

# Book of Isaiah



## Chapter 37

*Theme: Reaction Of Hezekiah To The Report*

**Michael Fronczak**

**564 Schaeffer Dr.  
Coldwater, Michigan 49036**

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## Chapter 37

**<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.**

Ps 50:15 (commandment or prophecy?). Ps 55:22 “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”<sup>1</sup>

**[into the house of the LORD]** There is no better place to go when one is in trouble than to the house of God.<sup>2</sup>

His reaction to the report of his messengers reveals a man of faith. In his extremity he turns to God and goes to the house of the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

Hezekiah's response was also extreme grief, but he went into the temple.

He wanted to seek the Lord's wisdom and help in prayer.

"Happy the nation that has such a ruler."393

It is not clear how involved Hezekiah had been in making the treaty with Egypt, but his personal repentance here set the pattern for the nation.<sup>4</sup>

**1-2** Like the envoys, Hezekiah in distress tore his clothes. He was disturbed because of the Assyrian threat and also because the name of the Lord had been profaned. Putting on sackcloth was another act of mourning (see comments on 3:24). In trust and dependence on God Hezekiah went into the temple of the Lord, showing symbolically that the nation now could do nothing on their own—their destiny was completely up to God. He also sent his top leaders Eliakim and Shebna along with the leading priests... to... Isaiah. Why Joah (cf. 36:3, 11, 22) is not mentioned is not known.<sup>5</sup>

Hezekiah's initial reaction is good. He sees the situation for what it really is. Often, when we are in some kind of trial or difficulty, we handle it poorly because we never see the situation accurately. Jerusalem's situation is desperate, and Hezekiah knows it. 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.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>2</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>3</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>4</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-37.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Isa/Isa-37.cfm)

**<sup>2</sup> And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.**

Hezekiah will pray, but his answer will come through Isaiah. Ps 121:4 “Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”

Gen 12:3 “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”<sup>7</sup>

Hezekiah first sent ambassadors of peace to the Assyrians, who insulted them; they came back with torn clothes (Isa. 36:3-4). Here he sent two men with the elders of the priests in sackcloth to Isaiah. He should have done this first instead of last. Too often God is put last, in trouble or blessing. Men generally try everything else before they trust God.<sup>8</sup>

Hezekiah now sends his messengers to Isaiah the prophet. This is another act of faith. He wants a word from God.<sup>9</sup>

Then the king sent some of his highest officials and some of the leading priests, who were also in mourning, to visit Isaiah. Notice that Hezekiah did not summon Isaiah into his presence. This reflects the respect that the king felt for the prophet (cf. 2 Kings 6:12).<sup>10</sup>

**<sup>3</sup> And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.**

Fourfold day of distress in Judah:

1. A day of trouble
2. Rebuke
3. Blasphemy
4. Weakness

The message to Isaiah is ominous, black, and pessimistic. It is a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy.<sup>11</sup>

Judah is compared to a woman who is trying to give birth to a child but is too weak to deliver. When the situation seemed hopeless, Hezekiah didn't give up. Instead, he asked the prophet Isaiah to pray that God would help his people. No matter how bad your circumstances seem, don't despair. Turn to God.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>8</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>9</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>10</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>12</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

**3-4** The men informed Isaiah of the situation, asked for a word from the Lord to rebuke the Assyrians, and then asked the prophet to pray for them. Hezekiah was thereby acknowledging that the Lord spoke through Isaiah. This contrasts with Ahaz's attitude (chap. 7) when he was confronted by a national calamity 33 years earlier, 734 b.c. In the leaders' report to Isaiah they picked up his imagery of distress (from 26:17-18) about a woman who is about to deliver a baby but has no strength and would die in the process.<sup>13</sup>

**3-4** The leaders of Judah, speaking for their king, acknowledged that he had come to the end of his rope. The Assyrian invasion of Judah had been like labor pains for the king, but now the crisis had peaked and there was no human strength left to expel the enemy. Hezekiah confessed that he deserved the adversity that had overtaken him, which had signaled an end of hope and resulted in great embarrassment. Yet he did not appeal for divine help on the basis of his own needs but because of the Lord's honor and the needs of His people (cf. 1 Sam. 17:26, 36). The king appealed for Isaiah's prayers on behalf of the remnant, the remaining Judahites who had not already been devoured by the Assyrians. This kind of admission of helplessness is frequently a necessity before divine help can be received. So long as we believe that we only need some assistance, we are still treating ourselves as lords of the situation, and that latent pride cuts us off from all that God would give us. The saying "God is my copilot" may reflect a similar attitude.<sup>14</sup>

