

Week 7: Isaiah Chapters 36 to 39
At least it won't happen in my day!

- We now transition to a narrative section of Isaiah that ends the first half of Isaiah (chapters 1-39).
- This narrative section seems to be placed here to show the truth of Isaiah's prophecies up to this point. He has been saying that God's judgement is coming against Northern Israel, and Judah in the form of the Assyrians.
- 2 Chronicles 32 and 2 Kings 18 & 19 tell this same narrative, but include the historical detail that Rabshakeh comes to Jerusalem from the siege at Lachish.
- Lachish is one of the most documented Assyrian conquests we have today.



Assyrian relief of Israelite captives from Lachish being impaled during the siege.



Assyrian relief of Israelite captives after the conquest being flayed alive in front of other captives.

- We can give Old Testament Israelites a hard time for NOT taking the LORD at His Word. But it is critical to remember that they faced deep fears. So, when they do exhibit faith in their fear, we should take great courage for our own trials and troubles.

Chapter 36

¹In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. ²And 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**. ³And 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**. ⁴And the Rabshakeh said to them, "Say to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this trust of yours? ⁵Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust, that you have rebelled against me? ⁶Behold, you are trusting in Egypt, that

Rabshaken = High ranking Assyrian military officer.

Three Officials of Judah

Washer's Field – Remember the last time this location was mentioned (Is. 7). Might it be that a similar choice is before Hezekiah as was Ahaz? Can we put our trust in YHWH?

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. ⁷But 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”? ⁸Come 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. ⁹How 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? ¹⁰Moreover, 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.”** ¹¹Then 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.” ¹²But 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?”** ¹³Then 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! ¹⁴Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you. ¹⁵Do 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.” ¹⁶Do not listen to Hezekiah. For thus says the king of Assyria: Make your peace with me and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of his own fig tree, and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern, ¹⁷until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. ¹⁸Beware 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? ¹⁹Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? ²⁰Who 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?’ ” ²¹But they were silent and answered him not a word, for the king’s command was, “Do not answer him.” ²²Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, 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.

Remember Isaiah’s warnings to not put faith in Egypt.

Did God say this to him?

Revealing plan to lay siege to Jerusalem.

Rabshakeh reveals his true faith and appeals to the lust of the flesh.

Chapter 37

¹As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the LORD. ²And 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. ³They 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. ⁴It 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.’ ” ⁵When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, ⁶Isaiah said to them, “Say to your master, ‘Thus says the LORD: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the young men of the king of Assyria have reviled me. ⁷Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.’ ” ⁸The Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he had heard that the king had left Lachish. ⁹Now the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, “He has set out to fight against you.” And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, ¹⁰“Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? ¹²Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? ¹³Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?’ ” ¹⁴Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. ¹⁵And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: ¹⁶“O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. ¹⁷Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. ¹⁸Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, ¹⁹and have cast their gods into the fire. For they were no gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. ²⁰So now, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may

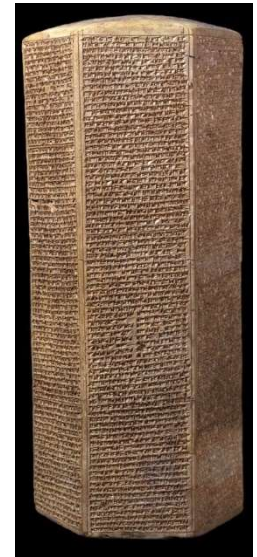
Contrast Hezekiah’s response with Ahaz’s response of Isaiah 7.

Ahaz looted the temple of gold and silver to “buy off” the Assyrians (2 Kings 16:7–8).

Hezekiah does a similar action (2 Kings 18:13-16) – But ultimately turns to the Lord for help rather than the pattern of his father.

