LORD said that He will deliver Jerusalem for the sake of David. However, it does not mean that the LORD will save the city because of David's personal merit, but He will deliver the city because of his promise to David in 2 Sam 7:16, in which the LORD promised to establish forever the throne of the Davidic kingdom. Thus, Hezekiah, who is sitting on the throne of the Davidic dynasty as the son of David, should be protected because of the LORD's promise. In Hezekiah's story in Isa 36–39, Hezekiah was represented as the servant of the LORD, David (Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 667). Thus, the LORD saved Jerusalem for the sake of David in Isa 37:35.

²⁰⁵ Generally speaking the royal narratives in Isaiah are Ahaz's story in Isa 7 and Hezekiah's story in Isa 36–39, but the exact boundary of Ahaz's story as royal narrative is disputed among scholars. Basically there are two perspectives to understand Ahaz's narratives. Ackroyd sees the accounts of Ahaz's story in Isa 6:1–9:6, rather than just Isa 7 (Ackroyd, "Isaiah 36–39," 152–80). On the other hand, Conrad just deals with Isa 7 as Ahaz's story (Conrad, "Royal Narratives," 67–81).

Konkel asserts that this phrase was originally in Isaiah to introduce the motif of the contrast between Hezekiah and Ahaz.²⁰⁶

Although many scholars point out the relationship between these two royal narratives,²⁰⁷ Conrad provides one of the fullest lists of the similarities between the royal narratives in Isa 7 and Isa 36–39.²⁰⁸ As mentioned above, Conrad provides six points of similarity between the royal narratives.²⁰⁹ Although these six similarities between the royal narratives indicate that these two stories are closely related and parallel to each other, they are not helpful in understanding the characterization of Hezekiah. Besides the similarities between the royal narratives, there are the differences between them, which help the reader to understand the characterization of Hezekiah.

As mentioned above, the narrator reports Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 by the dramatic narrative. Thus, it is not surprising that Hezekiah speaks several times in Hezekiah's narratives, but Ahaz only speaks once in Isa 7:12, where Ahaz rejected the

²⁰⁶ Konkel, "Sources," 476. See appendix 1 for more information on this issue.

²⁰⁷ Ackroyd was the first scholar who made a possible connection between Ahaz's story and Hezekiah's story (Ackroyd, "Isaiah 36–39," 152–80). He suggests that Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 should be regarded as part of Isaiah rather than as belonging to 2 Kgs 18–20. Brownlee believes that Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 come from the same source as Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20 and places them in Isaiah. He asserts that the Isaiah-Ahaz story in Isa 6–8 is paralleled by the Isaiah-Hezekiah story in Isa 36–39 (Brownlee, *Qumran Scrolls*, 247–259). Evans follows Brownlee in asserting that the Book of Isaiah consisted of two parts: Isa 1–33 and Isa 34–66 (Evans, "Unity," 129–47). Evans proves his suggestion by providing the evidence from Qumran scrolls which has a big gap between Isa 33 and Isa 34. He examines the parallel between Isa 1–33 and Isa 34–66. Seitz seeks to trace the development of traditions in Isa 1–39 by focusing on the theme of the promise to Zion. Examining Isa 36–39, Seitz points out that Hezekiah is portrayed as "the promised faithful counterpoint to a disbelieving and therefore disestablished Ahaz in fulfillment of 7:14; 9:1–7" (Seitz, *Destiny*, 89–90).

²⁰⁸ Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, 38–40.

²⁰⁹ First, both stories begin with the threat of a foreign army against the city of Jerusalem (Isa 7:1; 36:2); second, the location of the confrontation between Ahaz and Isaiah is identical with the location of the meeting between the Rabshakeh and Hezekiah's officials (Isa 7:3; 36:2); third, both stories indicate a sense of distress because the foreign army invaded Judah and Jerusalem (Isa 7:2; 37:1); fourth, both stories have the same oracle: "do not fear" (Isa 7:4; 37:6); fifth, Isaiah offered signs to both kings (Isa 7:10–16; 37:30–32); sixth, both stories end with Isaiah's ominous prediction for Judah (Isa 7:17–25; 39:6–7).

sign of the LORD.²¹⁰ Hezekiah spoke to his officers, to Isaiah, and to the LORD. By reporting the direct speech of Hezekiah, the narrator presents the character of Hezekiah as a more significant character than Ahaz. Even the narrator ends Hezekiah's narratives with his words in Isa 39:8, but the narrator banishes Ahaz from the scene at the end of Ahaz's story.

The narrator also makes a difference between these two royal narratives by reporting the responses of Ahaz and Hezekiah. As mentioned above, the narrator depicts the army of Assyria as being far more terrifying than the combined forces of Aram and Israel. However, the responses of these two kings are different. Although Hezekiah was attacked by the more powerful army who captured the fortified cities of Judah, Hezekiah responded in more faithful ways than Ahaz. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by making a contrast between Ahaz and Hezekiah.

The narrator continually makes a contrast between these two kings within the story. Isaiah's first response to Hezekiah's request to pray to the LORD was not to be afraid. In Isa 37:6, Isaiah said to Hezekiah אַל-תִּירָא ("do not be afraid"). In Isa 7:4, Isaiah emphatically gives a similar response to Ahaz. Isaiah encouraged Ahaz הַשְׁמֵר וְהַשְׁקֵט אֵל ("take care, and be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted"). Isaiah repeats a similar command four times in Isa 7:4.²¹¹ Isaiah gave his commandments to these two kings in order to comfort them in the threatening situation.

²¹⁰The reading of Isa 7:12 is that לֹא אֶשְׂאֵל וְלֹא אֶנְסֶה אֶת־יְהוָה ("I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test").

²¹¹ In Isa 7:4, Isaiah commanded Ahaz four times by utilizing four imperatives consecutively. The first term is הַשְׁמֵר which is *niphal* imperative masculine singular of שָׁמַר ("to watch") and the second term הַשְׁקֵט is *hiphil* imperative masculine singular of שָׁקַט ("to keep quiet"). The third term תִּירָא is *qal* imperfect second person masculine singular of יָרָא ("to fear"), but the imperfect verb תִּירָא is connected to the term אַל which is used for forbid. Thus the phrase אַל-תִּירָא is understood as a negative command. The last term יִרָךְ is *qal* imperfect third person masculine singular of רָכַךְ ("to be tender"). The imperfect verb יִרָךְ is also used with the term אֵל like the previous one. Thus, Isaiah used four commands in Isa 7:4.

Isaiah commanded Hezekiah only once, but Isaiah emphatically commanded Ahaz by using four imperatives consecutively, which indicates that Ahaz felt more threatened by the foreign invaders. In this way the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a faithful king by making a contrast between Hezekiah and Ahaz.

After being comforted by Isaiah, Ahaz refused prophetic counsel in the midst of the national crisis, while Hezekiah responded in prayer (Isa 37:1–4, 14–21) and sought prophetic counsel (Isa 37:2–4). At the same time Hezekiah’s prayer and request were honored by Isaiah (Isa 37:21–35). Similarly, when Isaiah encouraged Ahaz to ask for a sign from the LORD, Ahaz refused to ask for a sign from the LORD (Isa 7:10–12). When Isaiah asked that *שאל־לךּ אות מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ* (“ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God”), Ahaz said that *לֹא־אֶשְׁאַל וְלֹא־אֶנְסֶה אֶת־יְהוָה* (“I will not ask and I will not put the LORD to the test”) in Isa 7:12,²¹² which indicates Ahaz’s unbelief hypocritically.²¹³ On the other hand, in Hezekiah’s story in Isa 36–39, there are two signs. In Isa 38:7, Isaiah provided a sign after bringing the word of the LORD to add fifteen years of life and to protect Hezekiah and Jerusalem from Assyria, which suggests that “the royal house, when it stands firm in the promise to David, has the power to reverse a prophetic sentence of death and save the city through proper intercession (Isa 38:1–6).”²¹⁴ Here the sign functions as a confirmation of the promises of the LORD, which is the complete opposite to the response of Ahaz who refused to ask for a sign when Isaiah offered.

²¹² Wildberger asserts that the second verb *נסה* (“to test”) is explanatory. Thus, the first verb *שאל* (“to ask”) means to desire to put the LORD to the test (Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12*, 305).

²¹³ Oswalt, *Isaiah 1–39*, 206. Oswalt contends that the words of Ahaz are all in vain, because “[h]e has already concluded that his only hope is alliance with Assyria.” Then, Oswalt concludes that the words of Ahaz “I will not put the LORD to the test” indicate Ahaz’s unbelief.

²¹⁴ Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 13.

In Isa 38:22, Hezekiah himself asked for a sign from the LORD. After recovering from his sickness by Isaiah's treatment (Isa 38:21), Hezekiah said *מָה אוֹת כִּי אֶעֱלֶה בֵּית יְהוָה* (“what sign [is there] that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?”). Here Hezekiah asked for a sign that he would enter into the house of the LORD, which indicates Hezekiah's faithfulness to worship the LORD at His house.²¹⁵ Thus, the narrator clearly presents the two royal narratives in diametrically opposite ways in order to portray Hezekiah as a pious king who responded faithfully during the national crisis.

These two royal narratives clearly show the exact contrast between Ahaz and Hezekiah. Ahaz is portrayed as an unfaithful king by refusing a sign from the LORD, which indicates Ahaz's unbelief. However, Hezekiah is characterized as a faithful king by asking the LORD for a sign, which indicates Hezekiah's trust in the LORD. Thus, the narrator uses two royal narratives in Isaiah to characterize Hezekiah positively through a contrast between these two Judean kings.

On the other hand, the narrator portrays these two Judean kings in a similar way. Hearing Ahaz's response, Isaiah announced the Immanuel sign to Ahaz with the prediction of Assyrian invasion in Isa 7:10–17, which was the result of Ahaz's unbelief.²¹⁶ In Isa 39:6–7, Isaiah brought the word of the LORD for the Babylonian exile, which was caused by the reaction of Hezekiah in Isa 39:2. In this way, the narrator portrays these two Judean kings negatively. Although the narrator clearly makes a contrast between Ahaz and Hezekiah in the royal narratives in order to present Hezekiah as a pious king, he also presents Hezekiah negatively at the end of the story in order to indicate the limitation of the human king, Hezekiah. In this way, the narrator sets up the

²¹⁵ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 497.

²¹⁶ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 159.

second half of the book by introducing the Babylonian exile. Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah both positively and negatively in terms of the royal narratives.

4.4 The Function of the Hezekiah Narratives in the Book of Isaiah

The purpose of the previous section is to understand the characterization of Hezekiah in the Hezekiah narratives (Isa 36–39) and in the royal narratives in Isaiah. The present study has revealed that the narrator characterizes Hezekiah externally and internally as a positive character who totally trusts in the LORD and as a negative character who becomes a cause of the Babylonian exile in Hezekiah's narratives. In this way, the narrator intentionally omits, inserts, and rephrases Hezekiah's narratives in order to portray Hezekiah more positively than the Kings version of the story.²¹⁷ At the same time, Hezekiah is also portrayed both positively and negatively by making a comparison between Hezekiah and his father, Ahaz, in the royal narratives in Isaiah. Through Hezekiah's faithful response to the LORD, the city of Jerusalem and the life of Hezekiah are protected by the LORD, but his response to the Babylonian envoys causes the LORD's judgment and leads to the Babylonian exile. Now the present study is going to look at the function of Hezekiah's narratives in Isaiah.

Hezekiah's narratives are placed according to a certain logic in Isaiah, in terms of the thematic structure of the book. The present arrangement of the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39 gives a good flow to the plot of the story, which provides a good sequential presentation between Hezekiah's story and Second Isaiah (Isa 40–55).²¹⁸ The story of

²¹⁷ Most scholars, who hold to the priority of the Kings version over the Isaiah version of Hezekiah's narrative, assert that the account of Isa 38 is a modified version of 2 Kgs 20:1–11 (Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 288; Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 496; Kaiser, *Isaiah 1–39*, 400). Sweeney points out that "the Isaiah version shows a tendency to idealize Hezekiah and to emphasize YHWH's immediate response to Hezekiah's exemplary piety" (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 496).

²¹⁸ Seitz, "Divine Council," 229–47.

the Babylonian envoys which contains the prophecy of the Babylonian exile (Isa 39:6–7) is followed by the story of the return of the Judean people from Babylonian exile. Thus, the last story of Hezekiah provides the continuation into Second Isaiah.²¹⁹ Sweeney also points out that Isa 40–55 are present as “the continuation of the writing of Isaiah in light of the events portrayed in [Isa] 36–39.”²²⁰ In this regard, Hezekiah’s story in Isa 36–39 serves a transitional role between the First and the Second Isaiah.

On the other hand, Isaiah reports the story of the devastation of other nations who ruin the city of Jerusalem in Isa 34:8–15. Then, the story goes on to Hezekiah’s narrative where the narrator reports the promise of the LORD to protect the city of Jerusalem (Isa 37:35), which will be picked up again in Isa 40:1–11. Hezekiah’s story clearly shows that the LORD has “opposite agendas,”²²¹ which is the LORD’s revenge against his enemies in the city (Isa 34:8) and the LORD’s promise to protect Jerusalem (Isa 37:35).²²² The narrator utilizes these opposite agendas of God in order to prepare the way for the LORD’s command to comfort the people of the LORD and rebuild His city (Isa 40:1–11). Thus, the present placement of the Hezekiah narratives is important for the flow of the plot and plays a significant role to present the important theme of the city of Jerusalem in Isaiah.²²³

²¹⁹ Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 243. Seitz also asserts that “in the more sequential presentation ... the visit of Merodach-Baladan should have preceded the 701 B.C. narratives, with the sickness and recovery story holding the initial position.”

²²⁰ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 459.

²²¹ Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 548.

²²² Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 548.

²²³ Konkel, “Hezekiah,” 192. Konkel points out that “the overall theme which characterizes the book as a compositional unit ... is Yahweh’s interest in and devotion to the city of Jerusalem.” Watts also asserts that “[t]he themes that bind the narratives to the rest of the book are Judah and Jerusalem” (Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 549).

At the same time, Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 recall the royal narrative in Isa 7–11, because Hezekiah's narratives indicate the evidence that the LORD's promises in Isa 7–11 were fulfilled.²²⁴ Thus, Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, was able to maintain his throne and Jerusalem because of his son, Hezekiah. In Isa 38, however, the narrator states that Hezekiah received additional fifteen years of life, which symbolized the mortality of the Davidic king. Although the LORD answered Hezekiah's prayer by extending his life, it did not make Hezekiah immortal. Hezekiah was allowed to live on only for fifteen years. At the same time the narrator indicates the end of the monarchy in the story of the envoys from Babylon in Isa 39, which was caused by the response of Hezekiah to the Babylonian envoys.²²⁵

Moreover, the narrator presents Hezekiah's recovery and Jerusalem's protection together in Isa 38. Seitz also asserts that Hezekiah's illness in Isa 38 closely links to the theme of Jerusalem's sickness in Isa 1.²²⁶ In Isa 1, the narrator deals with Jerusalem, whose sacrifices and prayers become an abomination to the LORD. At the end of the book, the narrator describes the emergence of a New Jerusalem (Isa 66:20–24). The narrator states that the New Jerusalem will be God's holy mountain and that the world will go to there in pilgrimage worship (Isa 60:20). This city symbolizes a new age (Isa

²²⁴ Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 97. Seitz contends that Isaiah's proclamations in Ahaz's narrative (Isa 7–11) are fulfilled in Hezekiah's story (Isa 36–38). He says that "Assyria was turned back after gradual assaults that reached right up to the neck. Zion was spared by the prayer of the king and the prophetic word. At the same time, the vineyard was all but destroyed. ... [T]he prophet gives voice to his hopes for a new day following the defeat of Assyria, the sparing of Zion, and the pious deportment of Hezekiah. A shoot will come forth from this remaining stump. What God did once with Immanuel he will do again. But now the king will not just stand as a final bulwark against Israel's sin and God's judgment at the hands of Assyria. A new age of royal government and international peace is envisioned" (Seitz, *Isaiah 1–39*, 97–8).

²²⁵ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 501.

²²⁶ Seitz, *Destiny*, 176–82.

2:2–4)²²⁷ and links with the prophecy of a new creation (Isa 65:17–25).²²⁸ At the same time, the narrator also reveals the vision of God’s plan which will bring Assyria into Palestine (Isa 18–19) and which will later draw Cyrus from Persia to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple (Isa 45–46). The narrator proclaims that the city of Jerusalem, which suffered so tragically, is receiving the consolation of the LORD (Isa 40:2).²²⁹ Thus, in terms of the historical situation, the narrator explains the condition of Jerusalem under the oppression of Assyria in Hezekiah’s story (Isa 36–39), showing what the fate of Jerusalem was to be, and describing how the city is to become the center of the kingdom of the LORD. Thus, like the city of Jerusalem in Isa 1, Hezekiah’s sickness in Isa 38 needs to be healed. In the same way, Hezekiah’s faithful actions in Isa 38 indicate an example for Jerusalem’s sickness to follow in order to achieve the LORD’s plans to create a new creation in Isa 65–66.²³⁰

In this way, Hezekiah’s narratives in Isa 36–39 play an important role in illustrating Isaiah’s attitude toward “historical Jerusalem” and his messages for the city.²³¹ The reign of Hezekiah is a crucial one for Jerusalem. Thus, Hezekiah’s narratives show how the city of Jerusalem survived the national crisis.²³² As mentioned above, the city is spared from the hands of Assyria by Hezekiah’s faithfulness, who totally trusted

²²⁷ Clements, *Isaiah 1–39*, 40. Clements contends that the words of Isaiah are not of a current or previous status of Mount Zion, but “a future promise of a role that it would fulfil in the days to come.”

²²⁸ Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 285.

²²⁹ Oswalt, *Isaiah Chapters 40–66*, 50.

²³⁰ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 459.

²³¹ Konkel, “Hezekiah,” 193. Childs also mentions that “the events which climaxed in the Assyrian invasion of 701 were of decisive importance, and that one’s whole image of the prophet depended on how one judged his relation to this crisis” (Childs, *Isaiah*, 7).

²³² Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 549.

in the LORD. Thus, the faithful response of Hezekiah is very important for the city of Jerusalem.²³³

At the same time the narrator depicts Hezekiah as a faithful king who contrasts with his father, Ahaz. Ahaz's reign is also a crucial one for the city of Jerusalem. However, Ahaz did not act faithfully or trust in the LORD in the Syro-Ephraimite crisis. Nevertheless the city and the throne of Ahaz were maintained because of the promises of the LORD, which were fulfilled in Hezekiah's reign. The narrator utilizes these two royal narratives in order to emphasize Hezekiah's faith and trust in the LORD, which saved the city of Jerusalem.²³⁴ Thus, the character of Hezekiah plays an important role not only in Hezekiah story in Isa 36–39, but also in the entire context of Isaiah in terms of the theme of the LORD's protection of the city of Jerusalem.

The narrator, however, indicates that Jerusalem is saved from the hand of Assyria (Isa 37:36–38) but the city is destined to be exiled to Babylon (Isa 39:6–7). Although the city is saved by the LORD through Hezekiah's prayer, the city will fall by the hand of Babylon, which is caused by Hezekiah's reaction to the Babylonian envoys (Isa 39:2). This tension is well illustrated in the second narrative of Hezekiah, his illness and recovery. When he becomes mortally ill, he prays and receives fifteen years of additional life from the LORD. By his faithfulness Hezekiah is allowed to live longer, but it does not permit him to live forever, just fifteen years more. Hezekiah's additional life is limited. As such the city of Jerusalem is saved by the LORD, but the city will later

²³³ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 501. In Hezekiah's story, Hezekiah is portrayed as a man of intense prayer (Isa 37:2–4, 14–20; 38:2, 10–20), and effective prayer (Isa 37:6–7, 37:21–35; 38:5–8).

²³⁴ Sweeney contends that the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery (Isa 38) should be understood in relation to Sennacherib's invasion against Jerusalem (Isa 36–37), which is saved by Hezekiah's exemplary piety. He continues that Hezekiah and Jerusalem are saved by the LORD, but Hezekiah's deliverance is limited (Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 501).

fall to Babylon. The narrator also ends Hezekiah's narratives with the prediction of the fall of the Davidic monarchy in Isa 39:6–7, which is caused by the response of Hezekiah to the envoys from Babylon. This prediction is also symbolized by the limited additional life of Hezekiah.

The narrator places the Hezekiah narratives in the middle of the book in order to make a bridge between the preceding and the following parts of the book by showing what happens to the city of Jerusalem during the invasion of Assyria. At this point the actions of Hezekiah were very important to understanding both Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 and the entire Book of Isaiah. Thus, the Hezekiah narratives (Isa 36–39) help to unite the entire book thematically and to bridge the gap between the first half of Isaiah (Isa 1–35) and the second half of the book (Isa 40–66).

4.6 Summary

Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 are almost identical to the story in 2 Kgs 18:13—20:19, except for Hezekiah's psalm in Isa 38:9–20. In the Kings account, the narrator explicitly evaluates Hezekiah's reign in extremely positive ways at the introduction of the story, which indicates the narrator's characterization of Hezekiah. Although the Isaiah account does not provide the narrator's evaluation of Hezekiah, the narrator portrays Hezekiah more positively than the Kings account by omitting, inserting, and rephrasing sections in Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20.

The narrator tells Hezekiah's story by means of four modes of narrations, which create the literary setting for Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39. The narrator moves the temporal setting backward at the beginning and at the end of the second story in order to portray Hezekiah positively through emphasizing the final stage of two human

characters: Sennacherib, who was shamefully killed by his own sons in front of his own god, and Hezekiah, who was saved from the point of death by the LORD through his prayer. On the other hand, the geographical setting of the Hezekiah narratives in Isa 36–39 is very similar to the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20. The main events of Hezekiah’s narratives take place inside of the city of Jerusalem, especially the temple of the LORD, which is the center of the city. At the same time the narrator shows that Sennacherib, who wants to capture Jerusalem, could not come to Jerusalem. Sennacherib was getting farther away from Jerusalem and was finally killed at the temple of his own god in Nineveh, which indicates Hezekiah is the one who triumphs over Sennacherib.

Like the Kings account (2 Kgs 18–20), Hezekiah’s story in Isa 36–39 has a complex plot structure, which emphasizes the word of the LORD. The plot of Hezekiah’s narratives has four climaxes and the conflicts are resolved by the word of the LORD, except for the third story of Hezekiah. At the same time the narrator depicts Hezekiah as the recipient of the word of the LORD in answer to a prayer, which shows the positive characterization of Hezekiah. The plot type of the story may be a potential tragedy, because Hezekiah’s narratives end with Isaiah’s prediction of the Babylonian exile. In this way, the narrator draws the attention of the narratee to the last story of Hezekiah.

The narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively as a round character, and portrays him as a faithful king who trusted in the LORD when he faced difficult situations. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as a man of intense and effective prayer. The narrator also states that the city of Jerusalem was saved by the LORD for His own sake and for the sake of David, but the LORD saved Jerusalem in part through the faithful response of

Hezekiah. He also receives fifteen years of additional life from the LORD when he prays to the LORD regarding his illness. The narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively by omitting the short story of Hezekiah's capitulation (2 Kgs 18:14–16) and by instead inserting the psalm of Hezekiah (Isa 38:9–20). At the same time, the narrator also omits and reshapes the story of Hezekiah in Kings to emphasize the future of Jerusalem. On the other hand, the narrator utilizes the royal narrative in Isa 7 in order to portray Hezekiah positively by making a contrast between Hezekiah and Ahaz. Thus, Hezekiah is portrayed by the narrator not only in Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39, but also in the entire Book of Isaiah. Furthermore, in Isa 38, the narrator rephrases the story of Hezekiah's sickness of 2 Kgs 20:1–11. The narrator portrays Hezekiah more positively than the account of 2 Kgs 20:1–11 by the idealization of Hezekiah and the LORD's immediate response to Hezekiah's piety. However, in Isa 39, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah negatively whose actions led to the prediction of the Babylonian exile. The narrator characterizes Hezekiah more positively than the Kings account, but the negative characterization of Hezekiah is still the same with the Kings account.

Hezekiah's narratives in Isa 36–39 are placed in the middle of the book in order to bridge the first and second half of the book. In this way the story of Hezekiah plays an important role to thematically bind the entire Book of Isaiah. The main theme of the story is the city of Jerusalem, appearing throughout the Book of Isaiah and in the Hezekiah narratives. The Hezekiah story shows the attitude of Isaiah toward the city of Jerusalem. The Hezekiah narratives clearly show that saving the city of Jerusalem and the Davidic monarchy comes from the LORD, but the LORD does these actions through Hezekiah's faithful response. In the last story, however, the narrator relates that the city

will fall by the hand of Babylon because Hezekiah shows everything in his palace. These two opposites are shown in the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery. Hezekiah receives fifteen years of additional life from the LORD, which indicates that Hezekiah's life is limited. In the same way, the city of Jerusalem is saved from the hand of Assyria, but the city will fall by the hand of Babylon. Thus, the story of Hezekiah is placed at a crucial juncture in order to make a bridge thematically between the first and the second half of the book.

Chapter 5: The Portrayal of King Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles 29–32

5.1 Introduction

Hezekiah's narratives in Chronicles are demarcated by introductory and concluding regnal formulae in 2 Chr 29:1–2 and 2 Chr 32:32–33 as the Kings account.¹ Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Chr 29–32, however, are quite different from Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20 (Isa 36–39). Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20 and Isa 36–39 mainly consists of three narratives: Sennacherib's invasion against Judah (2 Kgs 18:13—19:37; Isa 36–37), Hezekiah's illness and recovery (2 Kgs 20:1–11; Isa 38), and the visit of the Babylonian envoys (2 Kgs 20:12–19; Isa 39). In the Chronicles account, however, these three stories are compressed into only one chapter (2 Chr 32:1–31). The narrator utilizes three additional chapters (2 Chr 29–31) to report Hezekiah's "religious reforms," namely the cleansing and rededication of the temple (2 Chr 29), the restoration of the Passover festival (2 Chr 30), and Hezekiah's other reforms (2 Chr 31).² Hezekiah's religious reforms, which are reported in a single verse in the Kings account (2 Kgs 18:4), are the dominant subject in the description of Hezekiah's reign in 2 Chronicles.³ Second Chronicles 29–32 presents the Hezekiah story in different ways so

¹ Williamson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 388. The introductory formula was taken by the narrator from 2 Kgs 18:2–3, but the narrator omits the synchronism with the kingdom of Israel in 2 Kgs 18:1. On the other hand, reporting the concluding formula, the narrator does not report the water-tunnel project of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:20), but expands the burial site of Hezekiah. The narrator adds the vision of Isaiah as the source of the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32.

² Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 579.

³ Myers, *1 Chronicles*, LXI. Myers points out that in Hezekiah's story in 2 Chr 29–32, the narrator reflects only 18 verses of the Kings version and the other parts of Hezekiah's story are the narrator's own. Thus, Myers contends that the goal of the chronicler was not "to rewrite the history of Judah," but "a lesson for the people of his time and situation drawn from the history of his people" (Myers, *1 Chronicles*, XVIII). Evans also understands the Chronicler as "an ancient 'historian.'" After comparing between the Kings account and the Chronicles account for the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, Evans concludes that the Book of Chronicles "can be understood as the work of an ancient 'historian'" (Evans, "Historia or Exegesis?" 120).

that the narrator characterizes Hezekiah differently.⁴ Thus, this chapter will be utilized to understand the portrayal of King Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29–32.

5.2 Narrative Technique

5.2.1 Narration

The Hezekiah narratives are presented in different modes of narration in biblical narratives. In 2 Kgs 18–20, the narrator utilizes five modes of narration, while the Isaiah account employs four modes of narration.⁵ In the Chronicles account, the narrator again utilizes five modes of narration: direct, dramatic, descriptive, declarative, and documentary narrative. The narrator begins Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 with the introductory regnal formulae in 2 Chr 29:1–2. In 2 Chr 29:1, the narrator reports the age of Hezekiah when he became king, the place where he ruled over his people, the length of his reign, and his mother's name by descriptive narrative. Then, the narrator evaluates Hezekiah's reign by declarative narrative in 2 Chr 29:2.⁶ After reporting the introductory formulae, the narrator relates the story of the purification and rededication of the temple (2 Chr 29:3–36) by direct and dramatic narrative. In 2 Chr 29:32–35, the narrator utilizes descriptive narrative in order to introduce the offerings that the assembly brought.

⁴ The name, Hezekiah, appears in the Bible in four different forms: i) הֶזְקִיָּה, ii) הֶזְקִיָּהוּ, iii) הֶזְקִיָּה, iv) הֶזְקִיָּהוּ. The character of these four forms of the name is longer or shorter representations of its first and last elements. Japhet points out that the initial element of the name of Hezekiah, i) and ii), may be represented with the perfect form of the verb הִזְקִי, or the imperfect form יִזְקִי, while the last elements may be either the shorter הִיָּה or the longer הִיָּהוּ (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 915). In 2 Kgs 18–20, the longer form of name הֶזְקִיָּהוּ, is dominant, while in 2 Chr 29–32 the most common form of the name of Hezekiah is the longer form of הֶזְקִיָּהוּ, which appears only once in Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20 (2 Kgs 20:10). At the same time the name, הֶזְקִיָּה, appears four times in Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 (2 Chr 29:18, 27; 30:24; 32:15). Thus, Japhet maintains that “[i]t is clear that the Chronicler has followed his own rules, independently of the Deuteronomistic usage, and the preference of the longer forms is unequivocal” (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 916).

⁵ In 2 Kgs 18–20, the narrator uses direct, descriptive, dramatic, declarative, and documentary narrative, while in Isa 36–39, the narrator does not employ descriptive narrative.

⁶ Boda, “Prayer,” 270.

The narrator also presents the story of the celebration of the Passover (2 Chr 30:1—31:1) by direct and dramatic narratives. In 2 Chr 30:3–4, the narrator provides the reason for the postponement of the celebration of the Passover by declarative narrative.⁷ Similarly, the narrator positively evaluates the entire celebration of the Passover through declarative narrative in 2 Chr 30:26.⁸ The narrator also describes the situation of the assembly by descriptive narrative in 2 Chr 30:12 and 2 Chr 30:17. The narrator reports the proclamation of the couriers sent by Hezekiah and his officials in 2 Chr 30:6b–9, which is one of the typical uses of documentary narrative.⁹ The couriers brought the words of Hezekiah written in the letters and the narrator relates the contents of the document.¹⁰ The narrator reports the story of the contribution for the temple worship (2 Chr 31:1–21) by direct narrative (2 Chr 31:1–9, 11–12a), dramatic narrative (2 Chr 31:10), and descriptive narrative (2 Chr 31:21b–19). The narrator concludes this narrative with his evaluation by declarative narrative in 2 Chr 31:20–21.

Through direct and dramatic narrative, the narrator relates three narratives regarding political matters in 2 Chr 32:1–31. Each of these narratives begins by directive narrative in 2 Chr 32:1–4, 2 Chr 32:24, and 2 Chr 32:27–30. Then, he ends them by declarative narrative in 2 Chr 32:22–23, 2 Chr 32:25–26, and 2 Chr 32:31 in order to introduce the result of these events. Similar to the Kings account, the narrator ends the entire Hezekiah narratives with the concluding formulae along with the action of the people of Judah at the death of Hezekiah by descriptive narrative (2 Chr 32:32) and

⁷ Boda, "Prayer," 271.

⁸ Williamson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 371.

⁹ Boda, "Prayer," 270. Boda asserts that there are three common documents in the biblical narratives, namely list, correspondence and proclamations.

¹⁰ Williamson points out that the text of the letters from the king and his officials "... reflects the Chronicler's own application of his narrative, reinforced by citation or allusion to Scripture" (Williamson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 366).

directive narrative (2 Chr 32:33). Thus, the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 are related by the five modes of narrative as follows:

Narrative	Direct	Dramatic	Descriptive	Declarative	Documentary
2 Chronicles			29:1		
	29:3–4			29:2	
	29:12–17	29:5–11			
	29:20–30	29:18–19			
		29:31			
	29:36–30:2		29:32–35		
	30:5–6a			30:3–4	
	30:10–11				30:6b–9
	30:13–16			30:12	
	30:18a			30:17	
	30:20–25	30:18b–19			
	30:27–31:9				30:26
	31:11–12a	31:10			
				31:12b–19	
	32:1–6				31:20–21
		32:7–8a		32:8b	
	32:9				
	32:16	32:10–15			
	32:18–21				
	32:24				32:22–23
32:27–30				32:25–26	
				32:31	
32:33			32:32		
					32:17

	56% ¹¹	17.1%	13.7%	9.4%	3.8%
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The chart shows that direct narrative (56%) is used the most in Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Chr 29–32. In Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 and Isa 36–39, the narrator dramatizes the story by utilizing dramatic narrative which is the predominant mode used in the Kings and Isaiah accounts. In 2 Chr 29–32, 17.1% of mode usage is dramatic narrative. The narrator relates ten direct speeches of characters in 2 Chr 29–32.¹² The narrator, however, does not present any dialogue, but places these direct speeches between other modes of narration.¹³ By reporting direct speeches between other modes of narration, the narrator provides information and motivation for the associated actions within the story.¹⁴

The narrator also utilizes declarative narrative in Hezekiah's story (2 Chr 29–32) in order to provide the narrator's clarification for understanding the characterization of Hezekiah as noted in the Kings account.¹⁵ In 2 Kgs 18:3 and 12, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah in extremely positive ways though declarative narrative. In the

¹¹ The percentages are based on verses.

¹² The narrator introduces ten speeches in Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Chr 29–32: Hezekiah's speech to the Levites (2 Chr 29:5–11), the Levites' speech to Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:18–19), Hezekiah's words to the Levites (2 Chr 29:31), the couriers' speech to the people of Judah and Israel (2 Chr 30:6–9), Hezekiah's prayer for the people of Israel (2 Chr 30:18–19), Azariah's words to Hezekiah (2 Chr 31:10), the speech of the people of Judah (2 Chr 32:4), Hezekiah's speech to the people of Judah (2 Chr 32:7–8), and Sennacherib's speeches (2 Chr 32:10–15; 32:17).

¹³ Boda asserts that biblical narratives utilize all kinds of speech types. Following Rimmon-Kenan, Boda summarises seven types of speech: "diegetic summary," "summary," "indirect content paraphrase (indirect discourse)," "indirect discourse," "free indirect discourse," "direct discourse," and "free direct discourse." Then he maintains that "[s]peech' is a category and ... cannot be limited to 'dramatic narratives (mimesis) but also functions in other narrative types" (Boda, "Prayer," 271–75).

¹⁴ Boda, "Prayer," 271–75. Boda points out that "a speech may be used for multiple purposes by a narrator," and then he provides seven purposes of speeches in ancient narratives: 1) the narrator utilizes speeches for advancing the plot of the story; 2) the narrator expresses his ideological messages by speeches; 3) the narrator provides another point of view through speeches; 4) characters are characterized by the narrator through speeches; 5) the narrator provides motivation for the following action through speeches; 6) the narrator also uses speeches to create the dramatic qualities of the story; 7) the narrator provides information through speeches.

¹⁵ Ryken, *Words*, 44.

same way, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively throughout the declarative narrative (2 Chr 29:2; 31:20–21; 32:22–23, 25–26, 31).

