

Isaiah Chapters 36-37 - Sennacherib Boasts Against the LORD; Isaiah Assures Deliverance; Sennacherib's Threat and Hezekiah's Prayer; The Word of the LORD Concerning Sennacherib; Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 112 (1st floor, backside of the High School, facing Mac Arthur, near the east corner, adjacent to the High School office), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – [Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221](mailto:ptwente@gmail.com); email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

I WILL CALL UPON THE LORD – Psalm 18:3, 46 - Maranatha

*I will call upon the Lord Who is worthy to be praised So shall I be saved from my enemies
The Lord liveth and blessed be the Rock And let the God of my salvation be exalted
The Lord liveth and blessed be the Rock And let the God of my salvation be exalted (3X)*

GENERAL OUTLINE OF ISAIAH: Referred to as the “Fifth Gospel” since the third century!

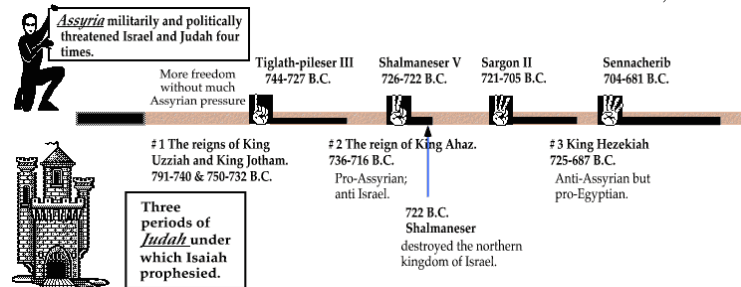
Possible date of kings reign” - Uzziah, - 792-740; Jotham, - 750-736; Ahaz, - 735-720 Northern Kingdom of Israel falls to Assyria in 722BC; Hezekiah, - 715-699/686; Manasseh – 687-642

Isaiah's time of prophecy - About a minimum of 40 years and possibly more than 60 years!

In the tenth year of Nabopolassar (616 BC) the Babylonians defeated the Assyrian army.

Cyrus takes Babylon. In October (539 BC), the Persian king Cyrus took Babylon.

- I. THE ASSYRIAN PERIOD - CONFLICT AND VICTORY ([Isa 1-39](#))
 - A. PROPHECIES CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM ([Isa 1-12](#))
 - B. PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE NATIONS ([Isa 13-27](#))
 - C. DELIVERANCE FOUND NOT IN EGYPT, BUT IN THE LORD ([Isa 28-35](#))
 - D. **HISTORICAL INTERLUDE ([Isa 36-39](#))**
- II. THE BABYLONIAN PERIOD - HOPE FOR TROUBLED TIMES ([Isa 40-66](#))
 - A. THE ONE TRUE GOD VERSUS IDOLS ([Isa 40-48](#))
 - B. LORD'S SERVANT WILL BRING SALVATION THROUGH SUFFERING ([Isa 49-57](#))
 - C. THE FUTURE GLORY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE, THE NEW ZION ([Isa 58-66](#))



Isaiah – Bible Timeline

739 BC	Isaiah Complains of Zion's Corruption	Isaiah 1 - 5
739 BC	Isaiah's Vision and Commission	Isaiah 6
735 BC	Isaiah's Prophecy of Immanuel	Isaiah 7
734 BC	Uriah/Zechariah Verification	Isaiah 8
730 BC	Isaiah Prophesies a Child Is Born	Isaiah 9
730 BC	Isaiah Prophesies Judgments Upon Israel	Isaiah 9:8
730 BC	Isaiah Prophesies Judgment on Assyria	Isaiah 10
730 BC	Isaiah Prophesies The Root of Jesse	Isaiah 11
730 BC	Isaiah's Joyful Thanksgiving	Isaiah 12
725 BC	Isaiah Prophesies against the Nations	Isaiah 13 - 22
725 BC	Isaiah's Valley of Vision	Isaiah 22
725 BC	Isaiah's Burden of Tyre	Isaiah 23
725 BC	Devastation on the Earth	Isaiah 24
725 BC	Isaiah's Songs of Praise	Isaiah 25 - 27
725 BC	Isaiah's Further Warnings	Isaiah 28 - 32
725 BC	Isaiah Prophesies a King Shall Reign	Isaiah 32
725 BC	Isaiah Declares God's Judgments	Isaiah 33, 34
725 BC	Isaiah Declares the Joyful Will Flourish in Zion	Isaiah 35
712 BC	Hezekiah's Illness and Healing	2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38
711 BC	Hezekiah Shows Treasures	2 Kings 20:12, Isaiah 39
711 BC	Isaiah Prophesies Captivity and Restoration	Isaiah 40 - 66
701 BC	Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem	2 Kings 18, Isaiah 36, 2 Chron. 32
701 BC	Hezekiah's Prayer	2 Kings 19,