**4 It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.**

[may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh] This shows Hezekiah's weak faith. It is the only kind that many have today. Anyone can declare "it may be," but true faith declares "it is done," or "it will be done." In this case God had already planned to fight for Judah and deliver the city, so the outcome did not necessarily depend upon the faith of the people (Isa. 37:5-6,23-28).<sup>15</sup>

[lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left] Hezekiah asked Isaiah to pray for the remnant of Israel. Whether the prophet specifically prayed on this occasion is not stated, but he did predict the destruction of the Assyrian army (Isa. 37:7).<sup>16</sup>

He speaks of the Lord as "thy God," not as "our God." Why didn't he say "our God" to begin with? However, he will correct this in his prayer in verse 20.<sup>17</sup>

Hezekiah did exactly what Isaiah had been calling the people to do (chapters 1-35). He turned to God and watched him come to Judah's aid. Turning to God means believing that God is there and that he is able to help you.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

<sup>14</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>16</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>17</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>18</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

**<sup>5</sup> So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.**

**5-7** In Isaiah's brief word to the messengers from the Lord he first told them not to be afraid of the Assyrians. God had heard that they had blasphemed Him (cf. v. 4). Then the prophet said that the Assyrian king would return home and would be killed there (the fulfillment of this is recorded in vv. 36-38).<sup>19</sup>

**5-7** So the officials came to Isaiah, and the prophet responded by sending them back to the king with a message from Yahweh. Hezekiah was not to fear the blasphemous claims of Sennacherib's underlings. The Lord promised to lead the invading king away from Jerusalem and back to his own country where he would die by the sword. A report placed in Sennacherib's ear would be the sovereign Lord's instrument. The lack of reference to the decimation of the Assyrian troops already gathered around Jerusalem (cf. 36:2) focuses the promise on the central issue, divine punishment for the king's blasphemy (cf. 14:24-27; 31:8).<sup>20</sup>

**<sup>6</sup> And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.**

“Thus saith the Lord” - as grave an emphasis as possible.  
“Servants” - minions, derogatory term.<sup>21</sup>

God gives assurance to Hezekiah that the blasphemy of the Assyrian has not escaped His attention. Likewise, God cannot, nor will not, ignore it.<sup>22</sup>

Three predictions -- fulfilled:

1. I will send a blast upon him (Isa. 37:7).
2. He will hear a rumor and return to his own land.
3. I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

God's message to Hezekiah was specific and to the point. He was assured that he didn't need to be afraid of the words of Rabshakeh who had blasphemed God Himself. Furthermore, the king of Assyria would not take Jerusalem; he would be supernaturally defeated, and would return and die in his own land (Isa. 37:7,36-38).<sup>23</sup>

The Lord commonly reassured His servants with the words: Do not be afraid (see 7:4; 35:4; Gen. 15:1; Josh. 1:9). We have no reason to fear if our trust is in the all-powerful God (see Heb. 13:6).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

<sup>20</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>22</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>23</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>24</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

**7 Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.**

[blast upon him] The blast was the sending of an angel from heaven with a sword -- an angel who killed 185,000 soldiers in one night, thus causing the king of Assyria to give up plans to besiege Jerusalem and to return to his own land where he was killed by his own sons (Isa. 37:36-38).<sup>25</sup>

[hear a rumour] Perhaps the rumor he heard was that about King Tirhakah of Ethiopia marching to fight him (Isa. 37:8-13).

[return to his own land] The return to his own land was after the supernatural destruction of 185,000 of his soldiers (Isa. 37:36-38).

[I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land] God evidently put it into the hearts of two of his own sons and they killed him upon his return to Assyria (Isa. 37:38).<sup>26</sup>

**8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.**

**8-10** Although the answer to Hezekiah's prayer was already in motion because Tirhakah was poised to attack, Hezekiah did not know it. He persisted in prayer and faith even though he could not see the answer coming. When we pray, we must have faith that God has already prepared the best answer. Our task is to ask in faith and wait in humility.<sup>27</sup>