Furthermore, by reducing dramatic narrative in Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Chr 32, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah more positively than the Kings and the Isaiah accounts. In 2 Kgs 20:1–19 and Isa 38–39, the narrator uses mostly dramatic narrative, but in 2 Chr 32:24–31, the narrator relates these two narratives without dramatic narrative. Reporting Hezekiah's narratives quickly without dramatic narrative, the narrator minimizes the negative aspect of Hezekiah in these two stories.¹⁶ In 2 Chr 32:24–30, the narrator portrays Hezekiah both positively and negatively, finding certain actions praiseworthy and other actions not. The narrator portrays Hezekiah positively first in 2 Chr 32:24, and then negatively in 2 Chr 32:25, and finally positively again in 2 Chr 32:26–30. The narrator provides less detail and also quickly reports the story of the Babylonian envoys in order to minimize the negative characterization of Hezekiah. As seen in the previous two chapters, the narrator portrays Hezekiah negatively through the dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah concerning the Babylonian envoys. In the Chronicles account, however, the narrator relates the story in only one verse in 2 Chr 32:31. In this way, without dramatic narrative, the narrator reduces the negative portrayal of Hezekiah in the context of the story of envoys from Babylon in 2 Chr 32.

Thus, in 2 Chr 29–32, the narrator reports Hezekiah's narratives by utilizing five modes of narrative, namely direct, dramatic, descriptive, declarative, and documentary narrative in order to portray Hezekiah positively. In this regard, the narrator purposely reduces dramatic narratives within the Hezekiah narratives (2 Chr 29–32).

¹⁶ Boda, "Prayer," 271.

5.2.2 The Evaluative Point of View of the Narrator

The Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 are presented in third-person narratives which depict the narrator as omniscient and omnipresent.¹⁷ As in the Kings and the Isaiah accounts, the narrator is omnipresent in the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32. Thus, the narrator's evaluative point of view is significant for the readers to understand the characterization of Hezekiah, because it provides a good criterion of judgment on the character of Hezekiah.¹⁸ Thus, it is necessary for the readers to examine the narrator's evaluative point of view in order to understand the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29–32. As mentioned in the previous chapters, however, the present section does not fully deal with the narrator's evaluative point of view, but only examines his explicit evaluations on Hezekiah and his reign in 2 Chr 29–32 due to overlapping with other sections of the chapter.

In 2 Chr 29:2, the narrator positively evaluates Hezekiah's reign. The narrator states that *וַיַּעַשׂ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה דָּוִד אָבִיו* (“he [Hezekiah] did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done”), which is identical to the evaluation of the narrator in the Kings account (2 Kgs 18:3). Here the narrator evaluates Hezekiah by comparing him with David. As mentioned above, the narrator compares seven Judahite Davidic kings with David in Kings.¹⁹ In Chronicles, however, only two Judean kings, Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:2) and Josiah (2 Chr 34:2), are compared favorably to David by the narrator. The lofty comparison to King David is

¹⁷ Longman, *Biblical Interpretation*, 85–86. Longman points out that in the first-person narrative, “the narrator is usually a character in the story and, as a result, presents a limited point of view,” but in the third-person narrative, “the narrator may display omniscience and omnipresence.”

¹⁸ Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 24.

¹⁹ The seven Davidic kings are Solomon (1 Kgs 3:3; 11:4), Abijah (1 Kgs 15:3), Asa (1 Kgs 15:11), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:3), Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:2), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:3) and Josiah (2 Kgs 22:2).

absent in the narratives of the other four Davidic kings found in Chronicles.²⁰

Williamson asserts that the phrase, *כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה דָּוִד אָבִיו* (“according to all that his father David had done”), is employed by the narrator from his source as “a stereotyped expression of commendation.”²¹ Japhet, however, correctly points out that this phrase is not simply the expression of commendation, but the narrator compares Hezekiah with David by omitting the other four Davidic kings found in Kings in order to characterize him positively.²² Thus, comparing Hezekiah with David, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively at the beginning of the story, which is very significant to understand the characterization of Hezekiah in the Chronicles account.

The narrator also evaluates Hezekiah’s reign by utilizing the perspective of the LORD. In 2 Chr 29:2a, the narrator reports that *וַיַּעַשׂ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה* (“and he [Hezekiah] did what was right in the eyes of the LORD”). Here the narrator utilizes God’s perspective on the character of Hezekiah by employing the phrase *בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה* (“in the eyes of the LORD”).²³ The LORD saw Hezekiah and his reign as good, which is God’s positive characterization of Hezekiah. Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively in his introduction to the Hezekiah narratives, providing the readers an important focal point for the positive characterization of Hezekiah.

The positive evaluation of Hezekiah’s reign is evident at the end of the story (2 Chr 32:33). In 2 Chr 32:33, the narrator reports Hezekiah’s final resting place. He describes Hezekiah’s burial place as *בְּמַעְלָה קְבָרֵי בְנֵי-דָוִד* (“in the upper part of the tombs

²⁰ In 2 Chr 28:1, Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, is compared unfavorably to David. The narrator reports that *וְלֹא-עָשָׂה הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּדָוִד אָבִיו* (“and he [Ahaz] did not do right in the sight of the LORD as David his father”).

²¹ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 352.

²² Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 915. The four Davidic kings are Solomon (1 Kgs 3:3; 11:4), Abijah (1 Kgs 15:3), Asa (1 Kgs 15:11), and Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:3).

²³ Bostock, *Trust*, 21–22.

of the sons of David”), which is not mentioned in Hezekiah’s story in 2 Kgs 20:21. Here in Chronicles, the narrator reports the burial place as *בְּגִידוֹיֵד בְּמַעְלָה קְבָרֵי בְנֵי־דָוִד* (“in the upper part of the tombs of the sons of David”) only for Hezekiah among the Judean kings. Although the meaning of the term, *מַעְלָה*, is not certain,²⁴ this term might express the distinction of Hezekiah.²⁵ Hezekiah’s distinction is also expressed by the narrator when he reports that *וְכָבוֹד עָשׂוּ־לּוֹ בְּמוֹתוֹ כָּל־יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם* (“all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did honor to him”) in 2 Chr 32:33b.²⁶ The narrator explicitly states that Hezekiah was honored by all Israel at his death.²⁷ In Chronicles, the narrator uses this expression only for Hezekiah among all the Judean kings including David and Solomon.²⁸ Thus, the narrator states that Hezekiah receives the most significant and distinguished burial description of all the kings of Judah, which is “a sign of exceptional distinction in the particular Chronistic theological lexicon.”²⁹ By reporting Hezekiah’s distinguished burial description, the narrator clearly evaluates that Hezekiah and his reign were good and portrays him positively, which is consistent with his evaluation in the introduction of the story in 2 Chr 29:2. Thus, the narrator clearly evaluates Hezekiah positively both in the introduction and conclusion of the story in order to enable the narratee to understand the character of Hezekiah positively.

²⁴ The meaning of *מַעְלָה* can be understood as “a topographical feature in the area of the royal tombs, ‘the upper part’ . . . , or as the upper tier of a two-level tomb or as an expression of quality, ‘better, finer’” (Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 260). Williamson also asserts that the Chronicler frequently utilizes the root of this term to denote the superlative and it is used later with the meaning “excellent.” Thus, the term *מַעְלָה* can be understood as “in a privileged place amongst” (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 352).

²⁵ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 997.

²⁶ Ackroyd, “Death of Hezekiah,” 219–26. Ackroyd asserts that the term *כְּבוֹד* (“honor” or “glory”) in 2 Chr 32:33 indicates the further development of later Jewish ideas of King Hezekiah as a messianic figure.

²⁷ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 260. Dillard points out that “[t]he burial of a king was customarily accompanied by a great fire (16:14; Jer 34:5) in his honor . . . the honor shown Hezekiah probably also included the quality and quantity of spices (16:14) that accompanied his interment.”

²⁸ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 469–70.

²⁹ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 997.

The narrator also positively evaluates Hezekiah's reign throughout Hezekiah's narratives. Concluding the story of Hezekiah's reforms in 2 Chr 29–31, the narrator explicitly evaluates King Hezekiah as a good and faithful king (2 Kgs 31:20).³⁰ In 2 Chr 31:20b, the narrator declares that *וַיַּעַשׂ הַטּוֹב וְהַיָּשָׁר וְהָאֱמֻנָה לְפָנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו* (“and he [Hezekiah] did what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his God”), which indicates a highly positive evaluation on Hezekiah and his reign. Many scholars assert that this positive evaluation performs the same function as the narrator's evaluation in 2 Kgs 18:5–6 and recalls the narrator's positive evaluation in 2 Chr 29:2.³¹ In 2 Chr 31:20, the narrator consecutively utilizes three positive terms, טוב (“good”), יָשָׁר (“right”), and אֱמֻנָה (“faithful”).³² The narrator characterizes Hezekiah by this “three-fold epithet” which is only used for Hezekiah by the narrator among the kings of Judah in Chronicles.³³ In this way the narrator portrays him as the most faithful king among the Davidic kings.

The narrator also reports that Hezekiah did all his religious reforms to seek out his God with all his heart, so that he succeeded in everything that he undertook in 2 Chr 31:21. He summarizes Hezekiah's reforms as such: the service of the house of the LORD, the Law, and the commandments. Then, the narrator states that *וַהֲצִלִּיהָ* (“and he

³⁰ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 972–3. Japhet sees 2 Chr 31:20–21 as “an appropriate summary of the three preceding chapters.” She also asserts that the first clause of 2 Chr 31:20–21, “Thus, Hezekiah did throughout all Judah,” functions as connecting 2 Chr 31:20–21 to the preceding passage.

³¹ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 454; Mabje, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 298; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 972; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 377; Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 590. Jonker also asserts that 2 Chr 31:20–21 is allusion to the narrator's evaluation in 2 Kgs 18:6b. Jonker also contends that the term *לְרַשׁ* (“to seek”) in 2 Chr 31:21 is reminiscent of the term *וַיִּדְבֶּק* (“and he [Hezekiah] held firmly”) in 2 Kgs 18:6 and that the term *וַהֲצִלִּיהָ* (“and he [Hezekiah] prospered”) in 2 Chr 31:21 echoes the term *נִשְׁכַּל* (“he [Hezekiah] was successful”) in 2 Kgs 18:7 (Jonker, “Disappearing Nehushtan,” 121).

³² The narrator uses the term *הָאֱמֻנָה*, which is a masculine singular noun with the definite article. The narrator also uses this noun in 2 Chr 32:1. Thus, the noun should be translated as “faithful” in both verses as the same meaning.

³³ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 972. The narrator evaluates King Asa in a similar way. In 2 Chr 14:1, the narrator says that *וַיַּעַשׂ אֲסָא הַטּוֹב וְהַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו* (“and he [Asa] did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God”). The narrator, however, does not use the term *הָאֱמֻנָה* (“faithful”) in the evaluation of Asa.

[Hezekiah] prospered”) as the result of Hezekiah’s reforms. The fact that Hezekiah prospered indicates that his reforms are approved by the LORD.³⁴ In this way the narrator evaluates the first half of Hezekiah’s reign as good in order to characterize him as a faithful king, which is illustrated at the beginning of Hezekiah’s story in 2 Chr 29. The narrator also summarizes Hezekiah’s reform in the previous three chapters (2 Chr 29–31) as *הַדְּבָרִים וְהַאֲמֹת הָאֵלֹהִים* (“these faithful deeds”) in 2 Chr 32:1a.

This concluding statement stands between the story of Hezekiah’s reforms (2 Chr 29–31), which is a unique story about him in Chronicles, and Hezekiah’s story in 2 Chr 32, which is also found in 2 Kgs 18–20 and Isa 36–39. Japhet points out that the narrator begins the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative with “a general conjunctive formula”: *אַחֲרַי* (“after these things”) with the additional words *וְהַאֲמֹת הָאֵלֹהִים* (“and these acts of faithfulness”), not by the date like the Kings and Isaiah accounts, in order to link the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story to the previous story.³⁵ The narrator utilizes the same term *וְהַאֲמֹת* when the narrator evaluates Hezekiah’s reign in the conclusion of Hezekiah’s reforms (2 Chr 31:20) and when the narrator summarizes the previous chapters in the introduction to the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story (2 Chr 32:1). In this way, the narrator positively characterizes Hezekiah at the end of the story of Hezekiah’s reforms and at

³⁴ Some of Hezekiah’s predecessors prospered by the LORD: Solomon (1 Chr 22:11, 13; 29:23; 2 Chr 7:11), Asa (2 Chr 14:7), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:20), and Uzziah (2 Chr 26:5).

³⁵ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 980. In both accounts in 2 Kgs 18–20 and Isa 36–39, the narrator introduces the story of Sennacherib’s invasion against Judah by the date: “the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah” in 2 Kgs 18:13 and in Isa 36:1. Of course, in Isa 36:1, this time phrase is not the first words but *וַיְהִי*. Wildberger asserts that the term *וַיְהִי* is usually utilized as “hypotrophic” when dates are supplied (Wildberger, *Isaiah 28–39*, 371).

the beginning of the story of Sennacherib's invasion against Judah by closely relating the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story to Hezekiah's faithful actions.³⁶

In sum, the narrator positively characterizes Hezekiah and his reign in terms of the narrator's evaluative point of view. The narrator evaluates Hezekiah positively by a comparison with David, and utilizes the perspective of God on Hezekiah to portray him positively in a more emphatic way (2 Chr 29:2). At the conclusion to the entire story of Hezekiah, the narrator portrays him as the best king among the Judean kings including David and Solomon by reporting Hezekiah's burial place (2 Chr 32:32) and by reporting that all Judah honored him at his death (2 Chr 32:33). At the same time the narrator evaluates Hezekiah's reforms in an extremely positive way by stating a three-fold epithet, namely good, right, and faithful (2 Chr 31:20). Hezekiah's reforms are also summarized as faithful deeds in 2 Chr 32:1a. The narrator portrays Hezekiah in extremely positive ways at the beginning, middle, and end of the story in 2 Chr 29–32. Thus, through evaluative point of view, the narrator provides a positive perspective on the character of Hezekiah to the narratee (the readers).

5.3 Story World

The previous section dealt with narrative techniques when the narrator tells the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32. Now the present study turns to Hezekiah's story itself which essentially consists of three elements: setting, plot, and character. This

³⁶ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 256. Dillard contends that “[t]he way the Chronicler introduces a narrative is often a key to his primary purpose in using it.” Thus, the introductory phrase *הַדְּבָרִים וְהַאֲמָתָה הָאֵלֶּה אַחֲרָיִם* (“After these things and these faithful acts”), functions to show the narrator's purpose. In Chronicles, the invasion of a foreign army is punishment for human transgression. Thus, the invasion of Sennacherib is not the punishment of the LORD for Hezekiah. The narrator shows this perspective at the beginning of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative to connect the story to the previous faithful actions of Hezekiah (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 980).

section will be utilized to examine these three elements in order to see the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29–32.

5.3.1 Setting

The setting plays an important role in understanding characters in the story because it provides the basic context where characters develop. The present study will examine spatial and temporal setting of the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32, but setting structure will be considered first.

5.3.1.1 Setting Structure

Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 basically consist of three narratives: Hezekiah's reforms (2 Chr 29–31), the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story (2 Chr 32:1–23),³⁷ and further facts of Hezekiah's reign (2 Chr 32:24–33).³⁸ These three Hezekiah narratives can be subdivided into many acts, scenes, and events. As with the Kings account, the narrator begins and ends the Hezekiah narratives with the introductory and

³⁷ The Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in 2 Chr 32:1–23 is the substitution of the Chronicler for the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story found in 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37 and Isa 36–37. Although the Chronicler does follow the order of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story in 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37 (Isa 36–37), the Chronicler omits a number of events. Williamson thinks that the Chronicler retold the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative as “midrash” in order to provide guidelines for the overcoming of such difficulties. Following Childs, Williamson defines the term midrash as follows: “By midrash we mean a specific form of literature which is the product of an exegetical activity by a circle of scholars in interpreting a sacred text” (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 379). However, the Hezekiah story in 2 Chr 32:1–23 seems not to be exegesis of the Hezekiah story in 2 Kgs 18:13–19:37, but it is a composition of the Chronicler. De Vries also suggests that “this is no ‘exegesis,’ but a fresh composition (De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 389). Lemke, who has the same idea, points out that the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story in 2 Chronicles has been composed to demonstrate the theme of the pious king (Lemke, “Synoptic Problem,” 357–63). Ackroyd also maintains that the Chronicler feels free to make adjustments to his source, which is very familiar to the Chronicler, in order to give the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story a somewhat different meaning in the light of subsequent event. Evans also suggests that the Chronicler's work is not midrash or “an imaginative attempt to correct his source or ignore history for exegetical or theological ends,” but “exegesis for historiographical and theological ends” (Evans, “Historia or Exegesis?” 120).

³⁸ The last part of Hezekiah's story in 2 Chr 29–32 is a collection of notes that the Chronicler found in 2 Kgs 20 (Isa 38–39) and in other sources. Lemke points out that it is not easy to understand the method of the Chronicler for the Hezekiah story in 2 Chr 32:24–33. He says that the Chronicler's method is quite inscrutable (Lemke, “Synoptic Problem,” 360–63). Ackroyd asserts that the Chronicler reinterprets the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 20 in order to indicate his own attitude (Ackroyd, “Chronicler as Exegete,” 10–14). Williamson, who follows Talmon, maintains that Hezekiah's story in 2 Chr 32:24–33 has been composed by the Chronicler (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 386).

concluding formulae as Act One (2 Chr 29:1–2) and Act Nine (2 Chr 32:32–33). In his introduction, the narrator utilizes the regnal formula to introduce the reign of King Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29:1. However, he omits the synchronism with the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the statement of Hezekiah’s reign, which are found in 2 Kgs 18:1. In his conclusion, the narrator reports the sources for Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:32) and his death (2 Chr 32:33).³⁹ The narrator utilizes three acts to report the first story of Hezekiah’s reforms. In Act Two (2 Chr 29:3–19), the narrator relates the purification of the temple and the Levites which was ordered by Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:3–4). In the next act (2 Chr 29:20–30), the narrator reports the process of the restoration of the temple worship. The narrator relates Hezekiah’s order for the sin offerings and the response of the priest (2 Chr 29:20–24). The narrator also reports that this consecration ceremony stressed the dedication of the purified religious leader and the temple structure to the service of the LORD (2 Chr 29:25–30). Then, the narrator reports the reaction of Hezekiah for the restoration of temple worship in Act Four (2 Chr 29:31–36).

In Act Five (2 Chr 30:1—31:1), the narrator relates Hezekiah’s celebration of the Passover. In 2 Chr 30:1, the narrator provides a heading for the story, which indicates the three central themes: all Israel (כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל), the Passover (פֶּסַח), and the house of the LORD (בַּיִת־יְהוָה).⁴⁰ The narrator relates the decision and the invitation to celebrate the

³⁹ In terms of the source of Hezekiah’s narratives, the Kings account indicates “the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah” in 2 Kgs 20:20, but the narrator identifies his source with “the vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz” in 2 Chr 32:32, which is taken from Isa 1:1. However, the narrator does not identify his source with the Book of Isaiah, because the narrator calls his source for the reign of Asa as the book of the kings of Judah and Israel in 2 Chr 16:11. The narrator also identifies the sources for Solomon’s reign as the history of the prophet Nathan, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of the seer Iddo in 1 Chr 9:29. Klein asserts that the narrator “may have been thinking of Isaiah’s account of Sennacherib’s attack, the illness of Hezekiah, and the delegation from Merodach-Baladan recounted in Isaiah 36–39” (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 469).

⁴⁰ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 496.

Passover (2 Chr 30:1–13), the celebration (2 Chr 30:14–20), and the result of the celebration of the Passover (30:23—31:1). The narrator reports Hezekiah’s providing for the Levites in Act Six (2 Chr 31:2–21). The narrator reports Hezekiah’s reform for the continuing temple worship by reappointment of the Levites and the contribution for the Levites (2 Chr 31:2-10) and faithful distribution (2 Chr 31:14–19). After reporting the distribution of the gifts, the narrator states the concluding statement for all of Hezekiah’s reforms (2 Chr 31:20–21).⁴¹

In 2 Chr 32, the narrator reports Hezekiah’s political events, namely the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative (2 Chr 32:1–23),⁴² and Hezekiah’s further actions (2 Chr 32:24–31). Thus, the setting structure of the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 is as follows:

I. Act One: Prelude

- A. Scene One: Hezekiah becomes king in Jerusalem (29:1)
- B. Scene Two: Evaluation for the reign of Hezekiah (29:2)

II. Act Two: Purification of the temple

- A. Scene One: Invitation to purify the temple
 - 1. Event One: An invitation to consecration (29:3–4)
 - 2. Event Two: Hezekiah’s speech to Levites (29:5–11)
- B. Scene Two: Responses of the Levites
 - 1. Event One: the Levites purify themselves (29:12–15a)
 - 2. Event Two: Purifying the temple (29:15b–17)
- C. Scene Three: the Levites report the purification of the temple (29:18–19)

III. Act Three: Restoration of the temple worship

- A. Scene One: The burnt offering and the sin offering for all Israel

⁴¹ Dillard asserts that in 2 Chr 31:20–21, the narrator paraphrases the evaluation of the narrator in 2 Kgs 18:5–7a (Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 251): Williamson sees that the narrator summarizes Hezekiah’s early reign in order to serve as a literary marker. He says that “the Chronicler is now rejoining the account of his *Vorlage*, which he has so expanded by the account of the reform and Passover” (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 377). Thus, summarizing Hezekiah’s early reign, the narrator ends Hezekiah’s reforms which are unique to the Chronicles account and indicates a return to the *Vorlage* of 2 Kgs 18–20.

⁴² For a deeper study about 2 Chr 32:1–23 in terms of the historical point of view, see Gonçalves, *L’Expédition*, 488–527.

1. Event One: Hezekiah's order for the the sin offering for the nation, temple, and Judah (29:20–21)
 2. Event Two: Response of the priests (29:22–24)
 - B. Scene Two: Restoration of the temple music
 1. Event One: Hezekiah's order for the task of Levites for temple music (29:25)
 2. Event Two: Response of the Levites (29:26)
 - C. Scene Three: Restoration of the temple worship
 1. Event One: Hezekiah's order for the burnt offering (29:27a)
 2. Event Two: Obedience of the Levites for the burnt offering (29:27b–28)
 - D. Scene Four: Reaction of Hezekiah and his officials for the temple worship
 1. Event One: Reaction of Hezekiah and his officials (29:29)
 2. Event Two: Hezekiah's order for the Levites to praise God (29:30a)
 3. Event Three: Response of the Levites (29:30b)
- IV. Act Four: Response of Hezekiah for the restoration of temple worship
- A. Scene One: Response of Hezekiah for the restoration of temple worship
 1. Event One: Hezekiah's order for the sacrifices for thank offerings (29:31a)
 2. Event Two: Response of the assembly (29:31b–36)
- V. Act Five: Celebration of the Passover
- A. Scene One: Invitation to celebrate the Passover
 1. Event One: The assembly's decision (30:1–5)
 2. Event Two: The letters for invitation (30:6–9)
 3. Event Three: The response in the North and in Judah (30:10–13)
 - B. Scene Two: Celebrating the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread
 1. Event One: Celebrating the Passover (30:14–20)
 2. Event Two: Celebrating the Feast of Unleavened Bread (30:21–22)
 - C. Scene Three: The result of celebrating the festivals (30:23—31:1)
 1. Event One: Blessings (30:23–27)
 2. Event Two: Response of the people (31:1)
- VI. Act Six: Providing for the Priests and the Levites
- A. Scene One: Hezekiah's reform for the continuing temple worship
 1. Event One: The reappointment of the priests and the Levites (31:2)
 2. Event Two: The people's contribution to the priests and the Levites (31:3–10)
 3. Event Three: Preparation for storing the people's contributions (31:11–13)
 4. Event Four: faithful distribution (31:14–19)
 - B. Scene Two: Positive evaluation of Hezekiah (31:20–21)
- VII. Act Seven: Sennacherib's invasion against Judah

- A. Scene One: Sennacherib's invasion against Judah
 - 1. Event One: Introduction to the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story (32:1)
 - B. Scene Two: Hezekiah's preparations for Sennacherib's invasion
 - 1. Event One: Hezekiah's stop for the waters of the springs (32:2-4)
 - 2. Event Two: Hezekiah's fortification for the city (32:5)
 - 3. Event Three: Hezekiah's speech for his officials (32:6-8)
 - C. Scene Three: Sennacherib's threats of Hezekiah
 - 1. Event One: Sennacherib's attack on the city of Lachish (32:9a)
 - 2. Event Two: Sennacherib's words through his representative (32:9b-19)
 - D. Scene Four: Response of Hezekiah and Isaiah
 - 1. Event One: The prayer of Hezekiah and Isaiah (32:20)
 - E. Scene Five: Response of the LORD
 - 1. Event One: The LORD's saving works for Hezekiah (32:21a)
 - 2. Event Two: The death of Sennacherib (32:21b)
 - 3. Event Three: The LORD's other saving works for Hezekiah (32:22)
 - F. Scene Six: Result of the LORD's saving works
 - 1. Event One: The response of other nation to the LORD and Hezekiah (32:23)
- VIII. Act Eight: Hezekiah's further actions
- A. Scene One: Hezekiah's sickness and its aftermath (32:24-26)
 - B. Scene Two: Hezekiah's wealth and successes
 - 1. Event One: Hezekiah's wealth (32:27-29)
 - 2. Event Two: Hezekiah's water supply system (32:30a)
 - 3. Event Three: Positive evaluation of Hezekiah (32:30b)
 - 4. Event Four: Test of the LORD for Hezekiah (32:31)
- IX. Act Nine: Postlude
- A. Scene One: The Hezekiah story in other materials (32:32)
 - B. Scene Two: Hezekiah's death and burial place (32:33)

The Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29-32 are subdivided into small units, which create a literary setting for Hezekiah's story. The narrator utilizes this literary setting in order to characterize Hezekiah.

5.3.1.2 Time

The Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29-32 covers the entire twenty-nine years of Hezekiah's reign. The narrator reports the beginning of Hezekiah's reign in 2 Chr 29:1 (cf. 2 Chr 29:3) and the death of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 32:32-33. Although the temporal

setting of Hezekiah's story is the whole reign of Hezekiah, the narrator explicitly mentions the temporal setting for the story in 2 Chr 29:3. The narrator sets the time for Hezekiah's narrative in 2 Chr 29:3a: הוא בשנה הראשונה למלכו בחדש הראשון ("in the first year of his [Hezekiah's] reign during the first month"). The narrator spends three chapters relating Hezekiah's reforms which occur during the first year of his reign.

The narrator reports that Hezekiah opened the doors of the temple during the first month in the first year of his reign (2 Chr 29:3).⁴³ In 2 Chr 29:17, however, the narrator states more explicitly that the Levites began to consecrate themselves and the temple on the first day of Hezekiah's reign. Thus, the narrator shows that the first official directive of King Hezekiah in his reformation was to repair the temple and to restore temple worship. Thus, the narrator clearly indicates that Hezekiah's main concern for his reign was the house of the LORD and the temple worship.⁴⁴ In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as like Solomon, whose concern was the house of the LORD from his accession in 2 Chr 1–2.⁴⁵

⁴³ In 2 Chr 29:3, the narrator explicitly mentions "in the first year of his reign during the first month." This phrase is further specified by the narrator as "the first day of first month" in 2 Chr 29:17. However, these two verses are problematic as to whether "the first day of the first month of the first year" was the first official year of Hezekiah (postdating) or the first month after the death of Hezekiah's father, Ahaz (antedating). See Cogan's article "The Chronicler's Use of Chronology" for more information on this issue (Cogan, "Chronicler's Use," 197–210). These time expressions may indicate the first month of Hezekiah's official year. However, it is not the aim of the narrator to mention these time expressions. Williamson correctly points out that "[e]ither way... his [the narrator's] aim is to show that concern for the temple ... characterized Hezekiah's reign from the start and completely overshadowed all other considerations" (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 352). Dillard makes a connection between Hezekiah and Solomon through these time expressions. He says that "[i]n either case the Chronicler is likening Hezekiah to Solomon in his concern with the temple from the time of his accession (2 Chr 1–2)" (Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 234).

⁴⁴ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 352.

⁴⁵ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 234.

The narrator states that Hezekiah assembled the priests and Levites and addressed them during the first month in the first year of his reign in 2 Chr 29:4–11.⁴⁶ In his speech, Hezekiah looked back on the life of his ancestors who sinned and suffered the punishments of the LORD for their sins in 2 Chr 29:6–11.⁴⁷ Here, the narrator provides a brief historical retrospect over the sins of the ancestors (2 Chr 29:6–9). In this way, the narrator draws the reader's attention to the life of his ancestors. In his speech, Hezekiah reflected the life of his ancestors as “a cause-and-effect relationship” between their religious affairs and their political experiences.⁴⁸ Their difficult situations were caused by their unfaithful actions to the LORD. In 2 Chr 29:6b, Hezekiah explicitly stated that *וַיִּזְבְּחוּ וַיִּסְבוּ פְּנֵיהֶם מִמִּשְׁכַּן יְהוָה* (“and they have forsaken Him and they have turned their faces from the dwelling place of the LORD”). Then, Hezekiah related that the anger of the LORD has been upon them because of their sins in 2 Chr 29:8–9. Concluding his speech, Hezekiah encouraged the Levites to serve the LORD in His dwelling place.⁴⁹ Thus, Hezekiah's main concern in his speech was to purify the house

⁴⁶ In 2 Chr 29:4, the narrator identifies the audience for the speech of Hezekiah as the priest and the Levites, but Hezekiah addressed only the Levites in 2 Chr 29:5. In 2 Chr 29:12–15, the narrator relates that the Levites only set out to follow the instructions of Hezekiah. Thus, it is problematic in terms of the audience of Hezekiah's speech. Rudolph asserts that the Chronicler only mentioned the Levites in order to highlight Levites (Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 293). Dillard also points out that the term “Levites” should be understood as including both. He explains that the priest and the Levites could be designated as “Levites” because “the broader includes the narrower” (Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 233). Interestingly the narrator designates the priest as “Levitical priests” in 2 Chr 30:27.

⁴⁷ Von Rad, “Levitical Sermon,” 275. According to von Rad, the speech of Hezekiah has been identified as a “Levitical sermon.” A Levitical sermon should consist of the following elements: a historical retrospect, an allusion to a biblical text, and an exhortation. In his speech, Hezekiah reminded his people about the sins of their ancestors in 2 Chr 29:6–7, and he also alluded to the word of the LORD in Jer 29:18 in 2 Chr 29:8–9. Finally Hezekiah was encouraging the Levites to return to the LORD and to serve Him in 2 Chr 29:10–11.

⁴⁸ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 916.

⁴⁹ Hezekiah's speech in 2 Chr 29:5–11 is constructed with a series of formulaic markers at the beginning and end of the speech. These two verses begin by a second-person invocation of the Levites: “Hear me, Levites” in 2 Chr 29:5 and “My sons” in 2 Chr 29:11. These two invocations are followed by the introductory adverb *עַתָּה* (“now”) and by a command *הִתְקַדְּשׁוּ* (“sanctify yourself”) and *אַל־תִּשְׁלֹוּ* (“do not be negligent”). Hezekiah utilized three opening formulations in the body of his speech. In 2 Chr 29:6,

of the LORD and to serve Him there. Moving the temporal setting backward in Hezekiah's speech, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by likening him to Solomon whose main concern was also the house of the LORD from the beginning of his reign (2 Chr 1–2),⁵⁰ which we will see more in detail later.

The narrator also reports that the Levites completely consecrated the temple for sixteen days (2 Chr 29:17),⁵¹ which sets the stage for the delayed observance of the Passover as reported in 2 Chr 30. The narrator moves his temporal setting forward until the celebration of the Passover. The narrator chronologically reports Hezekiah's reforms from the beginning of his reign. In 2 Chr 30:2, the narrator relates that Hezekiah, his officials, and all the assembly in Jerusalem decided to keep the Passover in the second month of the first year, because they were not ready to keep the Passover in the first month (2 Chr 30:3).⁵² Here the narrator shifts his temporal setting backwards.⁵³ In 2 Chr 30:1, the narrator states that Hezekiah sent the couriers to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh in order to invite them to the house of the LORD in

Hezekiah used the conjunction *ו* in order to introduce its beginning, and then in 2 Chr 29:9 and 2 Chr 29:10 Hezekiah used two concluding markers: *הנה* ("behold") and *עתה* ("now").

⁵⁰ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 234.

⁵¹ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 235. Dillard points out that "[t]he purification of the temple required two weeks, one week in the outer courts and another in the building itself. The term *interior* (*פנימה*) may broadly refer to the interior of the temple (cf. 29:18) or more narrowly to the Most Holy Place (cf. 4:22; 1 Chr 28:11; 1 Kgs 6:27; 7:12, 50). It is not altogether clear in this case which is intended."

⁵² Fishbane points out that Num 9:9–14 and 2 Chr 32:2–3 deal with "cases of ritual defilement and distance from a legitimate shrine" (Fishbane, "Revelation," 345) Then, he asserts that, the Chronicler did not explicitly make the connection with Num 9:9–14 in 2 Chr 30:2–3, although Num 9:9–14 can underpin the delay of the celebration of Passover. Fishbane notes that "[t]he covert nature of the exegesis in 2 Chr 30:2–3 may be the result of the writer's hesitation to make his reinterpretation explicit, and therewith obscure any suggestion that the Torah of Moses is insufficient when faced with new exigencies" (Fishbane, "Revelation," 346). In 2 Chr 30:2–3, however, the narrator does not deal with a second Passover, which was introduced in Num 9:9–14 for those who cannot keep the Passover at its regular time. The narrator explicitly reports a general postponement of the Passover. Fishbane fails to deal with this. Thus, there is no close connection between 2 Chr 30:2–3 and Num 9:9–14.

⁵³ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 938.

Jerusalem to keep the Passover of the LORD.⁵⁴ Then, the narrator describes the manner in which the decision was made by Hezekiah with his officials and all the assembly in Jerusalem in 2 Chr 30:2. Moving the temporal setting backward, the narrator emphasizes the decision-making process in 2 Chr 30:2–5. The decision that the Passover was celebrated in the second month was made in the following manner: consultation and its topic (2 Chr 30:2), arguments (2 Chr 30:3), consent (2 Chr 30:4), and decision (2 Chr 30:5).⁵⁵ In this way, the narrator states that Hezekiah's officials and the assembly in Jerusalem shared the responsibility with Hezekiah for changing the date of the Passover celebration in order to minimize the negative characterization of Hezekiah, because the postponement of the Passover is not presented as a positive feature.⁵⁶

Like Hezekiah's speech in Scene One of Act Two (2 Chr 29:5–11), the narrator relates the experience of the ancestors of the northern people in the speech of Hezekiah's

⁵⁴ Klein correctly points out that there are "chronological problems" in terms of the invitation for the celebration of the Passover. Klein says that "[i]f Hezekiah came to the throne during the final year of the northern kingdom, when Hoshea was still on the throne, he could not have invited citizens of the north to participate in the cultic rites of the southern kingdom during his first year" (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 429). This is a serious problem for the historicity of the reign of Hezekiah. Japhet, however, asserts that the chronology of Hezekiah's reign in 2 Chr 29–32 is theologically presented, for the Chronicler wants to present Hezekiah as the one who initiated religious reforms as soon as Hezekiah came to throne (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 935).

⁵⁵ The narrator provides two reasons for delaying the celebration of the Passover in 2 Chr 30:3. 1) There are not enough priests who had consecrated themselves; 2) the people had not assembled in Jerusalem. Williamson understands the first reason as "the theme of criticism of the priesthood," because "it can hardly be supposed that all would have been ready in any case by the fourteenth day of the first month" (Williamson, *I and 2 Chronicles*, 366). 2) The second reason is approved by the word of the LORD in Num 9:9–12, where the LORD allowed the people who had become unclean or absent abroad to keep the Passover in the second month. The narrator applies this legal justification to the whole nation. Talmon provides another reason for delaying the celebration of the Passover. It was intended to combine the religious calendar of Judah with the calendar of Israel that had been changed by one month since the reign of Jeroboam I in 1 Kgs 12:32–33 (Talmon, "Divergences," 58–63).