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Sennacherib Invades Judah

Isa 36:1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

Isa 36:2 Then the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field.

Isa 36:3 And Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

Isa 36:4 Then the Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust?"

Isa 36:5 I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but they are mere words.

Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me?

Isa 36:6 Look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

Chapter 36 begins a four-chapter section different than the prophecies recorded before or after. *Isaiah 36, 37* describe the LORD's work against the Assyrian threat. *Isaiah 38, 39* describe the response to the Babylonian threat. This is history at its best, which enables us to sense the haughty arrogance of the Assyrian and the chilling clutch of despair at the hearts of the Israelites. *vs. 1-3 Rabshakeh* speaks to leaders in *King Hezekiah's* government. *In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah:* This is about the years 701 B.C., during the reign of the godly King Hezekiah of Judah. The events of this chapter are also recorded in *2Ki 18:13-27* and *2Ch 32:1-19*.*came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them:* This Assyrian invasion has been the broad background for much of the Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah chapters 1 through 35. Now, Isaiah gives us a historical record of what happened during the time he prophesied about. The Assyrian army swept down from the north, conquering Syria and Israel, as Isaiah prophesied in *Isa 8:3-4* and many other passages. The Assyrian army then *came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them*, as Isaiah prophesied in *Isa 7:16-17* and many other passages.*sent the Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem:* At the time of *Isa 36:1-3*, the Assyrian army has conquered the both Syria and northern kingdom of Israel, and has devastated the countryside and *fortified cities* of Judah. All that remains is Jerusalem, and if the Assyrians conquer her, then Judah is destroyed as a nation just as Syria and Israel were. These were the desperate times of King Hezekiah! *the Rabshakeh*, a title, not a name, probably the “field commander” for the Assyrian army, who represented the Assyrian King Sennacherib. *Lachish* was thirty miles south-west of Jerusalem and was an important fortress city of Judah. *He stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool . . . Eliakim . . . Shebna . . . Joah . . . came out to him: Rabshakeh* seems to be in complete command of the situation, walking. Three officials from Hezekiah's government come to meet him.

vs. 4-6 Rabshakeh speaks against Judah's trust in an alliance with Egypt. *What is the confidence in which you trust (used 7X in this chapter)?* One of the great battles for Hezekiah during this time was the temptation to make a defensive alliance with Egypt, which seemed to be the only nation strong enough to protect Judah against the mighty Assyrians. Isaiah tried to discourage Hezekiah and the leaders of Judah from putting their trust in Egypt (*Isa 19:11-17; 20:1-6; 30:1-7*). The LORD wanted Judah to trust Him instead of Egypt. In this sense, Rabshakeh is speaking the truth! God wanted Judah to have no *confidence* in Egypt at all. He isn't doing it to bring Judah to trust the LORD God, but to demoralize Judah and drive them to despair. Satan attacks us the same way! Often, even when he tells the truth (“You are such a rotten sinner!”), he never does it to lead us to a firm trust in the LORD our God (“Jesus died for sinners, so if I am a rotten sinner, Jesus died to forgive and free me!”). Instead, Satan's strategy - even if he tells us the truth - is always to demoralize us and drive us to despair. *You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt:* Strangely, Rabshakeh, likely knowing of Assyria's plans to conquer Egypt, could see the truth of Egypt's weakness better than Judah's leaders!

vs. 1-3 We see we are entering the historical section of this portion of Isaiah. These all were written for us, as examples unto us. History was written that we might learn from history, the lessons, that we might know how to live. The problem is, people don't learn many times from history, so they, they fall into the same ruts, and mistakes. So now looking at the historic background to what Isaiah, this was what was going on when Isaiah was writing these things. Will we profit from the history of Hezekiah and of Jerusalem, given to us here?

vs. 4-7 It is always a sad day when the servants of God are rebuked by the pagan world. We've seen some of that of late. Where men who were supposed servants of God have done things that have brought the name of Christ into disrepute, and they have received the rebuke of the pagan world. It's sad when that happens. Here is Hezekiah, basically a good king, but he is receiving rebuke from this pagan king Sennacherib, who asked, “*Now in whom do you trust?*” This was such a good question for King Hezekiah and Jerusalem then, and is such a good question for us today! In whom do you trust?