**8-13** Sennacherib had left Lachish and was at Libnah, about five miles north of Lachish. Word had come that Tirhakah was coming to assist Judah in her fight against Assyria. Tirhakah was called the Cushite king of Egypt. He was from Cush, south of Egypt, and ruled Egypt at that time. In 701 Tirhakah was an army commander; he actually did not become king of Cush until 690; but since he was king when Isaiah wrote this account, Isaiah called him the king. Again Sennacherib told Hezekiah that other nations' gods had not been able to help them against the Assyrian advance (cf. 36:18-20). Gozan, a city on the Habor River, was conquered about 100 years earlier by the Assyrians. Haran, a city in Aram, was at that time an Assyrian stronghold. Rezepth, also an Aramean city, was captured about 100 years earlier by the Assyrians. Eden was probably in northern Mesopotamia, and may refer to a territory in which Tel Assar was a city. (See comments on Hamath... Arpad, and Sepharvaim in 36:19.) The location of Hena is not known. The site of Ivvah is also unknown but it may have been in the Babylonian region.<sup>28</sup>

The Rabshakeh returned to his master, having learned that Hezekiah would not surrender. He found him five miles closer to Jerusalem than Lachish, at Libnah, where he was fighting the Judahites. The message that Tirhakah, King of Ethiopia, was coming to engage him in battle,

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<sup>25</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>26</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>27</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>28</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

caused Sennacherib to decide to terminate further campaigns in Palestine and return to his homeland temporarily. Tirhakah was about 20 years old at this time and did not accede to the throne of Egypt and Ethiopia until 690 B.C. However, he was the military leader that Sennacherib did not want to engage at this time. It is a common practice of Ancient Oriental writers to refer to people and places by titles and names acquired later than the period being described.<sup>29</sup>

**9 And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard *it*, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,**

He -- the king of Assyria, not Rabshakeh. When he heard about the king of Ethiopia coming to fight against him he quickly sent messengers again to Hezekiah, seeking to scare him into an immediate surrender so he himself could then depart for Assyria to escape war with the Ethiopians (Isa. 37:9-13).<sup>30</sup>

“Tirhakah,” known in history as “Taharkah,” was the next to the last king of the twenty-fifth (Ethiopian) dynasty in Egypt.

**10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.**

#### **Threatening Letter To Hezekiah (37:10-13)**

When Rab-shakeh got back to his army, he learned that the king of Assyria had left Lachish and was going to war against Libnah. A rumor came that the main force of the Assyrian army was being attacked by the Egyptian army. Rab-shakeh withdrew from Jerusalem temporarily to assist the main force of the Assyrian army, but to "save face" 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.<sup>31</sup>

This was another insult to Jehovah, accusing Him of deception. God had declared through Isaiah that Jerusalem would be spared and this had probably been reported to the king of Assyria (Isa. 37:6-7,10).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>31</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>32</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

**11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?**

**12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar?**

Cities all through Middle East which have fallen.  
(Letter vs. verbal)<sup>33</sup>

Here he goes beyond the former word and boasts that no gods of any nation had delivered their people out of the hand of the Assyrian.<sup>34</sup>

**13 Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?**

He quotes historical facts that were difficult to answer.

**14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.**

[letter from the hand of the messengers] This last message (Isa. 37:9-13) was written in a letter and sent from the king of Assyria to Hezekiah. He read it, then spread the letter out before the Lord and prayed; God answered through Isaiah (Isa. Isa. 37:15-35).<sup>35</sup>

[the house of the LORD] The house of the Lord was Solomon's temple which had been standing about 288 years.

The idea was not that God must read the message, but rather that He might consider the matter. Hezekiah used this means to indicate that he was committing the entire matter to the Lord for His judgment.<sup>36</sup>

When Hezekiah received the letter, he went to God directly and spread the letter before Him. Then follows one of the truly great prayers of Scripture.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>34</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>35</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>36</sup> Believers Study Bible

<sup>37</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

**Ron Daniel:** I have come to really despise letters, because people most often encourage me verbally, but attack me in writing. Nine times out of ten, if somebody mails me something, it's because they're upset. They have decided that I'm evil, or determined that I'm doing everything wrong.

What do you do with letters of accusation or threats? I believe that Hezekiah's example is the best one to follow: get before the presence of God and spread it out before Him. "Look what they're saying, Lord! See what they're accusing? Lord, I'm turning to You for help!"

This was a situation over which Hezekiah had no control. His only choices were to pray or panic. He chose to pray, and we should learn the lesson from him. Are you dealing with threats? Spread them out before the Lord and pray. Are you facing difficulties? Lay them before the Lord and pray. Are you encountering opposition? Put it before the Lord and pray. Why do we choose to suffer through the sleepless nights, upset stomachs, and high blood pressure, when we should just be spreading the situation out before the Lord and praying?<sup>38</sup>

**14-20** Receiving the communication (a letter) from Sennacherib, Hezekiah prayed a great prayer of faith in the temple (cf. v. 1). By placing the matter in God's hands (v. 14), he was calling God's attention to it (though of course he believed that God already knew). The king began his prayer with praise (vv. 15-16). Referring to Him as the God of Israel, the king recalled the special covenant position Israel had with the Lord. God's being enthroned between the cherubim refers to His presence in the Jerusalem temple and thus with His people (1 Kings 8:10-13). (On the cherubim see comments on 1 Kings 6:23.) Besides being the God of Israel, the Lord is also over all the kingdoms of the earth, including Assyria! Hezekiah also stated that God is the Creator.

