

**ISAIAH**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 36 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In Isaiah chapters 36-39 we are going to see a historical account with the main focus being the destruction of the Assyrian army. Putting this historical account here in Isaiah may seem kind of strange, why in the world does God do that? I believe one of the reasons is this; He has been speaking on how the Assyrian army won't destroy Jerusalem, to trust in Him on this and not for them to trust in the world for help.

As we will see tonight, here in Isaiah chapters 36 and 37 we see God's promise become a reality as He destroys the Assyrians without even one arrow being shot into the city of Jerusalem. God was showing them that they could trust in Him because what He has promised them, as impossible from a human perspective as it may seem, He will fulfill His promise to them and He did!

I think these are very valuable lessons for us to learn. Before we obey God do we have to know all the what, where, who, why and-so-forth? If we do then that is not faith. Faith has legs and thus, they must walk if you are going to exercise that faith. God tells us something and we do it, we move forward, we are walking in faith not knowing the totality of what we are doing but one step at a time we move forward!

Let me show you about what I mean in regards to walking by faith, to go where God has called you to go or do what God has called you to do even though it may seem foolish, you may not even know the reason but God has called and as we will see, this person is going to go!

In Acts chapter 8 we see God is moving the church from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the earth. Jerusalem was filled with the things of God, the doctrine of God and now God was using the martyrdom of Stephen to move the church outward. Philip went to Samaria as the church in Jerusalem was being persecuted and things were going well in Samaria. Many got saved; the power of the occult was put down. Revival broke out in Samaria!

And in the midst of this revival Philip gets this message from God to leave Samaria and go down to Gaza! Wow, maybe he did not hear the message right, this is 90 miles south!

God calls Philip to go down to a dry, barren area, a desert and he doesn't tell Philip why. Now, think about this, "Samaria was the place to be. Salvation is the life for me. Land spreading out so far and wide, forget Gaza just give me that Samaritan countryside!"

Sorry to all you Green Acres fans! What would you do? There is no real direction, just to go to Gaza. Not what he is going to do there but just go. And not just go but leave this area where things were happening. Right in the middle of this awesome work of God, God says go down to the desert and what does Philip do?

We are told, "**So he arose and went . . .**" People wonder why they are not being used by God? Maybe it is because God called them and they refused to go to the desert area or wherever God instructed them to go. Maybe they were too comfortable where they are at! Folk's, God uses human instruments to do His work, and He wants to use you if you will let Him and go as He instructs you!

With all the other sounds, voices that are out there, Philip learned to not only hear the voice of God, but then to respond to what the Lord was saying. That is faith and true faith has legs to walk as I have said. And keep in mind that before you get step two from God you must take step one! If you haven't then God is not going to give you more until you take that first step and then He will tell you what is next. You need to obey what God is telling you and then you will get the next step. And think about it. When you put one foot down and then you moved the next one, what are you doing? You are walking! That is faith, one step at a time and as you take step one God will show you step two!

Now keep in mind that many times these steps will move us from the comfortable to the uncomfortable, thus, it is faith that moves us, helps us to walk! Philip could have argued how foolish this was for him to do, but he didn't, he just got up and went. May we have that kind of faith!

I love how God orchestrates these events on a dusty, dirty, desert road. The eunuch from Ethiopia who came to Jerusalem in search for the true and living God, his life is empty, not complete and he leaves Jerusalem not finding God but he takes home with him the scroll of Isaiah! And this is what I love, if you are seeking God you will find Him, as Jeremiah 29:13 says, "**And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.**"

So as Philip catches up with the chariot this eunuch was riding in he heard him reading out of Isaiah chapter 53, although they did not have them divided up in chapters, it was a scroll. And Philip knew what this eunuch was reading from because he knew the Word of God and that is important for us as well!

So Philip begins to question this eunuch about what he is reading and he says back that unless someone helps him to understand it, to guide him through it, he is lost. The place he was reading from was Isaiah 53:7-8 which deals with the Suffering Servant. And the eunuch's question to Philip is great because he wants to know who this suffering servant is, does it speak of the author or someone else? Philip is now going to answer that question for this eunuch!