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Isa 36:7 "But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar?'"

Isa 36:8 Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them!

Isa 36:9 How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen?

Isa 36:10 Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.'

v. 7 *If you say to me, “We trust in the LORD our God”*: Rabshakeh anticipated the response of the leaders of Judah. “Rabshakeh, you say that we can’t trust in Egypt. All right, we won’t. But we can trust in the LORD our God.” *Is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away*: Rabshakeh knew that King Hezekiah had implemented broad reforms in Judah, including the removal of the *high places* (**2Ki 18:3-4**). The *high places* were spots of “individual worship” which were prohibited by God’s law (**Lev 17:1-4**). Israel was commanded to bring their sacrifices to the official center for sacrifice (the tabernacle or later, the temple). In the pagan world at that time, it was customary to offer sacrifice wherever one pleased - altars would customarily be built on high hills, in forested areas, or at other special places. God regarded sacrifice at *high places* as an offense. Hezekiah did right when he took away the *high places* and the *altars*, demanding that people come to the temple in Jerusalem to offer sacrifice. *Is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away*: The enemy of our souls has an amazing way of discouraging our disobedience.

vs. 8-9 *Give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria*: Rabshakeh’s whole strategy was to make Judah give up. This is why he is at the aqueduct, speaking to these leaders of Hezekiah’s government. He had the vastly superior armies; he could have just attacked Jerusalem without this little speech. But *Rabshakeh* would prefer it if Judah would simply surrender, out of fear, discouragement, or despair. The enemy of our soul uses the exact same approach. Satan would much rather not fight you at all! He would much rather try to talk you into giving up! He used this strategy against Jesus during His temptation in the wilderness. (**Luk 4:5-8**). It didn’t work with Jesus, and it shouldn’t work with us. *I will give you two thousand horses - if you are able on your part to put riders on them!* Here, Rabshakeh mocks Judah’s weak army. His basic message is, “We could beat you with one hand tied behind our backs!” (*How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master’s servants*).

v. 10 *Rabshakeh* tells them that the LORD God of Israel is on his side. *Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it?* Rabshakeh saves his best thrust for last: “Admit it, Hezekiah. You know your God is on my side.” Like all good deception, it would have been easy for Hezekiah and his men to believe this one. *The LORD said to me, “Go up against this land, and destroy it.”* This is the finishing blow of a brilliant attack. “Hezekiah, God told me to destroy you. I’m just doing His will, and there is nothing you can do to stop it, so you may as well surrender.” *Rabshakeh* was partially correct! God was with him, and his attack on Judah fulfilled God’s prophesied plan!

v. 7 *In whom do you trust?*

vs. 8-9 We can see in the enemy Assyria, the same pattern that Satan uses in our lives – **Just give up! Give in to sin and to the flesh! We need to be aware of his ways and to put on the whole armor of God. – Eph. 6:10-20**

v. 10 Note the enemies’ deception here. **Rabshakeh is representing that he has been ordered by the LORD to destroy Jerusalem. Sort of a finishing blow of a brilliant attack. May we keep our spiritual guard up against Satan and our enemies, who frequently are misrepresenting our LORD!**

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Isa 36:11 Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who are on the wall."

Isa 36:12 But the Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

Isa 36:13 Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria!

Isa 36:14 Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you;

Isa 36:15 nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." "

Isa 36:16 Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make peace with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern;

Isa 36:17 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

Isa 36:18 Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?

Isa 36:19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand?

