

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 255 – Hezekiah’s Response Through Sennacherib’s Death (Isaiah 37:1-38)

1. How did Hezekiah take Rabshakeh’s threats?

He rent his clothes, went to the house of the Lord, and sent for Isaiah: *“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. 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”* (Isaiah 37:1-2; cf. II Kings 19:1-2).

- As we see at the close of chapter thirty-six (Isaiah 36:22), clothes were rent at these threats. That could mean many things (addressed when we studied Isaiah 36:22).
- What Hezekiah does next is he went to the Lord with his clothes rent and in sackcloth. This signifies confession, mourning, etc. (Jeremiah 4:8 and Daniel 9:3-19).
- Then Hezekiah seeks the prophet Isaiah. When things failed for Israel, they sought the prophets (Jeremiah 21:1-2). Sometimes to no avail (Ezekiel 7:26-27).
- Prophets, formerly called seers, were the source for God’s people to find out what the Lord would say (I Samuel 9:9).

2. What did the servants of Hezekiah say to Isaiah?

“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. 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. So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah” (Isaiah 37:3-5; cf. II Kings 19:3-5).

- They are like a woman in the pains of childbearing, yet without the strength to deliver (Isaiah 26:17-18).
- Now, they are calling upon the Lord in their day of trouble. That is not altogether wrong (Psalms 50:15 and Hosea 5:15). It is just sad that they did not go to Him first (Isaiah 30:1-5).
- Hezekiah’s plea to God was to hear the challenge the Assyrians made against God. Men of God realize that people who challenge God are stupid (I Samuel 17:26, I Samuel 17:36, I Chronicles 13:12, Job 40:1-8, Acts 5:39, and Romans 9:20).
- They desired Isaiah to pray for them as a prophet might well do (I Samuel 7:8-9, I Samuel 12:13-23, Joel 2:17, and Romans 10:1-3) if the people were worthy (Jeremiah 7:8-16).

3. Did Isaiah have comforting words for Hezekiah?

Yes: *“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. 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”* (Isaiah 37:6-7; cf. II Kings 19:6-7).

- Had they been faithful, they would have never been in this position (**Exodus 23:21-22, II Chronicles 16:9, Jeremiah 17:7-8, and Nahum 1:7**).
- Having said that, God will now stand with them so that they do not need to fear Assyria (cf. **Isaiah 51:12-13**).
- A blast, a noise, a rumor that will cause him to return to his land. Similar things had happened in the past (**II Kings 7:6-7**).

4. Who accused God of deception?

The king of Assyria: *“So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. 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, 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. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered? 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? Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah”* (Isaiah 37:8-13; cf. II Kings 19:8-13)?

- The king of Assyria, at that time, was in battle at Libnah (a place in the desert or a place in Palestine).
- God DOES NOT deceive His people (**Numbers 23:19, I Samuel 15:29, and Titus 1:2**).
- As an argument, the king of Assyria set forth the names of the cities he conquered and asked where their kings were. The failure of his wisdom is that he is now challenging the Almighty God who does not fail in what He sets out to accomplish (**Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 3:10, I Chronicles 28:20, and Luke 1:37**).

5. What did Hezekiah do with the letter he received from the Assyrians?

He brought it before God and asked God to save Jerusalem: *“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. And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, saying, 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. 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. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries, 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. 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” (Isaiah 37:14-20; cf. II Kings 19:14-19).

- The house of the Lord, in the Old Testament at this time, was the temple in Jerusalem (**I Chronicles 6:32**). God said His eyes would be on that temple (**I Kings 9:1-3**).
- The God that dwellest between the cherubims is in reference to what was in the Lord’s house (**Exodus 25:17, Exodus 37:9, I Chronicles 13:6, and II Chronicles 3:10-17**; cf. **Psalms 99:1-2**).
- The Lord was not unaware of what was said against Him (**II Chronicles 16:9**).
- God was also aware of, and even behind, much of the success of the Assyrians (**I Chronicles 5:23-26**).
- They could kill gods [idols] who weren’t real (**Psalms 115:1-12**).
- Hezekiah calls upon God to show them who He is (**Psalms 83:17-18**).