And listen carefully to what Philip did, **“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.”** Acts 8:35. The Gospel presentation must center upon Jesus Christ; His life, His death and His resurrection from the dead. You see, sin has separated us from God, which is the bad news. The Good News is that Jesus Christ has paid in full the penalty for our sins and He has conquered death and so will we as we come to Him! That is what Philip shared with this man and it is what we need to share with people!

Now the eunuch wants to be baptized and I want you to notice that Philip doesn't just baptize him, he first asks him who Jesus is to make sure he has come to saving faith, otherwise the baptism is an empty ritual – it doesn't do anything, it doesn't save, it is just an outward expression of what has taken place in a person's heart! So as they come across this water in the desert, this man is baptized, BAPTIZO is the Greek word, which means “to dip” or “to immerse.” Thus, all his servants who were traveling with this eunuch saw this outward expression of his inward faith in Christ!

This eunuch who left Jerusalem without finding God, maybe sad, maybe depressed is now full of joy, why? Because he found God or God found him. He came to the Savior of the world, to Jesus and as he did all of his sins were cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more and that brought great joy in his life. What happened to this Ethiopian eunuch and his faith? According to the church father Irenaeus he became a missionary to Ethiopia and spread the Gospel message to them! All because of one man who was called by God to leave a place where revival was happening and go to the desert. He didn't know why but he went and he spoke to this eunuch about Jesus and he got saved and brought that good news to the people of Ethiopia! Faith must have legs to walk!

And again, what we will see here tonight is God fulfilling the promise He made to them regarding the Assyrians. He was trying to stretch their faith, to get them to trust in Him no matter how impossible the situation would be. The Assyrians were a force, they were sweeping across the land and Jerusalem was only some 30 miles away and they were the next to fall and God wanted them to look to Him instead of the world for help. You see, God will fulfill His promises and thus these lessons should encourage us to walk by faith, believing and trusting in His promises.

And as we have seen, Isaiah chapters 28 through 35 are basically dealing with the idea of trusting in God and now Isaiah shows us that it is not foolish to put your trust in the Lord. And for us, we should stand strong in our faith in God because what God has done in the past He is more than able to do in the present. We need to trust in Him, God expects us to!

Then, as we move into chapters 38 & 39 we will be dealing with the sickness of Hezekiah, his healing, and then his foolish actions. So with that as our background, let's begin reading in Isaiah chapter 36 starting in verse 1 and let's see that the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

### **ISAIAH 36**

#### **VERSES 1-3**

1. To set the stage for what is going on here and the timeframe of all this, Hezekiah began his reign in 715 B. C., and thus, that would place the fourteenth year of his reign at 701 B. C. It was during this time that the Assyrians were moving southward towards Jerusalem, having already conquered some 46 cities in the northern parts of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. If you remember, Hezekiah tried to cut a deal with the Assyrians not to invade. And the Assyrians were more than happy to take the money, and attack anyway.

And look at our nation and how, ever since World War II, we have been using the almighty dollar to buy friends throughout the world. And what is interesting is that these so-called friends are ready to take our money and many times stab us in that back while they do it! Think about how many friends our nation has today and the numbers keep dropping! As Hezekiah learned and we have not, you cannot buy friends with money! And Hezekiah found out who his true Friend was and it was not a man, it was God. We have not learned that lesson as a nation and it may be too late!

What an important lesson for us to learn. You never make a deal with the devil, the flesh or the world. If you do, you won't find peace, only devastation. God wants us to trust more and more upon Him, to lean upon Him, no matter how hopeless the situation may look. That is the lesson the Southern Kingdom of Judah will learn through all of this.

2. If you want to review the events that are recorded in this chapter you will find them back in the books of II Kings 18:13 through II Kings 19:37 and II Chronicles 32:1-22.

3. Here we see that the King of Assyria, Sennacherib, sends the Rabshakeh, which is his title not his name, and it means chief of staff, along with half of the Assyrian army from Lachish, which is around a 30 mile hike, northeast to Jerusalem. And the Rabshakeh was very smart. He used psychological warfare to break the spirits of the enemy, so instead of fighting, they would just surrender. He was trying to intimidate them and the people had good reason to be intimidated by the Assyrians, no one was able to stop them!