Isa 36:20 Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?' "

vs. 11-12 Rabshakeh speaks directly to the people of Jerusalem. Hezekiah's men ask Rabshakeh to speak only to them. *Please speak to your servants in the Aramaic language, for we understand it:* We can just imagine how difficult this was for these leaders in Hezekiah's government. They must have thought, "It's bad enough we have to hear this. But since he is speaking in Hebrew, everyone will hear, and soon the people will become so discouraged they will rise up against us and make us surrender!" *Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall:* Rabshakeh doesn't care if the common citizens of Jerusalem hear him. That's how he wants it! The more fear, discouragement, and despair he can spread, the better! *Who will eat and drink their own waste with you:* Rabshakeh is pointing forward to what conditions would be like in Jerusalem after an extended siege. He wanted this to gross out everyone who heard it, and magnify the sense of fear, discouragement, and despair.

vs. 13-20 Rabshakeh's speech to the people of Jerusalem. *Then Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew:* Saying "don't do that" to Rabshakeh was like saying it to a naughty child. He couldn't wait to speak to the people of Jerusalem! *Hear the words of the great king:* Rabshakeh's speech was intended to glorify the enemy facing God's people. *Do not let Hezekiah deceive you:* Rabshakeh's speech was intended to make God's people doubt their leaders. *Nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD:* Rabshakeh's speech was intended to build fear and unbelief in God's people. *For thus says the king of Assyria: "Make peace with me by a present and come out to me, and everyone one of you will eat from his own vine."* Rabshakeh's speech was intended to make surrender an attractive option. *Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land:* Here, Rabshakeh refers to the policy of "ethnic cleansing" and "forced resettlement" practiced by the Assyrians. When they conquered a people, they forcibly resettled them in far away places, to keep their spirits broken and their power weak. Rabshakeh's speech was intended to make this terrible fate seem attractive. *Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?* Rabshakeh's speech was intended to destroy their trust in God. His message is simple, and cunning in its Satanic logic: "The gods of other nations have not been able to protect them against us. Your God is just like one of them, and can't protect you either." For anyone who had the spiritual understanding to see it, Judah could have started planning the victory party right then. It is one thing to speak against Judah, its people and leaders. It was another thing all together to mock the LORD God of Israel this way, and count Him as "just another god." Typical of the work of the enemy of our souls, Rabshakeh was going well until he simply overstepped his bounds. There was no way God would let him off the hook for this one. He has offended the LORD God in a way he will soon regret.

vs. 11-12 Another example of the enemies ploys, to work on the fears of the people-speaking very loudly in their native tongue of Hebrew. We need to avoid being overcome by fear by drawing near and trusting the LORD, demonstrating our faith in Him. Where there is fear - little faith. Where there is much faith - no fear!

vs. 13-20 We see two major conflicting messages here. The enemy is saying don't trust in the LORD, trust in Assyria - *'Make peace with me by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.* Hezekiah and Isaiah had been saying, "Trust in the Lord, the Lord will deliver, the Lord will destroy the Assyrians. Just put your trust in the Lord." Hezekiah was encouraging the people. "We're going to just trust the Lord." We've fortified the walls. But really, our trust is in the Lord to deliver us." Where is our trust?

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Isa 36:21 But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him."
Isa 36:22 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.

Hezekiah Seeks Isaiah's Help

Isa 37:1 And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

Isa 37:2 Then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.

Isa 37:3 And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day is a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth.

Isa 37:4 It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.' "

Isa 37:5 So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

vs. 21-22 The response of the leaders in Hezekiah's government and the citizens of Jerusalem. *But they held their peace and answered him not a word:* They didn't try to argue with Rabshakeh. Often, it is useless - if not dangerous - to try and match wits with this demonic logic. How much better to keep silent and trust God, instead of trying to win an argument! Silence may be our best reply to the allegations and taunts of our foes. Be still, O persecuted soul! Hand over your cause to God. It is useless to argue, even in many cases to give explanations. Be still, and commit thy cause to God. *For the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him."* King Hezekiah was wise enough to make this command, and his officials and the people were wise enough to obey him. *Came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn:* Though they were silent, they were still deeply affected by this attack. It didn't just roll off their back as if it were nothing. They have the same experience Paul described in *2Co 4:8 to 2Co 9:2* *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.* Thing were hard, but the battle was not lost yet!

ASSYRIA DESTROYED, GOD GLORIFIED

vs. 1-5 King Hezekiah seeks the LORD upon hearing the words of Rabshakeh.

