

Isaiah Chapter 37 Continued

Verses 18-19: Hezekiah exposed the Assyrian theory that the Lord was no different from gods of the other nations that could not deliver their worshipers.

Isaiah 37:18 "Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries,"

In the last lesson, we saw that Hezekiah carried the threatening letter from the Assyrians, and laid it before the Lord in the temple. He also, prayed for God's help. In the prayer, he reaffirmed his faith in God. Now he says, it is true, the Assyrians have defeated many of their neighboring countries.

Isaiah 37:19 "And have cast their gods into the fire: for they [were] no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them."

Hezekiah is reaffirming the fact that the gods of these countries had been easy to destroy, because they were not really God. Things made with your hands are idols (nothings). God is Spirit. You cannot see Him with your physical eyes.

Isaiah 37:20 "Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou [art] the LORD, [even] thou only."

“Thou only”: Hezekiah displayed the highest motivation of all in requesting the salvation of Jerusalem: that the world may know that the Lord alone is God (Dan. 9:16-19).

In this request, Hezekiah tells God that all the surrounding countries would believe in the One True God, if He saves Judah. It would prove to the others that the LORD is God, and there is none other.

Isaiah 37:21 "Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria:"

“Isaiah the son of Amoz”: Immediately upon the conclusion of Hezekiah’s prayer, Isaiah had a response from the Lord.

We see from this that Isaiah is speaking as an ambassador of the Lord, when he speaks to Hezekiah. It is not the message of Isaiah, but the message of the Lord, spoken through Isaiah. We must also note, that the prayer is what brought the response from the Lord.

Isaiah 37:22 "This [is] the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, [and] laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee."

Jerusalem, portrayed as a virgin helpless before a would be rapist, had the "last laugh" against Sennacherib.

"The virgin, the daughter of Zion" is speaking of the young Jerusalem. The church is also spoken of as the chaste virgin of Christ. This is saying they are under the protection of the Lord. There is no fear for the followers of God, when they are assured God will fight for them. They shake their head at Assyria, because God has taken up their battle for them.

Isaiah 37:23 "Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? And against whom hast thou exalted [thy] voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? [even] against the Holy One of Israel."

"Thou reproached ... blasphemed": The Lord had heard Sennacherib's reproach against Him (37:17).

Not only have these Assyrians come against Judah, but against the God of Judah as well. He is saying, you have mocked God. Their blasphemy was of God Himself.

Verses 24-25: Even the servants of Sennacherib had bragged about Assyria's being unstoppable.

Isaiah 37:24 "By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, [and] the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, [and] the forest of his Carmel."

We can see the arrogance of this king of Assyria. He had planned to utterly destroy Judah, but he had not taken into consideration the God of Judah. God knew even his evil thoughts, before he uttered his threats. The things mentioned above, were the things he had boasted to his people that he would do to Judah.

He planned to invade Judea through Lebanon. He had planned to rob the land of their beautiful cedars, and take them for his own people. "The forest of his Carmel" was speaking of the gardens in Judea with olive and fig trees.

Isaiah 37:25 "I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places."

Some of the places that he had besieged had been defeated, because he cut off their water supply. This is his plan for here, as well. He built dams on their rivers to stop the water flow.

Isaiah 37:26 "Hast thou not heard long ago, [how] I have done it; [and] of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defended cities [into] ruinous heaps."

“I brought it to pass”: God corrected Sennacherib’s vanity; he conquered nothing on his own, but was a mere instrument in the Lord’s hand.

A smart king would never tell the enemy how they would attack them. He tells them how, because he is so confident that he can defeat them. This is just boasting to frighten Hezekiah of Judah.

Isaiah 37:27 "Therefore their inhabitants [were] of small power, they were dismayed and confounded: they were [as] the grass of the field, and [as] the green herb, [as] the grass on the housetops, and [as corn] blasted before it be grown up."

“They were dismayed”: Assyria had utterly overwhelmed populations included in their conquests. This is more boasting of what had happened to the other godless countries that he had invaded.