4. Historically speaking, this mention of Lachish is important in regards to what was taking place at this time with the Assyrians. As I have said, Lachish was 30 miles south-west of Jerusalem and archaeologists have discovered a pit there with the remains of about 1,500 casualties of Sennacherib's attack. Not only that, in the British Museum you can see the Assyrian carving depicting their siege of the city of Lachish, which was an important fortress city of Judah.

5. So as this representative of Sennacherib stands before the Jewish people, he looks like he is the one in control, at least he thinks he is. And as he gets there we see Hezekiah send out his representatives, who stood upon the walls of the city, to speak to the Assyrian representatives who were down below. Now also understand that there were many soldiers and civilians on the wall, and the Rabshakeh had the Assyrian army around him. And listen to his threats, how he is trying to demoralize the people of Judah.

#### VERSES 4-6

1. Notice what the representative of the King of Assyria was doing. The Rabshakeh was mocking these people for trusting in empty words. He is mocking the strength of the Jewish people and the alliances that they were trusting in with Egypt, which was empty! You see, the help from Egypt never came because as the Egyptians were coming up the other half of the Assyrian army was on its way down, and they destroyed the Egyptians.

Remember what we were told in Isaiah 30:1-5, **“‘Woe to the rebellious children,’ says the LORD, ‘Who take counsel, but not of Me, And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, That they may add sin to sin; Who walk to go down to Egypt, And have not asked My advice, To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, And to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore the strength of Pharaoh Shall be your shame, And trust in the shadow of Egypt Shall be your humiliation. For his princes were at Zoan, And his ambassadors came to Hanes. They were all ashamed of a people who could not benefit them, Or be help or benefit, But a shame and also a reproach.’”**



2. Now please understand that the Rabshakeh spoke the truth, the Egyptians were not help, the army of Judah was no help, they were not going to be able to defeat the Assyrians. He was speaking the truth here. And Satan does the same thing; he speaks the truth to discourage us, to get us to give up, to get us to walk away in defeat. What do I mean by that? I mean he tells us, “You are a dirty rotten sinner!” And we listen to that and we throw our hands up and give up!

What a mistake. First of all Jesus died for sinners and when I come to Him I am forgiven. Why do I think that my actions save me, they don't. They never have and they never will. Stand strong in the Lord and the power of His might. But also understand that the enemy will never give up. Listen to what the Rabshakeh said next, he gets right to the heart of the matter. And again, he was trying to demoralize them and cause them to lose hope; to be in despair just as the Devil does with us! Look at what he says next.

#### VERSE 7

1. Notice what the Rabshakeh says, “Maybe you are not going to trust in weapons of war, of military assistance from other nations, maybe you are going to trust in God. Is that really going to work for you when your King, Hezekiah tore down those worship places in the groves? Your God is not going to fight for you; He is going to be angry with you!”

And the bottom line was what he said back in verse 5 of Isaiah chapter 36, “**... Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me?**” In other words, you can put your trust in anything and everything, even God and you will not win. His whole intention was to weaken the people and get them to give up without a fight.

And make no mistake about it; this is the way the world responds with us. They speak of things they know nothing about. It always amazes me how those that have never read the Scriptures can speak so boldly about them, even though they know nothing of them. And understand what is going on here. He is trying to destroy their faith, just as the world tries to do to us. Why do we listen to what the world is telling us about our faith instead of listening to God Himself? That is foolish, God's Word will direct you and keep you in line, it will not try to destroy your faith but build it up!

2. Now here is the problem with all of this. The enemy of our souls has an amazing way of discouraging our obedience. And if you begin to listen to him enough the argument he is making might begin to make sense when in reality it was demonic! That is what we see in the church today where teachers and pastors are telling people that the Bible is just a bunch of stories. That Jesus really did not die for our sins. There is no blood atonement and-so-on. And what we thought would not happen is happening, people are listening to those doctrines of demons and they are believing in them. Be warned, that kind of false teaching will grow more and more in these last days! The big question is, "***In whom do you trust?***" If it is not the Lord you are going to be in trouble and you are going to be deceived!