Then Hezekiah asked God to intervene for His glory, so that the other nations would know that He, the Lord of Israel, is the true God (Isa. 37:17-20). Hezekiah requested deliverance from the Assyrians so that nations everywhere would acknowledge God's sovereignty.<sup>39</sup>

**15 And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,**

### **Hezekiah's Sevenfold Prayer**

1. He addressed the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, which was customary in those times (Isa. 37:16). In the N.T. we are commanded to address God in the name of Jesus Christ (Mt. 16:17-18; Jn. 14:12-15; 15:16; 16:23-26).
2. He recognized that God still dwelled between the cherubim (Isa. 37:16). This was according to the covenant with Moses and all Israel about 940 years before this (Ex. 25:22).
3. He recognized that Jehovah was the only God on earth (Isa. 37:16).
4. He acknowledged Him as creator of heaven and earth (Isa. 37:16).
5. He asked God to hear and see what was written in the letter which was spread out before Him, that it reproached the living God (Isa. 37:17).
6. He acknowledged that many nations and their lands had been laid waste by the king of Assyria who had also destroyed the gods of these nations; now he was threatening Judah (Isa. 37:18-19).

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<sup>38</sup> <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah3601.php>

<sup>39</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

7. He concluded his prayer by appealing to God to save Judah from the hand of this mighty king so that all the nations of earth might know that He was the only true and living God (Isa. 37:20).<sup>40</sup>

**16 O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou *art* the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.**

“Dwellest between the cherubim” - Isa 6, Ezek 1, 10; Rev 4. Four cherubim so why “between” verses “among”? God viewed here by Hezekiah as dwelling between the cherubim of the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy of Holies.<sup>41</sup>

No instructed Israelites believed that God was a local deity who dwelt in the temple -- just a little box in Jerusalem! King Solomon had prayed: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded" (1Kings 8:27). Every Israelite recognized that He was the God of heaven, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Hezekiah pleads with Him to hear and deliver His people from the threatening Assyrian:<sup>42</sup>

[dwellest between the cherubims] This refers to the two cherubim made of gold which were on the ends of the lid or covering of the ark of the covenant, between which God was supposed to dwell and commune with the children of Israel (Ex. 25:22).<sup>43</sup>

Cherubim are mighty angels. The phrase "enthroned between the mighty cherubim" refers to the atonement cover on the Ark of the Covenant, which symbolized God's holiness, power, and sovereignty.<sup>44</sup>

God who Dwells: A reference to the Shekinah or "Cavod YHWH" which was seen in the Temple as a light.<sup>45</sup>

**16-20** Hezekiah began his prayer—did Isaiah witness it?—by acknowledging Yahweh's uniqueness. Yahweh was not like the gods of the nations but the only true God, who dwelt among His people, the Creator who rules and determines everything. Theologically this confession climaxes the whole first part of the Book of Isaiah. Hezekiah asked the living God to pay attention to the reproachful blasphemies of the Assyrian king. He acknowledged the Assyrians' superiority over the nations they had overrun, but he ascribed this to the fact that those nations had only gods of wood and stone to defend them. Finally, he asked God to deliver Jerusalem so the nations would know that Yahweh alone was God. In short, he prayed for the glory of God.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>41</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>42</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>43</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>44</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/36-39.htm>

<sup>46</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

**17 Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.**

Use of verbs resembles Dan 9.