6. Did God reply directly to Hezekiah?

No, He replied through Isaiah the prophet: *“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 37:21).*

- The prophets were a source for truth from God to the people (**Hosea 12:10** and **Hebrews 1:1-2**; cf. **II Peter 1:20-21**).

7. Was God going to allow the Assyrians to rage against Him successfully?

No: *“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. 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. 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. I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places. 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 defenced cities into ruinous heaps. 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. But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. 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” (Isaiah 37:22-29; cf. II Kings 19:21-28).

- Zion shaking her head at the arrogant Assyrians for ignorantly blaspheming against God. You cannot challenge the Lord (**Exodus 9:12-18**, **Psalms 2:1-5**, **Proverbs 21:30-31**, and **Isaiah 45:9**).
- They were taking credit for doing what God enabled them to do (**Isaiah 10:5-19**).
- God made it clear that He knew what they were saying (**Proverbs 5:21**, **Proverbs 15:3**, and **Jeremiah 23:23-24**).
- So, God was going to treat them like a wild beast that needs steering (**Psalms 32:9**) and forcibly remove them from His land; as He can so do (**Ezekiel 38:1-6**).

8. Did God give a sign that would prove His prophecy concerning Assyria was not chance when it came true?

Yes, the people of Jerusalem would be able to eat of wild growth in one year, the second, and then would be able to plant fruitful crops in the third year: *“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” (Isaiah 37:30; cf. II Kings 19:29).*

- When God is directly involved in something He is foretelling, He makes sure that there are signs that prove it (i.e. **II Kings 20:9-11**, **Isaiah 7:14**, and **Mark 16:20**).
- The Assyrians had encamped against Judah (**II Chronicles 32:1**).
- All of the rivers had been dried up and crops had been destroyed (**II Kings 19:24-26**).
- God was able to do this (**Leviticus 25:20-22**).

9. After the Assyrians attacked, would there be a remnant?

Yes: *“And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward: 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” (Isaiah 37:31-32; cf. II Kings 19:30-31).*

- A remnant (**II Kings 19:30-31**, **Isaiah 1:9**, **Isaiah 10:20-22**, **Jeremiah 23:3**, and **Romans 11:1-5**).
- The torn down shall arise, be planted (**Jeremiah 1:10**), and bear fruit (**John 15:8**).
- The fruit that was to come out of Zion was and is beneficial not only to the Jews, but to all nations (**Isaiah 2:2-3** and **Luke 24:44-47**).

10. What was God's reason for defending Jerusalem?

His own sake and David's sake: *"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. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake"* (**Isaiah 37:33-35**; cf. **II Kings 19:32-34**).

- Zion was not going to be taken (**Isaiah 33:20**).
- It was for God's sake, not just His people, that He delivered them (**Isaiah 43:25**, **Isaiah 48:9**, and **Ezekiel 36:21-22**).
- For David's sake points us to God's ultimate motivation in two parts:
 - His promise from Abraham to David had to be kept (**Genesis 22:1-18**, **Genesis 26:1-4**, **Psalms 105:42**, and **Acts 13:32-39**; cf. **Hebrews 6:13-18**).
 - Judah was germane to salvation for the world (**Hebrews 7:14**; cf. **Galatians 3:14**).

11. Did God do as He promised?

Yes: *"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. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. 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"* (**Isaiah 37:36-38**; cf. **II Kings 19:35-37**).

- The idea of "the angel of the Lord" smiting anything is scary (**Numbers 22:22-28** and **I Chronicles 21:16**).
- This event included leaders and men of valor (**II Chronicles 32:21**).
- Ironically, while worshipping HIS GOD, that is when he dies at the hands of his own sons. Whose saved whom (**Isaiah 45:20** and **Jeremiah 10:14-15**)?