

# Isaiah 36-37 • The voice and tactics of the enemy

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As we get into this chapter, we're beginning kind of a four-chapter section of the book of Isaiah that is going to be very very different from what we've been dealing with. Because you know what we've had a lot is just prophecy about the nations, about Israel, about the southern kingdom of Judah, about the surrounding nations and so forth.

And now we turn to a kind of more of a narrative. And tonight's section, which is going to be chapters 36 and 37, are going to describe for us how the Lord responded to the Assyrian invasion. We've been making the point for weeks that Assyria was the big conquering nation at the time of Isaiah and King Hezekiah, who happens to be the king who's on the throne at this time.

And what that means is that Assyria has basically been conquering everybody, all the other surrounding nations. And they had years before this already conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. Now they are threatening the southern kingdom of Judah.

And you'll remember there was a split. A lot of Christians really get confused about the split between Israel and Judah. It was all Israel under David and Solomon. But then under Solomon's son, Rehoboam, the kingdom split. They literally like had a civil war. And the northern kingdom retained the name of Israel, and the southern kingdom was called Judah. And of course, by the time the Romans came along many, many, many years later and conquered it, they called it Judea.

It has been years now since Israel has already been conquered. And we're going to read how the Lord moved powerfully on behalf of the southern kingdom of Judah to save them from this invading force.

By the way, if all of these verses that we look at tonight, if you're sitting here kind of going, man, this sounds really familiar, very possible that you read it elsewhere in the Word. Because these very events are covered in 2 Kings (2 Kings 18:28-35) and also in 2 Chronicles. (2 Chronicles 32:17) So this is one of those stories in the Bible that is given to us in redundant form.

What I want to do though, as we get into this, well these, really these two chapters is, I want to kind of direct your attention to what is happening in the passage that goes beyond the current or the context of the nation of Judah and the invasion of Assyria to what is probably has happened or will happen in your own life. And that is the voice of the enemy speaking to you.

I don't know if you've ever heard the voice of the enemy. His taunting, his mocking, his threats, and his temptations. But if you haven't heard the voice of the enemy, you will probably be familiar with it after tonight. Because we're going to see in this passage a great deal of what I think God wants us to pay attention to. Because we see an example in this passage of what you and I deal with on a daily basis, on a daily basis sometimes. And that is just the enemy's voice and all of his attempts to get you and I to trust in self or other things other than the Lord. And so, I'll be calling these things out as we go through them.

But I want you to see how it begins in verse one here of chapter 36. Look in your Bible. It says:

*"In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, (again, this is the southern kingdom of Judah) Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against the fortified cities of Judah and took them." (ESV)*

Now, remember, Jerusalem is the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah. You guys remember what the capital of the northern kingdom was before Israel was taken away? It was Samaria, okay? That was their capital city.

Whenever you have a capital, you have outlying cities that you call fortified cities. And what a king would do to protect his throne and the nation itself is they would take these fortified cities and they would build them up as military cities. And those cities would be strongholds to... and very tough to get past to, in order to get to the capital city.

Of course, to conquer a nation, you really, you got to take the capital city. You have to basically, go in and take the king. And either kill him, or deport him, or whatever. That's when you've won the final battle. So these fortified cities are put in place in order to protect Jerusalem.

Well, guess what? The king of Assyria came into Judah, and he easily took the fortified cities. Now there's nothing left. There's no defense, really, to keep this invading army away from the capital. They will make their way. So that's a scary situation. You can kind of see what's going on here. All right.

This is kind of the climax, if you will, of what we've been kind of hearing about for some time now.

And it says in verse two that:

*"2 (And) the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh (or you might notice here in the ESV, it says "the Rabshakeh," and we believe that to be a title. It's like, it's kind of like general or commander, all right. In fact, there are some Bibles that actually just put in the word commander because it is a title.*

*And it says the king of Assyria sent this commander "from Lachish (and Lachish was one of those fortified cities, that was going to be tough to get past along with cities like Libna and others. But he's sending him from that area "to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, (it says) with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field. 3 And there came out to him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who (is) over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder.*

*4 And (the)Rabshakeh said to them, (now I want you to listen and pay close attention as we hear what this commander says, because this is the voice of the enemy. All right 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?" (ESV)*

In other words, why haven't you just surrendered? You know that we took all of your fortified cities. You see our army now approaching your city. Why did you close the gates and bar us entrance? Why didn't you just open the doors and let us come in? Obviously, if you've got the doors closed, you're trusting in something. What is it that you're trusting in? That's the first thing he's asking.