[reproach the living God] The kings of Assyria ignorantly thought God was an idol like the gods of other nations. Had they known He was a living God, they might not have acted so haughtily. At times God has had to prove to men that He is alive and that He alone is sovereign over all (note b, Josh. 2:11).<sup>47</sup>

Hezekiah shows God the letter and calls attention to the fact that it is directly against God.<sup>48</sup>

**18 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries,**

This much of his letter was true (Isa. 37:18-19), but it didn't prove that Assyria could do the same with God. It was time now for them to learn that God is the only true and living God.<sup>49</sup>

**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 acknowledges the truth of the letter. There was no need to deny or ignore it. When we deal with God, it is wise to tell Him the truth, especially about ourselves, and not try to conceal anything.<sup>50</sup>

**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.**

Only one thing God puts higher than His Name: His Word (Ps 138:2). Truth is when the Word and deed become one.<sup>51</sup>

This should be the chief end of all prayer and ministry. He made all things originally for His glory and planned that His goodness, mercy, and grace would be extended to all creation. God has often done things to demonstrate His nature.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>48</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>49</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>50</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>51</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>52</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

**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:**

**Seven Predictions -- Fulfilled:**

1. I will put My hook in your nose, and My bridle in your lips, and will turn you back by the way which you came (Isa. 37:29)
2. You (Israel) will eat that which grows of itself, this year and the next; but in the third year you will sow, reap, plant vineyards, and eat their fruit (Isa. 37:30)
3. The remnant that has escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward (Isa. 37:31)
4. There will be a remnant which will escape out of Jerusalem and out of Mount Zion (Isa. 37:32)
5. The king of Assyria will not come into this city (Jerusalem), nor shoot an arrow into it, come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it (Isa. 37:33)
6. By the way that he came from Assyria he will return and shall not come into this city (Isa. 37:34)
7. I will defend this city and save it for My own sake, and for My servant David's sake (Isa. 37:35)<sup>53</sup>

[Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria] It seems God revealed to Isaiah that Hezekiah had prayed about the threats of the king of Assyria. Isaiah was sent to reassure Hezekiah that the former prediction (Isa. 37:6-7) would come to pass, and to give further details of assurance -- that the Assyrian king would never come against the city to besiege it or enter it, and that he would be destroyed (Isa. 37:29-35).<sup>54</sup>

**21-35** Responding to Hezekiah's prayer, the Lord sent a message to him through Isaiah that Assyria would be defeated (cf. God's first reply, vv. 6-7). That message included three parts. First, the Assyrians would be driven back (vv. 21-29). Deliverance would come to Jerusalem (the Virgin Daughter of Zion; see comments on 1:8; and comments on 47:1) for Assyria would flee (cf. 37:7). The tables would be turned and Zion would mock Assyria (v. 22). This would come about as an answer to Hezekiah's prayer (v. 21) and as punishment on the Assyrians for their blasphemy (vv. 23-24; cf. 36:20; 37:4, 17) and pride (I and my occur seven times in vv. 24-25). Sennacherib claimed to have felled the choicest tall cedars and pines in the heights (mountains and hills) of Lebanon (cf. 10:34). This may refer to his overrunning Lebanon or it may be a figurative way of saying he conquered leading nations. He also claimed to have conquered Egypt though it is questionable that he ever entered Egypt. However, he did defeat the Egyptians in Philistia. Those successes came only because the Lord allowed them, for He ordained them all. The nations Sennacherib conquered were weak and like grass on flat housetops (cf. Ps. 129:6) readily scorched by the sun. But now the Lord, knowing Sennacherib's rage, would cause him to go back to his land as if he were being led like an animal (Isa. 37:29), that is, in disgrace. This is fitting because the Assyrians were known for leading their captives by hooks in their noses. Second, God assured Hezekiah that a remnant would remain (vv. 30-32) and that life would go on as usual. For the next two years life would be difficult as they sought to get their crops back

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<sup>53</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>54</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

to normal, but in the third year (the normal time it takes for a vineyard to begin producing grapes) there would be a bountiful harvest. The Lord would do this because of his zeal for Judah. Third, the message again addressed the king of Assyria (vv. 33-35). God told him that he would not set foot inside the city of Jerusalem or even build a siege ramp against its walls. He would have to return home because God Himself would defend the city of David.<sup>55</sup>

Because you have prayed to Me: God's gracious response was a direct answer to the prayer of a godly king. Although God can certainly work His will without our prayers, He has chosen to faithfully answer the prayers of His people.<sup>56</sup>

God had heard Hezekiah's prayer. And He promised deliverance, not because of Hezekiah's flawless righteousness, but to defend His own Name.

Saints, this is so important to notice: God will often thwart your enemy not because of who you are, but because of Who your Father is. Many times, we walk with a cloud of condemnation hanging over our heads, thinking, "I've fallen short. I've messed up one too many times. God has washed His hands of me." But He hasn't. When people attack God's children, He takes it personally. We are His adopted sons and daughters. He loves us and has vowed to protect us, to never leave nor forsake us.