#### VERSES 8-9

1. The reason the Rabshakeh could speak with such boldness was because he was right, the Assyrians were a powerful nation and no one was able to stand in their way, at least not yet. Victory after victory they were enjoying and many nations would just surrender instead of trying to fight against them, a "better red than dead" mentality.

And he is just mocking them saying that he will give them 2,000 horses if they give him some money but that won't do them any good. They will not even be able to get riders to ride on those horses. In other words, he is basically telling the people of Judah, "We could beat you with our hands tied behind our backs!" The intimidation continues!

2. As I have said already, that is how the enemy deals with us. We think he wants to fight with us, do battle with us, but he really is not interested in that because he could lose, we could draw closer to God through it. Then what does the enemy want to do to us? He wants to talk with us, and he will use all kinds of people to do this so that we become discouraged and he basically talks us into giving up!

Remember when the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness and there in the wilderness the Devil was tempting Him! We see that in Matthew chapter 4, Mark 1 and Luke 4. And the Devil is not doing battle with Jesus, hand to hand combat you might say, he could not win that war and he will not win that war even though he will try at the end of the Tribulation Period. But here in the wilderness he is trying to talk Jesus into giving up, don't go to the cross; you can have it all now. Obviously it didn't work and it didn't work because Jesus defeated the Devil by the Word of God, "***It is written!***" So when the enemy is bringing people into your life to try and destroy your faith, get you to give up, how do you win this so that you don't give up? Very simply, "***It is written!***" May we not forget that, the Sword of the Spirit or the Word of God is our defensive weapon, may we use it!

VERSE 10

1. Rabshakeh saves his best thrust for last, “Admit it, Hezekiah. You know your God is on my side.” In other words, “God told me to come and destroy you!” That was not true, that was a lie but when you are weakened, discouraged, when you have lost all hope, you will believe almost anything!

That is exactly how Satan works. He gets us to doubt God’s love for us and we thus give up. Psychological warfare is tough, that is why you need the truth of God to dispel the lies of Satan. Paul said in Romans 8:37-39, **“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** May we never forget that!

2. Make no mistake about it, people continue to tell us that God is speaking through them, that Jesus told them this or told them that and when you listen to what they have to say it goes contrary to the Scriptures. That means that they are false prophets, false teachers, wolves in sheep’s clothing you might say who are bringing forth doctrines of demons! That may be harsh but it is true!

Case in point, Bill O’Reilly in his new book, “Killing Jesus” tells us that the reason that Jesus was killed was not for our salvation but that when He turned over the table of the money changers that made them mad, they lost money and thus, they put Jesus to death because of that. And on the Today show, to prove that this is the truth and not a lie, he said that the Holy Spirit showed him this.

I know Bill O'Reilly is followed by many Christians, I am not sure why because he is not a Christian and if you doubt that listen to what was said in this article called, "Top 5 Moments From Bill O'Reilly's 'Killing Jesus' Interview With '60 Minutes.'" This is what part of the article had to say,

In discussing his new book, O'Reilly made it clear that he believes God called him to write the book. After explaining that the idea came to him in the middle of the night, the commentator said that he believes it was ordained by the Lord.

"I believe, because I'm a Catholic, that comes from the Holy Spirit," he said of the motivation and idea to write the book. "My inspiration comes from that and so I wrote 'Killing Jesus,' because I think I was directed to write that."

. . . Most Christians believe that Jesus is God's son, so why didn't O'Reilly include this central theological underpinning in the book? . . .

"Because it's not a religious book," O'Reilly said, explaining that it's rooted entirely in history. ***"There's no religion in the book - nothing."***

O'Reilly also shared the most surprising thing he learned about Jesus throughout the writing process.

"That he was a regular guy, very afraid, very afraid," the television host explained. "Scared to die. Scared to be put on a cross. And that he got angry and that he was a little violent - and that he was a man."

. . . ***"Jesus of Nazareth was the most famous human being who ever lived on this planet and he had no infrastructure and it's never been done," O'Reilly said. "He had no government, no PR guy, no money, no structure. He had nothing, yet he became the most famous human being ever."***

. . . One other element worth noting is that O'Reilly didn't include Jesus' total and utter forgiveness of his captors when the savior reportedly said, "Father forgive them for they know now what they do." This quote was not out in the book, O'Reilly claims, because he doesn't believe it happened while Jesus was on the cross.