The countries they had fought (up to now), had been so weak; they just destroyed them without too much effort. The grass, mentioned here, is young and tender and easy to destroy.

Isaiah 37:28 "But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me."

“Thy rage against me”: Sennacherib’s ignorance of being a mere tool in the Lord’s hand was bad, but his belittling of God, the source of his life, was far worse.

Nothing is hidden from God. He knows the things Sennacherib has been doing. He knows where he lives. He knows when he sits down and when he gets up. God knows even the thoughts of Sennacherib. He also knows of the boasting he has done against God.

You may hide something from someone in the world, but you cannot hide anything from God.

Isaiah 37:29 "Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest."

Hook in thy nose ... bridle in thy lips”: In judging Sennacherib, the Lord treated him as an obstinate animal with a ring in his nose and a bridle in his mouth. Some ancient sources indicate that captives were led before a king by a cord attached to a hook or ring through the upper lip and nose. Thus, he was to be brought back to his own country.

This is God, who leads Sennacherib wherever He wants him to go. It is as if God has put hooks in his jaws to lead him with. Just as the horseman turns the horse with the bridle in his mouth, God turns the head of Sennacherib to go where He wants him to.

Compare this with (Ezekiel 38:4), and see that God can and will do these things: "And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armor, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords:"

These events in Ezekiel speak about events that will be at a different time which is in the latter days. It is supposed these enemies will come together to invade the land of Judea, and God will defeat them. God not only sees who are now the enemies of His church, but He foresees who will be so, and lets them know by His word that He is against them; though they join together, the wicked shall not go unpunished.

Isaiah 37:30 "And this [shall be] a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat [this] year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof."

The two years in which they were sustained by the growth of the crops were the two in which Sennacherib ravaged them (32:10). He left immediately after the deliverance (37:37), so in the third year, the people left could plant again.

The sign given to Hezekiah is that they will eat of voluntary crops the year this is spoken, and the next year, and the third year the land will produce in a normal fashion as before. The third year, they will have to plant a normal crop and reap the fruit as it comes in.

Verses 31-32: "Remnant ... remnant": From the remnant of survivors in Jerusalem came descendants who covered the land once again.

Isaiah 37:31 "And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward:"

God always saves a remnant of Judah. God is saying in the third year they shall spread over the land and not be afraid because they have the protection of God. They shall be settled in the land, grounded in the protection of God, and their fruit will produce.

We know that a large number of the men of Judah had been captured already by the Assyrians, but God will protect the remainder.

Isaiah 37:32 "For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this."

“The zeal of the Lord of hosts”: The same confirmation of God’s promise (in 9:7), assured the future establishment of the messianic kingdom. Deliverance from Sennacherib in Hezekiah’s day was a down payment on the literal, final restoration of Israel.

The remnant was always those who had not bowed their knee to Baal. They were those who truly believed in God. They put their trust in the Lord and He did not let them down. There is a special protection from God on this remnant. The zeal of the LORD could also be thought of as the holiness of the LORD.

Mount Zion is the city of our God, Jerusalem. It is also the church. Just as God protects this remnant, He protects the church supernaturally as well. He is jealous over His people. He will not let them be destroyed.

Verses 33-38: God promised Hezekiah that the “king of Assyria ... shall not come into this city”, because God will defend it “for my servant David’s sake” (i.e. to protect the Davidic line). “The angel of the Lord” is Christ Himself who had often moved in power on Israel’s behalf (Genesis 18: 1-13; Josh. 5:13 – 6:5; and Judges 6:11-23).

Just as He had earlier delivered Israel from the Pharaoh of Egypt (Exodus 12:29), so now He delivers Judah from the king of Assyria. He “went forth, and smote” 185,000 in the “camp of the Assyrians.” A parallel account is recorded (in 2 Kings 19:35), which adds the words “and it came to pass that night (i.e. the night after Hezekiah had prayed).