God's promise to Hezekiah was that not an arrow would be shot, and the enemy would be leaving. God Himself was going to defend Jerusalem.<sup>57</sup>

**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.**

virgin: Cities are often personified as female in the Scriptures. This imagery speaks of Jerusalem as a "daughter" being threatened by an attacker. Yet Jerusalem prevails and overcomes her assailant. Daughter of Zion is an endearing term for the city of Jerusalem. Just as the Lord called Israel His "son" (see Ex. 4:22), so He looked upon Jerusalem as His daughter (1:8).<sup>58</sup>

### **Tenfold Message of God to Sennacherib**

1. Judah has laughed you to scorn, despised you, and shaken the head at you (Isa. 37:22).
2. You have blasphemed Me, the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 37:23).
3. You have sent messengers who have reproached Me and boasted of what you are going to do to My people (Isa. 37:24-25).
4. I was the one who gave you and your fathers commission to destroy certain countries and lay them waste (Isa. 37:26).
5. Your successes of which you boast were made possible by Me, because I did not protect these countries from you (Isa. 37:27).
6. You have gone too far and you are now exalted because of your successes; you are not afraid to rage against Me (Isa. 37:28).

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<sup>55</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

<sup>56</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

<sup>57</sup> <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah3601.php>

<sup>58</sup> The Nelson Study Bible

7. Because of your rage against Me and your tumult coming up to Me, I will turn you back to Assyria (Isa. 37:29).
8. You will not come into this city or even besiege it (Isa. 37:33).
9. You will retreat and return to Assyria by the way you came (Isa. 37:34).
10. I will defend this city for My own sake and for the sake of David (Isa. 37:35).<sup>59</sup>

**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.**

It is God that you have reproached and blasphemed.

**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.**

**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.**

**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 shouldst be to lay waste defenced cities *into* ruinous heaps.**

These verses refer to the former prediction that God would use Assyria as a rod of chastening upon certain nations, and therefore make them successful in their conquests (Isa. 37:26-27).<sup>60</sup>

Ruinous Heaps. See comment on Qumran Isaiah scroll for a different reading for the word ruinous. The Qumran text reads " galiym notsriym." "Galiym" can also be "exiles." The word Notsriym" is the only Hebrew word that Jews use for the word "Christian." It literally means Nazarines. In the Qumran text of the Great Isaiah Scroll this verse can be read as: "That ruined exiles should become Christian cities."<sup>61</sup>

**26-27** Assyria had not heard the truth. She lacked the divine revelation that helps people see the realities of life. It was the Lord, not the Assyrians, who was responsible for all of Assyria's conquests. He not only planned them long ago, but He also brought them to pass. That explains why she was able to subdue her enemies and take over their territories. God is sovereign.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>60</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/36-39.htm>

<sup>62</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

**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.**

The nations whom the Assyrians had conquered were victims of circumstances -- like grass and green herbs blasted by the elements.<sup>63</sup>

**28 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.**

God had been using the Assyrian power to further His purpose among the nations. Now, seeing their pride and ignorance of Him who had made them successful, He determined to punish them for overstepping their commission (Isa. 37:29-38). He had not charged them to destroy Jerusalem, but only to chasten Judah to see if they would come back to Him as a nation.<sup>64</sup>

**28-29** The Lord knew everything about the Assyrians, including their raging against Himself. Because they raged against Him and felt complacent about controlling their own destiny, He would teach them who was sovereign. He would lead them away as they had led prisoners they had taken captive in war, by putting hooks in their noses. Assyrian monuments picture this. As they directed the horses they took so much pride in, God would put a bit in their mouths and turn them back to their homeland.<sup>65</sup>

**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.**

Cf. Ezek 38 (hooks in the jaws).

A ring was inserted in the nose of an animal to subdue and lead him. Prisoners were also treated this way. A ring was put in their lower lip, and a string was often tied to it which the king held in his left hand while he put out the eyes of his captive with a spear in his right hand (2Ki. 19:28; 25:7; Ezek. 19:4; 38:4). The idea here is figurative of the king of Assyria who would be forced to retreat to his own country in shame without besieging Jerusalem as he had boasted he would do (Isa. 37:29-38).<sup>66</sup>

Now God gives this word of comfort and assurance to His people.

