

Isaiah 36

¹ In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. ² Then the king of Assyria sent his field commander with a large army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. When the commander stopped at the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Launderer's Field, ³ Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went out to him.

⁴ The field commander said to them, "Tell Hezekiah: 'This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: On what are you basing this confidence of yours? ⁵ You say you have counsel and might for war—but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me? ⁶ Look, I know you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces the hand of anyone who leans on it! Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on him. ⁷ But if you say to me, 'We are depending on the Lord our God'—isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You must worship before this altar'?"

⁸ "Come now, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses—if you can put riders on them! ⁹ How then can you repulse one officer of the least of my master's officials, even though you are depending on Egypt for chariots and horsemen? ¹⁰ Furthermore, have I come to attack and destroy this land without the Lord? The Lord himself told me to march against this country and destroy it."

²² Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went to Hezekiah, with their clothes torn, and told him what the field commander had said.

Isaiah 37

When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the Lord. ² He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz.

³ They told him, "This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the moment of birth and there is no strength to deliver them. ⁴ It may be that the Lord your God will hear the words of the field commander, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words the Lord your God has heard. Therefore, pray for the remnant that still survives."

⁵ When King Hezekiah's officials came to Isaiah, ⁶ Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master, 'This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard—those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. ⁷ Listen! When he hears a certain report, I will make him want to return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.'"

¹⁴ Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. ¹⁵ And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: ¹⁶ "Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. ¹⁷ Give ear, Lord, and hear; open your eyes, Lord, and see; listen to all the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God.

¹⁸ "It is true, Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste all these peoples and their lands. ¹⁹ They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. ²⁰ Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, Lord, are the only God."

³⁶ Then the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! ³⁷ So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there. ³⁸ One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisrok, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer killed him with the sword, and they escaped to the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.

Unseen Enemy vs. God's Glory

Isaiah 36-37¹



- the unseen enemy

The War of Words

- enemy army (36:1-2)
- enemy messenger
(King Sennacherib's field commander,
the Rabshakeh)
- enemy strategy (36:4-20)
 - o doubt-generating questions
 - o fair points
 - o twisted reasoning
 - o confident mocking
 - o divine claims
 - o deceptive challenge
 - o rival promises
 - o no distinctions

The Weapons of Warfare

- the power of the word (37:2, 6-7)
- the power of prayer (37:1-4, 14-20)

The Victory of God

- the faithful king
- the divine intervention



¹ Parallel accounts to the Assyrian records and Isaiah's record of King Sennacherib's siege-without-invasion of Jerusalem (701 B.C.) are found in 2 Kings 18:13-19:37 and 2 Chronicles 32:1-22.