Hearing of the devastation of his troops at Jerusalem and of the advance of Tirhakah’s army, Sennacherib returned to “Nineveh,” where he was assassinated 20 years later (in 681 B.C.), by his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer (known in Akkadian as Adad-milki and Shar-usur).

“Armenia” is south of Russia beyond the Ararat mountains. “Esar-haddon” succeeded Sennacherib and ruled Assyria (from 681 to 669 B.C.).

Isaiah 37:33 "Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it."

“Shall not come ... cast a bank against it”: God promised that the Assyrians would not even pose a physical threat to Jerusalem. They came near, but never engaged in a true siege of the city.

God stops Sennacherib short of coming into Jerusalem. He cannot even fight his war in the city at all. God spoke it, and it is so.

Isaiah 37:34 "By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD."

God will stop him and send him back the same way he came.

Isaiah 37:35 "For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

“For mine own sake”: Since Sennacherib had directly challenged the Lord’s faithfulness to His word (verse 10), the faithfulness of God was at stake in this contest with the Assyrians (Ezek. 36:22).

“For my servant David’s sake”: God pledged to perpetuate David’s line on this throne (see 2 Sam. 7:16; 9:6-7; 11:1; 55:3).

Jerusalem was the city of David, as well as being the holy city of God. God Himself, will defend Jerusalem.

Isaiah 37:36 "Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they [were] all dead corpses."

“The angel of the Lord”: This was Isaiah’s only use of a title that is frequent in the Old Testament, one referring to the Lord Himself.

“Smote”: Secular records also mention this massive slaughter of Assyrian troops, without noting its supernatural nature, of course (Exodus 12:12, 29).

Notice the angel, not a host of angels, killed 185 thousand Assyrians. The amazing thing is the power of the angel of the LORD. You can easily see how silly it is to fear the world, or Satan.

All God has to do is send one angel to protect us from hundreds of thousands of the enemies. He did not just strike them, but killed them, because they were all dead corpses.

Isaiah 37:37 "So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh."

Nineveh: the capital of Assyria.

Sennacherib was smart enough to realize he could not fight God. He left and went to the evil city of Nineveh to live.

Isaiah 37:38 "And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead."

“His god”: The place of Sennacherib’s death, 681 B.C. recalled the impotence of his god, Nisroch, compared with the omnipotence of Hezekiah’s God.

“Smote him”: Sennacherib’s pitiful death came 20 years after his confrontation with the Lord regarding the fate of Jerusalem.

“Ararat” is the mountain region north of Israel, west of Assyria.

This evil Sennacherib had some evil sons, who killed their daddy, while he was worshipping his false god. They fled to Armenia. His third son, Esar-haddon, took over as king. He was the successor to Sennacherib (681-669 B.C.).

There are several lessons we can learn from this. Evil begets evil; do not threaten God; one angel can defeat thousands of evil men.

Isaiah Chapter 37 Continued Questions

1. Who has Assyria laid waste?
2. Are the works of men's hands gods?
3. What are they?
4. God is _____.
5. Who will believe, if God saves Judah?
6. Who was the father of Isaiah?
7. Who is Isaiah speaking for in verse 21?
8. What brought the response from God?
9. Who is "the virgin daughter of Zion"?
10. Who is the chaste virgin of Christ?
11. When is there no fear from God's followers?
12. Who have these Assyrians come against, besides Judah?

13. We can see the _____ of the king of Assyria in verse 24.
14. What had he planned to do?
15. What is "the forest of Carmel" speaking of?
16. How had he defeated some of the other countries?
17. Why does he tell them how he will attack them?
18. What did he compare the inhabitants to in verse 27?
19. _____ is hidden from God.
20. What is God going to lead them with?
21. What will be the sign to them?
22. Who will be escaped of Judah?
23. What is mount Zion speaking of?
24. God stops Sennacherib short of coming into _____.
25. How will he go out?
26. Why does God save Jerusalem?
27. Who smote the camp of the Assyrians?
28. How many Assyrians died?
29. Where did Sennacherib go to live?
30. Who killed Sennacherib?
31. Who reigned in his stead?
32. What lesson can we learn from this?