This was a common torture the Assyrians used on their captives. They were often led away with hooks in their noses or bits in their mouths to humiliate them. The Lord was threatening to do to the Assyrians what they had done to others.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>64</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>65</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>67</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

**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.**

Verses 30-32 were personal to Hezekiah concerning Jerusalem, but the Isa. 37:21-29,33-35 concerned the king of Assyria. God now addressed Hezekiah through Isaiah, assuring him that:

1. Judah would soon be free from the Assyrians: they would eat that which grew of itself for the rest of the year, and the next; in the third year they would sow and reap in peace (Isa. 37:30).
2. The remnant of Judah would again take root downward and bear fruit upward (Isa. 37:31).
3. There would be a remnant which would escape out of Jerusalem and out of Zion (Isa. 37:32).
4. The king of Assyria would be completely driven out of the land of Judah without even besieging Jerusalem, and God would defend the city (Isa. 37:33-35).<sup>68</sup>

The primary thought is that the children of Judah would continue on in the land a little longer.

For two years normal agriculture would be impossible around Jerusalem, but God would cause the land to produce enough to sustain the inhabitants. Probably the two years of interruption resulted from Assyrian military activity in the region. Fruitfulness has always been God's blessing on those who trust Him. Then the third year, planting and harvesting as usual would resume. It was particularly unusual that the Judahites would be able to plant vineyards and eat their fruit shortly after that because it often took several years for new grapevines to yield a crop.<sup>69</sup>

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

**31 - 33:** The Remnant: The same words (as is the rest of this history of the siege of Jerusalem) is in 2 Ki. 19:30, 31. Here Isaiah concludes that the assured future of the "remnant" precludes this being the coming punishment and exile for Judah which he has already outlined in his prophecies. (Outlined in Isa. 14 - 29) He predicts here that Sennacherib would not get into the city. His main reason for this conclusion is stated: There is to be a remnant of Judah to take root in the future in the literal earth of Palestine, and he said, that root would grow until it produced the fruit of the messianic age. Isaiah's confidence is without doubt based on his previous predictions and not on a special vision at the time of this request of Hezekiah for answers. It is rather based on prophecies like Isa. 2:2 that the word of God would go out to all nations from Mt Zion in Jerusalem. His confidence is further supported by his previous predictions (see Isaiah 8:8) that the Assyrian kings would conquer Israel but would "pass through" Judah and not conquer it. Isaiah had also the support of a past vision depicting the entire siege now being described in these chapters. The vision which he "saw" (Isa. 10:28-34) depicted every advance of the Assyrian armies and the frustration of the King shaking his hand against Jerusalem but little more. One more important prophecy (among others) which would increase the self assurance of Isaiah's bold assertions was that he has already predicted the punishment and exile and the resultant "remnant" which he describes here as foreordained to return and take root physically in

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<sup>68</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>69</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

Jerusalem and later to produce the fruit of Isa. 2:2 But the future punishment and exile, he has said, is to be inflicted by Babylonia, not Assyria. Without doubt, Isaiah understood his own political predictions and here he makes application of his previous visions for which, at this point, he did not require a further seer's "vision." He knew Assyria was not the appointed instrument of Exile, but rather for Judah, was an implement of short term discipline. Isaiah knew this: Assyria was the implement of long term punishment and exile for the nation of Israel while Babylon was reserved for future use by God as His instrument of punishment and exile for Judah. Therefore, just as I had said for almost 25 years before 1991, "do not look for the second coming of Christ as long as Russia is an enemy of the Gospel of Christ," and now I say, "do not look for the second coming of Christ until there is religious and political freedom in Islamic lands like Arabia, Algeria and Iran," so Isaiah would understand the political consequences of his prophecy and would be able to say, "Sennacherib will not enter this city."<sup>70</sup>

**<sup>32</sup> 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 Lord would preserve a people for Himself from among the Jerusalemites. This would include the Davidic line of kings, as He had promised (2 Sam. 7:16; cf. Isa. 9:6). His own zeal to remain true to His Word and to bless His people would perform this (cf. 9:7; 59:17). It would not depend on the faithfulness of His people (cf. 2 Tim. 2:13).<sup>71</sup>

**<sup>33</sup> 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.**

If one of the 185,000 Assyrians had accidentally shot an arrow over the walls of Jerusalem, God's Word would have been inaccurate! How wonderful are the promises of God!<sup>72</sup>

**<sup>34</sup> By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.**

By the way that he came: Sennacherib approached the city from the north as Isaiah described in the vision of 10:28-34 and not from the south west, as has been supposed because he was involved with the siege of Lachish, when the news of the Ethiopian intention to attack him hastened his attack on Jerusalem. The ascent from the plain of Sharon to the high passes approaching Jerusalem is a danger point for an invader. Since the Assyrians already had long term possession of Samaria the return there and the descent from higher ground from the north was chosen by Sennacherib but to little avail. He returned by the way that he came to the north and went back to Nineveh. Thirty some odd years later his son would make an invasion and take