And then he says in verse 5:

*"5 Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust, that you have rebelled against me? 6 Behold, you are trusting in Egypt, (and actually some of the people were) 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." (ESV)*

And it's kind of interesting, verse six is essentially true. What the commander of the Assyrian army is saying in verse six, is basically true. He's basically mocking them. And he's saying, hey, if you're trusting in Egypt to come to your defense, he says, that's like a splintered reed of a staff and you put your weight on it, you lean on it, it's going to splinter and it's just going to put shards

of wood and stuff through your hands. It's going to end up hurting you if you try to lean on Egypt for your defense, and he was right.

And this is one of the first rather interesting things about the voice of the enemy. Sometimes the enemy speaks that which is true. And that is the really challenging thing about when the enemy speaks. Because we know Jesus told us that essentially the enemy lies, when he lies, he's speaking his native language. He is a liar. Satan is a liar, but that doesn't mean he can't speak things that are partially true in order to draw you off course, off base, or off balance. Even when he spoke to Jesus in the wilderness, Satan quoted scripture. He knows scripture and he can use it against you if you don't know how he's misusing it.

In this particular case, the enemy, the voice of the enemy speaks a word of truth. If you're depending on Egypt, just going to come back and bite you. Verse 7, he goes on, he says,

*"7 But if you say to me, 'We trust in the Lord our God,' (ESV)*

Now, stop there for a minute. Now look what he's doing. Look at the word, Lord, in your Bible. Do you see how it's spelled? Yeah, it's L O R D, of course. But did you notice that it's in all caps? He's using the divine name. He's using Yahweh. He's not just saying, using some generic name for God. He is speaking a name that all of the Jews who are hearing him speak are going to fully recognize this commander came armed with an understanding of the God of the Israelites. And he says, listen, if you're saying to me that we're going to trust in Yahweh, our God, well, look what he goes on to say:

*"is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar'?" (ESV)*

Now, let me stop here. This comment by the commander is just really born out of flat out ignorance. This commander thinks that Hezekiah did a bad thing by telling the people they couldn't go worship at the high places. And by telling the people they had to worship in Jerusalem at the temple.

Hezekiah was just passing along what God commanded. They were to worship in Jerusalem. They were only to sacrifice at the temple. They were not... But see, the people were rebellious. And what are high places? And what are, what is important about a high place? You have to understand that's pagan thought. And they were very greatly influenced by pagan thought, even as Israelites. The pagans would worship their pagan deities on mounds, hills, mountaintops, because they believed that the closer you were to the heavens, the more access

you had to your pagan deity. They were superstitious about it. You're going to get close to God? Climb a hill. That's essentially what they believed. And so high places became very popular places of worship for the pagans.

Well, the Israelites, who became very influenced by pagan understanding, began to apply that same principle to worshipping Yahweh. And yeah, they were truly worshipping Yahweh. But they were doing what they were not to do, and that was they were sacrificing to Yahweh on these high places. Because they developed this superstitious idea that if we do it on a high place, we're closer to God. And you guys know that's stupid. High, low, in, out, wherever you may be, God is there, and you don't need to be worried about it.

Hezekiah had commanded that those high places be demolished and that the people worship in Jerusalem at the temple. Well, this commander heard about that and he thought, well, that's a bad thing. So, he's saying things that he really doesn't even fully understand. He's just using anything he can. And again, that's the voice of the enemy to use whatever he can to try to bring some kind of a smear on the name of the Lord.