"You couldn't say something like that audibly that people would hear. You die on a cross from being suffocated . . . you can hardly breathe," he said. "We believe Jesus said that, but we don't believe he said it on the cross."

For those who may disagree with some of the elements that contradict the holy book, he said, ***"If you want to take the Bible literally, it's your right to do that."***

- <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/09/30/top-5-moments-from-bill-oreillys-killing-jesus-interview-with-60-minutes/>

What is O'Reilly doing? He is trying to destroy the faith of those who believe that Jesus is God, that He did not go to the cross because He turned over the tables of the money changers but to die for our sins, that He is not just a man but fully God and fully man in the Incarnation and the Bible is to be taken literally! We need to be careful and use the discernment that God has given to us but sadly, many Christians don't and their faith is weakened, it is shaken and sometimes they give up! That should be a powerful warning to us!

VERSES 11-12

1. Hezekiah's men recognize what the Rabshakeh is doing and they call for him to speak in Aramaic so the people won't hear or understand what is being said. I like this about these representatives of the King, Hezekiah's men. They understood that as the people continued to hear these words from the Rabshakeh they would become fearful, discouraged, in despair and eventually just give up. They were trying to protect the people and that is what any good leader should do.

It upsets me when I see pastors and leaders allowing unsaved pastors or teachers that are presenting false doctrine into the church. They are there to watch over the people, to protect them but they are not doing that! These men are a great example of what leaders are to be in the home, at their job, in their neighborhood and in the church!

2. Now this did not stop the Rabshakeh, he only spoke more boldly and he tells these leaders as well as the people that in the end, if they don't surrender, they will be eating their own waste, they will drink their own waste! You see, many times when you attacked a city you would not break down the walls right away, you wanted to weaken the people first. So you would surround the city and starve them out. Thus, the Rabshakeh is saying that this information is also for the common people for they will be affected by this battle, they will be hungry and thirsty and reach a point of eating and drinking their own waste!

Listen to what the Rabshakeh says next starting in verse 13.

VERSES 13-20

1. Notice the tactics that the Rabshakeh is using here as he speaks to the common people. First of all he is trying to get them to turn against their King, Hezekiah. He is basically saying to the people, “Hezekiah is offering you death and I am offering you peace!” That was not true; the Assyrians were a brutal people. When they conquered a people they would resettle them in faraway places and mix them in with other people so that they could not gather a force to come against them.

But that is how the enemy works. He wants us to give up, give in, with the promise that things will be better; it will be easier if we do. ***IT NEVER IS!*** “If you only can get out of this marriage I have something so much better for you!” “It is not wrong to look at these pictures of naked women, God created the body and thus, what is wrong with that!” “Didn’t God create all things and thus, there is nothing wrong in taking these drugs that God created!” And the lies go on, give in and you will get more, you will be able to rest, and the exact opposite is true! Like the Rabshakeh, the Devil loves to make a terrible fate seem very attractive to us. Don’t fall prey to it, be in God’s Word and listen to His direction, He will not led you astray!

2. Next he speaks of how the god’s of these other nations could not give them victory; they were defeated and taken into captivity, even Samaria! So there is no way your God is going to be able to give you victory in this battle! You need to just give up and if you do, everything will be okay! The Devil loves to have us make peace with evil by surrendering and in the end, we lose. Don’t be deceived. God is still in control and nothing happens to us without His knowledge. He will give us the victories just don’t walk away from Him, don’t give up but humble yourself before Him and let Him lift you up!



VERSES 21-22

1. How important this is for us to learn. The representatives of King Hezekiah didn't try to argue with Rabshakeh. Why didn't they try to argue with him? Because most of the time it is useless, it can be dangerous to try and argue with the enemy because you will not win a battle through arguing! What should we do then? It is much better to keep silent and trust God instead of trying to win an argument!

Meyer put it like this, "Silence is our best reply to the allegations and taunts of our foes. Be still, O persecuted soul! Hand over thy cause to God. It is useless to argue, even in many cases to give explanations. Be still, and commit thy cause to God." That is another good lesson for us to learn. You stand strong upon God's Word, let God bring you the comfort and direction you need, let Him lead you instead of the Devil driving you!