What you did last is always less significant than what you do next when it comes to faith.

know that you alone are the LORD.”²¹ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria,²² this is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him: “ ‘She despises you, she scorns you— the virgin daughter of Zion; she wags her head behind you— the daughter of Jerusalem.²³ “ ‘Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? Against the Holy One of Israel!²⁴ By your servants you have mocked the Lord, and you have said, With my many chariots I have gone up the heights of the mountains, to the far recesses of Lebanon, to cut down its tallest cedars, its choicest cypresses, to come to its remotest height, its most fruitful forest.²⁵ I dug wells and drank waters, to dry up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt.²⁶ “ ‘Have you not heard that I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should make fortified cities crash into heaps of ruins,²⁷ while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown.²⁸ “ ‘I know your sitting down and your going out and coming in, and your raging against me.²⁹ Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come to my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came.’³⁰ “And this shall be the sign for you: this year you shall eat what grows of itself, and in the second year what springs from that. Then in the third year sow and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit.³¹ And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward.³² For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.³³ “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it.³⁴ By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD.³⁵ For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.”³⁶ And the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.³⁷ Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh.³⁸ And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword. And after they



Sennacherib's Prism: a royal account of the triumphs of Sennacherib in Judah. “As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts, and to the countless small villages in their vicinity. I drove out of them 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting and considered [them] booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage.”

But oddly enough it ends there...without the conquest of Jerusalem.

escaped into the land of Ararat, Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

Chapter 38

¹In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: Set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not recover." ²Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, ³and said, "Please, O LORD, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. ⁴Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: ⁵"Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. ⁶I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and will defend this city. ⁷"This shall be the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he has promised: ⁸Behold, I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps." So the sun turned back on the dial the ten steps by which it had declined. ⁹A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, after he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness: ¹⁰I said, In the middle of my days I must depart; I am consigned to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my years. ¹¹I said, I shall not see the LORD, the LORD in the land of the living; I shall look on man no more among the inhabitants of the world. ¹²My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent; like a weaver I have rolled up my life; he cuts me off from the loom; from day to night you bring me to an end; ¹³I calmed myself until morning; like a lion he breaks all my bones; from day to night you bring me to an end. ¹⁴Like a swallow or a crane I chirp; I moan like a dove. My eyes are weary with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; be my pledge of safety! ¹⁵What shall I say? For he has spoken to me, and he himself has done it. I walk slowly all my years because of the bitterness of my soul. ¹⁶O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit. Oh restore me to health and make me live! ¹⁷Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, for you have cast all my sins behind your back. ¹⁸For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness. ¹⁹The living, the living, he thanks you, as I do this day; the father makes known to the children your faithfulness. ²⁰The LORD will save me, and we will play my music on stringed instruments all the days of our lives, at the house of the LORD. ²¹Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a cake

Hezekiah's Illness

Hezekiah's prayer

God hears Hezekiah's Prayer

Sign for Hezekiah: Remember Ahaz (ch7) "Let it be...as high as heaven..."

Same story as Vs 1-8 but told from Hezekiah's perspective.

of figs and apply it to the boil, that he may recover.”²²Hezekiah also had said, “What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?”

All of this is recorded in 2 Chronicles 32:24-33.

Chapter 39

¹At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. ²And Hezekiah welcomed them gladly. And he showed them his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his whole armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them. ³Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say? And from where did they come to you?” Hezekiah said, “They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon.” ⁴He said, “What have they seen in your house?” Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that is in my house. There is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them.” ⁵Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: ⁶Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the LORD. ⁷And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” ⁸Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD that you have spoken is good.” For he thought, “There will be peace and security in my days.”

A foolish action of diplomatic positioning.

Prophesy of future judgement.

Hezekiah’s self-serving response. The story of Isaiah 39 is especially enlightening in view of 2Chronicles 32:31 “When the ambassadors of Babylon’s rulers were sent to him to inquire about the miraculous sign that happened in the land, God left him to test him and discover what was in his heart.”

BEFORE NEXT WEEK:

- Read Isaiah 40:1 – 48:22
- Suggested reading from *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners* – Chapters 22 thru 25
- Pray through Hezekiah’s response to the future of his children and grandchildren. What areas of your present life affect the behavior and belief of your children/grandchildren’s faith?