Verse eight, he goes on. He says,

*"8 Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I'll give you two thousand horses, if you're able on your part to set riders on them." (ESV)*

And of course, that statement is meant to belittle and to mock the condition of God's people. And this again is the voice of the enemy. And what the enemy is saying here, in essence, is you don't have the ability to even fight this battle. Tell you what, if you can supply riders, I'll give you horses for them. I dare you. I dare you to come up with enough riders. We'll give you the horses so you can at least put up a fight. Do you hear what the enemy's doing? These are things that you need to hear and understand. This is how the enemy speaks.

He goes on, verse nine, but he's talking about giving them horses. He says,

But... *"9 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? (And then he delivers his most undermining comment, I think, perhaps of all. He says in verse 10:) 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?" (ESV)*

This is again, the voice of the enemy who speaks for God, right? Who claims to speak for God. This is God doing this.

Have you ever been through a hard time in your life, a very difficult season in your life, that, where the enemy was just attacking, but the enemy put this thought maybe into your mind or whatever about how, "Oh yeah, this is God. This is God doing this. He has... He's commanded this." And that's what he's saying here.

And you know, guys, whenever the enemy speaks for God, you know that you have a battle on your hands. But let me tell you something else, when God's people start to listen to the voice of the enemy who claims to be speaking for God, then you know that defeat isn't far behind. The last thing we need to do is listen to the voice of the enemy. The last thing. And when we start to do that, we're almost surely defeated at that point.

It tells us in verse 11 that:

*"<sup>11</sup> Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to 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."*

*<sup>12</sup> 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?" (ESV) (Ew, yuck.)*

Now again, comments meant to intimidate and terrify through the whole issue of impending humiliation. Do you understand that in those days, the way they battled a city that was walled and closed is they would lay siege to that city. Meaning that they would surround it with their army, and they wouldn't let anybody come in and they wouldn't let anybody go out. If they did, they'd kill them and they would just...

And so the people, the inhabitants of the city are dependent upon whatever food, whatever water they have there in the city to live upon. And so, if the enemy can outlast them, because they have resources, if they can outlast them, eventually they can starve the people out.

And there were times in Israel's history when people actually resorted to cannibalism during a siege, okay. It really happened. Parents would eat their children because they were starving so much during the siege. It's horrific to

even think of it, but it's in the Bible. And that's what he's essentially referring to here.

And then verse 13 says:

*"<sup>13</sup> 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! <sup>14</sup> Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you.*

*<sup>15</sup> Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord by saying, 'The Lord will surely deliver us. The city will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.' (Again, he's using Yahweh, the divine name here as he speaks to the people in Hebrew. He says,) Do not listen to Hezekiah. For thus says the king of Assyria: Make peace with me. (Imagine that a man of violence saying, make peace with me) and come out to me. (Look what he promises) Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of (you) his own fig tree, and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern, <sup>17</sup> until 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." (ESV)*

And that's by the way, how Assyria treated their conquered nations. They would exile them to the land of one of their other conquered nations. They would basically swap, and this would keep them in a weakened position. They would take the people and basically just deport them to another area where they had previously conquered a nation. But you can see what the voice of the enemy is doing here, can't you? He says, "if you'll just surrender, you'll live."

First of all, you'll be able to stay home and do all the things that you're doing. Take care of your own land, the produce of your land. Now I will come, and I'll take you away, but I'm going to take you to a place that's going to be just as nice. You're really not sacrificing anything if you just give in. Because I'm going to take you to a good place. And there you'll be taken care of, there you'll have food to eat, and you'll be able to live out your days. It's not going to be so bad." And that is the voice of the enemy. If you'll just compromise, it won't be that bad.

Guys, when we compromise to the voice of the enemy, it's always that bad, and worse. Because he never tells us the truth. It's always a lie and compromise is always bad.

So he says in verse 18:

*"18 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? (And then he starts naming, he says,) So "19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? (ESV)*

Again, remember Samaria was the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And by the way, it had fallen 21 years earlier to this very same military force. And now he's asking the people of Jerusalem, should you be counting on your God? I mean, wait a minute, aren't you guys kind of closely related to the Israelites? I mean, aren't they your brothers? And your God couldn't help them. What makes you think He's going to help you? You are just as doomed as them. So, get these ideas out of your head.