⁵⁶ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 940. In Num 9:9–14, the LORD allowed the people of Israel to celebrate the Passover in the second month for those who are unclean or who are away on a journey. However, the LORD commanded Moses to cut off from the people of Israel those who are clean and who are not on a journey but who did not celebrate the Passover in the first month (Num 9:13). In 2 Chr 30:2–4, the narrator reports two reasons for celebrating the Passover in the second month. First, not enough priests had consecrated themselves. Second, the people had not assembled in Jerusalem. These two reasons are not related to the exceptions in Num 9:13.

couriers. The LORD gave their ancestors over to destruction because of their unfaithful actions (2 Chr 30:7). Mentioning the unfaithful actions of the ancestors of the north, the narrator draws the readers' attention to the judgment of the LORD who gave the people of Israel over to destruction according to their unfaithful actions. In this way, the narrator encourages the people of Israel to return to the LORD so that the LORD may return to them.⁵⁷ The way of the LORD's returning is to return the exiled people to the land of Israel. The narrator explicitly mentions this at the end of the speech of Hezekiah's couriers (2 Chr 30:9).

Then the narrator reports that they celebrated the Feast of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month according to their decision (2 Chr 30:13, 15).⁵⁸ Thus, the narrator moves his temporal setting forward again within the story of Hezekiah's reformation within 2 Chr 30. The narrator also explicitly mentions the temporal setting when the Israelites and Judahites bring their tithes for the Levites in 2 Chr 31:7. In 2 Chr 31:7, the narrator reports that they began to bring tithes of their production from the third month up until the seventh month.⁵⁹ Thus, the narrator chronologically describes the reformations of Hezekiah which occur during the first year of his official reign. In terms of the temporal setting the narrator moves the Hezekiah story forward from the first day of the first month to the seventh month of his reign.

⁵⁷ McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 344.

⁵⁸ Talmon and Segal understand Hezekiah's one-month delay celebration of the Passover as due to the use of an intercalary month (Talmon, "Divergences," 58-63; Segal, "Intercalation," 250-307). However, the biblical books do not explicitly mention this calendar.

⁵⁹ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 964. Japhet points out that 2 Chr 31:7 reflects both the Law of Moses and the agricultural calendar. In Lev 23:16-17, "the feast of Harvest" or "the feast of week" is celebrated in the third month, which indicates the beginning of the grain harvest and is connected with the presentation of "a cereal offering of new grain." On the other hand, "the feast of ingathering" in Exod 23:16 indicates the end of the vine and fruit harvesting, and is celebrated in the seventh month.

The narrator moves his temporal setting forward in the next story of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 32. Unlike Hezekiah's story in 2 Kgs 18–20 and Isa 36–39, the narrator does not provide any temporal setting for the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story in 2 Chr 32:1; rather the narrator introduces the story with a “general conjunctive formula.”⁶⁰ The narrator begins the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story with a prepositional phrase, אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים (“after these things”). This prepositional phrase functions as not only a temporal marker but also a contextual marker. The narrator places the phrase at the beginning of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story in order to connect the story closely to Hezekiah's reforms.⁶¹

The narrator continues moving his temporal setting in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story forward until the death of Sennacherib in 2 Chr 32:21. Then, the narrator also describes the final stage of Hezekiah who was saved from the hand of Sennacherib by the LORD (2 Chr 32:22) and who was exalted in the eyes of all the nations (2 Chr 32:23). Then, the narrator reports the next story of Hezekiah, his illness and recovery.⁶² Finally, the narrator ends Hezekiah's narratives with the story of Hezekiah's death and burial in 2 Chr 32:32–33. In the Kings account, the narrator presents the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery as happening before Sennacherib's invasion against Jerusalem, but the Chronicler account does not report this time reference. The narrator continually moves his temporal setting forward until the end of the story. Thus, the

⁶⁰ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 980. Japhet calls the phrase אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים (“after these things”) “a general conjunctive formula.”

⁶¹ Dillard asserts that this phrase indicates the narrator's theology of “immediate retribution” (Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 256). For Dillard, the Chronicler's theology of immediate retribution is that “a righteous king should enjoy victory in warfare and rest from his enemies, and this is the moral of the story (32:20–23).” However, Japhet correctly sees that it is not the case in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, because the narrator portrays Hezekiah as unparalleled in righteousness. Thus, she suggests that 2 Chr 31–32 should be understood differently as “a case of a divine test” (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 980).

⁶² Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 992.

movement of the temporal setting of the Hezekiah narratives in the Chronicles account is as follows:

Act	Scene	Temporal Setting	Act	Scene	Temporal Setting
I	A-B	—	V	A	← →
II	A	→		B-C	→
	B-C	→	VI	A-B	→
III	A-D	→	VII	A-F	→
IV	A	→	VIII	A-B	→
			IX	A-B	→

(→: Forward, ←: Backward, —: No movement)

5.3.1.2.1 Implication for Characterization

The narrator basically reports the Hezekiah story in 2 Chr 29–32 in chronological fashion, except for one part (2 Chr 30:2–5). In 2 Chr 30:2, the narrator also moves his temporal setting backward in order to reduce the negative characterization of Hezekiah by describing the decision-making process that led Hezekiah and his officials to celebrating the Passover in the second month.⁶³ On the other hand, this decision shows Hezekiah's mind to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem with the people of Israel. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a pious king who reunited all Israelites at the celebration of the Passover. Thus, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively by moving his temporal setting backward at a key interval in 2 Chr 29–32.

5.3.1.3 Space

Besides temporal setting, geographical setting is also another important element to help the readers understand the story. Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 basically

⁶³ In terms of the chronological order, the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 20 and Isa 38–39 occurred before the event of the invasion of Sennacherib. The narrator shows this chronological order in 2 Kgs 20:6 and Isa 38:6. However, in 2 Chr 32, the narrator does not show this reading, but simply connects the story of Hezekiah's illness to the previous story by employing the phrase "in those days" in 2 Chr 32:24 (Ackroyd, "Chronicler," 10–14; Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 365). Thus, in terms of the narrative analysis point of view, the narrator moves his temporal setting forward when he relates the last two narratives in 2 Chr 32:24–31.

occur in the city of Jerusalem. Hezekiah's story begins and ends in Jerusalem. In the beginning of the story, the narrator reports that Hezekiah became king in Jerusalem (2 Chr 29:1). The narrator also reports the death of Hezekiah and his burial place in Jerusalem at the end of the story (2 Chr 32:33). At the same time the narrator states Hezekiah's reforms in 2 Chr 29–31 which occur in Jerusalem. The other Hezekiah stories in 2 Chr 32 also occur in the city of Jerusalem. Thus, the basic geographical setting of the Hezekiah story in 2 Chr 29–32 is the city of Jerusalem.

However, the narrator does not stay in Jerusalem only within the story. The narrator also moves his geographical setting from Jerusalem to the cities of Israel and Judah in 2 Chr 30:6. The couriers were sent by Hezekiah and his officials to invite the people of Israel to come to keep the Passover of the LORD in Jerusalem. The narrator reports that the couriers went to the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun (2 Chr 30:10).⁶⁴ By shifting the geographical setting, the narrator shows that Hezekiah's main concern was not only Judah, but all Israel, when he restored the Passover.⁶⁵ In this way, Hezekiah wanted to restore the function of the city of Jerusalem as the place of centralized worship for all Israel.⁶⁶ Thus, the narrator depicts Hezekiah positively as the one who restored centralized worship in Jerusalem for all Israel by shifting the geographical setting from Jerusalem to all Israel.

⁶⁴ In 2 Chr 30:10, the narrator reports that the couriers were passing "from city to city," but the narrator states their route according to the northern tribes, "Ephraim, Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun," in 2 Chr 30:10. Japhet points out that the names of the northern tribes are used as "a synecdochic reference" (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 992).

⁶⁵ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 244. The narrator reports that Hezekiah invited all the people of Israel from Beersheba to Dan in 2 Chr 30:5. Dillard asserts that the phrase "from Beersheba to Dan" should be understood as "a useful hendiadys for the full extent of the kingdom."

⁶⁶ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 585.

The narrator, however, quickly returns his geographical setting into the city of Jerusalem in the very next verse. In 2 Chr 30:11, the narrator reports that only people from Asher and Manasseh and from Zebulun came to Jerusalem. In the same way, the narrator moves his geographical setting from Jerusalem to Lachish to report on Sennacherib who was against Lachish in 2 Chr 32:9a, but the narrator quickly moves back to Jerusalem in order to report the words of Sennacherib in 2 Chr 32:9b.

Furthermore, the narrator pays special attention to the house of the LORD in Hezekiah's story in the Chronicles account in terms of the geographical setting. The narrator begins the story of Hezekiah's reforms by reporting that Hezekiah opened the doors of the temple and repaired them (2 Chr 29:3),⁶⁷ which indicates Hezekiah's foremost concern with the temple of the LORD from the time of his accession.⁶⁸ Hezekiah's religious reforms were closely related to the house of the LORD.⁶⁹ In 2 Chr 29, the narrator reports that Hezekiah restored the service of the house of the LORD,⁷⁰ and the celebration of the Feast of Passover in 2 Chr 30, which is closely related to the house of the LORD.⁷¹ In 2 Chr 31, the narrator states Hezekiah's provision for the priests and Levites, who took the responsibilities for the temple (2 Chr 31:11).

⁶⁷ Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles*, 212. Tuell asserts that the doors of the temple are "symbols of access to the LORD's presence." Thus, the action of Hezekiah who opened the doors of the temple indicates Hezekiah's intention to seek and to serve the LORD.

⁶⁸ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 234.

⁶⁹ In Hezekiah's narrative, the narrator calls the temple by many names, namely *בית יהוה* ("the house of the LORD") in 2 Chr 29:5, *הקדש* ("the holy place" or "sanctuary") in 2 Chr 29:7, *משכן* ("dwelling place" or "Tabernacle") in 2 Chr 29:6, *האולם* ("vestibule") in 2 Chr 29:7, and *מחנה יהוה* ("the camp of the LORD") in 2 Chr 31:2. Dillard points out that the term *מחנה* ("camp" or "encampment") reminds the reader of the tabernacle traditions in Num 2:3, 9 (Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 248).

⁷⁰ Ackroyd, "Temple Vessels," 166–81. In his article, Ackroyd maintains that it is significant to see the vessels of the Temple in order to trace the continuous religious tradition of the community in Chronicles. Thus, in 2 Chr 29:18–19, the narrator reports that the vessels are restored to the temple, which indicates that the religious tradition of Judah is restored.

⁷¹ In Deut 16:5–6, the Feast of Passover should be observed at the place that the LORD will choose, namely the house of the LORD in Jerusalem (Lev 23:5–8; Num 28:16–25; Ezek 45:21–24).

The narrator, however, does not mention “the house of the LORD” in 2 Chr 32, which is found in Hezekiah’s narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 (Isa 36–39). The Kings and the Isaiah accounts explicitly mention the phrase “the house of the LORD” several times (2 Kgs 18:15; 19:1, 14; 20:5, 8; Isa 37:1, 14; 38:20, 22), but the narrator omits this phrase in 2 Chr 32. The narrator purposely removes the phrase “the house of the LORD,” when the narrator reports that Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed to the LORD. In the Kings account, the narrator clearly relates that Hezekiah prayed to the LORD at the house of the LORD in 2 Kgs 19:14. However, it is very interesting that the narrator explicitly reports the death place of Sennacherib as *בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי* (“the house of his god”) in 2 Chr 32:21. Here the narrator moves his geographical setting from Lachish (2 Chr 32:9), where the angel of the LORD annihilated the army of Assyria (2 Chr 32:21), to the house of Sennacherib’s god in Nineveh in order to report the death of Sennacherib.⁷² Shifting the geographical setting, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by making a contrast between Hezekiah and Sennacherib. Hezekiah, who did not enter the house of the LORD, was saved by the LORD in 2 Chr 32. Meanwhile Sennacherib, who entered the house of his god, was killed by his own offspring in front of his god. Hezekiah was protected by the LORD although he did not enter the house of the LORD, but Sennacherib was not protected by his god even though he entered the temple and worshiped his god there.⁷³ In this way, the narrator positively characterizes Hezekiah by contrasting him with Sennacherib by mentioning the house of his god in terms of the geographical setting of

⁷² Childs, *Isaiah*, 109. Childs points out that the Chronicles account clearly mentions that the angel of the LORD defeated the Assyrian army at Lachish (2 Chr 32:9) where all the army of Assyria were while only a group of people went to Jerusalem. In the Kings account, the narrator does not clearly locate the defeat of the army of Sennacherib.

⁷³ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 466.

the story.⁷⁴ Thus, the movement of the geographical setting in the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 is as follows:

Act	Scene	Geographical Setting	Jerusalem
I	A-B	Jerusalem	In
II	A	The square on the east in Jerusalem	In
	B	The house of the LORD	In
	C	Hezekiah's palace	In
III	A-D	The house of the LORD	In
IV	A	The house of the LORD	In
V	A	Jerusalem→Israel→Jerusalem	In→Out→In
	B	Jerusalem→The house of the LORD	In
	C	Jerusalem→Judah, Ephraim, Manasseh	In→Out
VI	A-B	The house of the LORD	In
VII	A	Judah	Out
	B	Jerusalem	In
	C	Lachish→Jerusalem	Out→In
	D	Hezekiah's palace	In
	E	Lachish→Nineveh→The house of Sennacherib's god→Jerusalem	Out →In
	F	Jerusalem	In
VIII	A-B	Jerusalem	In
IX	A-B	Jerusalem	In

5.3.1.3.1 Implication for Characterization

The chart shows that the main events in the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 occurred in the city of Jerusalem which is similar to the Kings and Isaiah accounts. However, the Hezekiah reforms in 2 Chr 29–31 (Act Two–Act Six) are closely related to the house of the LORD, which is the center of the city of Jerusalem. The narrator relates that Hezekiah reopened, consecrated, and rededicated the house of the LORD. He also celebrated the Passover at the house of the LORD in Jerusalem (Act Five: 2 Chr 30) and re-established the tasks of the Levites at the house of the LORD (Act Six: 2 Chr 31). In

⁷⁴ The narrator omits some information of the Kings and the Isaiah accounts: the god of Sennacherib was Nisroch and Sennacherib was killed by his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer in 2 Kgs 19:37 and Isa 37:38.

this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a pious king who re-established the temple worship and the celebration of the Passover.

However, the narrator does not mention the house of the LORD in 2 Chr 32 (Act Seven–Act Nine). In 2 Chr 32, the narrator presents the Hezekiah narratives that happened after the Hezekiah reforms (2 Chr 32:1). In the Kings and Isaiah accounts, which include the same narratives as 2 Chr 32, the narrator explicitly mentions the house of the LORD several times when Hezekiah prayed for help to the LORD and wanted to enter into it. Although the narrator does not indicate the house of the LORD in 2 Chr 32, he explicitly reports the house of Sennacherib's god in 2 Chr 32:21 in order to relate the humiliating death of Sennacherib. In this regard, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively. The narrator relates that Hezekiah prayed to the LORD with Isaiah, but the LORD saved Hezekiah from Sennacherib and his fatal illness. Although Hezekiah did not go to the house of the LORD, he received the protection of the LORD. However, Sennacherib who entered the house of his god was killed by his own offspring while he was in the house of his god (2 Chr 32:21). In this way, the narrator makes a contrast between Hezekiah who was not in the temple of the LORD and Sennacherib who was in the temple of his god in terms of the geographical setting in the story of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in Act Seven (2 Chr 32:1–23). Thus, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah as a pious king in the Chronicles account whose main concern was the temple of the LORD and the city of Jerusalem.

5.3.2 Plot

In 2 Chr 29–32, there are many narratives of King Hezekiah which occur during his reign. This section will examine the plot structure and type of the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32.

5.3.2.1 Plot Structure

The narrator begins Hezekiah's story with the introductory formula in 2 Chr 29:1–2, which functions as the introduction to the entire story of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29–32.⁷⁵ The narrator also provides a conclusion to the entire story of Hezekiah by reporting the concluding formula in 2 Chr 32:32–33. The narrator relates the Hezekiah narratives between the introductory formula and the concluding formula. Introducing the first event in 2 Chr 29:3–19, the narrator states that Hezekiah opened the doors of the temple, which were closed by Hezekiah's father Ahaz (2 Chr 28:24), and repaired them in the first month of the first year of Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:3). Then, Hezekiah found that the house of the LORD had become unclean since his father closed the doors of the temple, which indicates the occasioning incident for this event. Finding impure things in the temple presents a difficulty for Hezekiah that needs to be resolved because Hezekiah desired the restoration of the temple worship.⁷⁶ Then, Hezekiah commanded the Levites

⁷⁵ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 485.

⁷⁶ Hezekiah stated that עָתָה עִם־לִבִּי לְכַרוֹת בְּרִית לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (“now it is in my heart to make a covenant to the LORD God of Israel”) in 2 Chr 29:10. Williamson asserts that this verse indicates that Hezekiah desired to rededicate the temple of the LORD (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 353). Thus, the term “covenant” is not understood as a renewal of the covenant between Israel and the LORD; rather it indicates a one-sided commitment on the part of King Hezekiah. Japhet also points out that Hezekiah expressed his intention of taking a solemn oath before the LORD in 2 Chr 29:10. Examining Ezr 10:3–5, she suggests that the preposition ל in לַיהוָה should be translated as “to” rather than “with” (Japhet, *Ideology*, 112). Begrich argues that the translation of the preposition ל is a crucial one to understand the covenant. If one translates the preposition ל as “with,” it means that a covenant is made with equal parties. If one translates ל as “to,” it indicates that a covenant is made by two different parties between a superior and an inferior party (Begrich, “Berit,” 1–11). Thus, 2 Chr 29:10 should be understood as Hezekiah's solemn oath before the LORD.

to purify themselves and the temple of the LORD (2 Chr 29:4), because the Levites and the temple were not clean (2 Chr 29:5). Many Levites rightly responded to Hezekiah by throwing out the impure things from the temple, which indicates the beginning of resolution for the difficulty that Hezekiah faced. Finally the Levites finished purifying the house of the LORD (2 Chr 29:18–19), which shows the point of resolution. Finishing their tasks, the Levites reported its completion to Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29:18–19, which indicates the continuity with the glorious past.⁷⁷ In this regard, the narrator indicates that the difficulty which Hezekiah faced at the beginning of his religious reforms is resolved by the response of the Levites.⁷⁸ The narrator concludes this event by reporting the result of the purification of the temple in 2 Chr 29:20–36, which indicates the restoration of the temple worship. Then, the narrator explicitly reports Hezekiah’s gladness at the end of the narrative in 2 Chr 29:36. The narrator states that that *וַיִּשְׂמַח יְהוֹזָבָד וְכָל-הָעָם* (“and then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced”), which indicates the original conflict that Hezekiah faced is completely resolved.⁷⁹

The continuation of the Hezekiah narrative reported by the narrator is Hezekiah’s reform concerning the Feast of the Passover in 2 Chr 30:1—31:1. The narrator reports that Hezekiah invited all Israel to come to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem to keep the Passover. Here Hezekiah faces another difficulty: whether the people of the Northern Kingdom will come to Jerusalem or not. He sent the couriers throughout all Israel and

⁷⁷ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 355.

⁷⁸ Ackroyd, “Temple Vessels,” 166–81. Ackroyd also points out that the vessels of the temple represent the continuity of the religious activities. Thus, the consecration of the temple vessels indicates the restoration of the community and the continuation of the glorious past (think of Solomon’s temple).

⁷⁹ Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 380–81.

Judah in order to invite the people to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem (2 Chr 30:6).⁸⁰ The couriers brought the announcement of Hezekiah throughout all Israel and Judah, which is the climax of this event. Then, the narrator states their negative response (2 Chr 30:10): וַיְהִי מִשְׁחִיקִים עֲלֵיהֶם וּמְלַעְגִים בָּם (“they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them”). On the other hand, the narrator also reports the positive response of the north in 2 Chr 30:11. The narrator says that some Israelites humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem following the speech of couriers, which indicates the point of resolving the difficulty that Hezekiah has faced in 2 Chr 30:3. The result of the couriers’ speech is reported by the narrator in 2 Chr 30:13, which indicate the resolution of the event. He states that “a great many people were assembled in Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month, a very great assembly (קָהָל לְרַב מְאֹד),” which means that the words of Hezekiah, as proclaimed through his couriers, was accomplished.⁸¹ In this way, the narrator presents the resolution for the difficulty that Hezekiah faced.

However, this result causes another difficulty for Hezekiah, because many Israelites from Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun were ritually unclean (2 Chr 30:17–18a), which signals an occasioning incident. Although many animals have been killed by the Levites to consecrate these unclean people, many people ate the

⁸⁰ Talmon, “Divergence,” 58–62. Talmon believes that Hezekiah sent two invitations to the Northern Kingdom to come to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. Talmon asserts that Hezekiah’s first invitation was refused by the people of the Northern Kingdom because they celebrated the Passover in the second month. Thus, Hezekiah adapted the calendar of the Northern Kingdom and invited the people of the north to celebrate the Passover in second month. However, Talmon’s suggestion conflicts with the Chronicles account. In 2 Chr 30:2, the narrator reports that the decision is unanimous from the start. At the same time 2 Chr 30:1 is the summary statement of the event in 2 Chr 30:2–5 (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 431). Thus, Hezekiah sent only one invitation to the Northern Kingdom to come to celebrate the Feast of the Passover in the second month.

⁸¹ In 2 Chr 30:13, the narrator reports the festival of Unleavened Bread for the first time in the Chronicles account, which includes both the Feast of the Passover and the seven days of Unleavened Bread. In Lev 23:5–6, these two festivals are mentioned sequentially (cf. Num 28:16–17). Thus, Williamson suggests that the Chronicler was following an earlier tradition in 2 Chr 30:13, which mentioned only one festival, the feast of Unleavened Bread (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 364).

Passover before purifying themselves.⁸² The difficulty Hezekiah now faces is more problematic than before, because the partaking of the sacrificial meal by the ritually unclean is strongly prohibited by the Law of Moses (Lev 7:19–21). Thus, Hezekiah prayed to the LORD on behalf of these people for God’s forgiveness in 2 Chr 30:18b–19, which is the climax of this event. Then this difficulty was resolved by the answer of the LORD (2 Chr 30:20). In 2 Chr 30:20, the narrator reports that *וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶל־יְהוֹזָקִיהוּ וַיִּרְפָּא אֶת־הָעָם* (“and the LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people”). Reporting the response of the LORD, the narrator indicates the beginning of resolution by mentioning “the LORD listened to Hezekiah” (2 Chr 30:20a), and resolution by stating the LORD healed the people (2 Chr 30:20b).⁸³ God’s healing in this context should be understood “as spiritual restoration and social reconciliation, as the covenant relationship with God had been renewed and elements of the northern and southern tribes are reunited in true worship.”⁸⁴

The result of solving Hezekiah’s difficulty is expressed by the narrator in 2 Chr 30:21—31:1, which indicates the end of the event. The focal point in the celebration of the Passover is the great rejoicing, which is mentioned four times (2 Chr 30:21, 23, 25, 26). The ceremony was so successful that it was extended for seven additional days (2

⁸² Klein points out that the people of the north may lack sufficient time because of their journey to Jerusalem. In Exod 12:3, the Passover was prepared four days before the sacrifice itself (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 438).

⁸³ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 370. Williamson asserts that reporting the LORD’s response to the prayer of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 30:20, the narrator reminds the reader the word of the LORD in 2 Chr 7:14. The LORD promised that *וְאֲנִי אֶשְׁמַע מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶסְלַח לְחַטָּאתָם וְאֶרְפָּא אֶת־אֲרָצָם* (“and then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land”). The LORD’s promise is threefold: hearing, forgiving, and healing. Hearing and healing are explicitly mentioned in 2 Chr 30:20, but forgiving is not verbally exact. However, Williamson suggests that forgiving is certainly reflected in Hezekiah’s prayer. Hezekiah prayed for ‘atonement’ in 2 Chr 30:18, which indicates the forgiveness of the LORD. Thus, 2 Chr 30:20 is the fulfilment of the LORD’s promises in 2 Chr 7:14 (Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 499).

⁸⁴ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 587. Japhet also points out that “considering that the statement follows the prayer for ‘atonement’, we must understand ‘heal’ as a preventative rather than corrective measure” (Japhet, *1 & II Chronicles*, 953).

Chr 30:23), and the larger numbers were applied to the amount of offerings in 2 Chr 30:24.⁸⁵ The “joy” that the narrator reports as the result of a successful ceremony was accentuated (2 Chr 30:26). In 2 Chr 30:25, the assembly had the deeper joy, because they became more aware of their community. The narrator also reports the further response of those who attended the celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem in 2 Chr 31:1. The narrator states that they broke down the pillars, hewed down the Asherah, and pulled down the high places and altars from all Judah and Israel,⁸⁶ which functions as a conclusion to the narrator’s preceding account.⁸⁷

The narrator subsequently reports Hezekiah’s further reforms in 2 Chr 31:2–19. In the previous chapters the narrator states Hezekiah’s two reforms: the consecration of the temple (2 Chr 29) and the celebration of the Passover (2 Chr 30). These religious reforms of Hezekiah allow him to re-establish regular worship in the house of the LORD,

⁸⁵ Some commentators understand the donations of thousands of animals by the king and other royal officials as additional victims for ritual sacrifice (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 371), while others assume that the animals are provided as food for the crowds of people staying in Jerusalem (Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 356). However, it is better to see 2 Chr 30:24 as having both meanings.

⁸⁶ The narrator rephrases the Kings account (2 Kgs 18:4a). In 2 Kgs 18:4, the narrator relates that Hezekiah himself removed the high places, shattered the standing stones, and cut down the Asherim. In 2 Chr 31:1, however, the narrator reports that the work is done by all people who attended the Feast of the Passover. At the same time, in 2 Chr 31:1, the people “tore down” (וַיִּתְּצוּ) the high places, but in 2 Kgs 18:4, the narrator relates that Hezekiah “removed” (הִסִּיר) the high places; the people “ground down” the Asherim (וַיִּגְרְדוּ הָאֲשֵׁרִים), but in the Kings account the narrator reports that Hezekiah “cut down” the Asherah (כָּרַח אֶת־הָאֲשֵׁרָה). Furthermore, the Chronicles account does not indicate Nehushtan in 2 Kgs 18:4b. Many scholars have suggested explanations for this omission. Rudolph points out that the Chronicler did not want to make a connection between Nehushtan and the narrative of Moses in Num 21:4–9 (Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 305). Ziemer also suggests that Moses is portrayed in a contrasting role in 2 Kgs 18:4 and 6. In 2 Kgs 18:4, the narrator portrays Moses negatively by connecting him to Nehushtan, while in 2 Kgs 18:6, the narrator characterizes Moses positively by identifying him as the recipient of the commands of the LORD. For this reason, the Chronicler omits these two verses in the Chronicles account (Ziemer, “Reform Hiskias,” 136). Klein, however, asserts that Ahaz did not have any responsibilities for adding Nehushtan to the cult of the Israelites. The narrator does not need to report the destruction of Nehushtan (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 446). Jonker also notes that in 2 Chr 31:2–19, the narrator reports worship in accord with the Torah so that the narrator omits Nehushtan (Jonker, “Disappearing,” 120–21). I think Klein’s suggestion is more reasonable than others’ in terms of the context of the story of Hezekiah, which we will see in more detail below.

⁸⁷ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 372. Williamson asserts that the title Ephraim and Manasseh stand for the region of the old northern kingdom.

which demands two things: first, the priest and Levites are properly installed in their prescribed offices (2 Chr 31:2); second, proper financial support for them is required.⁸⁸ However, these two facts are not easy to accomplish for Hezekiah, because the regular temple worship and the system of offerings used for maintenance of the priests and Levites was stopped since Ahaz closed the doors of the temple (2 Chr 28:24).⁸⁹ Thus, Hezekiah's desire to reestablish the regular temple service causes a potential point of conflict because of the proposed reforms. The climax of this event is indicated by the command of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 31:4. Hezekiah ordered Jerusalemites to bring portions for the Levites and the priests according to the requirement of the Law of Moses (2 Chr 31:4) in order to resolve the apparent conflict.

Following Hezekiah's order, the narrator moves on to describe the response of all people including Israelites and Judahites (2 Chr 31:5–7). Although Hezekiah initially commanded only Jerusalemites to bring the portion for the Levites and the priests, the people of Israel also brought great quantities, because the word spread (וַיִּכְפְּרֵץ הַדְּבָר).⁹⁰ In this way the narrator shows that the problem that Hezekiah has faced began to be resolved at this point. Then, the narrator relates the result of the response of the people as resolution in the following verses. The narrator continues with the response of all people in 2 Chr 31:8–19.⁹¹ The narrator states that Hezekiah and his officials blessed the

⁸⁸ The narrator does not explicitly mention the financial support for the Levites and the priests, but we can assume from Hezekiah's order in 2 Chr 31:4 that they did not keep their task, because there was no financial support.

⁸⁹ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 250; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 963.

⁹⁰ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 374. Williamson points out that "this is the only place in the OT where this verb (prš) is used of a command or speech. ... The meaning is probably that ... his command to the residents of Jerusalem became unexpectedly widely known."

⁹¹ Throntveit points out that the term דַּרַשׁ is one of the key terms during the Divided Kingdom of Israel (Throntveit, *Royal Speech*, 116). The term דַּרַשׁ is used forty times in the Book of Chronicles and 165 times in the Old Testament, which is usually utilized as a technical term for a special enquiry by a prophet

LORD and his people, when they came and saw the heaps in 2 Chr 31:8, which indicates that Hezekiah's command was fulfilled successfully. Then the narrator concludes this event with Hezekiah's action to distribute the things that the people brought. The gifts were distributed to the priestly and Levitical families in various stages (2 Chr 31:11–19).⁹² In this way, the narrator indicates that Hezekiah's difficult was completely resolved.

In 2 Chr 31:20–21, the narrator states the concluding statement for all of Hezekiah's reforms reported in 2 Chr 29–31. This concluding statement serves to connect Hezekiah's reforms to the following Hezekiah narratives.⁹³ The link between Hezekiah's reforms and the subsequent stories also includes the introduction of Sennacherib, who came into Judah and encamped against the fortified cities (2 Chr 32:1b).⁹⁴ Sennacherib's presence generates another conflict for Hezekiah, because Sennacherib's intention was to conquer Jerusalem. The summary statement of faithful deeds stands in stark contrast to the looming presence of Sennacherib.

(Driver, *Introduction*, 536). However, five times out of forty appearances in Chronicles are only used for this technical terms (1 Chr 10:14; 2 Chr 31:9; 32:31; 34:21, 26). Thus, in Chronicles this term *דָּרַשׁ* is employed in a more generalized usage which indicates being faithful, seeking the LORD in the various religious contexts (Throntveit, *Royal Speech*, 116).

⁹² First, the gifts were placed in the temple storerooms (2 Chr 31:11–13). Then, they were given to those priests living in outlying towns whose names were not apparently recorded in genealogical lists (2 Chr 31:14–15). Lastly, those priests whose names were listed in genealogical records received gifts (2 Chr 31:16–19).

⁹³ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 251.

⁹⁴ The narrator reports Sennacherib's invasion against Judah in a different perspective. In the Kings account, the narrator states that Sennacherib invaded Judah because Hezekiah rebelled against Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 18:7 (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 460). In 2 Chr 32, however, the narrator rephrases and connects the story of Sennacherib's invasion against Judah to Hezekiah's religious reforms in 2 Chr 32:1 (cf. 2 Chr 30:20). The narrator does not present any reason for Sennacherib's attack except Sennacherib's desire for conquest in the Chronicles account (2 Chr 32:1).

The narrator introduces an occasioning incident in 2 Chr 32:1, and develops the conflict in the following event.⁹⁵ In the following verses, the narrator relates Hezekiah's preparation for Sennacherib's invasion against Judah in 2 Chr 32:2–6. Hezekiah's preparations comprise three actions, namely covering the city's water supply (2 Chr 32:2–4), improving its fortifications (2 Chr 32:5), and organizing the conscript army (2 Chr 32:6). Hezekiah then addressed the people, encouraging them to trust in the LORD alone (2 Chr 32:7–8a).⁹⁶ The narrator immediately reports the result of Hezekiah's address in 2 Chr 32:8b, which is the point of the beginning of resolution. The narrator states that *וַיִּסְמְכוּ הָעָם עַל־דְּבָרֵי יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה* (“and the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said”). The narrator explicitly relates that the people of Judah were encouraged by Hezekiah, which indicates the fulfillment of the purpose of Hezekiah's speech.⁹⁷

However, Sennacherib's threat is intensified by his words in 2 Chr 32:9–19.⁹⁸ Sennacherib sent his representative along with a letter to Hezekiah in order to threaten

⁹⁵ In 2 Kgs 18:13 (Isa 36:1), the narrator uses the verb *תפס* (“to conquer”) in order to indicate that Sennacherib conquered the fortified cities of Judah, but in 2 Chr 32:1, the narrator utilizes the verb *בקע* (“to capture”) in order to report Sennacherib's action of seizing rather than his action of conquering. Evans points out that in 2 Chr 32:1, the narrator utilizes a different verb to report Sennacherib's action in order to distinguish “between an initial ‘seizing’ (*תפס*) of cities and a final ‘conquering’ (*בקע*) of them” (Evans, “Historia or Exegesis?” 107–9). The fortified cities of Judah were not conquered by Sennacherib, rather he temporally seized them. Evans asserts that in the Chronicles account, the narrator “was interpreting his source and making historical judgments” (Evans, “Historia or Exegesis?” 109).

⁹⁶ In his speech (2 Chr 32:7–8), Hezekiah employed the four-fold formula of encouragement which is found in Deut 31:6 and Josh 10:25. Hezekiah utilized the imperatives: *חזקו* (“be strong”) and *אמצו* (“be courageous”), and the Jussives: *אל־תיראו* (“fear not”) and *אל־תחזו* (“be not dismayed”) in 2 Chr 32:7. This four-fold formula clearly indicates the theme of trust in the LORD which is so significant in the prayer of Chronicles (Throntveit, *Royal Speech*, 42). At the same time, The narrator does not mention the expectation of Egyptian help in order to avoid the topic of the foreign alliances that has brought judgment.

⁹⁷ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 984; Evans, “Historia or Exegesis?” 114.

⁹⁸ In 2 Chr 32:1–23, the narrator states the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story in a unique way. Selman points out that the narrator does not report this story as an ordinary military war, although the event of Sennacherib's invasion against Judah was one of the most significant wars in the history of the Davidic monarchy. In the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, the narrator states that the armies of Assyria and Israel play no important role this military battle, but the speeches of both sides are the effective elements.

Hezekiah and his people. After reporting the words of Sennacherib, the narrator relates, Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed to the LORD in 2 Chr 32:20, which indicates the climax of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative.⁹⁹ In Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20, the narrator emphasizes the mediation of Isaiah, the prophet, although Hezekiah also prayed by himself concerning the invasion of Sennacherib against Judah. Hezekiah asked Isaiah to pray to the LORD on behalf of the remnant (2 Kgs 19:4 // Isa 37:4) when Sennacherib threatened Hezekiah. In 2 Chr 32:20, however, the narrator states that Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed together concerning the invasion of Sennacherib against Jerusalem.¹⁰⁰ The narrator, then, reports that the LORD sent his messenger, which indicates that the LORD has heard the prayer of Hezekiah and Isaiah. In this way, the narrator indicates the beginning of the resolution of the conflict that Hezekiah had faced. Then, the narrator states that the army of Assyria was killed by the messenger of the LORD.¹⁰¹ Then, Sennacherib returned with a shameful face to his land and he was killed by his own offspring in front of his own god (2 Chr 32:21). The LORD's response to Hezekiah's

Hezekiah's speech in 2 Chr 32:6–8 is followed by the speeches and written threats by the representatives of the king of Assyria in 2 Chr 32:9–19. Then, the narrator reports that Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed to the LORD in 2 Chr 32:20. After reporting these things, the narrator relates the action of the LORD who sent His messenger to attack the army of Assyria in 2 Chr 32:21 (Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 508).