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<sup>70</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/36-39.htm>

<sup>71</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>72</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

captive Hezekiah's son but this too would be a short term discipline as Esarhaddon would cause no exile of Judeans and would return a repentant Mannaseh to his throne.<sup>73</sup>

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

Note the references for His and for His servant David's sake, not for Hezekiah, nor the people. Ezek 36:21 "... I do not this for your sakes, but for My holy Name's sake.." <sup>74</sup>

God would defend Jerusalem for the sake of his own honor and for David's sake in remembrance of his promise to David. The Assyrians had insulted God. They would not be his instrument to punish Jerusalem. What Jerusalem could not possibly do, God would do for it. God is prepared to do the impossible if we trust him enough to ask.<sup>75</sup>

**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.**

An angel of the Lord went forth (from heaven) and killed 185,000 soldiers (on earth) in one night (2Ki. 19:35; 2Chr. 32:21). He probably used a sword, as in the slaying of 70,000 Israelites by an angel (2Sam. 24; cp. 1Chr. 21:16,27). The captain of the Lord's host also had a sword (Josh. 5:13-15).<sup>76</sup>

[and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses] The ones left alive arose early in the morning and found the others killed. The slain were the mighty men, the captains, and the leaders of the army of Assyria; this made the king return home in shame (2Chr. 32:21).<sup>77</sup>

In the morning the men who were stationed on the walls of Jerusalem saw an amazing sight! The enemies they so feared were now lifeless corpses.<sup>78</sup>

The ancient historian Herodotus records that the camp was infested with mice. Evidently, God struck down the army with a powerful, deadly plague carried by the mice.

**36-38** The account of the destruction of the Assyrian army (predicted by Isaiah in 30:27-33; 31:8-9; 33:1, 18-19) is almost anticlimactic, occupying only three verses. The overnight slaughter did not come from the hand of an enemy but by the Angel of the Lord, who killed 185,000 soldiers. This angel may have been the preincarnate Christ (see comments on Gen. 16:7)

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<sup>73</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/36-39.htm>

<sup>74</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>75</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>76</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>77</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>78</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

though not all scholars agree on this. Sennacherib was assassinated 20 years later (681 b.c.) by two of his sons.<sup>79</sup>

Angel of the LORD . . . put to death. The Lord often sent his angel as his agent to bring plagues (compare the striking down of the firstborn in Egypt [Ex 12:12–13] and the angel's sword poised against Jerusalem [see 2Sa 24:15–16; 1Ch 21:22, 27]). The Greek historian Herodotus attributed this destruction to a bubonic plague. The death of these soldiers fulfilled the prophecies of 10:33–34; 30:31; 31:8.<sup>80</sup>

**37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.**

Sennachrib went all the way home, Ninevah, not Lachish.<sup>81</sup>

**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 Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.**

Sennachrib, assassinated by his own sons.<sup>82</sup>

The reason his sons killed him is not known, but they fulfilled prophecy by this act (Isa. 37:7). They fled to Armenia and became the heads of two celebrated families (Josephus, Antiquities, Book 10, 1:5).<sup>83</sup>

Secular history confirms the fact that Sennacherib was murdered by his sons. It was about this time that the great kingdom of Assyria began to disintegrate and eventually was taken over by Babylon. God had already let Isaiah know that He was preparing a kingdom down on the banks of the Euphrates River, which would be the one to take the southern kingdom into captivity. God knew that though He delivered His people by this tremendous miracle in the days of Hezekiah, soon the day would return when He again would say, "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (Isa. 1:4).<sup>84</sup>

The death of Sennacherib was prophesied by Isaiah in 10:12, 33, 34 and in 37:7. His death is also recorded in 2 Kings 19.<sup>85</sup>

Sennacherib was assassinated in 681 b.c.

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<sup>79</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

<sup>80</sup> First Century Bible Study Notes

<sup>81</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>82</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>83</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>84</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee

<sup>85</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

Ironically, it was while worshipping in the temple of his idol in Nineveh that God effected Sennacherib's assassination, whereas it was while worshipping the true God in His temple in Jerusalem, that God moved to spare Hezekiah's life. Hezekiah went into the house of his God and got help, but Sennacherib went into the house of his god and got killed. The Babylonian royal chronicles recorded the assassination of Sennacherib and the accession of Esarhaddon in 681 B.C.<sup>403</sup> It was not the Assyrian way to record their national disasters, so it is understandable that archaeologists have discovered no Assyrian accounts of Sennacherib's humiliations.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>