Do you see what the enemy's doing? When you and I are going through a difficult time, and something is attacking, whatever it may be, the great work of the enemy is for you and I to begin to look at the lives of other people and to compare them with our own. And that's when the voice of the enemy is given rise to be able to say to you and I, well, look what happened to them. Did they get spared? Look at that person. Look at that marriage. Look at that home. Look at those kids. Look at that person's health. Yeah, see, did trusting in God help them? I don't think so. Do you hear the voice of the enemy? Basically, tempting us to say, yeah, you're right. God is not faithful. And I guess there's nothing that can be done. You can see what's happening here. The enemy is trying to bring you to a place of total disappointment with God, hopelessness to give up.

He goes on, verse 20:

*20 "Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the Lord (Yahweh) should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand. (And that's, of course, I think that comment right there is the one that basically sunk this guy's ship. But we'll see that here in a minute. But it goes on to tell us in verse 21:)*

*"21 But they were silent and they answered him not a word, for the king had commanded them, 'Do not answer him.'"*

Oh, is that smart or what? Don't talk to the enemy. Oh, let me tell you, don't talk to the enemy. Talk to God. You're not going to get ahead talking to the enemy. You're not going to get ahead talking to Satan or talking to his demons. You're not going to get ahead doing that. Talk to God about it.



I think Hezekiah was incredibly smart here. He said to his men, and they obeyed. Don't answer him. Don't speak. Very smart.

Verse 22:

*"<sup>22</sup> 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 Rabshika. (ESV)*

All right. Chapter 37.

Now, remember something about Hezekiah. By the way, these two chapters are sometimes called the "Book of Hezekiah." Obviously, there's no such thing, but because of the fact that he is the central character, he is a godly man. Not perfect, but godly.

We've been looking here at the voice of the enemy, and we've been learning how the enemy attacks, and how to recognize a spiritual attack when you see it. And how the enemy uses things like mocking, and disappointment, and getting you to compare your life with other people. And trying to minimize the power of God in your life by getting you to look at other things, and other circumstances and situations. And we've gone through all that so that you would be more forearmed and understand how the enemy works.

But now I want you to notice in this chapter, how Hezekiah responds. Because there is great wisdom here about dealing with spiritual attack. Okay, so let's begin here. Verse one:

*"<sup>1</sup> As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, (meaning the news these men brought) he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the Lord." (ESV)*

I want you to stop there for a moment, because there are three things he did that I think are really important for you and I to see. You'll notice that he tore his clothes, and that was always a sign of grief. They would rend their garment, literally tear, so if you were walking around with torn clothes in that day, everybody would know that you were in a place of great grief.

In other words, I'm not celebrating. I'm not joyful. I'm not jubilant. I'm grieving. Okay? This is that sign of grief if you will. We have signs of grief that have been around for hundreds of years, even that still are today. People typically,

when they go to a funeral, they usually wear black, and that's a sign of grief. And that's something that we're aware of and so forth.

But this is what they would do. They would tear their clothes. And I think what's most important, though, is not that we're showing a sign of grief for other people, but our grieving is recognized by the Lord.

There's a point when we need to come to God, and we need to pull out all the stops to come to God and pray and really meet him in the place of prayer. And that's not while you're playing video games, or while you're having fun on your social media, or watching a movie, or, yeah, we'll go pray as soon as the movie's over, or something like that. No, when you're in that place of grief, you set aside everything, and you say, I am going to focus my attention. This is my goal. This is what I'm doing now. I'm setting aside all these other niceties, and I am going to seek the Lord.

And for you and I it might be fasting. And fasting from things is more than just not eating. You can fast from a lot of things. There's even other examples of biblical fasting.

The Apostle Paul talks to married couples in the New Testament in Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 7:5) And he says, if you decide that you're going to fast from marital relations, he talks about that, he says, that's fine, but only do it if you, if the both of you agree on it. And then only do it for a little while, and then come back together again so that you're not tempted by the enemy. But see that was a form of fasting was to literally refrain from the regular kind of marital relationships between a husband and a wife.

There's all kinds of different fastings that we can do. Today, we can fast from a lot of things. And I would recommend, if you need to focus your attention in prayer, you need to like turn off the TV, or shut down the computer, or whatever book you happen to be reading or whatever. Get rid of it. Set it aside and focus your attention on the Lord. And that's that sign of grief that you're coming to God with.