⁹⁹ Throntveit, *Royal Speech*, 81. Throntveit asserts that this does not indicate “a diminishing of Isaiah” nor “a glorification of Hezekiah” in terms of the prayer and prophecy in Chronicles. Throntveit continually asserts that prayers are usually performed by the king in Chronicles. He also contends that 2 Chr 32:20 is the only reference in which the prophet makes intercession.

¹⁰⁰ Childs asserts that the joint prayer in 2 Chr 32:20 indicates the harmonization of the narrator with both Hezekiah's request for Isaiah to pray in 2 Kgs 19:4 and Hezekiah's own prayer in 2 Kgs 19:14–19 (Childs, *Isaiah*, 108). However, the joint prayer in 2 Chr 32:20 includes more than these two prayers. Klein maintains that the joint prayer in 2 Chr 32:20 replaces Hezekiah's request for Isaiah to pray in 2 Kgs 19:4 (Isa 37:4), Hezekiah's own prayer in 2 Kgs 19:14–19 (Isa 37:14–20), Isaiah's assurance to Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 19:20 (Isa 37:21), and the word of the LORD to Hezekiah through Isaiah in 2 Kgs 19:21–34 (Isa 37:22–35). Then Klein suggests that “Hezekiah and Isaiah demonstrated confidence rather than despair” (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 465).

¹⁰¹ The Chronicles account does not report the number of people who died in his attack. At the same time the narrator does not state that the angel killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night. These two things are explicitly mentioned in 2 Kgs 19:35, but in 2 Chr 32:21 the narrator omits them in order to remove the autonomous and demonic quality of the activity of the angel (Japhet, *Ideology*, 139).

prayer was direct and immediate,¹⁰² which indicates that the conflict that Hezekiah has faced is resolved.

The narrator clearly shows that the initial conflict between Hezekiah and Sennacherib, intensified by the words of Sennacherib, was resolved by the LORD who heard the prayer of Hezekiah and Isaiah. Here the narrator relates that the fate of Sennacherib who was shamefully killed is exactly the opposite of that of Hezekiah, who abundantly received the blessing from the LORD.¹⁰³ In this way the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story is concluded by the narrator.

The narrator moves on to report the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery in 2 Chr 32:24–26. In 2 Chr 32:24, the narrator briefly reports this story in the same sequence as the account in 2 Kgs 20:1–11.¹⁰⁴ However, the narrator subsequently reports the response of Hezekiah to his healing from his illness. The narrator says that Hezekiah did not properly respond to the LORD, but his heart becomes proud in 2 Chr 32:25a, which causes the wrath of the LORD (2 Chr 32:25b). In this way the narrator generates a conflict for Hezekiah. Thus, although Hezekiah is healed from his illness through his prayer, he faces another difficulty, that is, God's anger against him, Judah, and Jerusalem.¹⁰⁵ In 2 Chr 32:26, the narrator states that Hezekiah and the Jerusalemites humbled themselves in the pride of their heart. Thus, the wrath of the LORD did not

¹⁰² Johnstone, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 218.

¹⁰³ The narrator already stated that some Judean kings received the rest from the LORD, namely Solomon (1 Chr 2:17–18; 23:25), Asa (2 Chr 14:5–6; 15:15), and Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:30). Although the LORD saved David from the hand of the Philistines in 1 Chr 11:14 and gave him victory whenever he went (1 Chr 18:6, 13), the narrator does not report that David received rest from the LORD.

¹⁰⁴ In 2 Chr 32:24, the narrator states that Hezekiah prayed to the LORD (2 Kgs 20:2–3), the LORD answered him (2 Kgs 20:4–7), and the LORD also gave a sign to him (2 Kgs 20:8–11).

¹⁰⁵ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 386. Williamson suggests that the narrator utilizes the terms, Judah and Jerusalem in this verse, and the phrase, the inhabitants of Jerusalem in 2 Chr 32:26 in order to encourage the readers to apply the lesson of this event to themselves.

come against them during the days of Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:26), which indicates the beginning of resolution. The anger of the LORD was postponed to the future, which shows that the difficulty that Hezekiah has faced was resolved by the repentance of Hezekiah. The narrator continues reporting Hezekiah's wealth and successes in 2 Chr 32:27–31 as the conclusion of the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery,¹⁰⁶ which illustrates divine blessings enjoyed by good kings.¹⁰⁷

In 2 Chr 32:31, the narrator relates the story of the Babylonian envoys in a very short summary statement.¹⁰⁸ However, the narrator reports this event in a part of Hezekiah's wealth and success, rather than a separate event as the Kings and Isaiah accounts.¹⁰⁹ In 2 Chr 32:31, the narrator begins a short summary statement by an adverb, *כִּי*, which is never used for "an adversative meaning."¹¹⁰ Thus, the narrator purposely utilizes the adverb *כִּי*, in order to make a harmony between the indication that Hezekiah successes in all his undertakings and the event of Babylonian envoys, which could not be understood as one of his fortunate actions.¹¹¹ Thus, the narrator presents the story of the Babylonian envoys as the result of the event of Hezekiah's illness and

¹⁰⁶ Vaughn, *Theology*, 172. Vaughn proves Hezekiah's richness through the study of the *lmlk* jars. He concludes that many *lmlk* jars were stored at central locations, which indicates Hezekiah's richness.

¹⁰⁷ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 515. According to Selman, "[r]iches and honor are regularly combined in Chronicles, almost invariably as visible signs of divine blessing, as with David (1 Ch. 29:28), Solomon (2 Ch. 1:11, 12 and Jehoshaphat (2 Ch. 17:5; 18:1))."

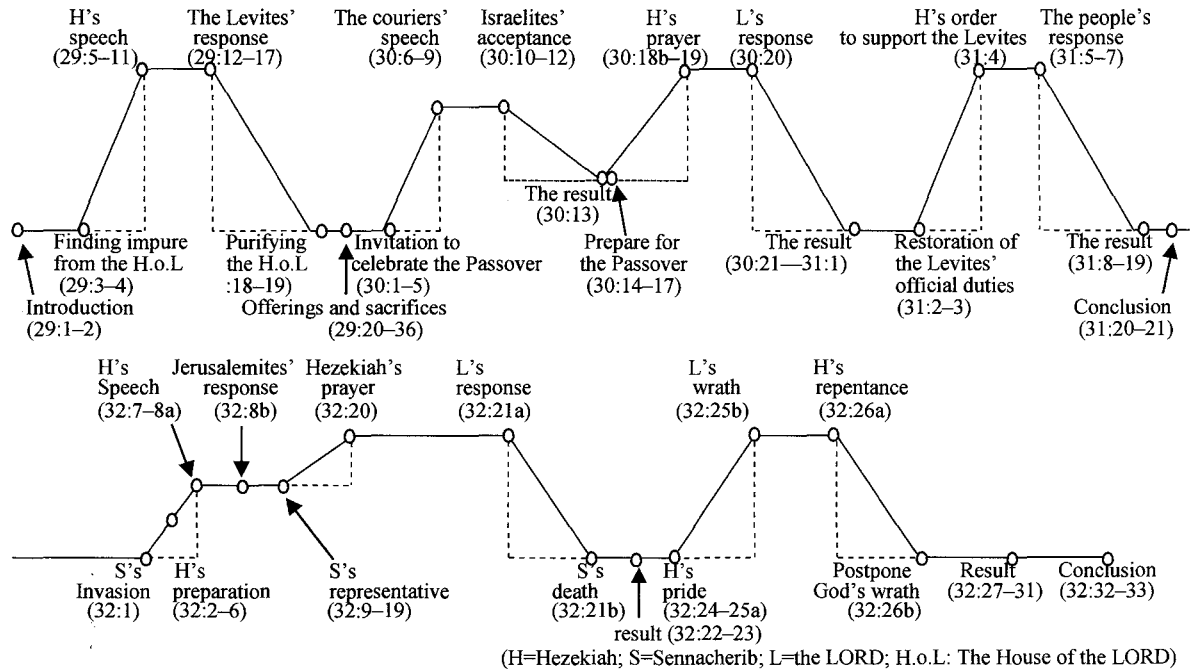
¹⁰⁸ McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 351. McKenzie maintains that the short statement in 2 Chr 32:31 obviously alludes to the story of the envoys from Babylon in 2 Kgs 20:12–19. However, he points out that the reason for the visitation from Babylon is different. In the Chronicles account, the narrator relates that the envoys from Babylon came to see a sign the miraculous healing of Hezekiah. Klein also points out that the narrator relates the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery by the sign of miraculous healing which came from the LORD in 2 Chr 32:24 (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 469).

¹⁰⁹ Curtis, *Chronicles*, 492.

¹¹⁰ Keil, *Chronicles*, 479. Curtis suggests that *כִּי* can be translated as "Howbeit" (Curtis, *Chronicles*, 493). However, Keil correctly asserts that "*כִּי* does not denote *attamen* ... [but] 'and accordingly.'" Other commentators also translate the adverb *כִּי* in this way (Kline, *2 Chronicles*, 468; Coggins, *Chronicles*, 285).

¹¹¹ Keil, *Chronicles*, 479.

recovery in the Chronicles account.¹¹² Then, the narrator ends the Hezekiah story in Chronicles with a regular form of conclusion to the reign as a whole in 2 Chr 32:32–33. Thus, the diagram of the plot structure for the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 is as follows:



This diagram shows that Hezekiah's narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 have six climaxes.

In the first five climaxes, Hezekiah gives a speech or a command to the people and prays to the LORD in order to resolve his difficulties that he has faced. These five climaxes are de-escalated by the responses of people who were addressed by Hezekiah. In the last one, the climax is de-escalated by Hezekiah's repentance. Thus, all conflicts which Hezekiah had faced are resolved in the Hezekiah narratives (2 Chr 29–32). In this regard,

¹¹² In 2 Chr 32:31, the narrator relates that the LORD forsook Hezekiah to test him to know all that was in his heart. In the biblical narrative, the LORD tested his people to respond to the LORD sincerely (Deut 8:2–3) "as a result of the discernment that emerges from this kind of self-knowledge" (Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 596). Thus, in 2 Chr 32:31, the purpose of the LORD's testing was to make Hezekiah's devotion to the LORD. Myers asserts that "[t]raditionally, in time of testing, God was thought to have abandoned the one being tested (cf. Abraham, Job, and in part, Israel in the wilderness)" (Myers, *II Chronicles*, 193).

the plot type of the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 is a comedy, which has a happy ending in the story. At the end of each climax, the narrator also relates the result or the conclusion of the story in order to indicate the situations and fall of Hezekiah, namely abundant sacrifices and rejoicing (2 Chr 29:31–36), the great rejoicing (2 Chr 30:21–26), the prosperity (2 Chr 31:21), honor and wealth (2 Chr 32:22–23), and wealth and success (2 Chr 32:27–30). In the conclusion of the entire story of Hezekiah, he honored all the people of Judah and was buried at the special place, which portrays him as the best king among the Davidic kings including David and Solomon. Hezekiah also faced many difficulties during his reign, but he resolved these difficulties through his faithful actions, which was evidenced by his religious reforms and his prayer. When he found that the temple was not properly used for worshiping God, Hezekiah fixed the problems in many ways. When Sennacherib invaded Judah, Hezekiah prayed to the LORD for help. When Hezekiah became sick to the point of death, he prayed to the LORD and was healed by the LORD. Thus, the story of Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles is a comedy in terms of the plot structure.

5.3.2.2 Implications for Characterization

The plot of Hezekiah's narratives indicates that the narrator portrays him positively. As mentioned above, the plot shows that Hezekiah's story in Chronicles has six climaxes, which are Hezekiah's speeches to the people (2 Chr 29:5–11; 30:6–9; 31:4; 32:7–8) and Hezekiah's prayers to the LORD (2 Chr 30:18b–19; 32:20).¹¹³ In the second climax (2 Chr 30:6–9), the couriers sent by Hezekiah brought an announcement for the

¹¹³ The narrator reports Hezekiah's speeches as direct speech in the first climax (2 Chr 29:5–11) and the fifth climax (2 Chr 32:7–8), but in the fourth climax (2 Chr 31:4), the narrator reports Hezekiah's command as indirect speech. At the same time, Hezekiah's prayer is also reported by direct speech in the second climax (2 Chr 30:18b–19) and by the narrator's comment in fifth climax (2 Chr 32:20).

people of Israel. Although the narrator reports their speech as direct speech in 2 Chr 30:6–9, this announcement is not made by them, but by Hezekiah with his officials. Thus, in the second climax, the narrator reports Hezekiah's speech through the mouth of his couriers.

On the other hand, these climaxes are de-escalated by the responses of other characters who were addressed in these speeches. The conflicts are also resolved by these positive responses in these six climaxes. When Hezekiah addressed the Levites to consecrate themselves and the house of the LORD, they totally obeyed Hezekiah's commandments in 2 Chr 29:12–17. The people of Israel also came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover when they heard Hezekiah's announcement through the couriers in 2 Chr 30:10–12. In 2 Chr 30:20, the LORD positively responded to Hezekiah's prayer for those who ate the Passover meal without ritual cleanliness. The Israelites and Judahites brought great gifts for the Levites in 2 Chr 31:5–7, when Hezekiah commanded the Jerusalemites to bring some portions of their property for the Levites and the priests (2 Chr 31:4). When Sennacherib invaded Judah, Hezekiah addressed the Jerusalemites to trust the LORD only; the people were encouraged by the words of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 32:8b. In 2 Chr 32:20, when Hezekiah prayed to the LORD for help concerning Sennacherib's invasion against Judah, the LORD answered Hezekiah by destroying the army of Assyria and killing Sennacherib. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively through these positive responses which indicate the resolution of the conflict that Hezekiah has faced.

The narrator also positively characterizes Hezekiah in the last climax of his story in 2 Chr 32:25–26. When the LORD's anger burned against Hezekiah, he humbled

himself before the LORD in 2 Chr 32:26a. In this way, the narrator indicates the conflict is resolved by Hezekiah's faithful response. At the same time, the narrator purposely includes the story of the Babylonian envoys in the result of the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery in 2 Chr 32:24–26.¹¹⁴ Williamson asserts that Hezekiah “came successfully through God's time of testing.”¹¹⁵ Thus, the narrator reinterprets the story of the Babylonian envoys in 2 Kgs 20:12–19 (Isa 39:1–8) and presents the story with relation to Hezekiah's successful deeds (2 Chr 32:30) in order to portray Hezekiah positively.¹¹⁶ Thus, the plot of the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 clearly shows that the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively.

5.3.3 Characterization

Hezekiah, the protagonist, is positively characterized by the narrator in the story in 2 Chr 29–32. The narrator portrays him positively in the introduction to the story. In 2 Chr 29:2a, the narrator evaluates that וַיַּעַשׂ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה (“and he [Hezekiah] did what was right in the eyes of the LORD”), which indicates the narrator's high commendation for Hezekiah by utilizing the LORD's perspective on Hezekiah.¹¹⁷ The narrator fully compares Hezekiah with David in 2 Chr 29:2b in order to portray Hezekiah like

¹¹⁴ Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 405. Allen contends that the meaning of 2 Chr 32:30–31 shows as represented in NEB: “In fact, Hezekiah was successful in everything he attempted, even in the affair of the envoys...” Myers and Williamson also see in the same way (Myers, *II Chronicles*, 193; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 387).

¹¹⁵ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 387.

¹¹⁶ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 388. Allen also points out that “[t]here is a reference back to the incident of 2 Kings 20:12–19 which the Chronicler used earlier in verses 25–26. There he used it both negatively in terms of human sin and divine judgment and positively in terms of eating humble pie. Now he picks up the last, positive element and comments on it in an interesting way: ‘God left him to himself (RSV) in order to test him’” (Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 405).

¹¹⁷ Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 344. Many commentators understand that the narrator takes over the introduction in 2 Kgs 18:2–3 with a few slight alternations (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 352; Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 233; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 915).

David,¹¹⁸ which is one of the narrator's unique features in Chronicles. As mentioned above, the narrator removes the comparison with David for all other kings in the Chronicles account except two other kings: Ahaz and Josiah.¹¹⁹

However, these two kings are compared to David in an opposite way. Josiah is positively compared with David as is Hezekiah (2 Chr 34:3), while Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, is negatively compared with David (2 Chr 28:1). The narrator reports that *וְלֹא־עָשָׂה הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּדָוִד אָבִיו* (“and he [Ahaz] did not do right in the sight of the LORD as David his father”), which is the opposite of Hezekiah's evaluation in 2 Chr 29:2.¹²⁰ In this regard, the narrator contrasts Hezekiah's reign with Ahaz's reign.¹²¹ In 2 Chr 29–31, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a cultic reformer who corrected the religious apostasies introduced by Ahaz.¹²² The narrator also shows this through the words of the priests in 2 Chr 29:18–19. When they finished consecrating the temple, they said to Hezekiah: *וְנָתַתְּ כָּל־הַכֵּלִים אֲשֶׁר הִזְנִיחַ הַמֶּלֶךְ אָחָז בְּמַלְכוּתוֹ בְּמַעַלּוֹ הַכִּנּוּ וְהִקְדָּשְׁנוּ* (“and all the vessels which king Ahaz had rejected during his kingship in his unfaithfulness, we have set up and consecrated”). The priests explicitly mentioned Ahaz in order to accuse him as a cultic apostate.¹²³ In this regard, the narrator makes a contrast between the reign

¹¹⁸ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 579.

¹¹⁹ In Kings, there are several kings who are compared to David, such as Solomon (1 Kgs 3:3; 11:4), Abijah (1 Kgs 15:3), Asa (1 Kgs 15:11), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:3), Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:2), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:3) and Josiah (2 Kgs 22:2).

¹²⁰ The narrator's evaluation of the reign of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29:2b is not exactly same as the evaluation of Ahaz in 2 Chr 28:1. In 2 Chr 29:2b, the narrator reports that Hezekiah did *כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה דָּוִד* (“according to all that David his father had done”), while in 2 Chr 28:1, the narrator reports Hezekiah did *כְּדָוִד אָבִיו* (“as David his father”). In 2 Chr 29:2b, the narrator positively portrays Hezekiah in an emphatic way by utilizing the relative clause *כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה דָּוִד אָבִיו* rather than the prepositional phrase *אָבִיו כְּדָוִד*.

¹²¹ Mabie, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 286.

¹²² McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 340.

¹²³ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 420.

of Ahaz and that of Hezekiah in order to portray Hezekiah as a pious king.¹²⁴ The narrator explicitly evaluates that Hezekiah is faithful and obedient to the LORD in 2 Chr 31:20–21, but Ahaz is *מְעוֹל מְעַל בַּיהוָה* (“most unfaithful to the LORD”) in 2 Chr 28:19. Thus, the narrator persuades the readers to see Hezekiah as a positive character in the entire story of Hezekiah by comparing him with David.

The narrator also characterizes Hezekiah in an extremely positive way in the conclusion of the story in 2 Chr 32:32–33. When the narrator provides the source of the Hezekiah story,¹²⁵ he summaries Hezekiah’s works as his good deeds (*וְהַסְדָּוִי*) in 2 Chr 32:32a,¹²⁶ which indicates the religious reforms reported in 2 Chr 29–31.¹²⁷ Here the narrator changes the phrase *כָּל-גְּבוּרָתוֹ* (“all his might”) in 2 Kgs 20:20 into *הַסְדָּוִי* (“his good deeds”) in 2 Chr 32:32. In the Kings account, the narrator stresses Hezekiah’s political strength, but in the Chronicler’s account the narrator emphasizes Hezekiah’s piety by changing the phrase “all his might” into “his good deeds.”¹²⁸ In this regard, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a pious king by rephrasing 2 Kgs 20:20.

Furthermore, the narrator positively characterizes Hezekiah through his resting place. The narrator relates that Hezekiah was buried on the ascent to the tombs of the sons of David, and that all Judah (*כָּל-יְהוּדָה*) honored him at his death in 2 Chr 32:33. As

¹²⁴ Ackroyd, “Biblical Interpretation,” 247–59.

¹²⁵ Evans, “Historia or Exegesis?” 107–8. Evans points out that the narrator reports his source as “the vision of Isaiah son of Amoz” (2 Chr 32:32), which indicates the title of the book of Isaiah. The book of Isaiah (Isa 1:1) begins by the same expression “the vision of Isaiah son of Amoz,” which is the “editorial incipit” of the book.

¹²⁶ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 388. Williamson asserts that “[i]t would be possible grammatically to translate ‘the deeds of loyalty shown towards him,’ but the context favors RSV’s rendering [his good deeds].”

¹²⁷ Most scholars see Hezekiah’s good deeds as his reforms in 2 Chr 29–31 (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 469; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 388; McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 351).

¹²⁸ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 388. Dillard also translates the term *הַסְדָּוִי* as “his acts of piety,” which indicates that the narrator emphasizes the piety of Hezekiah in the Chronicles account (Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 260).

mentioned above, this burial expression is the most elaborate and distinguished burial expression among all Judean kings including David and Solomon.¹²⁹ In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as “the greatest Judean king,”¹³⁰ which indicates that the whole reign of Hezekiah is positively approved by the narrator. Thus, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah in an extremely positive way at the beginning and ending of the story in order to make the readers see Hezekiah positively.

The narrator also states that Hezekiah instigated religious reforms at the beginning of his reign. When the narrator reports Hezekiah’s reforms, he indicates that Hezekiah enacted his reform *בְּשָׁנָה הָרִאשׁוֹנָה לְמַלְכוֹ בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן* (“in the first year of his being king, in the first month”) in 2 Chr 29:3. Furthermore, in 2 Chr 29:17, the narrator explicitly reports that it was the first day of the first month (*בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן*) of Hezekiah’s first regnal year. In this way, the narrator reports that Hezekiah’s first official work as the king of Judah was the consecration of the temple, which indicates that Hezekiah’s main concern during his reign was temple worship.¹³¹ This is also shown through the response of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29:20, when he heard that the purification of the temple was finished (2 Chr 29:18–19). The narrator relates that Hezekiah rose early in the next morning (*וַיִּשְׁכַּח*) in order to participate in a temple re-dedication ceremony.¹³² This is a literary sign for Hezekiah’s eagerness to re-dedicate

¹²⁹ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 996.

¹³⁰ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 470.

¹³¹ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 352.

¹³² Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 489. Although the narrator does not explicitly mention next morning in 2 Chr 29:10, we can assume that it is the next morning because the narrator uses the verb *שָׁחַח* (“to rise early”) with *waw* relative. Japhet points out that the time phrase, the early morning, indicates not only “local customs” in the Bible (Gen 19:27; 20:8; 21:14; 22:3 etc.), but also “Hezekiah’s diligence in promptly carrying all the necessary actions” for the ceremony (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 924). However, it is not just the indication of a local custom or Hezekiah’s diligence, but Hezekiah’s eagerness to restore the temple worship. The narrator only utilizes the verb *שָׁחַח* two more times in the Chronicles account (2

the temple of the LORD in order to restore the temple worship at Jerusalem. The narrator also reports that Hezekiah assembled his officials who represent the people of the city as a whole, and went to the temple with them.¹³³ In this way, the narrator shows that Hezekiah's eagerness was shared with his people.¹³⁴ The restoration of the temple worship is not just Hezekiah's personal action, but a national affair. This is also introduced by reporting the sacrifices that Hezekiah and his officers brought. The narrator relates that Hezekiah and his officials brought many sacrificial animals as a sin-offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, for Judah (2 Chr 29:21), and for all Israel (2 Chr 29:24).

The narrator also states that Hezekiah's works were approved by the LORD in 2 Chr 29:36. Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced (וישמחו) at the end of their restoration of the temple worship and their consecrated offerings. Then the narrator reports the reason for the joy of the people as the work of the LORD, which provides a stark contrast to the situation with which they had begun.¹³⁵ The narrator indicates that they rejoiced because the LORD established the people (על ההכין האלהים לעם) and the work was finished quickly (כי בפתאום היה הקבר), which means that Hezekiah's reforms in 2 Chr 29 were truly an act of the LORD.¹³⁶ The narrator treats the reforms of Hezekiah for temple restoration

Chr 20:20; 36:15). In 2 Chr 20:20, the verb שכם is not used for indicating the local custom, but Jehoshaphat's vigilance. In 2 Chr 36:15, it does not indicate the local custom or other things, but the LORD's compassion on His people (McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 370).

¹³³ The expression of the gathering of the "officers of the city" (ערי העיר) is another unique feature of the narrator in Chronicles. This is the first time to refer to city officers as plural in the Bible. There are a few times city officers appear as singular (Judg 9:30; 1 Kgs 22:26; 2 Kgs 23:8; 2 Chr 18:25; 34:8).

¹³⁴ Japhet, *1 & II Chronicles*, 925.

¹³⁵ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 492.

¹³⁶ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 584. Japhet points out that the clause על ההכין האלהים לעם in 2 Chr 29:36 has "double difficulties" in terms of syntax and contents. The syntax of the term, ההכין, indicates "the use of the article as a relative pronoun." On the other hand, in terms of the content of this clause, the narrator does not mention what the LORD did for the people in the story. Thus, she suggests that the article of the term ההכין should be understood as a demonstrative and the term לעם ("for the people")

as the act of God in order that Hezekiah's reforms are approved by the LORD.¹³⁷ In this way the narrator characterizes Hezekiah as a good and faithful king whose works were approved by the LORD.

As mentioned above, the narrator also portrays Hezekiah in an extremely positive way by utilizing the perspective of the LORD at the end of the story of Hezekiah's reforms (2 Chr 31:20–21). In 2 Chr 31:20, the narrator says וַיַּעַשׂ הַטּוֹב וְהַיָּשָׁר וְהָאֱמֻנָה לְפָנַי וְהָאֱלֹהִים (“and he [Hezekiah] did what was good, right, and faithful before the LORD his God”). Hezekiah is positively characterized by the narrator through three adjectival nouns: טוֹב (“good”), יָשָׁר (“right”), and אֱמֻנָה (“faithful”). The LORD saw the Hezekiah reforms as good, right, and faithful actions, which indicates a highly positive characterization of the narrator. In Chronicles, Hezekiah is the only king of Judah to be characterized in this way.¹³⁸ The narrator also states that Hezekiah succeeded (וְהַצְלִיחַ) his reforms, which he has done with all his heart in 2 Chr 31:21. The phrase, בְּכָל-לִבּוֹ (“with all his heart”), is used for David (1 Kgs 14:8) and Josiah (2 Kgs 23:25) in the Kings account, but in the Chronicles account, it is omitted from the evaluation of David and Josiah. On the other hand, the narrator utilizes the phrase for two other Judean kings: Ahaziah (Jehoahaz) (2 Chr 22:9) and Hezekiah. However, Hezekiah is the only king who is evaluated by the narrator through the phrase. Although the phrase, בְּכָל-לִבּוֹ (“with all his heart”), is also utilized in 2 Chr 22:9, it is the words of the people who killed

should be replaced by the term לִבָּם (“their heart”) following Ehrlich's emendation (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 931). However, it is just the narrator's conclusion for Hezekiah's temple restoration. Thus, it provides the narrator's view point on Hezekiah's religious reforms; rather than the summary of what happened in the story. Klein also suggests that the narrator indicates that the LORD had said “a gracious yes to Hezekiah's undertaking” during his religious reforms for the temple restoration by mentioning the clause וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת-הַקּוֹל וַיִּשְׁמַח בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל in 2 Chr 29:36 (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 425).

¹³⁷ Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 602.

¹³⁸ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 972.

Ahaziah. However, the narrator explicitly evaluates the reign of Ahaziah negatively (2 Chr 22:3–4).¹³⁹ Thus, the people’s evaluation of Ahaziah should be corrected by the negative evaluation of the narrator. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as the best king among the Judean kings.¹⁴⁰

In 2 Chr 34:31, the narrator also utilizes the phrase, בְּכָל-לִבּוֹ (“with all his heart”), in the story of Josiah. The narrator states that Josiah made a covenant before the LORD with all his heart and all his soul in 2 Chr 34:31. Although the Kings and Chronicles accounts utilize the phrase for the reign of Josiah, the contexts of the two places where they are used are different. In Chronicles, the narrator utilizes the phrase to relate Josiah’s renewal of the covenant, while in Kings the narrator utilizes the phrase to evaluate the reign of Josiah. Furthermore, in the former Josiah’s words show his commitment to follow the LORD and to keep His commands, but in the latter the narrator’s words evaluate Josiah’s reign.¹⁴¹ Thus, the narrator purposely omits the phrase for the evaluation of Josiah in the Chronicles account in order to undermine the positive characterization of Josiah in the Kings account. On the other hand, the narrator purposely adds this phrase to the evaluation for Hezekiah’s reign in order to reinforce the positive characterization of him.¹⁴² Thus, the narrator depicts Hezekiah as the one who overshadowed all other Judean kings, including Josiah, in order to characterize him as the best king among the kings of Judah.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 313. The narrator adds an explanatory clause “for his mother.” Klein asserts that this additional phrase indicates the narrator’s blame for Ahaziah’s behavior on the influence of the mother queen, Athaliah, who was the daughter of Jezebel.

¹⁴⁰ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 251.

¹⁴¹ Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 685.

¹⁴² Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 972.

¹⁴³ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 973.

As mentioned above, the narrator also externally characterizes Hezekiah as a positive character through the responses of other characters. The narrator reports that Hezekiah's officials and the Levites completely obeyed him within the story.¹⁴⁴ When Hezekiah ordered the Levites and the priests to consecrate themselves and the temple (2 Chr 29:5), they quickly and completely fulfilled Hezekiah's order (2 Chr 29:17). The narrator explicitly states that they began to consecrate the temple on the first day of the first month of Hezekiah's reign in 2 Chr 29:17. In other words, they concreted the house of the LORD on the very day that Hezekiah opened the temple's doors and gave them their orders (2 Chr 29:3–11).¹⁴⁵ Then, the narrator states that they completely finished their orders on the sixteenth day of the first month. The narrator reports their completion to consecrate the temple through their lips in 2 Chr 29:19. They told Hezekiah all the vessels had been consecrated and were in front of the altar of the LORD, which means that the temple was ready.¹⁴⁶ Thus, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively by the quick and complete response of the Levites to Hezekiah's orders.

The narrator then portrays Hezekiah positively through the positive response of the assembly. When the religious ceremony for the re-dedication of the temple was

¹⁴⁴ The characters of the Levites and the priests only appear in the story of Hezekiah's reforms (2 Chr 29–31). These characters act collectively as a flat character in the Hezekiah narratives. The narrator characterizes these characters as flat characters, but portrays them as important characters for Hezekiah's reforms who performed the religious activities according to the Law of Moses. On the other hand, the characters of Hezekiah's officials and the couriers also act collectively as a character in the story of the Hezekiah reforms. The character of Hezekiah's officials is shown as the company with Hezekiah throughout the story. As Hezekiah's officials, the narrator depicts the couriers as flat characters in the story. By the characterization of Hezekiah's officials, the couriers, the priests and the Levites, the narrator shows that Hezekiah has authority over them because they faithfully obeyed him.

¹⁴⁵ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 419.

¹⁴⁶ Ackroyd, "Temple Vessels," 166–81. In 2 Chr 29:19, the narrator utilizes the term, כִּינּוּ ("we prepared"), in order to indicate the restoration of the temple (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 420). Pratt also points out that "[t]his particular focus of the Levitical report to Hezekiah spoke clearly to the post-exilic community. Apparently, the Chronicler thought it was important to stress that restoration of the temple included attention to the purification and restoration of the instruments of worship brought back by those returning from Babylon" (Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 596).

finished,¹⁴⁷ Hezekiah commanded the assembly to bring sacrifices as thank offerings to the LORD (2 Chr 29:31). The narrator reports that the assembly abundantly brought sacrifices for the fellowship offerings in order to show their gratitude for the blessing of forgiveness and renewal.¹⁴⁸ They brought seventy cattle, one hundred rams, two hundred lambs for a burnt offering, and six hundred cattle and three thousand sheep for consecrated offering (2 Chr 29:32–33). The narrator states that there were not enough priests to prepare these sacrificial animals, which means that the assembly brought more sacrifices than Hezekiah expected. At the same time, the narrator relates that they voluntarily brought these abundant sacrifices in 2 Chr 29:31, which indicates one of the fellowship offerings.¹⁴⁹ Thus, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively through the assembly who willingly brought sacrifices abundantly.

In the same way, the narrator subsequently portrays Hezekiah positively in the story of Hezekiah's provision for the priest and Levites in 2 Chr 31. After celebrating the Passover successfully, Hezekiah ordered the Jerusalemites to provide the portion of due the priests and the Levites in 2 Chr 31:4.¹⁵⁰ Then, the narrator states that all

¹⁴⁷ In 2 Chr 29:21, the narrator reports sacrificial animals for burnt offering, seven of each, bulls, rams, and lamb, and for the sin-offering, seven he-goats. Japhet points out that these sacrificial animals were mentioned in Num 7:88 for "the dedication of the altar when it was anointed." They were also mentioned in the dedication of the second temple in Ezra 6:17. However, their numbers are different (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 925).

¹⁴⁸ Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 600. However, many commentators understand these verses differently. Allen contends that these sacrificial animals and thank offerings are an idiom meaning "thanksgiving sacrifices" (Allen, "The First and Second Books," 297–659). Petersen asserts that the narrator indicates peace offerings in Lev 7:12. A thanksgiving offering and a freewill offering that the assembly brought are two of three types of peace offering (Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy*, 84). Pratt also identifies the sacrifices as the fellowship offerings (peace offering), of which thank offerings were a type in Lev 7:11–15 (Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 600). Klein believes that the assembly are invited to contribute communion sacrifices and thank offerings (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 424).

¹⁴⁹ Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 600.

¹⁵⁰ In the Law of Moses, the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, and the first of the fleece of the sheep were assigned to the priests (Num 18:4, 12–13). The tithe was given to the Levites (Num 18:21). Furthermore, in Deut 14:27–29, the LORD commands that every third year the tithe was gathered from the Israelites and given to Levites, resident aliens, orphans, and widows.

Israelites brought their abundant tithes for the Levites. In 2 Chr 31:5b, the narrator reports that *וּמְעַשֵׂר הַכֹּל לַרֶב הַבְּיָאוּ* (“and they brought in abundantly the tithe of all”). The narrator explicitly reports that they piled up the heaps from the third month to the seventh month in 2 Chr 31:7, which emphasizes the Israelites’ willingness to bring their tithes for the Levites in order to obey Hezekiah’s command.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, the narrator reports that Hezekiah’s commands were enthusiastically obeyed by the people. The narrator states the people’s response to Hezekiah’s orders as “a sudden dramatic response.”¹⁵² In 2 Chr 31:5, the narrator reports that the people responded as soon as the order went out (*וּבְפִרְץ הַדְּבָר הָרַבּוּ*), which means that the people immediately responded.¹⁵³ At the same time, the narrator relates the story in an unexpected way. In 2 Chr 31:4, Hezekiah only ordered the Jerusalemites, but all Israelites brought their tithes in 2 Chr 31:5. The narrator reports that *בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל* (“the sons of Israel”) brought their tithes. Here the phrase *בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל*, refers to the entire nation.¹⁵⁴ Thus, the narrator reports that all the Israelites responded to Hezekiah’s order, although Hezekiah ordered the Jerusalemites. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively whose orders were obeyed immediately and unexpectedly by the people of Israel.