When King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth: The tearing of clothes and the wearing of *sackcloth* (a rough, burlap-type material) were expressions of deep mourning, usually for the death of a loved one. Hezekiah takes this report regarding Rabshakeh seriously, knowing how dedicated they are to completely conquering Jerusalem. Hezekiah's *initial reaction* is good. He sees the situation for what it really is. Jerusalem's situation is desperate, and Hezekiah knows it. *And went into the house of the LORD:* Hezekiah's *second reaction* is even better. He did not allow his mourning and grief spin him into a rejection of the LORD's power and help. He knew this was a more necessary time than ever to seek the LORD. Hezekiah went to the courts of the house of the LORD, to seek God in the place which was open to him as a man of Israel. *Then he sent Eliakim . . . Shebna . . . and the elders of the priests . . . to Isaiah the prophet:* The *third thing* Hezekiah did was also good. The king sought out the word of the LORD, given through the prophet of the LORD. *The children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth:* Hezekiah put these words in the mouth of his messengers to Isaiah to express the total calamity of the situation. This was a proverbial expression for a disaster - a woman so exhausted by labor that she could not complete the birth, so it is likely that both mother and child with die.

It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh: Hezekiah knew that their only hope was that God would take offense at the blasphemies of Rabshakeh, and rise up against him. *Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left:* "Isaiah, pray for us. Our nation is devastated by this Assyrian invasion, and Jerusalem alone is left standing. Pray *for the remnant that is left.* "

vs. 21-22 Frequently, it is useless and probably dangerous to try and match wits with this demonic logic. How much better to keep silent and trust God, instead of trying to win an argument!

vs. 1-5 Hearing of the threatening by Rabshakeh, Hezekiah went to the house of the LORD, which is the very best place to go in such a situation! Often, because of discouragement or fear, many will say, I'm just not up to going to church right now and give any number of excuses. The enemy will do everything possible to discourage us from coming to the house of the LORD, but Hezekiah knew that was where he needed to be. In such circumstances, to where are you likely to go? If we would only learn to take our problems and our troubles to the Lord, to just spread it out before the Lord!

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Isa 37:6 And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me.

Isa 37:7 Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.' " "

Isa 37:8 Then the Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish.

Isa 37:9 And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He has come out to make war with you." So when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,

Isa 37:10 "Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.' "

Isa 37:11 Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered?

Isa 37:12 Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar?

Isa 37:13 Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?' " "

vs. 6-7 Isaiah's words of assurance to King Hezekiah. *Thus says the LORD:* Isaiah was aware he spoke as a prophet of the LORD. Without hesitation, he speaks as if he were speaking for the LORD God of heaven. The fate of the nation, and his entire credibility as a prophet, was riding on what he said. His bold prophecy, which will be entirely "provable." It will either happen or it will not happen; Isaiah will soon be known as a true prophet or a false prophet. *Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard:* Perhaps we can sense the most gentle rebuke in these words from the LORD. "Hezekiah, it is good for you to seek Me so passionately. But the words of Rabshakeh are only words. *Do not be afraid of them.*" *With which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me:* How these words must have cheered Hezekiah! Before, he had hoped it may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh . . . *to reproach the living God (Isa 37:4).* Now, the LORD speaks through the prophet Isaiah, saying He has indeed heard these words, taking it personally! *The servants of the king of Assyria:* Servants is "a deliberately belittling expression, 'the king of Assyria's lads/flunkies'." *Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land:*

vs. 8-13 Rabshakeh's letter to Hezekiah. *So the Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah:* This must have seemed to Hezekiah to be the fulfillment of the LORD's promise through the prophet Isaiah. Rabshakeh left Jerusalem, and Hezekiah must have thought "Now he'll go back to his own land and be killed, just like the LORD promised. Good riddance! Thank You LORD!" *The king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He has come out to make war with you."* While Rabshakeh is away, the Assyrians learn that Egyptian troops (under an Ethiopian king) are advancing from the south. This would be the Egyptian intervention Assyria feared, and that many in Judah trusted in. But as Isaiah prophesied, it would amount to nothing (*Isa 20:1-6 and Isa 30:1-7*). *Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you:* Rabshakeh is not in Jerusalem, but that doesn't stop him from trying to build fear, discouragement, and despair in Hezekiah. He sends a letter to the king of Judah to attack him from afar! *Have the gods of the nations:* If read with an eye of faith, these must have been trust-building words of Rabshakeh to Hezekiah. In counting the LORD God of Israel among the gods of the nations, Rabshakeh blasphemes the LORD and invites judgment.