2. As this chapter concludes we see these representatives of King Hezekiah return from the wall and come before Hezekiah to tell him the news, and it was bad! And please understand that they were not giving up, they did not throw in the towel, they were silent, they did not argue with the Rabshakeh. And as we will see as we get to chapter 37, they are going to give this to the Lord in prayer!

Paul had some similar things to say in II Corinthians 4:8-9 as he wrote, **“We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.”** Notice the contrasting points Paul is making here. Yes, he is being pressured, squeezed in but he is not crushed because the Lord is with him. Yes, situations are perplexing, they are bad, it may look like there is no way out but Paul was not utterly lost in the situation because Jesus was there with him. Paul faced much persecution in his life for Christ, he suffered much but he knew the Lord would not leave him there, the Lord would see him through it because the Lord was with him. Yes, he was cast down, thrown down, stoned but God spared him, saved his life!

How could Paul do that? How could Paul feel that way? Because he saw the sufferings of Christ, all He went through and realized as a servant of the Lord he has and will continue to have to go through these things for a servant is not better than his master! Perspective is everything and as hard as things may get, the battle is never lost in the Lord!

**ISAIAH 37****VERSES 1-5**

1. Notice that when the heat is turned up Hezekiah does not turn away from the Lord but draws close to Him. This is something that we continue to learn. When you are under attack, not only from Satan, but it may be from our brothers and sisters in the Lord coming against you, it may be family, it may be friends, co-workers that are coming against you, don't allow that to move you away from God and you also don't retaliate. What you need to do is get on your knees and bring it before the Lord. That is what Hezekiah did; he went into the house of God. It is as Asaph did in Psalm 73:17, "**Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end.**"

When he communed with God he developed a proper perspective of the situation and so will we.

2. So we see that as Hezekiah is praying he sends his men to Isaiah with the news so he too can be in prayer over this situation. And what they told Isaiah was that the day of trouble has arrived and there is no one who can deliver them, they had no strength to do it themselves. And they ask Isaiah to also be in prayer and to ask God to deliver them based on the fact that the Assyrians were mocking God; His glory is being dragged through the mud.

VERSES 6-7

1. Notice what Isaiah is telling them. He is not saying, “I think luck is on our side!” No, Isaiah speaks to them the Words of God that bring comfort to them. “God is on our side!” I like that and we will see that played out. In the midst of the enemy coming against them, God will see them through, the Assyrians will not be victorious and their King will die by the sword in his own land. We will see how that all did come to pass at the end of this chapter. Keep in mind that they had to believe that by faith, trust in the Lord, walk by faith and all they had to go by were the Words of God. The same is true for us, we have God’s Word which will comfort our lives and if we truly believe what God has said we will walk by faith!

VERSES 8-13

1. The Lord told Isaiah and what was spoken to him came to pass. You see, Sennacherib, the King of Assyria leaves Lachish with the rest of his forces and heads about 5 miles northwest to Libnah. At Libnah they get word that Tirhakah was coming up to assist Judah. Tirhakah became the King of Egypt, a Cushite, in 690 B. C., but at this time, around 701 B. C., he was the commander and chief of the army.

And so the Rabshakeh brings his troops in to assist his King and they defeat the Egyptians and will now return with their King to Jerusalem to take this city. Now when Hezekiah saw what was happening he must of thought that this was the fulfillment of what God had promised and the King of Assyria will die! “Praise the Lord. Thank you Lord. Just what God promised is coming to pass” or so he thought. As we will see, this was not the fulfillment that the Lord spoke of, that is still coming. We need to be careful that we don’t get ahead of the Lord because we can be discouraged when what we think God is doing doesn’t come to pass!

2. Now before the Rabshakeh and his forces leave to help their King he wants the people of Jerusalem not to get their hopes up. This thing is not over. He basically is telling them, ***“I’LL BE BACK!”*** While he is gone he wants them to think about what the Assyrians have done to the other nations and their gods, how they were defeated. “And, don’t forget, Jerusalem is next!”

