

Series: Questions

Title: Whom Hast Thou Reproached?

Text: Is 37: 23

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Our text is a question the LORD asked a man—king Sennacherib, king of Assyria. This was the mightiest king of the mightiest nation in the world. King Sennacherib had sent messengers to the wall of Jerusalem to King Hezekiah, king of Judah and boasted of his will and his works. So God asks him this question:

**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.**

How did Sennacherib reproach and blaspheme God? If you read chapters 36 and 37 you can hear what he said. But the LORD gives a summary of what he said. This is how Sennacherib reproached and blasphemed God. God said to him,

**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. 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.**

Sennacherib reproached and blasphemed God by boasting of his own will and his own works. And you and I did the same thing! When we sinned in Adam in the garden, we reproached God and blasphemed his name. All the days we were dead in sins, by trusting our will and our works we reproached and blasphemed God. If anyone here puts confidence in anything you do for salvation then you are reproaching and blaspheming the Lord even now. If we trust in our works under the law, our personal goodness, our religious deeds or even if we trust in our faith then we reproach and blaspheme God. God says, “*That no flesh should glory in his presence*” (1 Cor 1:29). So, let’s answer this question.

**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.**

**Proposition:** The one we have reproached is the one true and living God of his elect people, who is THE HOLY ONE—unlike any of the gods of man’s imagination.

## **HE IS THE GOD OF PURPOSE**

Sennacherib boasted that he destroyed all these cities. So the Lord asks another question.

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

From eternity God purposed everything that comes to pass in time like he purposed to use Sennacherib to chasten his people in Judah and Jerusalem. And God purposed he would use this king to lay waste all those other cities. Therefore, God purposed that the inhabitants of those cities would have no power against him

Brethren, this is God's eternal purpose that he brings to pass in the whole earth among all nations over all time.

Isaiah 14: 24: The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so* shall it stand: 25: That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. 26: This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. 27: For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

Everything that comes to pass is what God purposed from eternity.

Isaiah 46: 9: Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me, 10: Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

What about man's will?

Proverbs 19:21: There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

Does God work *all things* according to his purpose? Yes, even salvation!

Romans 8: 28: And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. 29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30: Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31: What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

God's people are saved because God purposed to save us. God's elect are redeemed because Christ redeemed us on purpose. God has given us an inheritance on purpose.

Ephesians 1:11: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Sinner, it is useless to fight against God. As Gamaliel said, "*If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God*" (Acts 5:39). But those God saves do not reproach God by boasting in our purpose. By God's grace, we bow and praise God for his purpose, "*O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.*" (Is 25: 1)

**Isaiah 37: 23: Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high?**

**HE IS THE SOVEREIGN GOD**

God not only purposed Sennacherib would lay waist these cities, God said—**Isaiah 37: 26...now have I brought it to pass...**

This mightiest man on earth was but an instrument in God's hand by which God in sovereign power brought his eternal purpose to pass.

Isaiah 10: 5: O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. 6: I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. 7: Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but *it is* in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few...12: Wherefore it shall come to pass, *that* when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. 13: For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done *it*, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent:...15: Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? *or* shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake *itself* against them that lift it up, *or* as if the staff should lift up *itself*, *as if it were* no wood.

So when the Lord finished his whole work using Sennacherib, the Lord sent him home to be killed.

**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.**

Back in chapter 36, God said this

Isaiah 36: 7: Behold, I will send a blast upon him, [I will put a spirit of terror in his heart] 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.

We see how the Lord put terror in his heart, this is the rumor:

**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 Lord killed 185,000 of his army including all his chief captains and generals. The Lord said then he shall return to his own land and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

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

What God purposed, God declared beforehand he would do, then God sovereignly did it. That is what we mean when we say God is sovereign. God has the sovereign power to bring to pass his eternal purpose exactly as he purposed.

Now, Sennacherib is a picture of the devil and his seed. God is sovereign over the devil and his seed just like he was sovereign over Sennacherib and his army. God created the devil and sovereignly controls him to bring his eternal purpose to pass. God was in control when the devil entered the garden and man fell. God did it to fulfill his purpose of sending his Son and saving his people from our sins that he might exalt his Son. God was in control when the devil used his men to nail Christ to the cross. The Man, Christ Jesus, is this sovereign God. He said, "*No man takes my life, I lay down of myself*" (Jn 10: 18). Those wicked hands

that nailed him to the cross were guilty. But they only did what God determined before to be done (Acts 2:23; 3: 18; 4: 25-28).