Then you'll notice the next thing he did is he covered himself with sackcloth and that was a sign of humility. That was a picture of humility. And for you and I, it's humble yourself before your God. Humble yourself. And that means come to God and say, I can't do this. I can't fight this battle on my own. I'm not strong enough. That's putting on sackcloth for you and I. Coming to God in your weakness. In the midst of your weakness, Lord, I'm weak. I need your help.

And then you'll notice that the last thing he did here is he went into the house of the Lord. Now, that's a little bit different for you and I because we don't have houses of the Lord anymore. This is not a house of the Lord. This is a building. This is just kind of a fancy onion shed. This is not the house of the Lord. You are the house of the Lord. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Under the new covenant, each and every believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit. And together, we're told in the New Testament we are being built up into a holy structure, the church.

The cool thing is that the Holy Spirit's living in your heart. You can pray anywhere. You can seek the presence of God anywhere, anytime. You don't have to go to a specific place. Isn't that delightful?

I watch movies once in a while where somebody's going through a hard time. They go, I just need to go to a church and pray. I'm like, why? I mean, it's one thing if you want to go get prayer support, that's great. And we're going to see that actually as an important step in a minute, but a lot of times when people come to pray in a church, they want to find a church where there's nobody there so they can go and pray by themselves. I mean if you want to pray in a church building, that's your business but it's not going to make you any closer to God than if you were praying in your garage, or in your car, or in your bedroom, or in your bathroom for that matter. Your prayer closet can be anywhere, and it's holy, because it's where you're going to meet with God, alright?

Keep in mind that, even though we see here in Hezekiah, going to the house of the Lord, for you and I, that is just seeking God's presence with all of our hearts. Seeking Him through His Word. Seeking Him through His Spirit.

And it says here in verse 2:

*"2 that 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,*

This is where you go get prayer support. Prayer support is very important during a time of spiritual attack. Guys, do you understand we were never meant to go it alone?

Do you know that when you were born again, you weren't just born again? You were born into a family. I mean, it's wonderful enough just being born again, but you were born into a family. And the people who are your fellow believers are your brothers and sisters in Christ. And you need them, and they need you.

And when you're going through a hard time, we need to be able to humble ourselves enough to look somebody in the eye and say I need prayer. I need you to pray. I need you to pray for me because we're going through a rough season right now. The enemy is just really attacking, and this is hard, and I need prayer support.

And the people you talk to ought to be able to say absolutely we will pray for you, because I know that I'm going to turn around one day and I'm going to come to you with the same request. You need to pray for me. Man, we need prayer support. So they go to Isaiah, and they say this is what we need.

Verse 3:

*"<sup>3</sup> 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.' (That's what they say it's like. A woman who's carried a baby for nine months, and then she has no strength to actually birth the child.) "<sup>4</sup> It may be (they go on in verse four,) 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. (In other words, for those of us who are left, they're saying to Isaiah, "Pray for us, pray. We need you to pray."*

Verse 5:

*<sup>5</sup> When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, <sup>6</sup> Isaiah 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. <sup>7</sup> Behold, 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.'"*

*And then"...<sup>8</sup> Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libna, for he had heard that the king had left Lachish."*

Now again, Libna and Lachish are cities, fortified cities around Jerusalem. And apparently, after conquering Libna, it rallied and then attacked the Assyrian army again. These are Israelites, these are Jews living in Judah. And they obviously kind of got a second wind while all this is going on. And they re-attacked the king of Assyria that was near them. And this is what this commander is hearing about, all right. Says, the king had left Lachish where they had obviously conquered that city.

Now it says in verse 9:

*"9 Now the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, 'He has set out to fight against you.'"*

All right, now, you got to understand what's going on because you got to understand the history. Do you remember earlier how the commander was saying, do not trust in the king of Egypt? Well, at this time in history, Cush had conquered Egypt. And a Cushite king was ruling over Egypt.