vs. 6-7 Here, the LORD God assures Hezekiah that He will indeed deal with Rabshakeh. He has heard his blasphemy, and will bring judgment against him. So far there is no specific word from Isaiah, of Jerusalem's deliverance or the defeat of the Assyrian army. God focuses this word against Rabshakeh personally. The LORD frequently, usually, only reveals one step at a time for our obedience, which requires an element of faith that is needed. How is our faith regarding the future?

vs. 8-13 When Rabshakeh got back to his army, he learned that the king of Assyria had left Lachish and was going to war against Libnah. A rumor was received that the main force of the Assyrian army was being attacked by the Egyptian army. Rabshakeh withdrew from Jerusalem temporarily to assist the main force of the Assyrian army, but to keep the fear of an impending invasion he dispatched a letter from Sennacherib to Hezekiah saying, "I'll be back!" The message of the letter was another attempt to shake Hezekiah's faith in God's deliverance. Again, another typical Satanic ploy, false hope, then dashed by disappointment.

Isaiah Chapters 36-37 - Sennacherib Boasts Against the LORD; Isaiah Assures Deliverance; Sennacherib's Threat and Hezekiah's Prayer; The Word of the LORD Concerning Sennacherib; Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

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Hezekiah's Prayer for Deliverance
Isa 37:14 *And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.*

Isa 37:15 *Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying:*

Isa 37:16 *"O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.*

Isa 37:17 *Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.*

Isa 37:18 *Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands,*

Isa 37:19 *and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them.*

Isa 37:20 *Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD, You alone."*

Sennacherib's Fall

Isa 37:21 *Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria,*

vs. 14-20 Hezekiah's prayer. *Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD:* Hezekiah did exactly what any child of God should do with such a letter. He took it *to the house of the LORD* (to the outer courts, not the holy place), and he *spread it out before the LORD*. In this, Hezekiah boldly and effectively fulfilled the later command of **1Pe 5:7** : *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.* What should one do with serious, troubling letters? They should be *spread . . . before the LORD*. "LORD, show me what there is in this letter that I need to hear. Show me what I need to disregard. Help me to see beyond this person's sinful manner or tone and see if You have something in this for me." **O LORD of hosts:** This title for our God essentially means, "LORD of armies." Hezekiah was in a crisis that was primarily military in nature, so it made sense for him to address the LORD first according to the aspect of God's nature that was most needful for him. "LORD of armies, send some troops to help us!" **God of Israel:** This title for God reminded Hezekiah - and the LORD also, in our human way of understanding - that the LORD God was the covenant God of Israel, and that He should not forsake His people. **The One who dwells between the cherubim:** Here, Hezekiah sees the great majesty of God. Surely, **the One who dwells between the cherubim** would never allow Rabshakeh's blasphemies to go unpunished. **You are God, You alone:** **God** is a simple title for our LORD, but perhaps the most powerful. If He is **God**, then what can He not do? If He is **God**, then what is beyond His control? Hezekiah realizes the most fundamental fact of all theology: God is **God**, and we are not! God is **God**, and Rabshakeh or the Assyrians are not! **You who made heaven and earth:** In recognizing the LORD God as Creator, Hezekiah sees that the LORD has all *power* and all *rights* over every created thing. We can almost feel Hezekiah's faith rising as he prays this! **Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see:** Hezekiah knew very well that the LORD did in fact hear and see the blasphemies of Rabshakeh. This is a poetic way of asking God to *act upon* what He has seen and heard, assuming that if God *has seen* such things, He will certainly act! **All the words of Sennacherib, who has sent to reproach the living God:** In his prayer, King Hezekiah draws the contrast between **the living God** and the false gods of the nations the Assyrians have already conquered. Those false gods were **not gods, but the work of men's hands - wood and stone**, so they were not able to save them from the Assyrians. But Hezekiah prays confidently that the **living God** will save them, **that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD, You alone.**

v. 21 Isaiah brings the LORD's answer to King Hezekiah's prayer, and a word to Rabshakeh. The power of Hezekiah's prayer. **Because you have prayed to Me:** The glorious answer which fills the rest of the chapter came because Hezekiah prayed. What if he would not have prayed? Then we are to think that no answer would have come, and Jerusalem would have been conquered. Hezekiah's prayer really mattered. How many blessings, how many victories, how many souls saved for Jesus' glory, lie unclaimed in heaven until the LORD can say, **because you have prayed to Me?**

vs. 14-20 What a great example of responding to receiving a letter bearing tragic news!