Brethren, if the vilest deed in world history was under the sovereign control of our God and accomplished his eternal purpose and our salvation then know the rest is under his sovereign control for our salvation as well. *“Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?” (Amos 3:6)*. Our sovereign King Jesus has his hook in the devil’s nose. When he is done with his whole work of calling out the last one he redeemed then Christ shall cast the devil and all our enemies into hell just like he did Sennacherib.

**Isaiah 37: 23: Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high?**

**HE IS THE GOD OF OUR SALVATION WHO ALONE WE GIVE GLORY**

The Lord gives two reasons for doing all this.

One, it was to save his elect people. The Lord made this promise to Hezekiah—**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 they ate of that which grew of itself means that God’s remnant would not save themselves by their hand. The Lord would do all the work to save them bringing for life for them from the ground. The third year they would sow and reap meant once the Lord had saved them they would reap the harvest or all the benefit. In the next verse the Lord tells us plainly that is what he meant by this sign.

**Isaiah 37: 31: And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward: 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. 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. 34 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.**

From eternity, God has had an elect remnant who he chose from among Jew and Gentile. God chose us by his free grace, not based on any good or evil in us. God our Father is working all things in this earth to save his elect remnant.

As God made the children of Judah eat that which he produced out of the ground so God freely gives life to his elect remnant by Christ the Seed. Before going to the cross, Christ said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (Jn 12:24)*. Christ is the Seed who willingly gave his body to be broken under God’s justice in place of his people then he was buried in the ground. But like as God said they would reap the harvest in the third year, three days later Life sprang out of the ground *“bringing forth much fruit”*, that is, Christ arose and his people in him. It came to pass exactly as God promised, *“The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.”*

Salvation is entirely of the Lord: (Jon 2: 9; 1 Cor 1: 30)

- By God the Father—*“of God are ye in Christ Jesus”*
- By God the Holy Spirit—*“who of God is made unto us...”*
- By God the Son—*“Wisdom and Righteousness and Sanctification and Redemption.”*

The reason that salvation is entirely of the LORD is “*That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*” (1 Cor 1: 31) And that is the second reason God did all this. God saves apart from our works for his own glory for the sake of Christ Jesus his Son who redeemed us-.

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

When God says “*For mine own sake*” it means for the glory and praise of God’s own name.

Isaiah 48: 11: For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

Isaiah 43:7: Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Isaiah 43:25: I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, [for my own glory and praise] and will not remember thy sins.

Therefore, those God saves no longer reproach and blaspheme his name by boasting in our will and our works. Now, our boast is “*To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved*” (Eph 1:6).

When God says “*for my servant David’s sake*”—he is saying for my servant, Christ Jesus.

Jeremiah 23:5: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I WILL RAISE unto David a righteous Branch, and A KING shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

This is speaking of David’s antitype, Christ Jesus. He is the righteous Branch which came from David. Christ is the King who reigns and prospers. He executed judgment and justice in the earth on the cross when he honored God’s justice by dying in the room and stead of his people. He saved all his elect and made us dwell safely in him. He is the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. By God’s regenerating grace, we serve our true David, King Jesus exactly as Jeremiah prophesied,

Jeremiah 30:9...they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their KING, whom I WILL RAISE UP unto them.

Since God’s righteous servant fulfilled his end of the covenant by redeeming all God’s elect, God the Father is fulfilling his end of the covenant by quickening and calling all his redeemed *for Christ’s sake*.

Jeremiah 30: 10: Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD;...for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid.

Ezekiel 37:24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd:...25...and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

Remember Christ said that when he said, “*there shall be one fold and one shepherd*” (Jn 10:16).

**SO WHO IS THIS THAT WE ONCE BLASPHEMED AND SPOKE SO ARROGANTLY AGAINST?**

He is the God who saves on purpose, the God who saves by his sovereign hand, the God of our salvation who we now give all the glory!

Sinner do not fight against this God or you will end up like Sennacherib. Come bowing and begging for mercy and you shall receive mercy!

Believer be comforted knowing that everything God is doing in this earth is for you his people, for his glory, for Christ's sake! By God's grace and power we can laugh at our enemies. Therefore, on our behalf,

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

**Amen!**