¹⁵¹ Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 621. Other scholars understand the time phrases as the indication of the national feasts. The third month indicates the grain harvest, and the seventh month indicates the vine and fruit harvest (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 375; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 450; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 965; Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 250). In Exod 23:16, the former is called the Feast of Harvest (the Feast of Weeks [Exod 34:22; Lev 23:16–17]), and the latter is called the Feast of Ingathering (the Feast of Boots or Tabernacle [Lev 23:34]). However, these time phrases indicate not only the national feasts, but also the great quantities of their tithes for the Levites. In 2 Chr 31:5, the narrator focuses on the great quantities, rather than the national feasts.

¹⁵² Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 620.

¹⁵³ The term, *פָּרַץ*, usually refers to “broke out,” or “break through” in *HALOT*, which indicates exceptional political development (*HALOT*, 971–72). However, the term, *פָּרַץ*, means “to go out,” or “spread” in 2 Chr 31:5 (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 449).

¹⁵⁴ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 449. On the other hand, Williamson and Myers understand the term as those who dwell in Jerusalem (Williamson, *Israel*, 129–30; Myers, *II Chronicles*, 182). However, it is better to see this term as all Israelites, because the narrator mentions the sons of Israel and Judah as those who brought their tithes in the very next verse (2 Chr 31:6).

The narrator also notes that the people of Israel obeyed the words of Hezekiah in the story of the celebration of the Passover in 2 Chr 30:1—31:1. Hezekiah invited the people of Israel and Judah to come to the temple in Jerusalem in order to celebrate the Passover in 2 Chr 30:1.¹⁵⁵ When they heard the invitation of Hezekiah through his couriers, many people came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. The narrator explicitly states that *גַּיְאֲסָפוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם עִם־רַב* (“a great many people were assembled in Jerusalem”) in 2 Chr 30:13a. Among this large group there are many Israelites (2 Chr 30:18) who came from the north, which indicates that Hezekiah’s orders were positively accepted by the northern people.¹⁵⁶ Here the narrator intentionally reports that Hezekiah’s Passover was conducted in the first year of Hezekiah’s reign in order to portray Hezekiah positively.¹⁵⁷ Thus, the narrator positively characterizes Hezekiah in the positive response of both the Judahites and the Israelites by rewriting the history of Hezekiah’s reign intentionally.

The narrator also portrays Hezekiah as a pious king through his prayer and the LORD’s answer within Hezekiah’s story. In 2 Chr 32:20, Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed to the LORD concerning Sennacherib and his army, which is also found in both Kings (2 Kgs 19:1–4; 14–19) and Isaiah (Isa 37:1–4; 14–19). In the Chronicles account, the narrator reports that they did not enter the house of the LORD to pray, but just states that

¹⁵⁵ Japhet contends that the term “all Israel” in 2 Chr 30:1 refers to the former northern kingdom (Japhet, *Ideology*, 276). The narrator also mentioned the northern tribes in Hezekiah’s and Josiah’s story. In 2 Chr 30:1, the narrator mentions the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh and in 2 Chr 30:11, the tribe of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun appear. The narrator mentions the tribe of Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun in 2 Chr 30:18. In Josiah’s story the tribe of Naphtali is mentioned in 2 Chr 34:6. In the story of Hezekiah and Josiah, however, the narrator does not mention the transjordanian tribes, namely, Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. Japhet understands the omission of these two and a half tribes as the deportation under the Assyrian (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1024).

¹⁵⁶ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 436.

¹⁵⁷ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 936. Japhet, who focuses on the historicity of Hezekiah’s reign, asserts that the narrator shows his wish “to attribute all the aspects of Hezekiah’s religious reform to the king’s first year,” which means that the narrator intentionally rewrote the history of Hezekiah.

they prayed to the LORD.¹⁵⁸ However, this does not indicate their despair, but their confidence on the LORD.¹⁵⁹ The narrator already reported Hezekiah's confidence in the LORD in his speech to the officers before the battle over the army of Sennacherib in 2 Chr 32:7–8. In this regard, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively through his action of prayer in 2 Chr 32:20. This positive characterization is also reinforced by the LORD's answer. In 2 Chr 32:21, the narrator states that the LORD answered Hezekiah by sending an angel to destroy the camp of Assyria. The narrator also reports the death of Sennacherib as the LORD's answer to Hezekiah's prayer.¹⁶⁰

Furthermore, the narrator states that the LORD granted Hezekiah rest from all his enemies in 2 Chr 32:22. In the same way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as one who was honored by all the nations. The narrator relates that *וּמְגִדֹנֹת לַיהוֹקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה* (“and [many brought] precious things to Hezekiah king of Judah”), and that *וַיִּשְׂאָ לְעֵינָיו כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם* (“and he [Hezekiah] was exalted in the sight of all nations”). The narrator particularly reports that Hezekiah continually received this high honor of the nations. At the end of 2 Chr 32:23, the narrator utilizes the term, *מֵאָחַר־כֵּן* (“from then on”) in order to show that

¹⁵⁸ In both accounts, the narrator reports that Hezekiah went to the house of the LORD, while he sent his officials to Isaiah to ask him to pray to the LORD (2 Kgs 19:1–4 // Isa 37:1–4), and that Hezekiah also prayed to the LORD in the temple (2 Kgs 19:14–19 // Isa 37:14–19).

¹⁵⁹ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 465.

¹⁶⁰ The narrator changes a number of things in this event. In both Kings and Isaiah, it was the angel of the LORD who went out to smite the army of Sennacherib, but in Chronicles the narrator indicates that it is the LORD who sent the angel of the LORD to attack Sennacherib's army. The Chronicles account does not report the number of the Assyrian army (185,000) who died at this event, while both Kings and Isaiah clearly mention this number (2 Kgs 19:35 // Isa 37:36). These two accounts also indicate that this event happened in one night, which is not mentioned in Chronicles. The Chronicles account also omits the name of Sennacherib's god and the murderer of Sennacherib, which is found in the other accounts (2 Kgs 19:37 // Isa 37:38). In Kings and Isaiah, the narrator relates that Sennacherib lived for an unspecified time in Nineveh, but in Chronicles the narrator just reports the death of Sennacherib who shamefully returned to his country and was killed at the house of his own god. In this way, the Chronicles account just focuses on the fact that the LORD positively answered Hezekiah by reporting the death of Sennacherib and his army (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 991).

Hezekiah received the honor and the respect of the surrounding nations continually.¹⁶¹

The narrator relates that the LORD who answered Hezekiah's prayer not only saved Hezekiah from the hand of Sennacherib, but also provided him rest from the hand of all others and high honors from the surrounding nations. In this regard, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah as a pious king whose prayer was heard and answered by the LORD abundantly.¹⁶²

When Hezekiah became terminally ill, he also prayed to the LORD. Then, the LORD gave him a sign (2 Chr 32:24), which indicates that the LORD will heal him.¹⁶³ The narrator only presents this event in one verse, which is found in a long section in 2 Kgs 20:1–11 and Isa 38:1–22. The narrator intentionally omits a dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah and other information in order to indicate that the LORD communicated with Hezekiah directly.¹⁶⁴ In this way the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively, who directly communicated with the LORD. However, the narrator reports that Hezekiah

¹⁶¹ Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 638.

¹⁶² In Hezekiah's story in both Kings and Isaiah, the LORD did not appear on stage, but He acted through His representative, the prophet Isaiah. In Chronicles, however, Isaiah appeared only once in a cameo role in 2 Chr 32:20. The narrator just mentions his name when Hezekiah prayed to the LORD concerning Sennacherib. On the other hand, the narrator makes the LORD enter the stage as the main character in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story. In 2 Chr 32:21, the narrator explicitly states that the LORD himself sent an angel to destroy the Assyrian camp. In the other two accounts (2 Kgs 19:35 // Isa 37:36), it was the angel of the LORD who attacked the Assyrian camp, but in the Chronicles account it was the LORD who destroyed the Assyrian army through His messenger. In this regard, the narrator internally characterizes the LORD as a powerful God who was able to control the world according to His will. The narrator also externally characterizes the LORD as a faithful God who responded to His people (2 Chr 30:20; 32:24). The narrator also portrays the LORD externally as one who blessed His people. In 2 Chr 31:10, the narrator explicitly reports the reason why the people of Judah and Israel brought their contribution to the house of the LORD. The narrator states, *כי יהוה בָּרַךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹ* ("because the LORD blessed His people"). At the end of the story, the narrator reports Hezekiah's wealth and honor in 2 Chr 32:27–29a. Then, the narrator reports the reason for Hezekiah's wealth saying, *כי נְתַרְלוֹ אֱלֹהִים רְכוּשׁ רַב קָאֵר* ("because God had given him many possessions") in 2 Chr 32:29b. Thus, the narrator portrays the LORD as a faithful God who blessed His people. The narrator also reports that the LORD gave His people reasons to rejoice when Hezekiah and his people restored the temple worship (2 Chr 29:36) and when the LORD saved His people and gave rest from all their enemies (2 Chr 32:22). In this way the narrator characterizes the LORD positively as a round character.

¹⁶³ Wilcock, *Chronicles*, 253–54.

¹⁶⁴ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 467.

became proud in his heart, which brought the anger of the LORD against him and Judah (2 Chr 32:25). At this point the narrator characterizes Hezekiah negatively. In this situation, however, the narrator states that Hezekiah humbled himself in the pride of his heart (2 Chr 32:26), which means that Hezekiah sincerely repented from his pride. Then, the narrator reports the LORD's response for Hezekiah's repentance in 2 Chr 32:26. The narrator relates that *וְלֹא-בָא עֲלֵיהֶם קֶזֶף יְהוָה בְּיָמֵי הַחֻזְקָהּ* ("the anger of the LORD did not come upon them during the days of Hezekiah"), which indicates that the LORD forgave Hezekiah's sins. Thus, in 2 Chr 32:24–26, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah both positively and negatively, but finally portrays him as a faithful king who repented from his sin and who received the LORD's positive response.

The narrator also characterizes Hezekiah positively through his prayer for the people of Israel who ate the sacrifice while they were not unclean in the story of Hezekiah's Passover. In 2 Chr 30:18–19, Hezekiah prayed to the LORD for Israelites who committed ritual sin. Without any condemnation for them, Hezekiah just prayed for their ritual violations, which are not forgiven in the Law of Moses (Lev 7:19–21). Thus, at the beginning of his prayer, Hezekiah appealed to God's mercy by calling Him as *יְהוָה הַטוֹב* ("the good LORD").¹⁶⁵ Then, Hezekiah asked the LORD's atonement for the Israelites in 2 Chr 30:18b because this ritual sin should not be forgiven.¹⁶⁶ The narrator reports that Hezekiah boldly asked the LORD to atone the Israelites sins that should not be forgiven, because he knew that the people of Israel truly sought the LORD. Hezekiah

¹⁶⁵ Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*, 422. The LORD is frequently described as "good" in the Bible (1 Chr 16:34; Ezra 3:11; Pss 86:5; 100:5; 118:29; Jer 33:11; Nah 1:7), but the phrase *יְהוָה הַטוֹב* only appears in Hezekiah's prayer in the entire Bible.

¹⁶⁶ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 953. The term, *כַּפַּר*, is translated as "to pardon" in the most English translations, RSV, KJV, NEB, NIV, etc., but in this verse, this verb should be translated as "to atone" because this ritual sin could not be forgiven or taken back according to the Law of Moses.

prayed that the LORD may atone כָּל־לִבְבוֹ הַכִּין לְרֹשׁ הָאֱלֹהִים יְהוָה (“everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD”) in 2 Chr 30:19. Here Hezekiah identified the Israelites as those who sought God sincerely in their heart. In this regard, the narrator reveals that Hezekiah recognized that the heart of the Israelites is more important than merely keeping the rules of the sanctuary (2 Chr 30:19).¹⁶⁷ Thus, Hezekiah boldly interceded on the Israelites’ behalf, which indicates the narrator’s positive characterization for Hezekiah.

This positive characterization is also proved by the positive response of the LORD. In 2 Chr 30:20, the narrator reports that וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶל־יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ וַיִּרְפָּא אֶת־הָעָם (“and the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people”).¹⁶⁸ The narrator explicitly mentioned that the LORD heard Hezekiah’s prayer so that the LORD healed the Israelites. The healing of the LORD for the Israelites should be understood as the LORD’s forgiveness.¹⁶⁹ The LORD forgave the people of the north who ate Hezekiah’s Passover while they were ritually unclean. In this way the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively. Even though Hezekiah’s prayer was forbidden in the Law of Moses, his prayer was heard by the LORD and the LORD healed the Israelites.

¹⁶⁷ Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 612. Japhet points out that “[t]he dilemma facing Hezekiah is obvious, and in principle he could have followed any of three options. At the two extremes, he could have denied the pilgrims the right to both slaughter and to eat of the sacrifice, or he could have fully permitted these acts; in the middle would be some compromise between the extreme poles. Hezekiah opted for the third possibility, prohibiting these people the act of slaughtering but allowing them to partake in the sacrifice” (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 952).

¹⁶⁸ Second Chronicles 30:20 echoes the word of the LORD for Solomon in 2 Chr 7:15. The LORD declared that “My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” The LORD promised three things: 1) the LORD would hear the prayer of repentance, 2) the LORD would forgive their sins, and 3) the LORD would heal the land. In 2 Chr 30:20, the narrator echoes the first and third of those responses.

¹⁶⁹ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 439. Japhet suggests that the LORD’s healing for the Israelites should be understood as “a preventative rather than corrective measure,” because the LORD answered Hezekiah’s prayer for atonement (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 953). However, in the context, healing expresses the forgiveness of the LORD.

The narrator also makes a connection between Hezekiah's religious reforms (2 Chr 29–32) and his political affairs in 2 Chr 32 in order to characterize Hezekiah as a pious king. The narrator begins the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative with the prepositional phrase אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים וְהָאֲמָתָה הָאֵלֶּה (“after these faithful deeds”) in 2 Chr 32:1. The narrator also utilizes the noun אֱמֶת (“faith”), which is also found in the conclusion of the story of Hezekiah reforms in 2 Chr 31:20. In this regard, the narrator indicates that Hezekiah and his reign, which are evaluated by the narrator in an extremely positive way, is the result of Hezekiah's reforms, which were happened in the first year of his reign.¹⁷⁰ The narrator reports that Hezekiah was protected by the LORD from the hand of Sennacherib as the reward of the LORD, for he sought and returned to the LORD through his religious reforms.

The narrator reports that Hezekiah also had the same world view through his speeches within Hezekiah's narratives. In 2 Chr 29:5–11, Hezekiah gave his speech to the priests and the Levites to consecrate the house of the LORD (2 Chr 29:4). In his speech, Hezekiah evaluated the history of Judah in light of a religious viewpoint. Hezekiah said that the people of Judah was killed by the sword and was in captivity (2 Chr 29:9), because they acted unfaithfully in the sight of the LORD, forsook the LORD, and turned away from the LORD (2 Chr 29:6).¹⁷¹ Hezekiah clearly indicated that the wrath of the LORD was against Judah because of their unfaithfulness to the LORD (2

¹⁷⁰ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 380. According to Williamson, the narrator's aim here is “to draw the story of deliverance into a direct relationship with the account of the reforms, regardless of specific chronological considerations.”

¹⁷¹ In 2 Chr 28:6, the narrator reports that Pekah had killed one hundred twenty thousand in Judah because they abandoned the LORD. Two hundred thousand in Judah were taken in captive by Pekah, or to the defeats by Arameans (2 Chr 28:5, 23), Edomites (2 Chr 28:17), Philistines (2 Chr 28:18), and Assyrians (2 Chr 28:20–21). Turning one's face from the house of the LORD shows one's unfaithfulness and disrespect. Turning one's back would also means turning one's face away.

Chr 29:8). Thus, he addressed them to serve the LORD in order to remove the wrath of the LORD from Judah. Hezekiah indicated this activity as making a covenant to the LORD (2 Chr 29:10),¹⁷² which means that Hezekiah pledged his absolute loyalty to the LORD, because there is no actual covenant in Hezekiah's narratives.¹⁷³

In 2 Chr 30:6–9, the narrator also reveals Hezekiah's world view through his speech to all Israel, which was brought by his couriers (2 Chr 30:6).¹⁷⁴ Here Hezekiah had the same view on the history of Israel and Judah. Hezekiah said that the LORD handed the people of Judah and Israel over to desolation (לְשִׁמָּה),¹⁷⁵ because they acted unfaithfully against the LORD (2 Chr 30:7).¹⁷⁶ Thus, Hezekiah addressed the people of Israel and Judah to return in order to make the LORD return and to escape from the hand of the kings of Assyria (2 Chr 30:6). Hezekiah also said that God will turn His face to you, if you return to the LORD (2 Chr 30:10). Hezekiah concretely suggested the way of returning to the LORD saying, בָּאוּ לְמִקְדָּשִׁי (“come to His sanctuary”) and עֲבַדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה (“serve the LORD”) there (2 Chr 30:8), which means that Hezekiah addressed the people of Judah and Israel to come and to celebrate the Passover at the temple in Jerusalem.¹⁷⁷ Then, the LORD will return and will not turn His face from those who sincerely return to the LORD (2 Chr 30:9). This is also shown in the prayer of Hezekiah

¹⁷² There are three Judean kings, namely Asa (2 Chr 15:21), Jehoiada (2 Chr 23:16), and Josiah (2 Chr 34:31), who made covenants as part of a religious reform.

¹⁷³ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 417.

¹⁷⁴ Von Rad, “Levitical Sermon,” 279. Von Rad contends that the messengers of a king who brought religious instruction was the setting in life for the Levitical sermons.

¹⁷⁵ The term, לְשִׁמָּה, is the feminine noun שִׁמָּה with the preposition ל. The noun שִׁמָּה can be translated as “what is horrible (frightful),” or “what causes astonishment (horror).” I translate the noun שִׁמָּה as “what causes astonishment.”

¹⁷⁶ Jeremiah also maintains that the sins of the people have caused horror to come on their land by utilizing the verb שָׁמָה (Jer 18:16; 19:8; 25:9, 18; 29:18).

¹⁷⁷ The people of the Northern Kingdom had long abandoned the temple in Jerusalem since the Northern Kingdom was established. On the other hand, the people of Judah also abandoned the temple of the LORD under the reign of Ahaz.

for the Israelites who came from the north and ate the sacrifices while they were unclean (2 Chr 30:18–19). As mentioned above, Hezekiah boldly prayed for them, because he knew the people of the north returned to the LORD by coming to the temple in Jerusalem sincerely seeking the LORD.

Hezekiah's view on the history of Israel is reported by the narrator in Hezekiah's speech in 2 Chr 32:7–8. Hezekiah addressed his officials that *חֲזָקוּ וְאִמְצוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַל־תִּחַתּוּ* (‘‘be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria’’), because the LORD is with Judah and fights for Judah (2 Chr 32:8).

Hezekiah was convinced that the LORD will help Judah because he returned and sought the LORD sincerely through his religious reforms in 2 Chr 29–31. Thus, the narrator reports the story of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative with relation to the previous narratives, which recount as Hezekiah's faithful deeds to the LORD. In this way, the narrator externally characterizes Hezekiah as an extremely positive character consistently from the beginning to the end of the story.

On the other hand, Sennacherib characterizes Hezekiah negatively in his speech in 2 Chr 32:10–15.¹⁷⁸ Sennacherib portrayed Hezekiah as a deceiver and a misleader (2 Chr 32:15). He also mentioned Hezekiah's reforms in 2 Chr 32:12b to show that Hezekiah could not be trusted. However, the effect of Sennacherib's word is just the opposite because the narrator evaluates Hezekiah's reforms as his greatest act of faithfulness in the beginning of the story (2 Chr 32:1a).¹⁷⁹ The narrator also evaluates

¹⁷⁸ The character of Sennacherib acts through his representative in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story as a round character as in the account of Kings and Isaiah. However, the narrator holds the name of Sennacherib's representative; rather, the narrator calls Sennacherib's representative his servant in 2 Chr 32:9. Sennacherib speaks through this anonymous servant in order to intimidate ‘‘surrounding cities into capitulation in the face of a threatened siege’’ (Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 257).

¹⁷⁹ Childs, *Isaiah*, 110.

Hezekiah and his reign in an extremely positive way in the introduction and the conclusion of the story. Thus, Sennacherib's negative characterization on Hezekiah should be corrected by the narrator's positive characterization.¹⁸⁰

The narrator omits, expands, and rewrites Hezekiah's story in the Kings and Isaiah accounts in order to characterize Hezekiah differently.¹⁸¹ The narrator omits the story of Hezekiah's tribute to Sennacherib in 2 Kgs 18:14–14, which is the negative characterization of Hezekiah. Omitting Hezekiah's initial reaction to the invasion of Sennacherib, the narrator adds Hezekiah's preparations for the battle with Sennacherib. Hezekiah and his officials first stopped up all the springs so that the Assyrians could not find water (2 Chr 32:4). Then they rebuilt each broken wall and made spears and shields in abundance (2 Chr 32:5).¹⁸² Finally Hezekiah encouraged his officials by his speech to fight with Sennacherib.¹⁸³ The Kings account portrays Hezekiah as a servile character through the event of Hezekiah's tribute, but in the Chronicles account the narrator characterizes Hezekiah as a bold and faithful character who totally depended on the LORD and who also encouraged the people of Judah to depend on the LORD.¹⁸⁴ Evans points out that “[t]o emphasize Hezekiah's faith, the Chronicler presents Hezekiah as

¹⁸⁰ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 463–64. Klein asserts that “[t]he Assyrians considered Hezekiah's actions an insult to the Israelite Deity, but from the Chronicler's point of view the main theme of this long work is Hezekiah championed the temple in Jerusalem. Instead of Yahweh being insulted, the reader would conclude, Hezekiah would be extremely pleasing to Israel's God.”

¹⁸¹ On the other hand, Auld suggests that the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler utilized common sources for their writings. However, Van Seters and McKenzie criticise Auld and they suggest that the Chronicler used the Book of Kings for the Chronicles account (Van Seters, “The Chronicler's Account,” 283–300; McKenzie, “The Chronicler as Redactor,” 70–90).

¹⁸² In Isa 22:8–11, Isaiah reports that Hezekiah rebuilt the city walls in order to criticize him for demonstrating the lack of faith in the LORD. However, in Chronicles, the expression of a king strengthening himself is indicated as a positive expression by the narrator: Solomon (2 Chr 1:1), Rehoboam (2 Chr 12:13), Abijah (2 Chr 13:21), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:1), and Jotham (2 Chr 27:6).

¹⁸³ The story of Hezekiah's actions for Jerusalem's fortification is not found in the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20 and Isa 36–39, but Evans points out that the Chronicler draws the story of Hezekiah's preparation for war from his source, the Book of Isaiah in Isa 22 (Evans, “Historia or Exegesis?” 113).

¹⁸⁴ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 460–62.

encouraging the people not to trust in these extensive preparations for war ... but instead to trust in Yahweh alone.”¹⁸⁵ In this regard, the narrator intentionally omits and expands some parts of Hezekiah’s initial reaction to the invasion of Sennacherib in the Chronicles account in order to characterize Hezekiah positively as the one who fully trusted in the LORD.¹⁸⁶

As mentioned above, the narrator also fully expands the story of Hezekiah’s reforms in the Chronicles account. In Kings, the narrator only reports Hezekiah’s reforms in one verse (2 Kgs 18:4), but in Chronicles, the narrator utilizes three chapters to report Hezekiah’s religious reforms (2 Chr 29–31).¹⁸⁷ The Chronicles account also utilizes Hezekiah’s reforms, which indicate Hezekiah’s faithful actions to the LORD, to make a connection to the following story of Hezekiah. In the Kings account, the narrator reports the fall of the Northern Kingdom as the immediately preceding context for the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story, and the narrator introduces the story as the response to Hezekiah’s rebellion against Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18:7). However, in the Chronicles account, the narrator removes all of them and just introduces the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story as the response of Hezekiah’s faithfulness to the LORD. In this regard, the narrator purposely omits and makes a connection between Hezekiah’s reforms and the LORD’s protection from Sennacherib’s invasion.

¹⁸⁵ Evans, “Historia or Exegesis?” 113. Evans also asserts that the reason to omit the story of Hezekiah’s preparation for war in 2 Kgs 18–20 is that “the Deuteronomist sought to present Hezekiah as a model of faith” (Evans, “Historia or Exegesis?” 113). In this way, the Kings account removes the critique, which is indicated in Isa 22. In the Chronicles account, however, the narrator reports the faithful actions of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18–19 and Hezekiah’s preparations for war in Isa 22 in order to harmonize his sources.

¹⁸⁶ Evans, “Historia or Exegesis?” 107–20.

¹⁸⁷ In the Isaiah account, the narrator does not report the story of Hezekiah’s reforms, since the narrator omits the introduction and the conclusion of the entire story of Hezekiah. The narrator just reports three stories of Hezekiah which are found in 2 Kgs 18–20.

In the same way, the narrator just simply reports the stories of Hezekiah's sickness and Babylonian envoys which are found in a long account in 2 Kgs 20 and in Isa 38–39. The Chronicles account reports these events in only four verses, where the narrator characterizes Hezekiah both positively and negatively.¹⁸⁸ In 2 Chr 32:24, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively first by reporting the responses of Hezekiah and the LORD. The narrator relates that Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, when he became sick to the point of death (2 Chr 32:24a), which indicates the positive characterization of Hezekiah.¹⁸⁹ This positive characterization is approved by the response of the LORD, who answered Hezekiah with “a miraculous ‘sign’ as a pledge of his eventual recovery.”¹⁹⁰ However, Hezekiah's healing, which was given by the LORD, led to his pride, which indicates the narrator's negative characterization on Hezekiah.¹⁹¹ In 2 Chr 32:25, the narrator reports that Hezekiah became proud when he was healed by the LORD. The narrator evaluates that Hezekiah did not faithfully respond to the LORD, who graciously responded to Hezekiah's prayer. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as faithless.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ The event of Hezekiah's recovery from his sickness is reported in 2 Chr 32:24–26, and the event of the envoys from Babylon is related in only one verse (2 Chr 32:31). Pratt points out that the narrator abbreviates the stories of Hezekiah in the Kings account in order to draw the reader's attention to the narrator's positive characterization on Hezekiah (Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 639–46). Many scholars, however, believe that the Chronicler combines the story of Hezekiah's sickness (2 Kgs 20:1–11) and the Babylonian envoys (2 Kgs 20:12–19) in 2 Chr 32:24–26 (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 386; Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 404; Myers, *II Chronicles*, 192; Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 365). These scholars assert that the Chronicler assumes that the readers are familiar with the fuller account in 2 Kgs 20:1–19. However, McKenzie points out that the Chronicler “... added verses 25–26, apparently in order to derive a theological point from the episode—one that differs from the point of his Kings source” (McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 350).

¹⁸⁹ Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 404.

¹⁹⁰ Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 404.

¹⁹¹ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 386.

¹⁹² Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 404.

The narrator portrays Hezekiah negatively by reporting the LORD's judgment for Hezekiah's pride. In 2 Chr 32:25b, the narrator reports that *וַיְהִי עָלָיו קֶצֶף וְעַל־יְהוּדָה וְיִירוּשָׁלַם* ("therefore wrath came on him [Hezekiah] and on Judah and Jerusalem"). The narrator relates that Hezekiah's pride caused the LORD's judgment not only upon himself but also Jerusalem and Judah. Here the narrator portrays Hezekiah negatively, as the one who is the cause of the LORD's judgment on Judah. The narrator emphatically indicates the negative characterization of Hezekiah by reporting three shown that he was the cause of three instances of the LORD's wrath, namely on Hezekiah himself, Judah, and Jerusalem.¹⁹³

Then, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively again in 2 Chr 32:26. The narrator relates that *וַיִּכְנַע יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ בְּנִבְיָהּ לִבּוֹ הוּא* ("however, Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart"). The narrator also includes the people of Jerusalem in this event. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively once again as one who repented and returned from his pride.¹⁹⁴ This positive characterization is also shown to be the result of Hezekiah's humbling. However, this positive characterization does not remove all aspects of the negative characterization of Hezekiah. The narrator reports that the wrath of the LORD, which caused by Hezekiah's pride, was delayed, but not removed in 2 Chr 32:26. Although the humbling of Hezekiah and the Jerusalemites brought

¹⁹³ Myers, who understands the event in 2 Chr 32:25–26 as the story of the Babylonian envoys in 2 Kgs 20:12–19, asserts that "[h]is pride was bound to lead to disaster, as the prophet Isaiah declared. Though only the royal house stood under judgment, the Chronicler brings Judah and Jerusalem into the picture because he was aware of the wider consequences of such action" (Myers, *II Chronicles*, 192).

¹⁹⁴ Allen, *I, 2 Chronicles*, 404–5.

themselves free from the wrath of the LORD, the wrath of the LORD on Judah and Jerusalem was only postponed to the future, and was caused by the pride of Hezekiah.¹⁹⁵

Then, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively again in 2 Chr 32:27–31, which presents the LORD’s blessing for Hezekiah. The LORD’s forgiveness for Hezekiah’s pride not only delayed His judgment, but also resulted in blessings for Judah and Hezekiah.¹⁹⁶ In 2 Chr 32:27–29, the narrator expands the story of Hezekiah’s wealth and honor, which was granted by the LORD (2 Chr 32:29). The narrator also reports Hezekiah’s successful construction of a water supply system for the city of Jerusalem as a mark of the LORD’s blessings.¹⁹⁷ Then, the narrator positively evaluates that Hezekiah was successful in all his deeds in 2 Chr 32:30b. In this way, the narrator shows that the LORD approved of Hezekiah’s faithful actions as good.¹⁹⁸ At the same time, the narrator diminishes Hezekiah’s failure (2 Chr 32:25) through these positive characterizations.¹⁹⁹

As mentioned above, the narrator also presents the story of the Babylonian envoys as another mark of the blessings of the LORD for Hezekiah in 2 Chr 32:31.²⁰⁰ The narrator relates that the Babylonians came to Hezekiah in order to ask about a sign that occurred in the land. Then the narrator interprets the visitation of the Babylonian envoys as a test for Hezekiah.²⁰¹ He also reports that the LORD forsook Hezekiah in order to test him (2 Chr 32:31b). Often in biblical narratives, when the LORD forsakes

¹⁹⁵ Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 405. McKenzie points out that the Chronicler makes two points in 2 Chr 32:25–26: firstly, “Hezekiah is a model of humility and repentance when the unspecified ‘wrath’ comes upon Judah and Jerusalem,” and secondly, “God is faithful in responding to Hezekiah’s repentance so that the wrath does not come in the days of Hezekiah” (McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 350).

¹⁹⁶ Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 365.

¹⁹⁷ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 387.

¹⁹⁸ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 468.

¹⁹⁹ McConville, *I & II Chronicles*, 247.

²⁰⁰ Myers, *II Chronicles*, 193; Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 405; McKenzie, *1–2 Chronicles*, 351.

²⁰¹ Myers, *II Chronicles*, 193.

his people, this indicates His judgment on the people's sin or disobedience (Deut 23:14; 31:6; 1 Sam 28:15; 1 Chr 28:20; Ho 9:1). Those who are forsaken by the LORD are then generally characterized negatively. However, in the context of 2 Chr 32:31, the LORD left Hezekiah in order to test him. Divine testing of God's people is to establish their devotion to the LORD, to train and make their faith grow, and to discover whether there is genuine faith in God's people (Deut 8:2; 13:3).²⁰² Williamson asserts that divine testing in 2 Chr 32:31 "is considered necessary after his deviation and repentance in vv. 25–26, the question being whether that repentance was genuine and lasting."²⁰³ Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by utilizing the divine testing which confirms Hezekiah's genuine repentance and faithfulness.²⁰⁴ Myers also points out that it is normal that the LORD forsook His people when He tested them.²⁰⁵ In this way, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively in 2 Chr 32:31 in order to conclude the reign of Hezekiah on "a fully positive note."²⁰⁶

Thus, the narrator omits, expands, and rephrases elements within Hezekiah's story in order to portray Hezekiah as a faithful king.²⁰⁷ Hezekiah is characterized by the narrator's evaluation in extremely positive ways. The narrator also characterizes Hezekiah positively through Hezekiah's speeches and actions and through other characters' responses. The narrator also portrays Hezekiah positively by omitting,

²⁰² Allen, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 405; Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 366; Myers, *II Chronicles*, 193.

²⁰³ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 387.

²⁰⁴ Myers, *II Chronicles*, 193; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 387.

²⁰⁵ Myers, *II Chronicles*, 193. Myers shows three cases of the LORD withdrawing from His people, namely Abraham, Job, and Israel in the wilderness. Williamson also points out that the departure of the LORD from His people "is the normal OT understanding of divine testing" (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 387).

²⁰⁶ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 388.

²⁰⁷ Throntveit, "Relationship," 105–22. Lemke also asserts that the Chronicler characterizes pious kings positively by omitting the materials found in the Kings account (Lemke, "Synoptic Problem," 349–63).

expanding, and rephrasing Hezekiah's narratives in the Kings and Isaiah accounts. The Chronicles account externally and internally characterizes Hezekiah positively.

5.4 The Function of the Hezekiah narratives in the book of Chronicles

The story of the reign of King Hezekiah in Chronicles is important for the narrator, who devotes more space to tell Hezekiah's story than any other Judean kings except David and Solomon. The narrator utilizes four chapters to relate Hezekiah's story (2 Chr 29–32), and his perspective on Hezekiah is an almost entirely positive one.²⁰⁸ The emphasis of the narrator is not on Hezekiah's political affairs as in Kings (2 Kgs 18–20) and in Isaiah (Isa 36–39), but Hezekiah's religious reforms in 2 Chr 29–31. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as “a reformer of worship” (2 Chr 29–31), with his political success and his reputation (2 Chr 32) following as a result of his reforms.²⁰⁹ In Chronicles, the narrator describes the religious affairs of all Judean kings, not only Hezekiah, in greater detail than political affairs.²¹⁰ Selman also asserts that “[n]othing is more central to the Chronicler's message than worshiping God.”²¹¹ Konkel points out that “[t]he portrait of the history of Israel by the Chronicler is that of a theocratic kingdom centered in Jerusalem ... where Yahweh's people find their primary point of contact with him in a cult oriented to the temple liturgy”²¹² Thus the narrator relates the Hezekiah story with this perspective.

²⁰⁸ In 2 Chr 32:25, the narrator reports the mistake of Hezekiah. This is the negative perspective on Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29–32.

²⁰⁹ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 484. Many scholars understand Hezekiah's narratives in the same way (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 350–88; Throntveit, “Relationship,” 105–122; Japhet, *1 and II Chronicles*, 910–98; Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 226–61; Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles*, 211–30; Allen, *The First and Second Book of Chronicles*, 602–32; McKenzie, *The Chronicler's Use*, 226–61).

²¹⁰ Riley, *King and Cultus*, 13.

²¹¹ Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 484.

²¹² Konkel, “Hezekiah,” 231.

The presentation of Hezekiah's story in 2 Chr 29–32 is quite different than that in 2 Kgs 18–20 and in Isa 36–39. There are a number of distinctions in the presentation of Hezekiah's story in 2 Chr 29–32, which plays an important role in the entire Book of Chronicles. The most significant thing is that the narrator portrays Hezekiah as “a second David and Solomon.”²¹³ The narrator presents Hezekiah's reign as one which parallels only the reign of David or the reign of Solomon, and the combined era of David and Solomon in the Chronicles account. In this regard, Throntveit correctly points out that the comparison between Hezekiah and these two kings should be made by two fundamental criteria: 1) the comparison should be unique to the narrator, and 2) the comparison only appears in the story of Hezekiah and David and (or) Solomon alone.²¹⁴ While many comparisons between these Judean kings are valid, the alleged comparisons should meet these two criteria.²¹⁵

5.4.1 Hezekiah as a Second David

Hezekiah and David are compared in many ways in Hezekiah's narratives (2 Chr 29–32). Mosis suggests that the Chronicler portrays Hezekiah as a second David.²¹⁶ First, in 2 Chr 29:2, the narrator evaluates the reign of Hezekiah with the reign of David. The

²¹³ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 228. There is disagreement among scholars over whether Hezekiah is likened in Chronicles to David or to Solomon. Thompson, Dillard and others favor “an indissoluble unity of the two,” so that both are true (Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 229).