- **Hezekiah read it and went to the house of the LORD.**
 - **He spread it before the LORD**
 - **He prayed for deliverance!**
- Isa 37:17-20** *Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. [18] Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, [19] and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. [20] Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD, You alone."* Though there are many gods that people bow down to worship, yet there's **only one true, eternal, living God. Creator of heaven and earth.**

v. 21 *Because you have prayed to Me:* What an encouragement to pray! We don't really understand how pray works, but it does! It changes us and apparently works towards the will of the LORD being done!

Isaiah Chapters 36-37 - Sennacherib Boasts Against the LORD; Isaiah Assures Deliverance; Sennacherib's Threat and Hezekiah's Prayer; The Word of the LORD Concerning Sennacherib; Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

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INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Isa 37:22 this is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him: "The virgin, the daughter of Zion, Has despised you, laughed you to scorn; The daughter of Jerusalem Has shaken her head behind your back!

Isa 37:23 "Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice, And lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel.

Isa 37:24 By your servants you have reproached the Lord, And said, 'By the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, To the limits of Lebanon; I will cut down its tall cedars And its choice cypress trees; I will enter its farthest height, To its fruitful forest.

Isa 37:25 I have dug and drunk water, And with the soles of my feet I have dried up All the brooks of defense.'

Isa 37:26 "Did you not hear long ago How I made it, From ancient times that I formed it? Now I have brought it to pass, That you should be For crushing fortified cities into heaps of ruins.

Isa 37:27 Therefore their inhabitants had little power; They were dismayed and confounded; They were as the grass of the field And the green herb, As the grass on the housetops And grain blighted before it is grown.

Isa 37:28 "But I know your dwelling place, Your going out and your coming in, And your rage against Me.

Isa 37:29 Because your rage against Me and your tumult Have come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back By the way which you came."

vs. 22-35 The LORD's word to Rabshakeh. *The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you, laughed you to scorn:* The idea is that the Assyrians have come to ravish the *daughter of Zion*, the city of Jerusalem. But God won't allow it. *Virgin* is used here of being untouched by the marauder. The Assyrian came intent on rape but Jerusalem remains unharmed because you have prayed. *Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice, and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel:* The LORD, speaking through Isaiah, simply says to Rabshakeh, "Do you know whom you are dealing with?" Rabshakeh obviously did not know. Perhaps this prophecy may have never reached his ears. At the very least, this prophecy would have been most encouraging to Hezekiah and all of Judah, even if Rabshakeh never heard it on this earth. *By the multitude of my chariots, I have come up to the height of the mountains:* Here, the LORD describes the great pride the Assyrians had in their own conquests. But they forgot that the LORD was really in charge (*Now I have brought it to pass, that you should be crushing fortified cities into heaps of ruins. Therefore the inhabitants had little power*). Even if the Assyrians didn't know it, they owed their success to the LORD! How humbling this must have been for the Assyrians! All along, they thought it was because of their mighty power they had accomplished so much. Here, God makes it plain that it was His power that did it. But God knows all about Assyria. (*I know your dwelling place, your going out and your coming in*). And because Assyria went too far in blaspheming the One who made all their success possible, *therefore I will put My hook in your nose . . . and I will turn you back by the way which you came*. This was an especially dramatic statement, because this is exactly how the Assyrians would cruelly march those whom they forced to relocate out of their conquered lands. They would line up the captives, and drive a large fishhook through the lip or the nose of each captive, string them all together and march them. God says, "I'm going to do the same thing to you!"

vs. 22-35 *The LORD promised to defend His people not because they were righteous, but for His own purposes. This is the same for us. He will defend us as well. He's going to protect us and see us through not because of anything we have done, but because of the covenant He made with His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!*

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*Isa 37:30 "This shall be a sign to you: **You shall eat this year such as grows of itself, And the second year what springs from the same; Also in the third year sow and reap, Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.***
Isa 37:31 And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah Shall again take root downward, And bear fruit upward.
Isa 37:32 For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, And those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.
*Isa 37:33 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: **'He shall not come into this city, Nor shoot an arrow there, Nor come before it with shield, Nor build a siege mound against it.***
Isa 37:34 By the way that he came, By the same shall he return; And he shall not come into this city,' Says the LORD.
Isa 37:35 'For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'"

Isa 37:36 Then the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.

