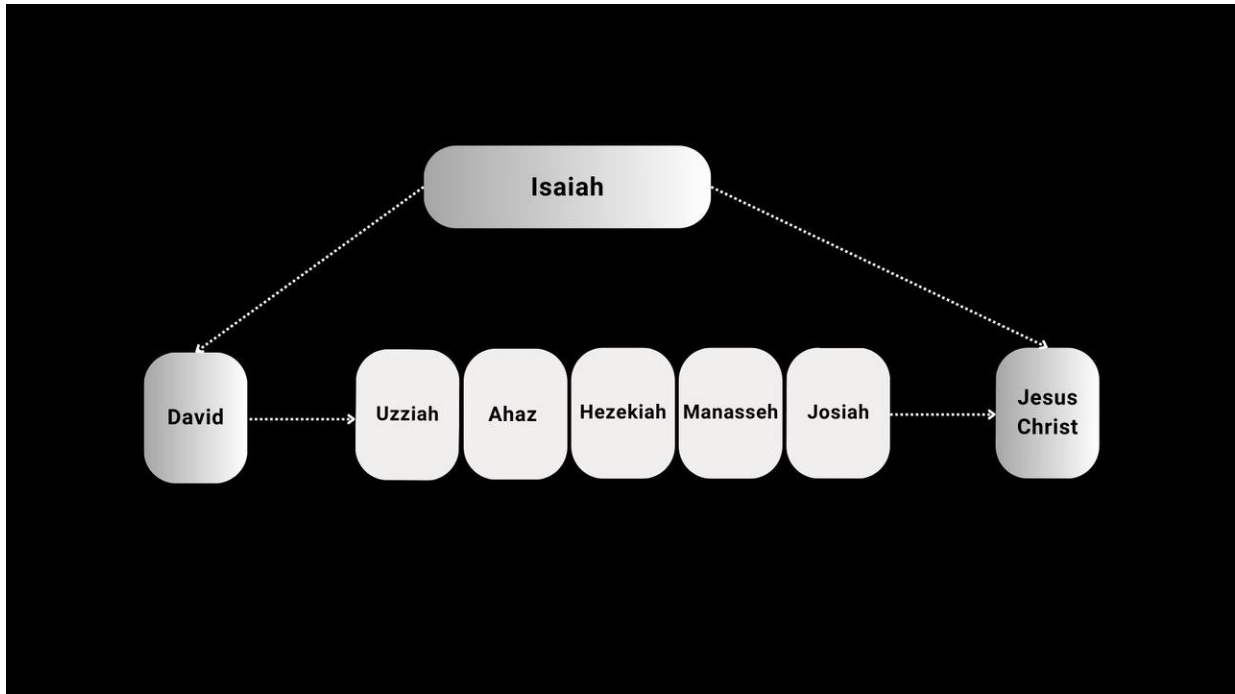


When Hope is Being Tested

Isaiah 36:1-37:4



I. The foundation of Hope

2 Chronicles 29:1-2 Hezekiah began to reign when he was twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abijah the daughter of Zechariah. And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done.

2 Chronicles 29:3-6 In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. He brought in the priests and the Levites and assembled them in the square on the east and said to them, 'Hear me, Levites! **Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of the Lord, the God of your fathers, and carry out the filth from the Holy Place.** For our fathers have been unfaithful and have done what was evil in the sight of the Lord our God. They have forsaken him and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord and turned their backs.'

2 Kings 18:4 He removed the high places, broke the pillars, and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it; it was called Nehushtan.

2 Kings 18:5-7 **He trusted in the Lord,** the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. **For he held fast to the Lord.** He did not depart from following him but kept the commandments that the Lord commanded Moses. And the Lord was with him; **wherever he went out, he prospered.**

2 Chronicles 29:10-11 Now it is in my heart **to make a covenant with the Lord, the God of Israel**, in order that his fierce anger may turn away from us. My sons, do not now be negligent, for the Lord has chosen you to stand in his presence, to minister to him and to be his ministers and make offerings to him.

II. The Challenge for the Hope

2 Chronicles 32:1 After these things and these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them for himself.

Isaiah 36:1 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and **took them**.

Isaiah 36:2 And the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field.

Isaiah 36:3-4 And there came out to him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder. And the Rabshakeh said to them, 'Say to Hezekiah, "Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: **On what do you rest this hope of yours?**"

Isaiah 36:5-6 **Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust**, that you have rebelled against me? **Behold, you are trusting in Egypt**, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

Isaiah 31:1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord!

Isaiah 36:7 But if you say to me, 'We trust in the Lord our God,' is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar?'

Isaiah 36:11-12 Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, 'Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it. Do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall.' But the Rabshakeh said, 'Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and drink their own urine?'

Isaiah 36:13-15 Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah: 'Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! Thus says the king: "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you. Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord by saying, 'The Lord will surely deliver us. This city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'"

Isaiah 36:8-9 'Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. How then can you repulse a single captain among the least of my master's servants, when you trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?'

Isaiah 36:18-20 Beware lest Hezekiah mislead you by saying, 'The Lord will deliver us.' Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that **the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?**

Isaiah 36:10 Moreover, is it without the Lord that I have come up against this land to destroy it? The Lord said to me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it.

Isaiah 36:21-22 But they were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was, 'Do not answer him.' Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.

1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

III. The Expression of Hope

A. Grief

Isaiah 37:1-2 As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, **he tore 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 secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz.

Matthew 5:3-4 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

B. Humility

Isaiah 37:1-2 As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore 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 secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz.

C. Turning to God

Isaiah 37:1-2 As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore 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 secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, **to the prophet Isaiah** the son of Amoz.

D. Desire to Seek what is God's

Isaiah 37:3-4 They said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, 'This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the Lord your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent **to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that the Lord your God has heard**; therefore, lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

E. Fervent Prayer

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What do you do when you find yourself in difficult situations?

What role does your hope in the Lord play in them?