²¹⁴ Throntveit, “Relationship,” 107.

²¹⁵ Japhet makes comparisons between Hezekiah and David and (or) Solomon, which occur with other Judean kings, in order to indicate that Hezekiah and his reign are peculiar (Japhet, *I and II Chronicles*, 998). Contemporary scholarship also utilizes the materials that are found in the Chronicler's *Vorlage* to present the theological perspective of the Chronicler (Williamson, *Israel*, 124–25; Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 227–29). However, these suggestions should be avoided by his two simple criteria, which are suggested by Throntveit (Throntveit, “Relationship,” 107–8).

²¹⁶ Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 164–69. Mosis suggests three texts to portray Hezekiah as a second David. The last comparison is that Hezekiah's restoration of the temple and his celebration of the Passover are compared with the postexilic cultic restoration which found in Ezra 1–6. Mosis believes that the restoration in Ezra 1–6 is typologically Davidic. However, this comparison necessitates the view that the author of Ezra-Nehemiah was the same author as Chronicles (Williamson, *Israel*, 125).

narrator reports that *וַיַּעַשׂ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה דָּוִד אָבִיו* (“and he [Hezekiah] did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done”). The narrator explicitly compares Hezekiah with David, but this evaluation is not unique in the Chronicler account. In the Kings account, the narrator also reports the exactly same evaluation for the reign of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 18:3.²¹⁷ The narrator also utilizes this comparison for other Judean kings in both Chronicles and Kings.²¹⁸ Thus, the narrator’s evaluation in 2 Chr 29:2 does not meet the criteria.

Second, Mosis asserts that the narrator’s description of Hezekiah’s deliverance from Sennacherib in 2 Chr 32:1–23 parallels the story of David’s deliverance from the Philistines in 1 Chr 14. Both events indicate that David and Hezekiah were a victory over foreign enemies as a reward from the LORD for seeing either the LORD or the ark. However, Williamson correctly points out that the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in 2 Chr 32:1–23 has been carefully rewritten by the narrator omitting Hezekiah’s capitulation (2 Kgs 18:14–16) and changing the taking of Judah’s fortified cities (2 Kgs 18:13 // Isa 36:1). He also asserts that in Chronicles the narrator reports that Hezekiah was saved from Sennacherib because of the LORD’s intervention.²¹⁹ On the other hand, the narrator also reports the reigns of other Judean kings who sought the LORD and who were saved by the LORD: Asa (2 Chr 14:6, 10–14), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:1–30), Amaziah (2 Chr 25:7–13), Uzziah (2 Chr 26:5–6), and Jotham (2 Chr 27:5–6). Thus, the

²¹⁷ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 352.

²¹⁸ In the Chronicles account the narrator compares Ahaz (2 Chr 28:1) and Josiah (2 Chr 34:2) with David, and in the Kings account, the narrator evaluates Judean kings by comparing them with David, namely Abijam (1 Kgs 15:3), Asa (1 Kgs 15:11), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:3), Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:2), and Josiah (2 Kgs 22:2).

²¹⁹ Williamson, *Israel*, 124–25.

Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative which is related in 2 Chr 32:1–23 is not unique and therefore does not meet the criteria.

Halpern also suggests that the story of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29–32 is similar to the story of David in Chronicles in some ways.²²⁰ He asserts that Hezekiah's prosperity in 2 Chr 32:27–29 is significant in order to compare him with David. In 1 Chr 18:2–11, the narrator relates David's victory in warfare and his exaction of tribute, which may be compared with the reporting that וְרַבִּים מִבְּיָאִים מִנְחָה לַיהוָה לִירוּשָׁלַם וּמִנְדֻנֹת לִיהוֹזָקִיהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה (“and many were bringing gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem and choice presents to Hezekiah king of Judah”) in 2 Chr 32:23a. In 2 Chr 32:27–30, the narrator states that Hezekiah was highly honored by all nations at his death in 2 Chr 32:23b, which is also found in the death of David. In 1 Chr 29:28, the narrator reports that וַיָּמָת בְּשִׁבְיָה טוֹבָה שְׁבַע יָמִים עֹשֶׂר וְכָבוֹד (“and he [David] died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour”). However, the narrator utilizes the motif of the formula “wealth and honor” not only to portray Hezekiah positively but also other Judean kings: Solomon (2 Chr 1:12, 14–17; 2:6–9; 3:4–7, 14; 4:7–8 18–22; 5:1; 8:17–18; 9:9–28), Asa (2 Chr 14:12–15), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:5, 9, 11; 20:25), Uzziah (2 Chr 26:6–15), and Jotham (2 Chr 27:3–5).²²¹ In the Chronicles account, the motif of the wealth and honor is the most pervasive, not unique for the story of Hezekiah.²²² Thus, these suggestions do not quite meet the criteria for understanding Hezekiah as a second David.

Dillard also suggests a number of parallels between Hezekiah and David. First, Dillard compares the angel who was sent by the LORD to destroy the army of Assyria in

²²⁰ Halpern, “Sacred History and Ideology,” 51. Throntveit correctly maintains that Halpern's goal for his comparison is not to portray Hezekiah as a second David (Throntveit, “Relationship,” 109–10).

²²¹ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 466.

²²² Throntveit, “Relationship,” 105–22.

2 Chr 32:21, with the angel who appeared after David's census in 1 Chr 21.²²³ However, the contexts of these two events are different. In 2 Chr 32, the LORD sent the angel to save Jerusalem (2 Chr 32:21–22), but in 1 Chr 21, the LORD sent the angel to destroy Jerusalem (1 Chr 21:15). The former is the LORD's blessing,²²⁴ but the latter is the LORD's judgment.²²⁵ Thus, these two accounts should not be used for the comparison between Hezekiah and David, although they meet the criteria.²²⁶

In 2 Chr 32:5b, the narrator reports Hezekiah's preparation for the battle with Sennacherib. The narrator says, *וַיְחַזַּק אֶת־הַמִּלּוֹא עִיר דָּוִד* ("and he [Hezekiah] strengthened the Millo in the city of David"). Dillard asserts that 2 Chr 32:5b portrays Hezekiah as a second David and Solomon.²²⁷ However, the narrator omits the reference to Solomon in the Chronicles account and only keeps the reference to David in 1 Chr 11:8.²²⁸ Thus, in 2 Chr 32:5b, the narrator compares Hezekiah with David only,²²⁹ but this is not unique to the Chronicles account.

Scholars' suggestions, which are mentioned above, are not unique to the story of Hezekiah and the story of David; rather they appear elsewhere in the Chronicles account. Thus, it is not easy to utilize these suggestions to portray Hezekiah as a second David. There are some cases where Hezekiah is portrayed as a second David. Thronveit also suggests that in Hezekiah's speech (2 Chr 30:6–9) the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a second David. In 2 Chr 30:6, the LORD was called *אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיִשְׂרָאֵל* ("the God of

²²³ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 258.

²²⁴ Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 638.

²²⁵ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 383.

²²⁶ Thronveit, "Relationship," 111–12.

²²⁷ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 257.

²²⁸ In 1 Kgs 11:27, the narrator reports that *שְׁלֹמֹה בָּנָה אֶת־הַמִּלּוֹא סָגַר אֶת־פְּרֵץ עִיר דָּוִד אָבִיו* ("Solomon built the Millo, and closed up the breach of the city of his father David"), but in the Chronicles account the narrator omits this.

²²⁹ Coggins, *Chronicles*, 281.

Abraham, Isaac, and Israel”), which is also found in the prayer of David in 1 Chr 29:18. David also called the LORD as אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיִשְׂרָאֵל (“the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel”), which is a very unique expression in the Chronicles account. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a second David.²³⁰

Dillard also makes a comparison between Hezekiah and David because of common references to storerooms in the temple.²³¹ In 2 Chr 31:11–14, the narrator reports that Hezekiah ordered the Levites to prepare store chambers in the temple, which the narrator already mentioned in the story of David. The narrator relates that David provided chambers and treasuries (1 Chr 9:26; 28:12) and chambers (1 Chr 9:33; 23:28) in the temple and appointed the Levites to take care of them.²³² In terms of storerooms, the narrator mentions it only in the story of Hezekiah and David, which meets the criteria. Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a second David through the matter of storerooms.

The narrator also reports that הָאֱלֹהִים לָחַת לָהֶם לֵב אֶחָד (“God gives them [Israelites] one heart”) in 2 Chr 30:12. The narrator utilizes the phrase, לֵב אֶחָד (“one heart”), in order to emphasize the “undivided loyalty” of all the people to their pious king Hezekiah.²³³ The narrator also utilizes the similar phrase in David’s story in order to indicate one mind. In 1 Chr 12:39 (Eng. 38), the narrator reports that all warriors were united with full intent to make David king. Here the narrator utilizes the phrase, לֵבָב שָׁלֵם

²³⁰ This expression for the LORD is also found in Elijah’s prayer in 1 Kgs 18:36. Elijah exactly called the LORD in the same form, אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיִשְׂרָאֵל (“the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel”).

²³¹ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 251.

²³² Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 451. Dillard provides four texts from the story of David namely, 1 Chr 9:26, 13:28; 26:22, and 28:12. These four verses deal with chambers, chambers and treasuries, or treasuries. However, in 2 Chr 31:11–14, the narrator mentions the term לְשִׁכּוֹת (“chambers”) only. Thus, 1 Chr 26:22, which deals with treasuries (אֲצִרוֹת) only, should not be included. On the other hand, in 1 Chr 9:33, the narrator mentions chambers again. Thus, 1 Chr 9:33 should be included in this regard.

²³³ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 245.

(“a perfect heart”) to indicate one mind of the warriors to their king Hezekiah.²³⁴ The narrator also reports Hezekiah’s prayer for Solomon in 1 Chr 29:19. David prayed that the LORD grants Solomon such a single mind (לִבְּךָ שְׁלֵם) to obey the law of the LORD and to build the house of the LORD.²³⁵ The phrases, לֵב אֶחָד (“one heart”) and לִבְּךָ שְׁלֵם (“a perfect heart”), are unique expressions in the Chronicles account, which are only used for Hezekiah and David. Thus, the narrator utilizes these unique phrases in order to portray Hezekiah as a second David.²³⁶

The narrator also portrays Hezekiah as a second David by reporting Hezekiah’s speech in 2 Chr 32:7–8. In 2 Chr 32:7a, Hezekiah commanded, חֲזַק וְאַמְצוּ אֶל־תִּירְאוּ וְאַל תִּחַתּוּ (“be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed”), which is also found in David’s speech to Solomon in 1 Chr 22:13. David commanded Solomon, חֲזַק וְאַמְצֵן אֵל חֲזַק וְאַמְצֵן אֵל תִּירְא וְאַל־תִּחַתּוּ (“be strong and courageous, do not fear nor be dismayed”).²³⁷ Thus, Hezekiah’s encouragement for his people in 2 Chr 32:7 is used to depict him as a second David.²³⁸

There are four cases in which the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a second David. The narrator compares Hezekiah with David through the title of the LORD (2 Chr 30:6 // 1 Chr 29:18), the matter of storerooms (2 Chr 31:11–14 // 1 Chr 9:26, 33; 23:28; 28:12); one heart (2 Chr 30:12 // 1 Chr 12:39 [Eng. 38]); and Hezekiah’s encouragement (2 Chr 32:7 // 1 Chr 22:13).

²³⁴ Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 127.

²³⁵ Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 273–74.

²³⁶ Throntveit, “Relationship,” 112.

²³⁷ The narrator reports Hezekiah’s speech in plural imperatives, but David’s speech in singular imperatives, because their audiences are different. Hezekiah addressed his people, but David addressed his son Solomon. The narrator reports again in 1 Chr 28:20, when David addressed Solomon to build the temple.

²³⁸ Throntveit, “Relationship,” 112–13.

5.4.2 Hezekiah as a Second Solomon

The narrator specifically links Hezekiah's celebration of the Passover to the dedication of the temple in the reign of Solomon.²³⁹ The size of the crowd at the Passover festival, the length of the festival and the great joy experienced by those participating in the festival are compared with the time of Solomon by the narrator. To summarize the entire festival, the narrator explicitly states that כִּי מִיָּמֵי שְׁלֹמֹה בְּרִדְוִיד מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא כָּזָאת בִּירוּשָׁלַם ("because there was nothing like this in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel") in 2 Chr 30:26. Here the narrator explicitly mentions the name Solomon to emphasize Hezekiah's celebration of the Passover.²⁴⁰ Williamson asserts that the seven additional days of the celebration in 2 Chr 30:23 compare with the number of days of celebration at the dedication of the temple in 2 Chr 7:8–9.²⁴¹ Both stories are marked by joyous festivals. In 2 Chr 30:26, the narrator reports that there was great joy (שִׂמְחָה גְּדוּלָה) in Jerusalem at the conclusion of the Passover celebration. In 2 Chr 7:10, the narrator also states that at the end of the festival, the people returned to their home with rejoicing and happy heart (שִׂמְחָה וְטוֹבֵי לֵב). The narrator uniquely reports the great joy of the people in the story of Hezekiah and Solomon. Thus, an additional seven days and the great joy in the celebration of Hezekiah's Passover are included for the narrator's portrait of Hezekiah as a second Solomon.²⁴²

²³⁹ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 371.

²⁴⁰ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 441. In 2 Chr 35:18, the narrator reports a similar expression for Josiah's celebration of the Passover. In 2 Chr 35:18, the narrator evaluates Josiah's Passover that there had not been anything like this since the time of Samuel the prophet.

²⁴¹ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 371.

²⁴² Throntveit, "Relationship," 113.

Williamson maintains that the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a second Solomon through his prayer for the Israelites, who ate the Passover meals while they were unclean in 2 Chr 30:18–20.²⁴³ Williamson suggests that in the context of Hezekiah’s prayer (2 Chr 30:6–19), the narrator utilizes four verbs of repentance, which are found in the LORD’s response to Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple (2 Chr 7:14). In 2 Chr 7:14, the narrator reports that if God’s people, who are called by his name, humble themselves, pray, seek his face, and turn from their wicked ways, then the LORD will hear from heaven, and forgive their sins and heal their land. The narrator utilizes four verbs, כָּנַע (“humble”), פָּלַל (“pray”), בָּקַשׁ (“seek”), and שׁוּב (“repent”), in order to indicate the conditions for God’s forgiveness and healing. These four verbs are employed by the narrator in the context of Hezekiah’s prayer in 2 Chr 30:6–19: humble (2 Chr 30:11), pray (2 Chr 30:18), seek (2 Chr 30:19),²⁴⁴ and repent or return (2 Chr 30:6, 8, 9). According to the LORD’s promise, the narrator explicitly states that the LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people (2 Chr 30:20). Hezekiah’s prayer in 2 Chr 30:18–19 and the LORD’s positive response in 2 Chr 30:20 are clearly reminiscent of a similar prayer of Solomon at the celebration of the temple dedication in 2 Chr 6:12–42 and the LORD’s promise in 2 Chr 7:14. Thus, the narrator intentionally inserts Hezekiah’s prayer, employs four verbs of repentance, and reports the LORD’s positive response to depict Hezekiah as a second Solomon.

²⁴³ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 367–70.

²⁴⁴ In 2 Chr 7:14, the narrator employs the verb בָּקַשׁ, but in 2 Chr 30:19, the narrator utilizes the verb שׁוּב. However, these two verbs have a similar meaning to seek someone or something.

The narrator also compares the first official action of Hezekiah with Solomon's action.²⁴⁵ When both kings ascended to the royal office, their main concern was the temple (2 Chr 1 // 2 Chr 29:3). In 2 Chr 29:3, the narrator explicitly reports that Hezekiah opened the doors of the temple and repaired the house of the LORD in the first day of the first month of the first year of his reign (2 Chr 29:17). This is a unique reference to Hezekiah in the Chronicles account. Thus, the narrator depicts Hezekiah as a second Solomon by reporting emphatically Hezekiah's immediate concern for the temple.²⁴⁶ At the same time, the narrator similarly summarizes the accomplishment of both kings (2 Chr 8:16 // 2 Chr 29:35b). In 2 Chr 29:35b, the narrator reports that *וַתִּכּוֹן יְהוָה בְּבֵית יְהוָה* ("so the service of the temple of the LORD was reestablished"). In a similar way, the narrator states that *וַתִּשְׁלַם בְּיַד יְהוָה בְּיִתְיָהּ* ("so the house of the LORD was completed") in 2 Chr 8:16b. In this regard, the narrator compares Hezekiah with Solomon to portray him as a second Solomon.²⁴⁷

The narrator also portrays Hezekiah as a second Solomon through his speech for all Israelites in 2 Chr 29:6–9. In 2 Chr 29:9, the narrator reports that the Israelites will find compassion with their captors, which is an echo of Solomon's prayer at the temple dedication in 1 Kgs 8:50.²⁴⁸ It is very significant that the narrator omits the second half of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8:50b) in 2 Chr 6:39.²⁴⁹ Then, the narrator reports the second half of Solomon's prayer through Hezekiah's speech in 2

²⁴⁵ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 415. Barnes points out that "a non-synchronic chronological datum from Chronicles serves to indicate the theological *Tendenz* of the writer, rather than representing a reliable chronological datum independent of DtrH" (Barnes, "Non-Synoptic Chronological References," 127).

²⁴⁶ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 234.

²⁴⁷ Throntveit, "Relationship," 114.

²⁴⁸ Williamson, *Israel*, 124. Williamson points out that it is Japhet's suggestion that 2 Chr 29:9 is an echo of 1 Kgs 8:50.

²⁴⁹ Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 435–36.

Chr 29:9. In this regard, the narrator intentionally reports some part of Solomon's prayer through Hezekiah in order to portray him as a second Solomon.²⁵⁰

Dillard also points out that the narrator compares Hezekiah with Solomon by the reference to מגנים ("shields") in 2 Chr 32:27, which were kept in treasuries.²⁵¹ In 2 Chr 32:27, the narrator intentionally lists the item of shields for Hezekiah's wealth in order to mark Hezekiah as a second Solomon.²⁵² The narrator reports that Solomon had made three hundred golden shields, which were not made for military use in 2 Chr 12:9. These golden shields, however, were replaced with bronze shields by Rehoboam (2 Chr 12:10), because they were taken by Shishak (2 Chr 12:9). Thus, the narrator intentionally mentions shields for Hezekiah's wealth to depict Hezekiah as a second Solomon.²⁵³

On the other hand, there are many other suggestions for depicting Hezekiah as a second Solomon, but they do not meet the criteria. Williamson suggests that Hezekiah's words in 2 Chr 32:7, which parallel David's words of encouragement to Solomon (1 Chr 22:13), portray him as a Solomon.²⁵⁴ However, it is better to see Hezekiah's words as a second David rather than as a second Solomon. At the same time, Williamson understands that the phrase "from Beersheba to Dan" in 2 Chr 30:5 indicates the narrator's depiction for Hezekiah as a second Solomon, because "the land is regarded as having returned to its full Solomonic extent."²⁵⁵ However, Throntveit correctly points

²⁵⁰ Williamson, *Israel*, 124.

²⁵¹ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 254. Although some recent translations (NAB, NJB) have emended the term מגנים ("shielded") to מגורים ("excellent things") following the suggestion of *BHS*, Dillard maintains that "this emendation would be at the expense of the author's effort to parallel Hezekiah with Solomon."

²⁵² Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 468. Klein also adds "stalls" to depict Hezekiah as a second Solomon.

²⁵³ Throntveit, "Relationship," 115–16.

²⁵⁴ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 382.

²⁵⁵ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 366.

out that the land already extended this far in the reign of David.²⁵⁶ In 1 Chr 21:2, the narrator clearly reports that the land that David reigned was “from Beersheba to Dan.” In the same way, Williamson sees Hezekiah’s restoration for the division of the priests and Levites in 2 Chr 31:2–3 as the narrator’s depiction for Hezekiah as a second Solomon.²⁵⁷ However, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a second David through 2 Chr 31:2–3. Ackroyd also sees that Hezekiah’s activities in 2 Chr 31:2–3 echoes David’s achievement in 1 Chr 23–26.²⁵⁸

The narrator’s evaluation in 2 Chr 32:22, the LORD gave the Israelites rest all around. In 2 Chr 32:23b, Hezekiah was exalted in the eyes of all the nation, and in 2 Chr 32:27–29, Hezekiah had very much wealth and honor. These are understood by Williamson as the narrator’s depiction for Hezekiah as a second Solomon.²⁵⁹ However, these evaluations are the narrator’s favorites in the Chronicles account. The narrator utilizes these evaluations for other pious Judean kings in Chronicles, namely David (1 Chr 14:7), Asa (2 Chr 14:1; 15:5), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:10–11; 20:29–30), Uzziah (2 Chr 26:8) etc. Thus, it is not true that these evaluations are paralleled only to Solomon.

5.4.3 Hezekiah as a second David and as a second Solomon

As revealed in the previous two sections, the narrator portrays Hezekiah either as a second David or as a second Solomon. However, there were some cases where Hezekiah is not to be seen as a second Solomon, because Hezekiah also paralleled to David. Thus, it is possible to see Hezekiah as a second David and as a second Solomon, rather than to see him as one or the other. In this regard, Dillard suggests a number of

²⁵⁶ Throntveit, “Relationship,” 115.

²⁵⁷ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 373.

²⁵⁸ Ackroyd, *1 and II Chronicles*, 187. Also see Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 448.

²⁵⁹ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 385–87.

cases to compare Hezekiah with David and Solomon. First of all, the narrator reports that Hezekiah appointed the priests and Levites to their respective divisions and duties in 2 Chr 29:11–14 and 2 Chr 31:11–20, which only compares to the activities of David (1 Chr 15:3–24; 23–26) and Solomon (2 Chr 8:14–15).²⁶⁰ David appointed the priests and Levites (1 Chr 15:3–24) and gave them their respective duties (2 Chr 23–26). In 2 Chr 8:14–15, Solomon recalled the Levites to their divisions and duties following the arrangement of David (1 Chr 23–26), which is also paralleled with Hezekiah's actions to recall the Levites in order to keep their duties (2 Chr 31:2, 11–20). The narrator only reports the Levitical divisions and duties in the reigns of these three kings. Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a second David and as a second Solomon by reporting the Levitical divisions and duties in 2 Chr 29:11–14 and 31:11–20.²⁶¹

The narrator explicitly states that Hezekiah provided the regular offerings from his property in 2 Chr 31:3, which is paralleled to David's provision (1 Chr 16:37–40; 29:1–5) and Solomon's provision (2 Chr 2:4; 8:12–13; 9:10–11).²⁶² However, the narrator also reports that Josiah also provided sacrifices animals for the Passover from his property in 2 Chr 35:7–9, which indicates that the provisions of Hezekiah, David, and Solomon are not a unique event in the Chronicles account. Thus, the motif of Hezekiah's provision is not utilized to portray him as a second David and as a second Solomon according to the criteria.²⁶³ At the same time, Williamson also points out that

²⁶⁰ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 229.

²⁶¹ Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 594. Throntveit doubts Dillard's suggestion saying, "a more qualified assessment is required in the matter of the appointment of the priests and Levites." He also treats the Davidic references, which are found in sections, as secondary (Throntveit, "Relationship," 117).

²⁶² Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 249.

²⁶³ Throntveit asserts that Josiah's provision "would not prevent the allusion from depicting Hezekiah as a second David and Solomon," because Josiah comes after Hezekiah. However, Josiah's

the fact that all the people assembled for celebrating the Passover in Hezekiah's story (2 Chr 30:1, 5) indicates the narrator's portrait for Hezekiah as a second David and Solomon, because the narrator only mentions this event for only three Judaen kings: David (1 Chr 11:3), Solomon (2 Chr 1:2; 5:2), and Hezekiah.²⁶⁴

Scholars also suggest that Hezekiah's blessing for the people in 2 Chr 31:8 is parallel with the blessing of David (1 Chr 16:2) and Solomon (2 Chr 6:3).²⁶⁵ In 1 Chr 16:2, David blessed the people in the name of the LORD, and Solomon also blessed the assembly when he met them in 2 Chr 6:3.²⁶⁶ In the same way, Hezekiah also blessed the people of Israel for their generosity and praised the LORD.²⁶⁷ The narrator only applies the motif of the royal blessings for the people of Israel to these three kings. Thus, the narrator utilizes this motif to depict Hezekiah as a second David and Solomon in the Chronicles account.

Dillard also suggests two more events to portray Hezekiah as a second David and Solomon. In 2 Chr 29:31–33, the narrator reports that the people of Israel positively responded to Hezekiah's requests for offerings and contributions for the temple. Dillard asserts that this positive response echoes similar events during the reign of David (1 Chr

provision makes that Hezekiah's provision is not unique in the Chronicles account, which does not meet the criteria (Throntveit, "Relationship," 117).

²⁶⁴ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 366.

²⁶⁵ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 250; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 450; Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 621.

²⁶⁶ Throntveit contends that the verb בָּרַךְ in 2 Chr 6:3 may be understood as the meaning "greeted," because the narrator reports that Hezekiah turned his face to the assembly (Throntveit, "Relationship," 117). However, the context of Solomon's blessing for the assembly in 2 Chr 6:8 is the same as David's blessing in 1 Chr 16:2. Both kings blessed the assembly when they finished transporting the ark to the new place. In 1 Chr 16:2, David's blessing served well as the final act in his transportation of the ark to the tent that David pitched for it, and in 2 Chr 6:3, Solomon's blessing also served well as Solomon's final act in his transporting the ark to the new temple (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 88). Thus, it is best to see the verb בָּרַךְ as meaning "blessed" in 2 Chr 6:2.

²⁶⁷ In 2 Chr 31:8, the narrator utilizes only one verb בָּרַךְ ("to bless") to report Hezekiah's blessing for his people and his God. However, it is impossible that a human can bless the LORD. Thus, the verb בָּרַךְ can be understood as meaning "praised" (Williams, "בָּרַךְ," 755–57). Thus, I translate 2 Chr 31:8b as they praised the LORD and blessed his people (Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 621).

29:6–9) and Solomon (2 Chr 7:4–7).²⁶⁸ In 1 Chr 29:6–9, the narrator relates that the assembly gave willingly to Solomon’s temple project following David’s example. In 2 Chr 7:4–7, the narrator reports that all the people offered a sacrifice before the LORD. However, this is not a unique event for only these three kings; rather the narrator also reports this event in the reign of Joash in 2 Chr 24:8–14.²⁶⁹ Dillard also understands the motif of success in Hezekiah’s story (2 Chr 31:21; 32:30) as the narrator’s depiction for Hezekiah as a second David and Solomon.²⁷⁰ However, the narrator also reports the same motif in the reign of Asa in 2 Chr 14:6 (Eng. 7). Thus, these two suggestions are not included for the narrator’s portrait for Hezekiah as a second David and Solomon. The narrator also portrays Hezekiah as a second David and as a second Solomon through the motif of Hezekiah’s provision for regular offerings (2 Chr 31:3), assembly of all Israel (2 Chr 30:1, 5), and Hezekiah’s blessing for the assembly (2 Chr 31:8).

5.4.4 Concluding Observation

As revealed above, in Hezekiah’s narratives (2 Chr 29–32), the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a second David *or* as a second Solomon, and as a second David *and* as a second Solomon in many ways. Thus, in Chronicles, the narrator does not simply tell the story of Hezekiah, but according to his own perspective he reshapes the Hezekiah story in order to portray Hezekiah as a second David *and* Solomon. Williamson asserts that the reigns of David and Solomon in Chronicles stand together to complement each other in order to form the ideal Israel of the LORD in a proper form, which is the worship of the LORD at the temple. Thus, he understands that the accession of Solomon is a

²⁶⁸ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 237.

²⁶⁹ Throntveit, “Relationship,” 117–18; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 318.

²⁷⁰ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 251.

continuity of the reign of David as Joshua follows Moses.²⁷¹ In this regard, the reign of Solomon is understood as a conclusion of the reign of David in terms of the task of temple building. Konkel also sees that “the reigns of David and Solomon are presented as a unity in establishing the eternal dynasty,” and he continues “the restoration under Hezekiah should parallel the ideal nation of Israel presented under both kings.”²⁷² Thus, the reign of Hezekiah clearly parallels the reigns of David and Solomon.

At this point the theme of “all Israel” plays an important role to demonstrate the ideal nation observed during the reigns of David and Solomon. This theme is clearly presented by the narrator in Hezekiah’s story. The fact that the Northern Kingdom fell into the hands of Assyria indicates that there is only one king over Israel, which is the first time since the reigns of David and Solomon. Although the narrator does not explicitly report the fall of Samaria in 2 Chr 29–32, the narrator presents the unity of North and South in the celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem (2 Chr 30:1–20), which reflects “the golden era under Solomon.”²⁷³ Thus, the narrator portrays the reign of Hezekiah as a united kingdom geographically, religiously and politically. Politically all Israel has only one king Hezekiah; religiously all Israel has only one temple in Jerusalem; and, geographically all Israel is bounded by Beersheba and Dan (2 Chr 30:5), which shows “the ideal geographical boundaries of Israel” (1 Chr 21:2).²⁷⁴

The narrator also uses the phrase אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל (“Land of Israel”) in 2 Chr 30:25, which appears three more times in the entire book of Chronicles. This phrase “land of Israel” is first used in reference to the reign of David (1 Chr 22:2), secondly with

²⁷¹ Williamson, “Accession,” 351–361.

²⁷² Konkel, “Hezekiah,” 243.

²⁷³ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 228.

²⁷⁴ Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 585.

Solomon (2 Chr 21:2), and lastly with Josiah (2 Chr 34:7). The narrator depicts that the reign of Hezekiah was the first time the land of Israel was similar in extent to the time of Solomon.²⁷⁵ Thus, North and South are reunited under Hezekiah in terms of a king, the temple of the LORD, and the land of Israel. Through Hezekiah's story the narrator takes the narratee back to the time of a united kingdom where all Israel was united around one temple under the Davidic king. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as one who represents the nation of Israel under David and Solomon.

The story of Hezekiah's triumph in faith over the Assyrian king Sennacherib (2 Chr 32:1–23) stands in the context of the religious reformations which marks out Hezekiah as the faithful king.²⁷⁶ In this way, the narrator introduces Hezekiah's victory from the battle with Sennacherib as the reward of God. The narrator uses a unique formula to link the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story to the previous religious reforms in order to introduce the theme of God's reward for Hezekiah's religious reforms (2 Chr 32:1a).²⁷⁷ Thus, Hezekiah's victory over Sennacherib is the result of God's retribution. The narrator also states that the LORD saved Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:22), which also indicates God's reward.²⁷⁸

For this reason, the narrator does not need to describe the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story in detail like the Kings account which focuses on the political affairs. Rather, the narrator briefly summarizes and comments on this event in order to show God's reward for those who act faithfully like Hezekiah. In Chronicles, God's reward for Hezekiah

²⁷⁵ Williamson, *Israel*, 123.

²⁷⁶ Ackroyd, "Chronicler," 311–43.

²⁷⁷ In 2 Chr 32:1a, the narrator purposely reports the phrase אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים וְהָאֵלֶּה הָאֵלֶּה ("after these things and these faithful acts"). The Hebrew root דָּבַר means "act" (Gen 18:25; 39:19) or "word" (Gen 39:17; 44:4–7).

²⁷⁸ Williamson, *Israel*, 124–5.

portrays not only that Hezekiah is delivered from the hand of Sennacherib by the LORD, but also that Hezekiah gains “precious things” from the Assyrian’s campaign (2 Chr 32:23).²⁷⁹ The narrator also adds that the LORD gives Hezekiah, including the people of Jerusalem, ‘rest’ from all around as God’s blessing (2 Chr 32:22). Thus the narrator indicates that the military victory over his enemy, rest and receipt of precious gifts were God’s reward for Hezekiah’s faithfulness.²⁸⁰ It is very significant that Hezekiah is the last king who received such evaluations from the narrator in Chronicles. Halpern asserts that “[f]rom Manasseh onward, the whole rest/prosperity/salvation complex disappears.”²⁸¹ In the same way, the narrator does not report “in the city of David” as the burial place for Judean kings nor the name of the queen mother after Hezekiah. Thus, Halpern concludes that “there is an *inclusio* formed there between Hezekiah and the ‘United Monarchy.’”²⁸²

The story of Hezekiah in 2 Chr 29–32 is presented by the narrator in his own way. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as a second David and Solomon, and the reign of Hezekiah as an ideal nation, which is demonstrated in the reigns of David and Solomon. Thus, all Israel is reunited under Hezekiah politically and religiously. In this way, the Hezekiah story plays an important role in the entire book of Chronicles to indicate that Israel is reunited under one Davidic king, Hezekiah.²⁸³ Thus, the narrator shows that the

²⁷⁹ Kalimi, *Reshaping*, 26.

²⁸⁰ Japhet, *Ideology*, 150–76.

²⁸¹ Halpern, “Sacred History and Ideology,” 41.

²⁸² Halpern, “Sacred History and Ideology,” 50.

²⁸³ Throntveit understands the history of Judah presented in Chronicles as three periods, namely the united monarchy, the divided monarchy, and the re-united monarchy (Throntveit, *When Kings Speak*, 113–20). He points out that “[h]istorically, there is no longer a division in the Kingdom ... the north has fallen to Assyria, and Judah, under Ahaz, has apostasized to the point of closing the temple (2 Chr 28:24). Since Judah is still free of Assyrian domination, she provides the only option for a return to the political/cultic unity enjoyed under David and Solomon. ... But for that to occur, drastic reform is necessary. Thus, the stage is set for the Chronicler’s re-interpretation of the roles of Hezekiah and Josiah”

ideal nation first established during the reigns of David and Solomon has returned during the reign of Hezekiah. This might be the reason why the narrator portrays the reign of Hezekiah as “the zenith for post-schism Judah.”²⁸⁴ The narrator also portrays Ahaz, the predecessor of Hezekiah, as the worst king among the Davidic kings in order to exalt the reign of Hezekiah.

5.5 Summary

The narrator utilizes three chapters to report Hezekiah’s reforms (2 Chr 29–31) which are not found in Kings and Isaiah. The narrator also presents the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Chr 29–32 in a different way by utilizing direct narration the most, while that the narrator utilizes dramatic narrative the most in 2 Kgs 18–20 and Isa 36–39. The narrator positively characterizes Hezekiah through his evaluative point of view. The narrator evaluates Hezekiah and his reign in extremely positive ways in the introduction and conclusion of the story. Hezekiah is evaluated as a pious king by comparing him with David and through God’s perspective (2 Chr 29:2). The narrator also evaluates him as the best king among the Judean kings through his death and burial place (2 Chr 32:33). The narrator also evaluates him as a faithful king who sought the LORD through his

(Throntveit, *When Kings Speak*, 120). Thus, according to Throntveit, the re-united Kingdom begins with the rule of Hezekiah. Williamson also suggests that reunification between the north and the south occurred during the reigns of two Judean kings, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Seeing Hezekiah as a second Solomon, Williamson points out that in the reign of Hezekiah “the one Israel is united around a single temple under the authority of the Davidic king” (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 351; also see, Japhet, *The Ideology*, 231–37). However, Knoppers maintains that “[r]ather than seeing any one monarch in Chronicles achieving a permanent reunification, for which there is no evidence, more attention should be paid to the repeated pattern of Judean kings making overtures and campaigns to the northern kingdom” (Knoppers, “A Reunited Kingdom,” 83). Knoppers also notes that “some measure of reunification is achieved in the reigns of kings such as Ash, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah” (Knoppers, “A Reunited Kingdom,” 83). Thus, Knoppers concludes that there is no re-united monarchy in Chronicles (Knoppers, “A Reunited Kingdom,” 83). Pratt, however, understands that “the Chronicler emphasized the symbolic rejoining of the faithful northern Israelites with Judah during this period [the reign of Hezekiah]” (Pratt, *1 & 2 Chronicles: A Mentor Commentary*, 583). In Chronicles, Hezekiah is clearly portrayed as a second David and Solomon, which may indicate the reunited kingdom of Israel.

