

## EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #52

Isaiah 37:6-38

When intimidating and threatening things happen to God's people, God wants them to turn to Him in prayer and trust Him in faith. The real issue for God's people is whether or not they will trust in God and turn to God and pray to God in the face of intimidating threats.

We may recall that Assyria was threatening to destroy Judah and Jerusalem if they did not surrender. Hezekiah knew they needed the help of a powerful man of God - so he sent word to Isaiah (**Isaiah 37:2-5**). Isaiah was the most powerful man of God on this earth at the time of these events. He was a prophet who knew God and knew God's Word and Hezekiah was smart enough to know, we need his help. **One thing he certainly wanted Isaiah to do was to pray (37:4)**. What God teaches his people here is that:

**NO MATTER HOW TREATENING OR INTIMIDATING THE ENEMY MAY BE, GOD REVEALS THAT HE WILL PROTECT HIS PEOPLE AND HE WILL COMPLETELY DESTROY ALL ARROGANT ENEMIES WHEN HIS PEOPLE TURN TO HIM.**

Now this is an amazing chapter filled with five different responses:

**RESPONSE #1** – Isaiah responds to Hezekiah . **37:6-7**

As soon as Shebna and the elders reported to Isaiah what had happened, Isaiah said I have three messages from God that you are to go tell King Hezekiah:

**(Message #1)** - Do not fear Assyria's verbal threats. **37:6**

Isaiah basically says - you have nothing to fear about anything you have heard from these Assyrian blasphemers. Their words mean nothing. The real reason why you have nothing to fear is that God is a greater power than any threat you ever face.

**(Message #2)** - God will cause Assyria to return to its own land. **37:7a**

**(Message #3)** - God will kill the king in his own land. **37:7b**

God says I will cause Sennacherib to go back home and there he will die.

**RESPONSE #2** – Sennacherib responds to Hezekiah . **37:8-13**

When the three Assyrian leaders went to report back to Sennacherib, they found that he was engaged in a fight with Libnah, another fenced in city in Judah. Sennacherib learned that some Egyptians were on the way to fight the Assyrians (**v. 9**). He apparently did not want to get caught in the crossfire of two battles, so he turned up the heat on Jerusalem and he sent his messengers back to Hezekiah to intimidate him. Apparently, he wrote out his intimidating warnings which consisted of four main intimidations:

**(Intimidation #1)** - Don't be deceived by God's Word that says Jerusalem will not fall. **37:10**

The real deception of this world will be to try to get you not to believe the Bible.

**(Intimidation #2)** - You have heard how successful we have been destroying everybody .  
**37:11**

**(Intimidation #3)** - No god was able to stop us from succeeding. **37:12**

The deadly mistake that Sennacherib makes is that he doesn't realize that Judah's God is not a man-made god; He is the living God and the only God. Don't you ever make the mistake of thinking that the God of the Bible is the same as the god of the Muslims or the god of the Mormons or the god of the Buddhists. The God of the Bible is the only true living God and all the others are inventions by religious men who are liars.

**(Intimidation #4)** - No king was able to stop us from succeeding. **37:13**

**RESPONSE #3** – Hezekiah responds to the threats of Sennacherib . **37:14-20**

Hezekiah immediately took the threatening letter and went to the temple to pray. Hezekiah was a man of prayer, a point stressed several times (37:1, 4, 15; 38:2). G. Campbell Morgan said this prayer "was characterized by reverence, simplicity, and directness" (*The Prophecy of Isaiah*, Vol. 1, p. 215).

This is a masterpiece of a prayer to make when you are threatened. It is filled with theology that can move the heart of God. I believe this is the prayer that will be made when Israel finally turns to God at the end of the Tribulation.

**(Part #1)** - Hezekiah acknowledges the majesty and sovereignty of God. **37:16**

Hezekiah properly identifies God as:

- 1) The God of hosts - God is the God of the armies - heavenly and earthly
- 2) The God of Israel - God is the God of the nation
- 3) The God ranked higher than the highest angels
- 4) The only God - "the God alone" - God is the only true living God
- 5) The God of all kingdoms of the earth - God is the God of all nations
- 6) The God who made the heaven and the earth - God is the creator of all things

When you pray to God with this true perspective of God you are praying to the only true power.

Don't miss this - in heaven sits a God of glory who is great and mighty. He is the creator of all things and the observer of all things. There are two sides to God - He is a God of damnation and He is a God of salvation. This Almighty, Sovereign God can bless and He can curse. When you pray to this God of the Bible, you are praying to a God who can do whatever He wants to do. When you get a faithful man like Hezekiah asking God to do something about an enemy, you may be certain God will do something.

**(Part #2)** - Hezekiah asks God to hear his prayer about Sennacherib who defies God. **37:17**

Hezekiah asks God to listen to His prayer, not only for the threat against Judah, but Sennacherib dared to verbally assault the living God.

**(Part #3)** - Hezekiah points out that Assyria has destroyed countries and lands and all concepts of God. **37:18-19**

Notice in this prayer that Isaiah uses the word “truly” (v. 18). There is absolutely no possible way we will ever move God unless we are praying in truth. God will never answer the prayer of one who is lying or living a lie. Now Hezekiah’s point is that these Assyrians have tried to remove God, or faith in any god, from the entire world and God truly saw this and knew it.

**(Part #4)** - Hezekiah asks that God would deliver them so the whole world would know that Jehovah is God. **37:20**

Hezekiah’s prayer was heard, seen and saved. But this prayer was not just about God getting Judah out of a jam; this prayer was about God glorifying Himself.