You shall eat this year such as grows of itself: “The invasion prevented sowing in 702 B.C., but when the threat lifted in 701 they would find sufficient growth to preserve life; in 701 the withdrawing Assyrians still inhibited agriculture, yet in 700 there would still be enough through ‘chance growth’. ***For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant:*** As much as the Assyrians would like to crush Jerusalem and Judah, they will not be able to. God will preserve His remnant. ***He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there . . . for I will defend this city, to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake:*** God plainly and clearly draws a line. Although the Assyrian military machine is poised to lay siege to Jerusalem, and ultimately crush them, they won't. The king of Assyria will ***not come into this city***, because God is defending it. ***For My own sake.*** God will defend His own glory. Often, we unnecessarily think that we must defend the glory of the LORD. But that isn't really the case. God is more than able to defend His own glory. ***For My servant David's sake.*** King David had died almost 300 years before this, but God still honored His promise to David (***2Sa 7:10-17***). God would defend Jerusalem, not for the city's sake at all - Jerusalem *deserved* judgment! But He does it for His own sake, and for the sake of David. In the same way, God the Father defends and blesses us, not for our own sake - we often *deserve* His judgment! But He often does it for His own sake, and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

v. 36 God strikes down the mighty army of Assyria. ***The angel of the LORD went out:*** Simply and powerfully, God destroys this mighty nation in one night. 185,000 die at the hand of ***the angel of the LORD***. Against all odds, and against every expectation except the expectation of faith, the Assyrian army was turned back without having even shot an arrow into Jerusalem. The unstoppable was stopped, the undefeated was defeated! The prophet Hosea made this same prediction: ***Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, will save them by the LORD their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword or battle, by horses or horsemen. (Hos 1:7)*** This was not “hard” for God to do. Far “harder” for the LORD was getting the heart and minds of His people in the right place. Once they were there, it was nothing for God to dispatch *one angel* to do this.

v. 36 The LORD fulfills his promise to protect Jerusalem, not even allowing one arrow to come into the city. In one night, 185,000 Assyrians soldiers were wiped out by the angel of the LORD. What an incredible, supernatural, monumental victory. ***Eph 3:20*** Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

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YEAR BCE	(regnal years counted Tishri to Tishri)
727	A ← Hezekiah (727-698) became king in third year of Hoshea, Temple cleansed and Passover kept in his first year,
726	1st
725	2nd
724	3rd
723	4th
722	5th
721	6th ←-- Fall of Samaria (721)
720	7th
719	8th
718	9th
717	10th
716	11th
715	12th
714	13th ←-- Hezekiah's life-threatening illness, when God gave him fifteen extra years of life
713	14th
712	15th
711	16th
710	17th ←-- b. Manasseh (710)
709	18th 1 yo.
708	19th 2 yo.
707	20th 3 yo.
706	21st 4 yo.
705	22nd 5 yo.
704	23rd 6 yo.
703	24th 7 yo.
702	25th 8 yo.
701	26th 9 yo. ←-- Sennacherib's invasion
700	27th 10 yo.
699	28th 11 yo.
698	29th/A ← Manasseh (698-643)
697	1st 13 yo.

Isa 37:37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh.
Isa 37:38 Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

vs. 37-38 The end of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. **He departed and went away:** Exactly as God said He would. But he left still full of pride. After this retreat from Judah, Sennacherib commissioned record, 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." 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*) **Now it came to pass:** Between **Isa 37:37** and **Isa 37:38**; 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.

vs. 37-38 It is believed that about 20 years later, following Sennacherib's return to Assyria, following the LORD's wiping out his army, the prophecy of his being turned back – **Isa 37:29** **Because your rage against Me and your tumult Have come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back By the way which you came."** – came true as Sennacherib was struck down with the sword by his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer in his temple in Assyria. **God's word is sure! He says what He means and He means and does what He says!**