#### VERSES 14-20

1. So Hezekiah gets this threatening letter and what does he do with it? He brings it to the local attorney to press charges against the Assyrians for making threats against them? No, He brings it before the Lord, the creator of heaven and earth. Hezekiah uses, in a sense, his trump card and with the Lord, what may seem impossible with man is very possible with Him. And Hezekiah does what Peter admonishes us to do in I Peter 5:6-7, **“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”** That is what Hezekiah did and it is what we need to do, bring it before the Lord and leave it with Him!

2. Now in this prayer look at the points that Hezekiah is making. He establishes ***their relationship with God*** and then recognizes ***the power of God***, the creator of heaven and earth. That is a great place to start and it leads to ***his petition***, his concern that this pagan King was mocking the living God. Yes they defeated many nations and destroyed their gods, but they truly were not gods, only images made by the hands of man. Thus, they can’t destroy the true and living God but they call for God to destroy the Assyrians, which will be an object lesson for the other nations, showing them that ***He alone is God!***

In other words, “Do it for your glory!” And that is exactly what did happen as God defeated the Assyrians and fear came upon the people, not only in the other kingdoms but in Zion also. We read in Isaiah 33:14, **“The sinners in Zion are afraid; Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites: ‘Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?’”**

#### VERSES 21-35

1. Isaiah, in speaking for the Lord tells Hezekiah that God is going to answer his prayer. Jerusalem, spoken of as a virgin in that they have not been violated by the Assyrians, will not fall to them. In fact, the people of Jerusalem shall laugh at them. A completely different picture than what the Rabshakeh was trying to paint! And Sennacherib had no idea whom he picked a fight with, the creator of heaven and earth!

You see, in fighting against God’s people they were ultimately fighting against God. Yes, God used them to bring judgment upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel and other nations, but pride puffed them up and they saw themselves as god, doing as they pleased and not as God allowed them. They went too far. You see, you can’t fight against God and win!

2. Isn’t it amazing how people see themselves apart from God! They are strong, they are invincible, they do as they please and that is what the Assyrians thought and they were wrong, dead wrong! In fact, God sees them as nothing. They have defeated nations that were weak in God’s eyes and now, judgment is coming, He knows their hearts, and there is no place for them to hide.

3. Now verse 29 is interesting because when you were taken captive by the Assyrians they many times would place hooks in your nose and led you back to Nineveh that way. Now God is saying He is going to bridle them and bring them back to Assyria that way - turning the tables on them.

I guess you reap what you sow and they will find this out.

4. And yes, we see in verses 30 and 31 that times will be tough this first year and into the second year because of the Assyrians but in the third year things will return to normal, they will be able to eat what they have planted.

5. Also, as dark as it may seem, God always has His faithful remnant, and they will bear fruit.

6. Through the prophet Isaiah the Lord is telling Hezekiah that the enemy is not going to enter their city. In fact, not even an arrow will be launched into the city. Think about that! Even though nearly 200,000 Assyrians were camped outside the city walls not a single arrow will enter over the walls of the city! How can that be? Because God is going to defeat the Assyrians before they can launch an invasion. What happened to the Assyrians and their King? We don't have to guess because Isaiah is going to tell us as we read on.

### VERSES 36

1. Just as the Lord spoke through Isaiah of what would take place, came to pass. You see, as the Jews woke up that morning, and as they looked out over the walls of the city, all they could see out in the fields were the bodies of the Assyrians lying there dead on the ground. In one night the angel of the Lord killed 185,000 of them!

2. Now we read of this and we are amazed but this is not hard for God to do. He is the creator of heaven and earth and He spoke this universe into existence. So this was easy. Do you know what is hard for God to do? It is hard for God to get the hearts and minds of God's people to trust in Him, to walk by faith. God dispatched one angel with just His command but He will not force His people to follow Him, they must make that choice. May we learn to trust in His promises to us that no matter how dark things may get, no matter how hopeless they may seem to us, God is on the throne and He is in control, and He will see us through!

3. Now what happened to Sennacherib and the rest of the men who were not killed? Let's read on and see.

#### VERSES 37-38

1. So Sennacherib and his men flee back to Nineveh and yet he is still filled with pride. Amazing and yet it is true. After this retreat from Judah, Sennacherib commissioned a record of this event, which is preserved in the spectacular Annals of Sennacherib (the Taylor Prism), which can be seen in the British Museum. It shows how full of pride Sennacherib's heart still was; even if he could not even claim he conquered Jerusalem!