²⁸⁴ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 228.

reforms (2 Chr 31:20–21) and who received God’s protection from Sennacherib (2 Chr 32:1).

Hezekiah’s story has a complex plot structure. This complex plot structure has many climaxes which are clearly related to the speech of characters, especially Hezekiah. Thus, these conflicts are resolved by the responses of the characters to these speeches. Through these responses the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a good and faithful king who received loyalty from his people (2 Chr 29:12–17; 30:10–12; 31:5–7; 32:8b) and the LORD’s positive answer (2 Chr 30:20; 32:21a). At the same time, in the results of these responses the narrator describes Hezekiah’s wealth (2 Chr 32:22–23), his international reputation (2 Chr 32:27–31), and the Israelites’ joy (2 Chr 30:21—31:1), which indicates that the LORD blessed Hezekiah and his kingdom. The narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively through the positive responses of other characters. In this regard, the narrator indicates the resolution of Hezekiah’s conflicts. The narrator also shows that Hezekiah directly prayed to the LORD to resolve his conflicts in order to characterize him positively (2 Chr 30:18–19; 32:20). This positive characterization is proved by the LORD’s positive responses (2 Chr 30:20; 32:21). Thus, Hezekiah plays an important role to resolve the conflicts in terms of the plot structure of the story.

The narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively and negatively within Hezekiah’s narratives (2 Chr 29–32). Thus, the narrator intentionally omits, expands, and reshapes elements from the Kings and Isaiah accounts. The narrator fully expands Hezekiah’s reforms in three chapters (2 Chr 29–31), which is found in only one verse in 2 Kgs 18:4 (no parallel in Isaiah). On the other hand, the political affairs in 2 Kgs 18–20 (Isa 36–39) are summarized in one chapter (2 Chr 32). In these ways, the narrator portrays Hezekiah

as a pious king who restored temple worship and the national festival and who received the LORD's protection from Sennacherib because of his religious reforms (2 Chr 32:1). Thus, the narrator introduces the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative as an example of God's protection for those who seek the LORD.

The narrator also omits some details of political affairs in 2 Chr 32, which are found in 2 Kgs 18–20 (Isa 36–39). The narrator omits Hezekiah's tribute in 2 Kgs 18:14–16, Hezekiah's frustrating responses to the speeches of Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:1 // Isa 37:1), and dialogues between Isaiah and Hezekiah concerning Sennacherib (2 Kgs 19:3–7 // Isa 37:1–7), while the narrator adds Hezekiah's wealth and international reputation in 2 Chr 32. In this way, the narrator minimizes the negative characterization and maximizes the positive characterization for Hezekiah. At the same time, the narrator adds the further actions of Hezekiah after receiving the LORD's healing in order to portray him negatively by introducing Hezekiah's pride for his recovery which was given by the LORD.

Furthermore, the narrator emphatically presents the role of the LORD in Hezekiah's story. In the Kings account, the LORD does not appear on the stage, but in Chronicles the LORD appears in the scene and is directly involved in the events. The narrator reports the LORD as the active character who hears the prayer of His people and heals them. The narrator also reports that it is the LORD who destroys the army of Sennacherib (2 Chr 32:21). The narrator also states that it is the LORD who saved and blessed Hezekiah and his people (2 Chr 29:36; 30:12, 20; 31:10; 32:29). However, it does not mean to diminish Hezekiah's positive characterization, but maximizes the positive characterization of him by demonstrating God's full support. On the other hand,

the narrator slowly shifts the reader's attention from a human king, Hezekiah, to the heavenly king, the LORD, by emphasizing the LORD's role in Hezekiah's success during his reign (2 Chr 32:27–31) and by indicating Hezekiah's failure (2 Chr 32:24). In this way, the narrator encourages the narratee (the readers), the post exilic community, to depend on the LORD rather than a Davidic king, because there was not a Davidic king.

The Hezekiah story in 2 Chr 29–32 plays an important role in the entire Book of Chronicles. The narrator depicts Hezekiah as a second David and Solomon in order to show the reign of Hezekiah as the ideal nation which was revealed first in the reigns of David and Solomon. Hezekiah is the first king over all Israel since Solomon, and all Israel is reunited under Hezekiah in terms of the temple worship. Hezekiah's reign also shows that the land of Israel is fully recovered from Beersheba to Dan which has been the ideal boundary of Israel since the reign of David and Solomon. Thus, the narrator parallels the reign of Hezekiah with the reigns of David and Solomon, and presents Hezekiah as the best king among the Davidic kings. Thus, Hezekiah's story stands in a significant position to indicate a reunited kingdom. In this regard, the narrator portrays Hezekiah in an extremely positive manner as the best among the Judean kings in the Chronicles account.

Chapter 6: Conclusion – A Comparison of Three Accounts of Hezekiah

The previous three chapters dealt with the characterization of Hezekiah within the context of each biblical book. Three biblical books (Kings, Isaiah, and Chronicles) report the same reign of Hezekiah, but they present it differently according to their own purposes. In other words, the narrator portrays Hezekiah differently in each biblical book. Now, this chapter will utilize the result of the previous three chapters in order to compare the narrator's characterization of Hezekiah. The present study will provide some further suggestions for the study of Hezekiah in the Bible.

6.1 Narration

Hezekiah's narratives in three biblical books are presented in the five modes of narration by the narrator. However, each book utilizes these five modes of narration differently as follows:

Narrative	Direct	Dramatic	Descriptive	Declarative	Documentary
2 Kgs 18–20	29.1%	61.8%	3.1%	2.9%	3.1%
Isa 36–39	16.7%	65%		0.5%	17.8%
2 Chr 29–32	56%	17.1%	13.7%	9.4%	3.8%

In Kings and Isaiah, dramatic narrative is used the most by the narrator, but in the Chronicles account the narrator utilizes direct narrative the most. The narrator draws the attention of the readers (the narratee) to the dramatic scenes by dramatic narrative in the Kings and Isaiah accounts. In this regard, the narrator positively involves the readers to understand the characterization of Hezekiah. In Chronicles, however, the narrator relates Hezekiah's story by direct narrative the most. In this way, the narrator quickly reports the Hezekiah narratives in the Chronicles account. Removing dialogues between characters, the narrator minimizes the active involvement of the readers to understand

the characterization of Hezekiah by passing quickly over the events. In the same way, the Kings account reports the event of Hezekiah's tribute to Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18:14–16) by direct narrative rather than by dramatic narrative by which Hezekiah's story in Kings is presented in order to pass the negative characterization quickly. Hezekiah's negative characterization in the Kings account is removed in the Isaiah and Chronicles accounts in order to remove the negative spot on the pious king Hezekiah.

On the other hand, the Kings and Chronicles accounts clearly report the positive evaluation of the narrator on Hezekiah and his reign through declarative narrative. In this way the narrator provides the readers with some guidelines for the characterization of Hezekiah. In the Isaiah account, however, the narrator almost omits these declarative narratives and simply relates Hezekiah's story. Thus, in the Isaiah account, the readers should be involved more actively than in the Kings and Chronicles accounts in terms of the characterization of Hezekiah. Thus, although these three accounts portray Hezekiah positively, they utilize these five modes of narration differently in order to characterize him differently according to their intentions.

6.2 The Evaluative Point of View of the Narrator

The narrator's evaluative point of view plays an important role for the readers to understand the characterization of Hezekiah. In the Kings account, the narrator explicitly reports his evaluations and comments on Hezekiah and his reign in the introduction (2 Kgs 18:3–8). In the Chronicles account, the narrator also states his evaluations and comments on Hezekiah and his reign at the beginning (2 Chr 29:2), middle (2 Chr 31:20–21) and end (2 Chr 32:33) of the story. In the Isaiah account, however, the narrator does not explicitly report his evaluation on Hezekiah.

In Kings and Chronicles, the narrator utilizes the LORD's perspective on Hezekiah in order to indicate the positive characterization of Hezekiah emphatically (2 Kgs 18:3; 2 Chr 29:2). In both accounts, the narrator evaluates that Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. The narrator intentionally utilizes the phrase, בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה ("in the eyes of the LORD") to portray Hezekiah emphatically as a faithful king to the LORD. At the same time, the narrator also compares Hezekiah with David in Kings and Chronicles to characterize him positively. In Kings, however, the comparison with David is very common for the Judean kings.¹ In Chronicles, however, the narrator compares only three Judean kings with David, namely Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Josiah. The Chronicles account removes this comparison for the other Judean kings and only keeps it for three kings. Hezekiah is the first king who is positively compared with David in the Chronicles account.² In this regard, the Chronicles account more positively portrays Hezekiah than the Kings account.

The narrator continually characterizes Hezekiah as the best Judean king through his death and burial notice in 2 Chr 32:33. The narrator explicitly evaluates that Hezekiah was honored by all the people of Judah and was buried in a privileged place among the tombs of the descendants of David. The Kings account, however, simply reports the death of Hezekiah. The narrator does not even report Hezekiah's burial place or the honor of Jerusalemites for Hezekiah. Furthermore, the Chronicles account indicates the narrator's positive evaluation for Hezekiah's reforms in 2 Chr 31:20–21. Here, the narrator utilizes God's perspective again due to the positive characterization of

¹ There are seven Judean kings who are compared with David: Solomon (1 Kgs 3:3; 11:4), Abijah (1 Kgs 15:3), Asa (1 Kgs 15:11), Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:3), Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:2), Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:3) and Josiah (2 Kgs 22:2).

² Three Judean kings are Ahaz (2 Chr 28:1), Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:2), and Josiah (2 Chr 34:2).

Hezekiah. The narrator expresses his positive evaluation in a more emphatic way by utilizing three adjective terms: טוב (“good”), יָשָׁר (“right”), and אֱמֻנָה (“faithful”). This three-fold expression is only used for Hezekiah in the Chronicles account. Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as the most faithful king among the Davidic kings in Chronicles.

6.3 Setting

The narrator provides the setting for the entire story of Hezekiah at the beginning of the story in both Kings (2 Kgs 18:1–12) and Chronicles (2 Chr 29:1–2). These two opening parts of the story introduce the main character, Hezekiah, and provide temporal information through the regnal formula, which indicates the characterization of the narrator on Hezekiah. Through his evaluations and comments on Hezekiah, the narrator portrays him in extremely positive ways in Kings and Chronicles. Furthermore, the Kings account relates a short summary of the fall of Samaria (2 Kgs 18:9–12) as a part of setting in order to indicate that Judah will face a similar situation. In Isaiah, however, the narrator does not provide the setting for the entire story of Hezekiah. Rather, the narrator simply begins the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story with the temporal setting (Isa 36:1). In Chronicles, the narrator reports that Hezekiah undertook the religious reforms at the beginning of his official reign (2 Chr 29:3, 17), which portrays Hezekiah as a pious king whose main concern was to restore the temple worship. At the same time, in 2 Chr 32:1, the narrator presents the political events (2 Chr 32) with relation to Hezekiah’s reforms (2 Chr 29–31). The narrator intentionally begins the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative with the phrase, אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים וְהָאֱמֻנָה הָאֵלֶּה (“after these faithful deeds”) in order to introduce the story as a result of Hezekiah’s reforms.

In terms of the temporal setting, the narrator constantly moves his temporal setting forward within the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story in Kings and Isaiah, but the narrator moves the temporal setting backwards in the last two stories of Hezekiah as flashbacks. In this way, the narrator draws the readers' attention to the stories of Hezekiah in 2 Kgs 20 and Isa 38–39. In the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, the narrator emphasizes Hezekiah's healing from the fatal illness by the LORD in order to accentuate Hezekiah as the one who received the LORD's protection. In the last story, however, the narrator emphasizes the negative characterization of Hezekiah through the prediction of Isaiah which was caused by Hezekiah's response to the Babylonian envoys. Furthermore, in Isaiah the narrator moves his temporal setting backward again by reporting Isaiah's treatment and Hezekiah's request for a sign (Isa 38:21–22) after inserting Hezekiah's thanksgiving psalm (Isa 38:9–20) in order to portray Hezekiah as a faithful king who eagerly worships the LORD in His temple. In Chronicles, the narrator also moves his temporal setting backward by reporting the decision making process for celebrating the Passover in the second month (2 Chr 30:2–4). In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively as the one who eagerly celebrates the Passover with the people of the north.

In terms of geographical setting, Hezekiah's story mainly occurs in the city of Jerusalem in three accounts. In Kings and Isaiah, Sennacherib tried to capture Jerusalem, but he was getting further and further away from the city within the story and finally he was shamefully killed at the temple of his own god in Nineveh. The LORD saved the city from Sennacherib through Hezekiah's prayer, which indicates the positive characterization of Hezekiah. Another important geographical setting in Hezekiah's

narratives is the house of the LORD. In Kings and Isaiah, the narrator depicts Hezekiah as the one who entered into the house of the LORD when he faced difficulties (2 Kgs 19:1–2; 19:14; Isa 37:1–2, 14). In Chronicles, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah even more positively by utilizing the geographical setting of the temple. The narrator purposely reports that Hezekiah took his religious reforms the first day of his reign in order to indicate that Hezekiah's main concern for his reign was to restore the temple worship. In 2 Chr 32, however, the narrator does not mention the temple for Hezekiah, but the narrator mentioned the temple of Sennacherib's god in order to report the humiliating death of Sennacherib (2 Chr 32:21). Although Hezekiah prayed in his palace, he was saved from his fatal illness by the LORD. Thus, the narrator intentionally omits the references to the temple for Hezekiah in 2 Chr 32 in order to characterize him positively by making a contrast between these two rival characters.

In Isaiah, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a faithful king by reporting the royal narratives which have the same geographical setting of the conduit of the Upper Pool. In Ahaz's story (Isa 7), the narrator portrays Ahaz negatively by rejecting the sign of the LORD, but in Hezekiah's story, the narrator portrays him positively because he sought the LORD's help and the LORD's sign. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as a faithful king by contrasting him with Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, and utilizing the same geographical setting.

Thus, in terms of geographical setting of the temple, the Chronicles account characterizes Hezekiah more positively than the other two accounts. In the same way, the Isaiah account more positively characterizes Hezekiah than the Kings account, although these two accounts report Hezekiah's story in almost the same way. In Isaiah,

the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a faithful king through the geographical setting of the conduit of the Upper Pool.

6.4 Plot

The narrator's positive characterization of Hezekiah also becomes evident through the plot in the three biblical accounts. In Kings and Isaiah, Hezekiah played an important role to resolve the conflicts that Hezekiah faced. In the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in Kings, Hezekiah asked other characters three times in order to resolve the conflict. In 2 Kgs 18:14, he asked Sennacherib, and in 2 Kgs 18:37—19:4, he asked the LORD through Isaiah. Finally, he directly prayed to the LORD to resolve the original conflict (2 Kgs 19:15–19). In this way, the narrator develops the character of Hezekiah from negative to positive. The initial response of Hezekiah to the invasion of Sennacherib was to conciliate him by providing the tribute that he demanded, which indicates the narrator's negative characterization, but Hezekiah's human effort to resolve the conflict failed and the tension intensified. Then, Hezekiah turned to the LORD to resolve the original conflict, but this time he asked the LORD for help through Isaiah (2 Kgs 19:4). Although the LORD positively responded to Hezekiah by promising to make Sennacherib return to his land and to have him killed there (2 Kgs 19:7), the original conflict was not resolved, but continued by Sennacherib's intimidation through his letter (2 Kgs 19:10–14). In the Isaiah account, however, the narrator omits Hezekiah's initial response to Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18:14–16) in order to remove the negative aspect of Hezekiah's character. The narrator only relates the second and the third request of Hezekiah. In this way, the Isaiah account portrays Hezekiah more positively than the Kings account by omitting his first human response.

Hezekiah continually plays an important role to resolve the conflict in the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery in Kings and Isaiah. When Hezekiah was mortally ill, he directly prayed to the LORD (2 Kgs 20:3 // Isa 38:3). Then, Hezekiah received the positive response of the LORD that He will provide fifteen years of additional life to Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:5 // Isa 38:5). Thus, the narrator indicates that the conflict that Hezekiah faced is resolved through Hezekiah's prayer. In this regard, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively through his recovery from his sickness by his prayer.

On the other hand, the narrator portrays Hezekiah negatively in the story of the Babylonian envoys in both Kings and Isaiah. The narrator presents Hezekiah passively in the story. In the previous two narratives, Hezekiah actively played to resolve the conflict in various ways, but in the last narrative, Hezekiah was passively asked by Isaiah some questions concerning the Babylonian envoys. Then, he received the LORD's judgments on Judah caused by Hezekiah's reactions to the Babylonian envoys. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah negatively because he provided cause for the dark future of Judah. At the end of the story, however, the negative characterization is changed by the response of Hezekiah to the word of the LORD. In Kings, the narrator shows that Hezekiah willingly accepted the word of the LORD (2 Kgs 20:19), saying, טוב דבר יהוה ("the word of the LORD is good"). In Isaiah, however, the narrator presents Hezekiah as defiant by revealing his inner thoughts. In Isa 39:8b, Hezekiah said, כי יהיה בימי שלום ואמת בימי ("for there will be peace and truth in my days"), which indicates Hezekiah's positive response to the word of the LORD in Isa 39:6–7 (2 Kgs 20:17–18). In this way, the narrator minimizes the negative characterization of Hezekiah by reporting Hezekiah's willingness to accept the word of the LORD. However, it is not

intended to remove all the aspects of the negative characterization of Hezekiah. The narrator still portrays Hezekiah negatively in the story of the Babylonian envoys because the LORD's judgment was not removed by Hezekiah's positive response in Isa 39:8 (2 Kgs 20:19).

Hezekiah also plays an important role in the Chronicles account in terms of the plot of the story. The narrator presents Hezekiah as an active character who actively endeavored to resolve the conflicts that he faced. When Hezekiah found that the temple had been abandoned by his ancestors, he restored the temple worship by consecrating the Levites and the temple and by offering the sacrifices in 2 Chr 29. In the story of the celebration of the Passover (2 Chr 30), Hezekiah became actively involved again to solve that problem by praying to the LORD directly for those who ate the Passover meal while they were not religiously clean (2 Chr 30:18–19). In this regard, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively because he actively worked to resolve the difficulties in the celebration of the Passover. In 2 Chr 31, Hezekiah commanded the Jerusalemites to bring the portion due to the priests and the Levites (2 Chr 31:4) in order that the Levites continually keep their official duties at the temple. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah in his religious reforms not only as a pious king who eagerly restored the temple worship and the Passover, but also as an active character who was actively involved in resolving the problems.

The narrator portrays Hezekiah as a positive and active character again in the Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative in 2 Chr 32:1–23. When Sennacherib invaded Judah, Hezekiah's first reaction was to prepare for the battle against Sennacherib by fortifying the city (2 Chr 32:2–5) and by encouraging the people (2 Chr 32:7–8). However, the

people of Judah were frightened and terrified by the words of Sennacherib's servants and his letter (2 Chr 32:9–19), which indicates that the original conflict that Hezekiah faced was intensified. Thus, Hezekiah actively prayed to the LORD for help (2 Chr 32:20) and the LORD also positively responded to Hezekiah by sending His angel to destroy the Assyrian army. The narrator also reports that Sennacherib returned and was killed in Nineveh, which shows that the original conflict was completely resolved. Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively as one who was actively involved in resolving the original conflict by encouraging the people and by praying to the LORD for help.

The narrator, however, portrays him differently in the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery (2 Chr 32:24–26). When Hezekiah was healed by the LORD with a miraculous sign, he became proud (2 Chr 32:25) so that the LORD was angry against him and Judah. Then, Hezekiah humbled himself before God so that the wrath of God did not come against Judah during his reign. The narrator portrays Hezekiah positively and negatively by a series of zigzags. Thus, the narrator portrays him not only as one who is actively involved in resolving the difficulties, but also as a positive king who sought the LORD when he faced difficulties in terms of the plot of the story.

In terms of plot, the narrator presents Hezekiah as an important character in the three biblical accounts. He is actively involved in resolving the original conflict by words and deeds to other characters. In the Isaiah account, the narrator omits Hezekiah's first reaction to Sennacherib which is found in 2 Kgs 18:14–16 in order to remove the negative characterization of him. This positive characterization is more emphasized in the Chronicles account. The narrator not only omits Hezekiah's first negative response, but also adds his first positive responses to prepare for the battle by rebuilding the city wall

and by encouraging the people to fight Sennacherib with confidence in the LORD. In Chronicles, the narrator abridges and reinterprets the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, and the envoys from Babylon in order to remove the negative characterization.

6.5 Characterization

The narrator characterizes Hezekiah differently in three biblical books. In the Kings account (2 Kgs 18–20), the narrator portrays him positively as a round character in various ways. In Isaiah and Chronicles, the narrator portrays him more or less positively than the Kings account by omitting, inserting and rephrasing sections in the story. In the introductory section (2 Kgs 18:1–12), the narrator positively characterizes Hezekiah in several ways. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as the best king among the Judean kings by utilizing the perspective of the LORD, by comparing him with David, and by his evaluations and comments. The narrator reports that Hezekiah was successful because the LORD was with him (2 Kgs 18:7).

In Isaiah, however, the narrator totally omits this positive characterization, but in Chronicles, this characterization is fully expanded in 2 Chr 29–31. The narrator utilizes three chapters to report Hezekiah's religious reforms, which are found in one verse in the Kings account (2 Kgs 18:4). In the story of Hezekiah's religious reforms, the narrator portrays him as a pious king in extremely positive ways. Hezekiah restored the temple worship (2 Chr 29:3–36), the celebration of the Passover with all Israelites (2 Chr 30:1—31:1), and the Levitical duties (2 Chr 32:2–19). The narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by reporting that Hezekiah's religious reforms were carried out in the first day of his reign (2 Chr 29:17). The narrator also characterizes him positively as one who

actively participated in the restoration of the temple worship by providing sacrifices willingly (2 Chr 29:21) and by attending the sacrificial ritual actively (2 Chr 29:27–29).

The narrator also portrays him as one who reunited the kingdom through the celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem (2 Chr 30:1—31:1). It is the first time that all the Israelites were gathered together in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover since Solomon which indicates that all the Israelites were reunited under a Davidic king, Hezekiah. It is very significant that in Kings the narrator does not mention Hezekiah's Passover celebration, but the narrator emphasizes Josiah's Passover celebration (2 Kgs 23:21–23). Furthermore, the narrator purposely indicates that Hezekiah celebrated the Passover with many Israelites in the first year of his reign. In Kings, however, the narrator reports that the Northern Kingdom was conquered by Assyria in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign (2 Kgs 18:10). Thus, the Chronicles account intentionally relates that Hezekiah's celebration for the Passover occurred in the first year of his reign in order to indicate Hezekiah's reign as the beginning of the reunited kingdom. The narrator continues to portray Hezekiah positively in the story of the restoration of the temple personnel for the priests and the Levites in 2 Chr 31.

Finally, the narrator positively evaluates Hezekiah's reforms at the end of his reforms (2 Chr 31:20–21). The narrator reports that Hezekiah did what was good and right and faithful before the LORD. The narrator also proves this positive characterization through the LORD's blessing for Hezekiah. The narrator states that Hezekiah prospered (2 Chr 31:21). Thus, the narrator concludes the story of Hezekiah's reforms positively in order to portray him as the best king among the Judean kings. Thus, in Chronicles, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah more positively than the Kings

account by fully expanding the positive characterization of his *Vorlage* in introduction formula (2 Kgs 18:4).

The narrator begins the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story by the temporal setting, “in fourteenth year of King Hezekiah” in Kings and Isaiah (2 Kgs 18:13 // Isa 36:1), but in Chronicles, the narrator begins the story by the temporal and thematic notice, “after all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done” (2 Chr 32:1). The Chronicles account presents the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story in a way that relates it to Hezekiah’s reforms in 2 Chr 29–31. In other words, the narrator forces the readers to read the story in the shadow of Hezekiah’s reforms. In this way, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by relating the story to Hezekiah’s faithful works. The Chronicles account also states that Sennacherib was thinking to conquer the fortified cities, while in Kings and Isaiah, the narrator reports that Sennacherib captured the fortified cities of Judah. In this regard, the narrator reduces the effectiveness of the invasion of Sennacherib in order to characterize Hezekiah positively. Thus, the Chronicles account rephrases the introductory verse of the Hezekiah-Sennacherib story in his *Vorlage* in order to characterize Hezekiah positively.

The Isaiah account omits Hezekiah’s tribute to Sennacherib, which is only found in 2 Kgs 18:14–16, in order to remove the negative characterization of him. In Chronicles, however, the narrator not only omits this event, but also adds other initial reactions to Sennacherib in 2 Chr 32:1–8 in order to characterize Hezekiah positively. The narrator reports that Hezekiah covered all the springs, rebuilt the broken walls and towers, and encouraged his people to trust in the LORD. Thus, the Chronicles account characterizes Hezekiah in the most positive way among three biblical accounts for the

Hezekiah-Sennacherib narrative, by removing Hezekiah's tribute to Sennacherib and by adding his faithful preparations for the battle with Sennacherib.

The Isaiah account also reshapes Hezekiah's story in Kgs 18–20. In the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, the narrator inserts Hezekiah's thanksgiving psalm (Isa 38:9–20) in the middle of the conversation between Isaiah and Hezekiah in order to indicate Hezekiah's confidence on the LORD's healing and Hezekiah's eagerness to enter the house of the LORD. In Isaiah, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by inserting Hezekiah's psalm (Isa 38:9–20) and by reshaping the dialogue between Isaiah and Hezekiah (Isa 38:21–22).

On the other hand, the Chronicles account simply reports Hezekiah's political events in 2 Chr 32. The narrator relates the story by direct narration removing Isaiah's interventions between Hezekiah and the LORD and dialogues between characters. In the story of Hezekiah's sickness (2 Chr 32:24–26), however, the narrator portrays Hezekiah negatively as the one whose response brought the LORD's judgment upon Judah. In both Kings and Isaiah, the narrator characterizes Hezekiah positively as the one who was healed by the LORD, but the narrator presents the limitation of the human character by indicating that the LORD gave Hezekiah a limited amount of additional life. This limitation of Hezekiah is more explicitly presented in the Chronicles account. In Chronicles, the narrator reports that Hezekiah became proud of the LORD's healing and the LORD was angry against him and Judah because of his pride (2 Chr 32:25–26). Although Hezekiah repented from his unfaithful action, the LORD's judgment was not removed, but postponed. Hezekiah was excluded from the LORD's judgment, but the narrator still portrays him negatively as the one who caused the LORD's judgment on

Judah. The narrator also shows this negative characterization in the story of the Babylonian envoys in Kings and Isaiah. In both accounts, Hezekiah was portrayed as the one who caused the national crisis by his response to the Babylonian envoys. Although the three accounts generally portray Hezekiah positively within the Hezekiah narratives, the narrator indicates his negative characterization at the end of the story in order to indicate the limitation of Hezekiah. However, in the story of the Babylonian envoys in 2 Chr 32:31, the narrator interprets this event as the testing of the LORD of Hezekiah in order to portray him positively when he was confirmed by the LORD as being a genuine character and showing faithfulness.

At the end of the story the Chronicles account portrays Hezekiah as the best king among the Judean kings. The Kings account simply concludes Hezekiah's story by utilizing the concluding formula, but the Chronicles account expands that Hezekiah was buried on the highest place of the tombs and honored by the people of Judah, which is the only expression among the Judean kings including David and Solomon. However, in Isaiah, the narrator totally omits the concluding section in Kings. In this way, the Chronicles account characterizes Hezekiah more positively than the other two accounts.

Thus, although three biblical accounts portray Hezekiah positively, the Isaiah account more positively characterizes him than the Kings account by omitting and inserting some parts of the story. In the Chronicles account, the narrator characterizes him more positively than his *Volage* by expanding, omitting and reshaping the story. In this regard, Hezekiah is most positively characterized in the Chronicles account. However, the narrator does not portray Hezekiah a perfect king, but he is characterized as a limited human king who caused the national crisis in all three accounts.

Portraying Hezekiah as the most pious king, the Chronicles account emphasizes the role of the LORD by reshaping the story. The narrator explicitly reports that it was the LORD who sent a messenger to smite the Assyrian army in 2 Chr 32:21, but in Kings and Isaiah, it was the messenger of the LORD who went out to destroy the Assyrian camp (2 Kgs 19:35 // Isa 37:36). The narrator also concludes that the LORD saved Hezekiah from Sennacherib and gave him rest all around (2 Chr 32:22). The narrator also reports that it was the LORD who gave him many possessions (2 Chr 32:30). In Kings and Isaiah, the narrator does not explicitly mention these things and the LORD was behind the scenes. In Chronicles, however, the LORD was active in the foreground. The narrator also emphasizes the LORD in the story of Hezekiah's reforms by portraying Him as the one who re-established the temple (2 Chr 29:36) and who blessed the people (2 Chr 31:10). The narrator finally evaluates that Hezekiah's reforms succeeded because of the LORD. Thus, in Chronicles, the narrator shifts the readers' attention from Hezekiah, who is a limited human king to the LORD who is a perfect heavenly king.

Thus, in Kings the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively by reporting Hezekiah's story both positively and negatively though focusing on his political events, but in Isaiah, the narrator more positively portrays Hezekiah than the Kings account by omitting the negative characterization and by inserting Hezekiah's psalm. In the Chronicles account, the narrator not only more positively characterizes Hezekiah than Kings and Isaiah by omitting, expanding, and reshaping the story, but also emphasizes the LORD who gave success to Hezekiah in his works.

6.6 The Hezekiah Narratives in the Context of Each Biblical Book

The narrator not only characterizes Hezekiah positively within Hezekiah's story (2 Kgs 18–20), but also portrays him as a pious king in the context of the Book of Kings. The narrator evaluates Hezekiah as a religious reformer who removed the high places (במות) in 2 Kgs 18:4. There are many Judean kings who are evaluated positively in Kings, but they did not remove the high places where the people of both kingdoms sacrificed to other gods. The narrator intentionally utilizes the term רק ("only" or "except") to portray these good kings ironically. In Kings, Hezekiah is the first king who removed the high places and led the people to worship the LORD in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:22). Thus, the narrator portrays Hezekiah as a pious king in the context of the Book of Kings through his removing of the high places and making Jerusalem the worship center for the people of God.

The narrator also presents Hezekiah's narratives in comparison with the event of the fall of Samaria. The narrator fully reports the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 2 Kgs 17, but this event is summarized again in the introductory section of Hezekiah's story (2 Kgs 18:9–12). This event indicates not only the narrator's positive characterization for Hezekiah by means of contrast between the people of the north and Hezekiah, but also the similar situation of Judah, which was invaded by Assyria. However, the result is quite different between these two kingdoms. Israel was destroyed by Assyria, but Judah was saved by the LORD from Assyria through Hezekiah's faithful actions. However, the narrator states that Judah was not just saved by Hezekiah's faithful deeds, but by the LORD who kept His promise to David in 2 Sam 7. The narrator explicitly mentions that the LORD will save Hezekiah and Jerusalem from the

hand of Sennacherib for the sake of His name and David (2 Kgs 20:6). The narrator already mentioned the same reason to keep the kingship of Solomon and to keep one tribe under the rule of Davidic kings in 1 Kgs 11:11–13. The LORD, who kept His promise to David, is also presented during the history of Judah. Although there were many wicked kings among the Judean kings, the Davidic dynasty was continually succeeded by David's descendants. Thus, Hezekiah's story plays an important role to indicate this theme in the Kings account. In this regard, the LORD saved Hezekiah from the hand of Sennacherib and from fatal illness in order to keep the promise to David.

At the same time, the narrator indicates a transition from the Assyrian period to the Babylonian period through Hezekiah's narratives in the Kings account in terms of the international political situation. Assyria was one of the main enemies for both Israel and Judah during the Divided Kingdoms. Hezekiah's first story is also the invasion of the king of Assyria, Sennacherib (2 Kgs 18:13—19:37), but after Hezekiah's reign, Assyria does not appear as the enemy of Israel in Kings. On the other hand, Hezekiah's last story is related to Babylon and the narrator ends the story with the deportation of the royal family to Babylon (2 Kgs 20:12–19). The narrator reports that Babylon was the main enemy for the Davidic dynasty after Hezekiah's reign. In this regard the narrator does not arrange Hezekiah's three narratives chronologically. Thus, Hezekiah's narratives play an important role in the Kings account to portray Hezekiah as a pious king who removed the high places and to indicate the LORD's faithfulness to keep the promise to David. It also serves as a point of transition in the international political situation.

Hezekiah's story in Isa 36–39 also plays an important role in the Book of Isaiah. In Isaiah, Hezekiah's story is compared with the previous royal narrative of Ahaz in Isa 7. These two royal narratives indicate that both kings were invaded by other nations: Ahaz, by the Syro-Ephraimite coalition, and Hezekiah, by Assyria. Although these two kings were attacked by foreign nations, the narrator reports their situation differently. The Syro-Ephraimite coalition, the enemy of Ahaz, marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it (Isa 7:1), while Sennacherib, the enemy of Hezekiah, came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them (Isa 36:1). However, their responses are different. Ahaz shook with fear because of the invasion of the Syro-Ephraimite coalition, but Hezekiah was calm and was actively involved to resolve the invasion of Sennacherib. The narrator contrasts these two kings. When Isaiah asked Ahaz to request a sign from God, Ahaz refused to request a sign (Isa 7:12), while Hezekiah requested a sign that he would enter the temple (Isa 38:22). Ahaz spoke only once to refuse the LORD's sign in Ahaz's story (Isa 7:12), but Hezekiah spoke not only to his officers and Isaiah, but also directly to the LORD many times in Hezekiah's story. Thus, the narrator intentionally presents these two royal narratives in order to characterize Hezekiah positively by means of contrast between these two kings. In the Isaiah account, Hezekiah is far more prominent than Ahaz.

Thematically, Hezekiah's story is the key to their presentation of the city of Jerusalem in the context of Isaiah. Hezekiah's story clearly indicates that the LORD saved the city of Jerusalem and the Davidic monarchy through Hezekiah's faithful deeds. However, at the end of Hezekiah's story, the narrator reports the prediction of Isaiah for the exile to Babylon, which means that the city of Jerusalem will be destroyed by

Babylon. This prediction seems to be in opposition to what the LORD promised to Hezekiah in the previous narratives. However, it is the narrator's intention to arrange Hezekiah's narratives in this way in order to bind the first half of the book and the second half of the book. Literally, the first half of Isaiah is dominated by Assyria, but the second half of Isaiah is dominated by Babylon. Thus, the narrator utilizes Hezekiah's story which is related to Assyria in the first two narratives and to Babylon in the last narrative in order to present a transition from the Assyrian period to the Babylonian period. Hezekiah's story in Isa 36–39 plays an important role not only to portray Hezekiah as a faithful king, but also to bind the Book of Isaiah together thematically and literarily.