What the commander is hearing here is, or rather the king is hearing, is that the king of Egypt, and he's called here the "king of Cush," is coming out to fight. And they probably assume that they're mercenaries. The people that Judah had hired to come and do that. And so this is going to kind of throw things off a little bit.

It goes on into verse 9, and it says, *"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.' (ESV)"*

I want you to stop there for a minute, because again we're back now to the voice of the enemy. And this is a very crucial time for the voice of the enemy to speak. Because remember, he'd been speaking, he'd been mocking, but they humbled themselves, sought the Lord in humility and grief. And the Lord spoke through Isaiah, and said don't worry, I'm going to take care of this.

And then there's this kind of the shifting and movement. And there's the word that Libna had kind of rallied against Assyria a little bit. And, oh, wait, now the king of Egypt is coming down to help out or to attack we heard, maybe, I don't know what's going on. And right when they kind of think that, okay, maybe things are looking up, now, another message comes from the king of Assyria.

And he says this time it isn't, don't trust in your king. He's saying don't trust in your God. He says don't believe anything your God says. If your God has purported to have spoke saying I'm going to deliver you, don't believe it. He's deceiving you. See what's going on? See how the enemy is now attacking God specifically? He says don't let your God deceive you.

Verse 11:

*"<sup>11</sup> Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? <sup>12</sup> Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed. Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who are in Telassar? <sup>13</sup> Where's the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?*

*<sup>14</sup> Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; (Now guys, check this out) and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord." (ESV)*

This is beautiful because this is a symbolic act on his part to take that which is threatening me, and lay it at the feet of my Savior, right? My Deliverer. And that's what we need to do. Guys, this is what we need to do when we are threatened by anything. Bring it to the feet of your God. Make it His problem.

Do you know that's what we just have such a hard time learning. We think that what we're going through is my problem. Here's my problem, and Pastor Paul, let me just tell you about my problem. Make it God's problem. Lay it at his feet. Father, I lay this before you. Look at what they've said. Look at what they're saying, whatever it may be. Look Lord!

And I just love this. And I want you to listen to his prayer because Hezekiah prays a great prayer of faith that you and I can greatly learn from.

Verse 15:

*"<sup>15</sup> And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: <sup>16</sup> "Oh, Lord of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, (And then look what he says here, You are the God. You are the God. You're not just a God) "you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth." (ESV)*

What is Hezekiah doing in that statement? He's acknowledging that Yahweh is the God of the Assyrians. Even though they say they have all these other pagan deities. He says but I know better. You are the God over all. Every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. There is no God above.

Verse 17. Now, listen to his prayer:

*"<sup>17</sup> Incline your ear, (and that means listen) 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." (ESV)*

Notice that Hezekiah is not saying that Sennacherib is mocking him. It's not a personal thing. He has come to mock You, God. And then, and I want you to see what he does in verse 18, and this is going to fly in the face of what you hear in the prosperity movement, the name it, claim it, the positive confession.

Look at verse 18:

*"<sup>18</sup> Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands;" (ESV)*

What is Hezekiah doing here in his prayer? He's acknowledging, you know what, they're bragging about all these nations they've conquered, and you know what, they're right. I mean, they're not lying. It really has happened. In other words, this is a real threat. This is a genuine threat. They're not just blowing smoke, right?

I love that because this is what David used to do as well. David used to call it like it was. He didn't kind of make it all flowery and like pretend like there isn't a problem. Like we've been told to do by some preachers and teachers of the Word. Just don't confess that you have a problem. Don't let those words even come out of your mouth, because that's a negative confession, and you'll just reinforce with the bad stuff that's going on in your life. That is nonsense. It is absolute nonsense. And we see a biblical example of being able to acknowledge this is a genuine threat. It's very real. And that's, Lord, why I'm calling upon your name.

But look what he goes on to say. And he says in verse 19,

*"<sup>19</sup> and they have cast their gods, (meaning the gods of these other nations) into the fire." (ESV) And you know why, because they were no gods at all, but the work of men's hands - wood and stone. Therefore, they were destroyed. <sup>20</sup> So now, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are the Lord." (ESV)*

I love that. Lord don't save it. Don't save us for my sake. Save us for Your sake. That all the kingdoms may know that You are God. And now the Lord's response. Got to love it when the Lord responds like this.