“I attacked Hezekiah of Judah who had not subjected himself to me, and took forty-six fortresses, forts and small cities. I carried away captive 200,150 people, big and small, both male and female, a multitude of horses, young bulls, asses, camels, and oxen. Hezekiah himself I locked up in Jerusalem like a bird in its cage. I put up banks against the city. I separated his cities whose inhabitants I had taken prisoners from his realm and gave them to Mitiniti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Zilbel, king of Gaza and thus diminished his country. And I added another tax to the one imposed on him earlier.” (Cited in Bultema).

“The Biblical account concludes with the much debated statement that the Assyrian army was struck down in some way during the night with considerable loss of life, following which the siege was called off . . . The Assyrian Annals tacitly agree with the Biblical version by making no claim that Jerusalem was taken, only describing tribute from Hezekiah.” (T. C. Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*).

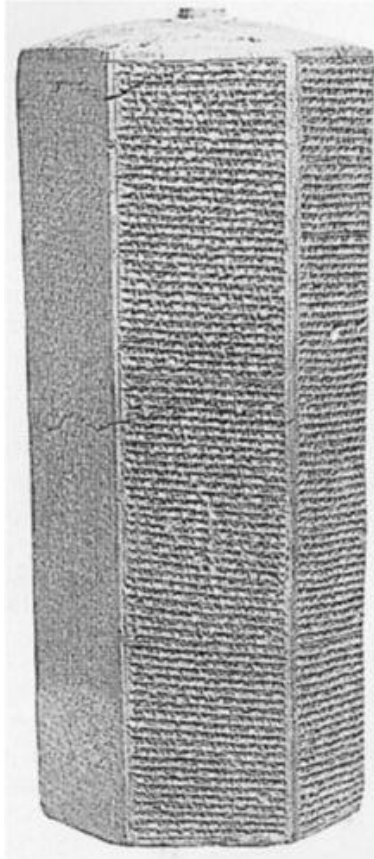
2. God has an interesting way of dealing with things. This Assyrian King, so pompous in his attitude and actions, thinking no one could stand against him, not even the gods, was killed by his own children as he came into his temple to worship his god. His own god could not save him from the true and living God or from his own children.

Now keep in mind that between Isaiah 37:37 and Isaiah 37:38 some 20 years pass. Perhaps Sennacherib thought he had escaped the judgment of God, but he hadn't. He met the bitter end of death at the end of swords held by his own sons. It is as Proverbs 16:18 says, “**Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**”

3. As we get into chapters 38 & 39 next time we are going to see that these events also took place around 701 B. C., but prior to the Assyrians coming against them. And what we will see is what transpires here in Hezekiah's life, for it opens the door for the Babylonians to come against them, beginning in 606 B. C., leading to their captivity in 586 B. C. and then chapter 40 will open with the promise of a deliverer!

4. Let me leave you with this. You can't fight against the creator of heaven and earth and win. Many have tried and they all have failed and they will fail. God is not looking for a battle He is looking for a relationship with us and as we come to Him He wants that relationship to grow so that we can trust Him, lean on Him. You see, the straightest you will ever walk will be when you are leaning. I know that sounds wrong but listen carefully. When you are leaning on the Lord your walk will be straight, it only becomes crooked when we lean upon our own understanding of things as Solomon tells us, and I will close with these words.

In Proverbs 3:5-6 Solomon wrote, "**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.**" The Amplified Bible puts it like this, "**Lean on, trust in, and be confident in the Lord with all your heart and mind and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know, recognize, and acknowledge Him, and He will direct and make straight and plain your paths.**" May we learn that lesson and lean on Him every day of our lives, our walk depends on it! We can trust Him every step we take because He loves us and is leading us down the path that is best for our life!



This stone monument, known as the prism of Sennacherib, gives the Assyrian account of Sennacherib's invasion of Jerusalem (Is. 36; 37)  
Photo by Howard Vos



Judean captives being led away into slavery by the Assyrians after the siege of Lachish in 701 B. C.