**RESPONSE #4** – God responds to the prayer of Hezekiah. **37:21-35**

I want you to carefully notice that God sends His answer to Hezekiah through His prophet Isaiah. I think this is critical to see because we are living in a day in which the cry in the church is equality. There is a sense in which that is true, but there is also a sense in which it is not true. God still gives various gifts and those gifts have various ranks to them. God has structure to His Word, His work and His church. Hezekiah prayed to God but God answered through Isaiah. There are **three specific answers** to Hezekiah’s prayer that God gives:

**(Answer #1)** - God assesses Sennacherib and Assyria. **37:22-29**

There are **four key assessments** that God makes here:

**Assessment #1** - Assyria has despised the nation of God. **37:22**

Hezekiah’s prayer had been about Assyria mocking God. God says I have taken this seriously in that Assyria has mocked you.

The reference to the daughters of Zion being a virgin meant that Assyria could not touch Jerusalem. God would see to it that they could not defile His people.

**Assessment #2** - Assyria has reproached, blasphemed and arrogantly mocked God. **37:23**

The “Holy One of Israel” is a reference to God and specifically to Jesus Christ. The Assyrian army had mocked any idea of God or His Son or His Messiah being able to do anything about them. God says, I want you to know they haven’t just haughtily and arrogantly mocked you, they have mocked Me.

**Assessment #3** - Assyria has taken credit for things God did. **37:24-27**

The Assyrians bragged about how they had achieved victory in every sphere of life (vv. 24-25). He bragged that no hindrance or privation could stop him. Mountains could not stop us, forests could not stop us and rivers could not stop us. God says, you pompous fool; the only reason you had victory in anything is because “I planned it” (v. 26). **God says, you Assyrians don’t realize that you are nothing more than a puppet in My hands; I am the One who permitted and planned everything about you.**

We live in a country that just about denies that there is an Almighty God at the helm. We are no better than the Assyrians. We think we are so smart that we caused the Industrial Revolution and all the witty inventions that have come into existence. What every nation needs to know is that Almighty God is still on His throne and He can break a nation and break a person.

We had better carefully check ourselves often to make sure we aren’t taking credit for something God did. Any success we have ever had in life, in any sphere of life, is due to Him, not us. He planned it and He did it and we need to give Him the credit for it.

**Assessment #4** - God knows everything Assyria did and said and He will punish them. **37:28-29**

Don’t miss **verse 28**; God knows everything about everybody. He knows what people do and what they say. There is not one human being on this earth who fools Him.

God says, you are not in charge, I am and I will lead you right back to your own land like a bunch of cattle and horses. John Kitto saw Assyrian sculptures that did put rings in lips and noses of those they conquered and led them back with a rope (*Kitto’s Daily Bible Illustrations*, Vol. 1, p. 249). God says, I’ll turn you around and lead you out of My land by your nose.

**(Answer #2)** - God assures Hezekiah that a remnant will be left. **37:30-32**

We don’t know exactly the month in which this all happened, but agriculturally speaking, it was past planting time. God says, I will intervene on your behalf, but you will have to eat your present harvests for a couple of years, until year three, when you will sow and reap new fruit. Going through some lean times is not new for God’s people; but in the end they reap the fabulous blessings of God. God will always care for His faithful remnant no matter how intimidating this world gets.

What God was doing here was promising that He would take care of His people and they might have it lean for a while, but then they would experience His full blessings.

**(Answer #3)** - God will protect and defend Jerusalem for His and for David’s sake. **37:33-35**

Why would God do such wonderful things for a people who had been so unfaithful to Him? Why would God defend a people who rarely were willing to turn to Him and trust Him? He did it for His sake and for King David’s sake.

The Assyrians would not step one foot in Jerusalem, shoot an arrow into the city, or even build some siege ramp. God would stop them dead in their tracks because of His own name and because of a covenant that He made with David (II Samuel 7).

**REPONSE #5 – God responds to the Assyrians . 37:36-37**

It is so ironic that Rebshakeh boasted that one Assyrian official was more powerful than 2000 Jewish cavalry riders (Isaiah 36:8-9). But the reality is, one “angel of the LORD” (none other than Jesus Christ) could cause 185,000 Assyrian soldiers to drop dead in one night.

That night those 185,000 soldiers went to bed thinking they would get up the next day and carry out their tasks. They would get up and do whatever they wanted. They never made it through the night. They never woke up again; God dropped them all dead.

Ladies and Gentlemen do not ever assume you have time. You don’t know how long you have. If you have never trusted Jesus Christ as Savior, God can snuff out your life today and you’ll be burning in hell. You can go to bed tonight and think I’ll just get up tomorrow and be me. You may not get up tomorrow. That is what 185,000 soldiers thought and by morning they were dead.

Sennacherib was broken and he was totally and completely humiliated so he packed up and went home to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. God led him out of His land by his nose.

What is so interesting is that twenty years later, he was worshipping his false god in Nineveh and was assassinated by two of his own sons in 681 B.C. (v. 38), which fulfilled exactly what Isaiah predicted in **Isaiah 37:7**.

**Practical Lessons:**

- 1. When we are threatened and scared we need to go straight to the Lord in prayer because God takes a very personal interest in His people when they are scared and pray to Him.**
- 2. God does not usually instantly destroy arrogant, God-mocking people; He may let them exist for awhile.**
- 3. When people mock God, His Word and His people, they are building up God’s rage and eventually, at just the right time, God will crush them.**
- 4. God knows everything every person does and says. Wise are those who govern their lives with this in mind.**