In the Chronicles account, the narrator characterized Hezekiah as the best king among the Judean kings. He is portrayed as a reformer who rededicated the temple and restored the temple worship, the Passover, and the temple personnel for the Levites. He is also portrayed as a pious king who trusted in the LORD and prayed to Him during the national and personal crisis. The narrator portrays Hezekiah as one who restored the duties of the priests and Levites and the celebration of the Passover with all Israelites, and who blessed the people who brought some portions for the Levites in order to characterize him as a second David and Solomon. Thus, the narrator depicts Hezekiah's reign as ideal, which is demonstrated in David's and Solomon's reign. In this way, the north and the south are reunited under Hezekiah, one Davidic king, politically, geographically and religiously. Thus, the narrator indicates that the ideal nation first established in David's and Solomon's reigns has returned during Hezekiah's reign. In this regard, Hezekiah's story plays an important role in the context of Chronicles to

show that all Israelites are reunited under Hezekiah. This might be the reason why the narrator portrays the reign of Hezekiah as the highest point of the Davidic dynasty. The narrator also depicts Ahaz as the worst king among the Judean kings in order to exalt Hezekiah by means of contrast between these two kings. In this regard, the narrator presents Hezekiah's reign as the beginning of a reunited kingdom of Israel.

6.7 Concluding Observation: The Characterizations of Hezekiah

The goal of the present study has been to understand the characterization of Hezekiah in the biblical accounts through narrative analysis. The understanding of the characterization of Hezekiah as it is portrayed in Hezekiah's narratives is quite different among three biblical accounts: Kings, Isaiah, and Chronicles. The narrators utilize many narrative techniques differently in order to present Hezekiah's narratives in its own way. In the Kings account, the narrator portrays Hezekiah positively and negatively as a round character, but in the Isaiah account, the narrator removes Hezekiah's tribute to Sennacherib and inserts his psalm in order to characterize him more positively than the Kings account. Furthermore, in the Chronicles account, the narrator fully extends the events of his religious reforms and abridges his political events in order to portray him as the best king among Judean kings. Thus, Hezekiah's narratives show that the narrator presents his story differently due to the narrator's purpose. In Kings, the narrator emphasizes the theme of the LORD's faithfulness to His promise to David (2 Sam 7). Thus, the narrator focuses more on Hezekiah's political events including his negative aspects. In Isaiah, Hezekiah is characterized as a more pious king than Ahaz in order to encourage the people, who heard the visions of Isaiah, to trust in the LORD sincerely. In Chronicles, the narrator depicts Hezekiah as the best king among the Davidic kings in

order to indicate the beginning of the reunited kingdom and to portray him as a second David and Solomon.

However, these three accounts also portray Hezekiah negatively as a limited human king who caused the dark future of Judah as the LORD's judgment at the end of each account (2 Kgs 20:17–18; Isa 39:6–7; 2 Chr 32:26). At the same time, in Chronicles, the narrator emphasizes the LORD who is actively involved in the events of Hezekiah by making him successful in his religious reforms and saving him from his national and personal crisis. In this way, the narrator slowly shifts the reader's attention from Hezekiah, the Davidic king, to the LORD, the heavenly king, in order to encourage the reader, the post exilic community, to depend on the LORD rather than a human king. In this way, the narrator indicates the limitation of human character in order to look for the heavenly king, the LORD.

Each biblical book presents Hezekiah's story in its own way. Thus, we as the reader should read and study Hezekiah's story by itself in its own context; rather than to understand the story in connection with his story presented in other biblical books. In general, every biblical story or event should be read and studied by itself in its own context, because each narrator (author) presents the story from a distinctive point of view. Especially, in studying Chronicles, it is very important that the Book of Chronicles is not seen as the supplementary to the Book of Kings, but Chronicles stands by itself, which means that we should read the text by itself in its own context.

Appendix

The Proto-Masoretic Text for the Story of Hezekiah in Kings

The present study deals with narratives of King Hezekiah in Kings, Isaiah, and Chronicles by applying narrative analysis. In general, narrative analysis of the Bible deals with the final form of the text. With regard to the text of the Hezekiah narratives in 2 Kgs 18–20, however, it is necessary to find the proto-Masoretic text form of the story, for the later Masoretic text, which we call the Masoretic text, has been corrupted in transmission with the presence of a very similar text in Isaiah. Konkel convincingly asserts that “[c]ompositional changes that have been made are much more evident before the texts have begun to conform to each other through harmonization in the transmission process.”¹ Thus, appendix 1 of this dissertation is used for finding the proto-Masoretic text of Kings as the text form of the Hezekiah narratives. The proto-Masoretic text, however, is not the original text, but the final form of the Masoretic text which is not corrupted by harmonization in the transmission process. On the other hand, in terms of the text of Isaiah and Chronicles, the MT of Isaiah and of Chronicles are used for the study of this dissertation.

In the following study, I will utilize A. E. Brooke, N. McLean, and H. St. J. Thackeray’s work for the text of Vaticanus (B) and the other Greek versions in Kings.² The collection of J. Ziegler is used for the Greek text of Isaiah (LXX).³ I also utilize

¹ Konkel, “Sources,” 464.

² Brooke et al., *Old Testament in Greek*. According to Konkel “[i]t is the text of Vaticanus (B) which best preserves for us *kaige* in Kings” (Konkel, “Sources,” 467–68). Thus, I will use the term *kaige* for indicating the text of the story of King Hezekiah as found in Vaticanus. The older Greek which is in the manuscripts known as Lucian (boc2e2) was also found in these *kaige* sections. Konkel asserts that “[t]he relationship of *kaige* to the old Greek of boc2e2 is not certain, but *kaige* was revised to bring the translation into closer conformity with the proto-masoretic text tradition” (Konkel, “Sources,” 466).

³ Ziegler, *Isaias*.

Lenigradensis (L) as printed in *BHS* as the Mesoretic Text (MT) in both Kings and Isaiah, and Eugene Ulrich and Peter W. Flint's work is used as the source for the text of 1QIsa^a.⁴ The following instances are a pre-Masoretic textual variant in Kings in the text of Vaticanus.⁵ In the following study I deal with only 15 verses of Kings which need to change the reading of the MT of Kings as the proto-Masoretic text.

• 2 Kgs 18:17	
MT	וַיִּשְׁלַח מֶלֶךְ-אֲשׁוּר אֶת-תִּרְחָן וְאֶת-רַב־סָרִיסוֹ וְאֶת-רַב־שָׂקָה מִן-לְכִישׁ אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּהוּ בְּחֵיל כְּבֹד יְרוּשָׁלַם ^a וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיַּעֲמְדוּ ^a בַּחֲעֶלֶת הַבְּרֵכָה הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּמִסְלַח שְׂדֵה כּוֹבֵס
<i>kaige</i>	καὶ ἀπέστειλεν βασιλεὺς Ἀσσυρίων τὸν Θαρθαν καὶ τὸν Ραφίς καὶ τὸν Ραψακην ἐκ Λαχίς πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα Ἐζεκιαν ἐν δυνάμει βαρεῖα ἐπὶ Ἱερουσαλημ «καὶ ἀνέβησαν καὶ ἦλθον εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ ἔστησαν ^a ἐν τῷ ὕδραγωγῷ τῆς κολυμβήθρας τῆς ἄνω ἣ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ τοῦ ἀγροῦ τοῦ γναφέως

In the section of a-a, וַיַּעֲמְדוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיַּעֲלוּ, in the MT, two verbs, עָלָה (“to go up”) and בָּאָה (“to come”) are repeated, but the text of *kaige* does not have this repetition. Rather the text of *kaige* is rendered only one time for these two verbs as καὶ ἀνέβησαν καὶ ἦλθον εἰς Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ ἔστησαν. In the text of Isa 36:2 this repetition does not occur. Thus, the case of the MT is judged as an obvious case of dittography in the MT. With regard to the proto-Masoretic Text, the second verbs of וַיָּבֹאוּ should be omitted. Thus, the text of the proto-Masoretic Text is:

2 Kgs 18:17 וַיִּשְׁלַח מֶלֶךְ-אֲשׁוּר אֶת-תִּרְחָן וְאֶת-רַב־סָרִיסוֹ וְאֶת-רַב־שָׂקָה מִן-לְכִישׁ אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּהוּ בְּחֵיל כְּבֹד יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיַּעֲלוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיַּעֲמְדוּ בַּחֲעֶלֶת הַבְּרֵכָה הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּמִסְלַח שְׂדֵה כּוֹבֵס

• 2 Kgs 18:36	
MT	וְהַחֲרִישׁוּ הָעָם ^a וְלֹא-עָנוּ אֹתוֹ דָּבָר כִּי-מִצְוַת הַמֶּלֶךְ הִיא לֵאמֹר לֹא תַעֲנֶהוּ
<i>kaige</i>	καὶ ἐκώφευσαν καὶ οὐκ ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ λόγον ὅτι ἐντολὴ τοῦ βασιλέως λέγων οὐκ ἀποκριθήσεσθε αὐτῷ

The MT of Kings contains the noun הָעָם (“the people), but none of the manuscripts of Isaiah has it. At the same time the Greek of Kings (*kaige*) does not render

⁴ Ulrich and Flint, *Discoveries*.

⁵ My study for this section is heavily influenced by the Konkel's work.

it. Thus, the noun עָהָה in the MT of Kings would seem to be an addition during the Masoretic tradition.⁶ Cogan and Tadmor assert that it is a gloss.⁷ If we keep the noun עָהָה, it is problematic that Hezekiah should order the people to be silent before it was known that Rabshakeh wanted to address the people. However, if the noun עָהָה is omitted, the subject of this verse could be three officers of Hezekiah. Thus, for the proto-Masoretic Text of 2 Kgs 18:36 the noun עָהָה should be omitted as follow:

וְהִתְקַדְּשׁוּ וְלֹא-עֲנֶהוּ אִתּוֹ דְּבַר כִּי-מִצְוַת הַמֶּלֶךְ הִיא לֵאמֹר לֹא תִעָנֶהוּ 2 Kgs 18:36

• 2 Kgs 19:17

MT	אֲמַנָּם יְהוָה הִחְרִיבוּ מַלְכֵי אֲשׁוּר אֶת-הַגּוֹיִם וְאֶת-אֲרָצָם ^a
<i>kaige</i>	ὅτι ἀληθεία κύριε ἠρῆμωσαν βασιλεῖς Ἀσσυρίων τὰ ἔθνη

The phrase וְאֶת-אֲרָצָם (“and their land”) in the MT of Kings is omitted by B. The text of B reads τὰ ἔθνη (“the nations”), which means that the original text of Kings as indicated by B reads simply אֶת-הַגּוֹיִם (“the nations”), rather than וְאֶת-הַגּוֹיִם וְאֶת-אֲרָצָם (“the nations and their land”). However, the text of 1QIsa^a reads it as כָּל הָאֲרָצוֹת (“all the countries”), and the MT of Isaiah reads אֶת-כָּל-הָאֲרָצוֹת וְאֶת-אֲרָצָם (“all the countries and their land”). Konkel convincingly maintains that “[t]he Isaiah reading was added to Kings as *rsm* in the interests of indicating that the people and the lands were destroyed,” and then the reading of Kings “was imported back to Isaiah” as אֶת-כָּל-הָאֲרָצוֹת וְאֶת-אֲרָצָם, which is found in the MT of Isaiah.⁸ The Greek text of Isaiah also reads τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην καὶ τὴν χώραν αὐτῶν (“the whole world and their land”). Konkel points out that “[t]his is an obviously faulty reading, but was already present when the Greek of Isaiah was

⁶ Konkel, “Sources,” 473.

⁷ Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 233.

⁸ Konkel, “Sources,” 473–74. Omans and Ellington also point out that the phrase “and their lands” was added to the Hebrew text here from the parallel passage in Isa 37:18 (Omans and Ellington, *I–2 Kings*, 1197).

translated.”⁹ Thus, the MT of Kings is a double reading, but the omission of the *kaige* of Kings indicates that the *Vorlage* of the *kaige* was not expanded. Thus, the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 19:17 omits the phrase וְאֶת־אֲרָצָם (“and their land”) as follows:

וְהָיָה הַחֲרִיבוּ מַלְכֵי אַשּׁוּר אֶת־הַגּוֹיִם 2 Kgs 19:17

• 2 Kgs 19:18

MT	וְהָנִיחוּ אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם בְּאֵשׁ כִּי לֹא אֱלֹהִים הֵמָּה כִּי אִם־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי־אָדָם עָץ וְאֶבֶן וְיֶאֱבָדוּם
<i>kaige</i>	καὶ ἔδωκαν τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ πῦρ ὅτι οὐ θεοὶ εἰσιν ἀλλ’ ἢ ἔργα χειρῶν ἀνθρώπων ξύλα καὶ λίθοι καὶ ἀπώλεσαν αὐτοῦς

The MT of Kings begins with וְהָנִיחוּ (“and they put”), which is *qal*, perfect, third person, common plural with simple *waw*. However, the Greek text renders καὶ ἔδωκαν (“and they put”), which is aorist, active, indicative, third person, plural with the conjunction καὶ. At the same time, the MT of Isaiah reads וְהָנִיחַ, which is *qal*, infinitive absolute with simple *waw*. Thus, Cogan and Tadmor and others suggest that the Masoretic text, וְהָנִיחוּ, should be changed to וְהָנִיחַ following the MT of Isaiah (Isa 37:19), because the infinitive absolute form, וְהָנִיחַ, makes good sense in the text.¹⁰ This suggestion, however, is against the general rules for textual criticism: *difficilior lectio potior*.¹¹ At the same time, the reading of 1QIsa^a is וַיְהִי (“and then they put”), which is the *qal*, imperfect, 3rd person, masculine, plural with *waw* relative. Thus, the Greek text of Kings,

⁹ Konkel, “Sources,” 473–74. According to Seeligmann, the Greek text of Isaiah translates the same faulty text which we find in the MT of Isaiah (Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 208).

¹⁰ Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 236; Montgomery, *Kings*, 504; Gray, *I & II Kings*, 687; Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 267.

¹¹ McCarter, *Textual Criticism*, 21. The rule, *difficilior lectio potior*, means “[t]he more difficult reading is preferable.” It does not mean that the harder reading is to be preferred, but the more distinctive. We want the reading that is suitable, sensible, and elegant. However, we do not want the commonplace reading, but neither do we want garbage.

καὶ ἔδωκαν, renders וַיִּחַנּוּ which is the *qal* imperfect third person masculine plural with *waw* relative as in 1QIsa^a.¹² In this way, the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 19:18 is this:

וַיִּחַנּוּ אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם בְּאֵשׁ כִּי לֹא אֱלֹהִים הֵמָּה כִּי אִסְמַעְשָׁה יְדִי־אֲדָם עַן וְאָבָן וַיִּאֲבָדוּם

• 2 Kgs 19:20

MT	וַיִּשְׁלַח יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶן־אֲמוּן אֶל־חֲזַקְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר כֹּה־אָמַר אֲיֵהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ^a אֲשֶׁר הִתְפַּלֵּלְתָּ אֵלַי אֶל־סִנְחַרְבַּבְבֵּי מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר שִׁמְעֵתִי
kaige	καὶ ἀπέστειλεν Ησαϊας υἱὸς Αμώς πρὸς Εζεκιαν λέγων τάδε λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων θεὸς Ἰσραηλ ἃ προσηύξα πρὸς με περὶ Σεινααχηριμ βασιλέως Ἀσσυρίων ἤκουσα

The MT of Kings reads אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (“the LORD God of Israel”) in a-a, but the Greek text of B adds the phrase ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων (“the God of Hosts”) and boc2e2¹³ adds the words τῶν δυνάμεων (“of Hosts”). Like the MT of Kings, these added words are not found in the MT of Isaiah. The added words in the Greek text δυνάμεων can be rendered from the Hebrew word צְבָאוֹת (“Hosts”). In the story of Hezekiah in Isaiah, the term צְבָאוֹת is found (Isa 37: 16, 32; 20:16). At the same time, the Greek term παντοκράτωρ which can be also rendered from the Hebrew term צְבָאוֹת,¹⁴ is found in boc2e2 in 2 Kgs 19:15 and 2 Kgs 20:16. The Greek word δυνάμεων is also found in all the Greek texts at 2 Kgs 19:31. In this way, Konkell concludes that “the *Vorlage* of *kaige* at 2 Kgs xix 20 included *s^eebā’ôt* just as it does at xix31, and boc2e2 at xix 15, 20, 31, xx 16.”¹⁵ Thus, the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 19:20 can include the term צְבָאוֹת as follows:

¹² Konkell, “Sources,” 474.

¹³ The text of boc2e2 is the Old Greek text which was found in the manuscripts known as Lucian, designated by Brooke, Thackeray, and McLean.

¹⁴ Hatch and Redpath, *Septuagint*, 1053–54. In the LXX and other Greek versions, the term “παντοκράτωρ” is rendered from the Hebrew words: אֱלֹהֵי, יְהוָה, צְבָאוֹת, and שְׁדַי. However, almost all of the cases are rendered from the Hebrew term צְבָאוֹת, except in the book of Job and Zech 11:4, 6; 12:4.

¹⁵ Konkell, “Sources,” 474.

2 Kgs 19:20 וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׁעִיהוּ בֶן־אֲמוּן אֶל־חֻזַּקְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר
הִתְפַּלֵּל אֵלַי אֶל־סַנְחֶרֶב מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר שְׁמַעְתִּי

• 2 Kgs 19:21

MT	וְהַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עָלָיו בָּזָה לָךְ לְעֵנָה לָךְ בַּחֲזֹלַת בַּת־צִיּוֹן אַחֲרֶיךָ ^a רֹאשׁ הַנִּיּוּעָה בַת יִרְוִשָׁלַם
<i>kaige</i>	οὗτος ὁ λόγος ὃν ἐλάλησεν κύριος ἐπ’ αὐτόν ἐξουδένησέν σε καὶ ἐμυκτηρίσέν σε παρθένος θυγάτηρ Σιων ἐπὶ σοὶ κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς ἐκίνησεν θυγάτηρ Ἰερουσαλημ

The MT of Kings reads ראש (“head”), but the text of *kaige* renders it as κεφαλὴν αὐτῆς (“her head”), which adds the genitive feminine singular personal pronoun αὐτῆς.

The MT of Isaiah and the Greek text of Alexandrinus (A) do not have this reading.

However, the text of 1 QIsa^a 37:22 has the third person feminine singular suffix. The text of 1 QIsa^a 37:22 reads ראשה אחריך (“her head behind you”). Thus, it is possible that the reading of the MT of Kings was influenced by the MT of Isaiah. Therefore, the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 19:21 could have the third person feminine singular suffix as follow:

2 Kgs 19:21 וְהַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עָלָיו בָּזָה לָךְ לְעֵנָה לָךְ בַּחֲזֹלַת בַּת־צִיּוֹן אַחֲרֶיךָ רֹאשָׁה הַנִּיּוּעָה
בַת יִרְוִשָׁלַם

• 2 Kgs 19:23

MT	בְּיַד מַלְאָכָיִךְ חֲרַפְתָּ ^a אֲדֹנָי וְהֵאמַר בְּרַכְבּ רַכְבֵּי אֲנִי עָלִיתִי מְרוֹם הַרִים יִרְכְּתִי לְבָנוֹן וְאֶכְרַת קוֹמַת אֲרָזָיו מִבְּחֹר בְּרַשִׁי ^b וְאֶבֹּאֶה מִלֶּן קִצָּה יַעַר כְּרַמְלוֹ ^b
<i>kaige</i>	ἐν χειρὶ ἀγγέλων σου ὠνείδισας κύριον σου καὶ εἶπας ἐν τῷ πλήθει τῶν ἀρμάτων μου ἐγὼ ἀναβήσομαι εἰς ὕψος ὀρέων μηρῶν τοῦ Λιβάνου καὶ ἔκοψα τὸ μέγεθος τῆς κέδρου αὐτοῦ τὰ ἐκλεκτὰ κυπαρίσσων αὐτοῦ ^b καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς μέσον δρυμοῦ καὶ καρμήλου ^b

In a, the MT of Kings reads אֲדֹנָי (the LORD”), but the *kaige* adds the genitive singular of 2nd person personal pronoun as κύριον σου (“your Lord”), which is a unique rendering among the Greek manuscripts. Konkel, however, points out that the sixth column of the Hexapla reads κύριον τὸν θεόν (“the Lord God”), and concludes that “[o]ne suspects here a *Vorlage* of ’ādōnāy ’ēl ōhekā, and that the name of God was lost

through haplography.”¹⁶ Thus, the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 19:23 has the term אלהיך (“your God”), which makes good sense.

In b-b, the MT of Kings reads קצה יער כרמלו (“and I entered lodging of its end, its thickest forest”), and the text of B renders $\text{καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς μέσον δρυμοῦ καὶ καρμήλου}$. The verb form in the reading of B is ἦλθεν , which is the aorist active indicative 3rd person singular of ἔρχομαι . The reading of B should be ἦλθον , however, which is the aorist active indicative first person singular of ἔρχομαι , because the MT of Kings has the 1st person common singular verb form ואבואה . At the same time, the previous two verb forms in the reading of B are first person singular verb forms: ἀναβήσομαι ¹⁷ and ἔκοψα .¹⁸ Thus, the 3rd person singular form in the reading of B is an error and is changed as ἦλθον like other Greek manuscripts.

On the other hand, the Greek text of B has only μέσον , which is rendered from the Hebrew word קצה , which means that the *Vorlage* of *kaige* at 2 Kgs 19:23 does not have מלון in the MT of Kings. At the same time, the MT of Isaiah (Isa 37:24) has מרום (“height”) instead of מלון in the MT of Kings. Thus, the reading of B is more close to the proto-Masoretic text for the text of 2 Kgs 19:23.¹⁹ The proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 19:23 is:

2 Kgs 19:23 $\text{בְּיַד מַלְאָכָיו חֲרַפְתָּ אֶדְנִי וְחָאֵמַר בְּרַכְבּ רַכְבֵּי אֲנִי עָלִיתִי מְרוֹם הַרִים יִרְכְּתִי לְבָנָן וְאָכַרְתָּ קוֹמַת אֶרְצוֹ מִבְּחֹר בְּרָשִׁי וְאָבֹאֶה קֶצֶה יַעַר כְּרַמְלוֹ$

• 2 Kgs 19:25

MT	$\text{לְמַרְחֹק אֶתְּהָ עֲשִׂיתִי לְמִימֵי קָדְמָא וְיִצְרְתִּיהָ עֲתָה הִבִּיאֲתִיהָ וְחָהִי לְהַשׁוֹת גְּלִים נְצִים עָרִים בְּצִרוֹת הַלְא־שְׁמַעַתa$
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¹⁶ Konkel, “Sources,” 474.

¹⁷ Indicative, future, middle, first person, singular from ἀναβαίνω (“to go up”).

¹⁸ Indicative, aorist, active, first person, singular from κόπτω (“to act” or “to cut”).

¹⁹ Konkel, “Sources,” 474–75.

<i>kaige</i>	ἔπλασα αὐτήν συνήγαγον αὐτήν καὶ ἐγενήθη εἰς ἐπάρσεις ἀπὸ οἰκεσιῶν μαχίμων πόλεις ὄχυράς
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In a-a, the MT of Kings begins this verse with הַלֹא־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְמַרְחֹק אֶתָּה עֲשִׂיתִי לְמִיָּמַי הַקָּדָם (“Have you not heard? Long ago I did it. In days of old”), and the MT of Isaiah also reads in the same way with the MT of Kings. At the same time the Greek text of A and boc2e2 have the equivalent words in the MT of Kings. The Greek text of B, however, does not render the a-a part in the MT of Kings. E. W. Conrad maintains that the reading of the MT of Kings is clearly an Isaianic phrase. He thinks that Isaiah utilizes this phrase in order to link the story of Hezekiah to the motif in the second half of Isaiah.²⁰ Thus, the section a-a in the MT of 2 Kgs 19:25 should be omitted in the proto-Masoretic text of Kings as follow:

ויצרתיה עתה הביאתיה וחהי להשוח נלים נצים ערים בצרות 2 Kgs 19:25

• 2 Kgs 19:31

MT	כִּי מִירוּשָׁלַם תֵּצֵא שְׂאֲרֵית וּפְלִיטָה מִהַר צִיּוֹן קִנְאֵת יְהוָה תַּעֲשֶׂה־אֵת
<i>kaige</i>	ὅτι ἐξ Ἱερουσαλημ ἐξελεύσεται κατάλειμμα καὶ ἀνασωζόμενος ἐξ ὄρους Σιών ὁ ζῆλος κυρίου τῶν δυνάμεων ποιήσει τοῦτο

The MT of Kings reads יְהוָה (“the LORD”), but the Greek text of *kaige* reads κυρίου τῶν δυνάμεων (“the Lord of Hosts”). The Greek text of B adds τῶν δυνάμεων which is rendered from the Hebrew word צְבָאוֹת. As we saw above in 2 Kgs 19:20, it is common to all the Greek texts in Kings to render צְבָאוֹת in their translations. At the same time the MT of Isaiah has the term צְבָאוֹת. Thus, as 2 Kgs 19:20, the *Vorlage* of *kaige* at 2 Kgs 19:31 has this epithet “צְבָאוֹת” then, the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 19:31 is:

כִּי מִירוּשָׁלַם תֵּצֵא שְׂאֲרֵית וּפְלִיטָה מִהַר צִיּוֹן קִנְאֵת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה־אֵת 2 Kgs 19:31

²⁰ Conrad, *Reading Isaiah*, 72.

- 2 Kgs 19:34

MT	וַנְּגִדְתִּי אֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת ^a לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ לְמַעַן וּלְמַעַן דָּוָד עַבְדִּי
<i>kaige</i>	καὶ ὑπερασπιῶ ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης δι' ἐμέ καὶ διὰ Δαυιδ τὸν δοῦλόν μου

The MT of Kings reads לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ, but in the Greek text of B this term is not rendered. At the same time, boc2e2 omits the first half of this verse וַנְּגִדְתִּי אֶל־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ. However, the Greek text of A contains both as in the MT of Kings. At the same time, the MT of Isaiah has the term לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ²¹ (Isa 37:35). This reading is also found in the story of healing in 2 Kgs 20:6 (Isa 38:6), but the MT of Kings and Isaiah do not have לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ. Following H. Wildberger, Konkel asserts that the first half of the MT of Kgs 19:34 omitted by boc2e2 is “an Isaianic composition added as a compelling conclusion to the oracle.” Then, he concludes that the first half of 2 Kgs 19:34 is reminiscent of Isa 31:5, and the last half of this verse is a combination of a formula from second Isaiah (Isa 43:25; 48:11) and the Deuteronomist (1 Kgs 11:13, 32, 34).²² Thus, the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 19:34 is only the second half of the MT of Kings.

2 Kgs 19:34: לְמַעַן וּלְמַעַן דָּוָד עַבְדִּי

- 2 Kgs 20:4

MT	וַיְהִי יִשְׁעִיהוּ לֹא יָצָא ^a הָעִיר הַתִּיכְנָה ^a וּדְבַר־יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו לְאָמֵר
<i>kaige</i>	καὶ ἦν Ἡσαϊας ἐν τῇ ἀύλῃ τῆ μέσῃ καὶ ῥῆμα κυρίου ἐγένετο πρὸς αὐτὸν λέγων

The MT of Kings reads הָעִיר הַתִּיכְנָה (“middle of the city”), which is difficult to understand. The Greek text of B reads ἐν τῇ ἀύλῃ τῆ μέσῃ (“in the middle of the court”). In the reading of the Greek text the term τῇ ἀύλῃ is rendered from the Hebrew word הַצֵּר (“the court”) rather than הָעִיר which is in the MT of Kings. At the same time the MT of Isaiah also omits this detail about Isaiah’s location when the LORD spoke to him in Isa

²¹ Preposition לְ + *hiphil*, infinitive construct of יָשַׁע (“to save”) with third person feminine singular.

²² Konkel, “Sources,” 475.

38:4. Omanson and Ellington point out that “it is almost universally agreed that the word for ‘city’ is a corruption of the word meaning ‘courtyard.’”²³ The *qure* of Kings also suggests reading הָעִיר as הָצֶר which refers to the middle of the court. H. M. Orlinsky asserts that this is a corruption of the MT of Kings possibly with the introduction of the square script.²⁴ Konkel also suggests that the reading of לֹא יָצָא in the MT of Kings is added to make sense of the new reading, and then he concludes that “[t]he Greek represents the original text of the story in Kings.”²⁵ Thus, the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 20:4 is:

2 Kgs 20:4 וַיֹּאמֶר יְשַׁעְיָהוּ הַצֶּר הַחֵיכָנָה וְדַבַּר יְהוָה הָיָה אֵלָיו לְאֹמֶר

• 2 Kgs 20:7	
MT	וַיֹּאמֶר יְשַׁעְיָהוּ קְחוּ דִבְלַת הָאֲנִים ^b וַיִּקְחוּ וַיִּשְׂמוּ עַל־הַשְּׁחִין וַיִּחֲיוּ
<i>kaige</i>	καὶ εἶπεν λαβέτωσαν παλάθην σύκων καὶ ἐπιθέτωσαν ἐπὶ τὸ ἔλκος καὶ ὑγιᾶσει

The MT of Kings has the name of the prophet יְשַׁעְיָהוּ and the verb וַיִּקְחוּ²⁶; the Greek text of B and boc2e2 does not render these words in the MT of Kings. the Greek text of A, however, renders both as in the MT of Kings. The verb וַיִּקְחוּ makes a quite different meaning of the MT of Kings. If we keep the verb, then the second half of this verse shows the result of Isaiah’s command in the first half of it as וַיִּקְחוּ וַיִּשְׂמוּ (“and then they took it and placed it”).²⁷ On the other hand, if we omit the verb וַיִּקְחוּ, then the second half of this verse becomes a continuation of Isaiah’s command as in the reading

²³ Omanson and Ellington, *1–2 Kings*, 1220.

²⁴ Orlinsky, “Kings-Isaiah Recensions,” 33–49.

²⁵ Konkel, “Sources,” 475.

²⁶ *Qal*, imperfect, third person, masculine, plural from לָקַח (“to take”) with *waw* relative.

²⁷ In his speech, the prophet commands those who are with Hezekiah as קְחוּ דִבְלַת הָאֲנִים (“Take a cake of figs”). The verb קָח is *qal*, imperative masculine plural from לָקַח (“to take”).

because the masculine noun הַצֵּל cannot be the subject of the feminine verb יָרְדָה.³³ The phrase, אֲשֶׁר יָרְדָה בַּמַּעְלוֹת אִחָז, which has a grammatical problem and is omitted in the Greek text of B, is from the form of the text in Isaiah. Thus, this phrase must be understood as a later insertion from Isaiah. Konkel explains that “Ahaz was introduced in the book of Isaiah as part of the motif of his contrast with Hezekiah, especially in their relationship to the temple,”³⁴ and understands that “[t]he incorporation of this phrase in Kings is part of the process of the texts later coming into conformity.”³⁵ Thus, the phrase, אֲשֶׁר יָרְדָה בַּמַּעְלוֹת אִחָז, must be omitted in the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 20:11 as follows:

2 Kgs 20:11: וַיִּקְרָא יְשַׁעְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא אֶל־יְהוֹנָה וַיֵּשֶׁב אֶת־הַצֵּל בַּמַּעְלוֹת אַחֲרֵינִית עֶשֶׂר מַעְלוֹת

• 2 Kgs 20:13	
MT	<p style="text-align: right;">^aוַיִּשְׁמַע עֲלֵיהֶם הַזִּקְנָהוּ וַיֵּרְאֵם אֶת־כָּל־בֵּית נְכֹתָה אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף וְאֶת־הַזָּהָב וְאֶת־הַבְּשָׂמִים וְאֶת־וַשְׁמֵן הַטּוֹב וְאֶת בֵּית פְּלִיז וְאֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא בְּאוֹצְרוֹתָיו לֹא־הָיָה דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הָרְאִים הַזִּקְנָהוּ בְּבֵיתוֹ וּבְכָל־מִמְשַׁלְּחֹתוֹ</p>
kaige	<p>καὶ ἐχάρη ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς Ἐζεκιᾶς καὶ ἔδειξεν αὐτοῖς ὅλον τὸν οἶκον τοῦ νεχῶθα τὸ ἀργύριον καὶ τὸ χρυσίον τὰ ἀρώματα καὶ τὸ ἔλαιον τὸ ἀγαθόν καὶ τὸν οἶκον τῶν σκευῶν καὶ ὅσα ἠύρεθη ἐν τοῖς θησαυροῖς αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἦν λόγος ὃν οὐκ ἔδειξεν αὐτοῖς Ἐζεκιᾶς ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ</p>

The MT of Kings begins with the verb וַיִּשְׁמַע (“then then he listened”), but the Greek text of B renders καὶ ἐχάρη (“and he rejoiced”), which is rendered from the verb וַיִּשְׂמַח. At the same time, all the texts of Isaiah have וַיִּשְׁמַע rather than וַיִּשְׂמַח as the MT of Kings. Thus, it is better to change the verb וַיִּשְׁמַע as וַיִּשְׂמַח for the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 20:13 as follows:

³³ Konkel, “Sources,” 476–77. The verb יָרְדָה is *qal*, perfect, third person, feminine, singular of יָרַד (“to go down”).

³⁴ Konkel, “Sources,” 476–77. The Old Latin reads Isa 38:8 without reference to Ahaz, but in 2 Kgs 20:11 the Old Latin interprets אִחָז as a verb: “the shadow remained fixed by the sun.”

³⁵ Konkel, “Sources,” 476–77.

2 Kgs 20:13 וַיִּשְׁמַע עֲלֵיהֶם חֲזַקְיָהוּ וַיֵּרָאם אֶת-כָּל-בֵּית נֹכַחָה אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף וְאֶת־הַזָּהָב וְאֶת־הַבְּשָׂמִים וְאֶת־
 שָׁמֶן הַטּוֹב וְאֶת בֵּית כָּלֹו וְאֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא בְּאוֹצְרוֹתָיו לֹא־הָיָה דָבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הָרָאם
 חֲזַקְיָהוּ בְּבֵיתוֹ וּבְכָל־מַמְשַׁלְתּוֹ

• 2 Kgs 20:19

MT	וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזַקְיָהוּ אֶל־יְשַׁעְיָהוּ טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ ^a וַיֹּאמֶר הֲלוֹא אִם־שְׁלוֹם וְאִמְתָּ יִהְיֶה בְיָמַי ^a
kaige	καὶ εἶπεν Εἰσεκίας πρὸς Ησαϊαν ἀγαθὸς ὁ λόγος κυρίου ὃν ἐλάλησεν

In the second half of this verse the MT of Kings reads הֲלוֹא אִם־שְׁלוֹם וְאִמְתָּ יִהְיֶה בְיָמַי (“Is it not so, if there shall be peach and truth in my days?”), but the Greek text of B does not render it. The Greek text of A renders the MT of Kings, and the text of boc2e2 renders differently. At the end of the story each manuscript has different readings. Konkel asserts that the expanded texts in the MT of Kings are derived from the reading of Isaiah, because “[t]hey are in keeping with the theology and sentiments of the poem which point to the possibility of life and hope in spite of judgment.”³⁶ Williamson also asserts that the extended texts in the MT of Kings become a marker in the second half of Isaiah (Isa 48:22; 57:21).³⁷ Thus, the proto-Masoretic text of 2 Kgs 20:19 does not have the second half of the MT of Kings.

2 Kgs 20:19 וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזַקְיָהוּ אֶל־יְשַׁעְיָהוּ טוֹב דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ

The present study clearly shows that these 15 texts of Kings have been expanded or changed by the influence of the MT of Isaiah. Thus, these parts of 15 verses should be corrected for the proto-Masoretic text of Kings as I suggested above. Without these 15 texts, the MT of Kings is regarded as the proto-Masoretic text of Kings. At the same time, the MT of Isaiah and the MT of Chronicles are utilized as the text of the story of Hezekiah in this dissertation.

³⁶ Konkel, “Sources,” 477.

³⁷ Williamson, *Book*, 210.

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