*"<sup>21</sup> 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; <sup>22</sup> this is the word that the Lord has spoken concerning him: (you're ready? Here it is:)*

*<sup>23</sup> "'She despises you, she scorns you- ( Who's he talking about? He mentions it now,) the virgin daughter of Zion; she wags her head behind you- the daughter of Jerusalem." (ESV)*

What's going on here? You see, the king of Assyria has been mocking. But now he is characterizing Jerusalem as, or as he says, calls her "*the daughter of Jerusalem*," as mocking back. And notice that "she" is referred to here as "*the virgin daughter of Zion*."

The word virgin here is now meant to kind of identify that Jerusalem will be untouched and undefiled. It's kind of almost like, as if Jerusalem is portrayed in these words, as what would otherwise be "a helpless virgin" who is getting the last laugh against her would be attacker, or to make it really graphic, rapist. Because that's essentially the way the Assyrian army is depicted here. And the virgin daughter of Jerusalem has the last laugh, and she says, "*she despises you, she scorns you*."

Verse 23:

*"<sup>23</sup> Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? (that speaking of prideful arrogance, He says, I'll tell you who) Against the Holy One of Israel!*

*<sup>24</sup> 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.*

*"<sup>25</sup> I dug wells and drank waters, to dry up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt." (ESV)*

You see what the Lord is doing here? He's confronting the prideful arrogance and boasting of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. He says and you're saying you did all this. But look what the Lord says here in verse 26:

*<sup>26</sup> "'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, (or literally, with their strength cut away) 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."(ESV)*

What is God saying to the king of Assyria? I am the Lord God, and I give abilities, and I take them away. And if you have had any success, it's because I have graciously allowed it. I am the God who governs sovereignly over the affairs of all mankind. And you did not escape my notice. And anything you have, I gave you, so don't boast as if you have it in your own hand, and it was by your own strength, and guile and strategy and wisdom. I allowed it.

Look what God says in verse 28. Boy, this is a great statement!

*28 "I know your sitting down and your going out and your coming in, and your (all of your) raging against me (and that's God's way of saying, I've got your number, buddy.) And ...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.*

*29 "And this (shall) will 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." (ESV)*

And by the way, this is a word for Judah now. What is God saying? And it's because it's a really incredible sign. It's an incredible thing that he's saying here among the Jews.

Because whenever an invading army came into a land, they would basically just trample, well, they would eat anything that they found in the open fields because they had to sustain an entire army. When an army came in, they would literally devastate the land. They would take everything, right? Everything they found they would just say it's ours.

And so that kind of devastation could take years to recover from, right? What God's saying here, He's saying listen, tell you what, I'm going to confirm this Word. And here's how I'm going to confirm it. I'm going to cause such significant growth among your unplanted crops, these crops that the Assyrians have come into the land and taken. I'm going to cause such incredible growth among those crops that it will furnish the people with food for three seasons without you even lifting a finger except to go out in the fields and get it. And that's how I'm going to confirm my deliverance to you. Isn't that amazing?

Verse 31 says,

*"<sup>31</sup> And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. (In other words, they're staying right here for now.) <sup>32</sup> 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.*

*<sup>33</sup> "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. <sup>34</sup> By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the Lord. <sup>35</sup> For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant, David." (ESV)*

Wow! David's been gone for a long time, and yet still, for the sake of the obedience of David, God says I will spare the city.

Look how it happened. Verse 36:

*<sup>36</sup> "And the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when the people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. <sup>37</sup> Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home (kind of with his tail between his legs. Doesn't say that, but that's kind of the essence you get) and lived at Nineveh." (ESV)*

Remember, Nineveh was the capital city of the Assyrian empire. That will give you ladies a little bit of geography for your Jonah study that you're currently in concerning Jonah's call to go and preach repentance to the Ninevites. The Ninevites were simply the residents of the capital city of Assyria. That's why Jonah didn't want to go. These were the Assyrians. We hate their guts, and the last thing I want to do is preach repentance. You know why? They might listen and then God's going to spare His judgment. I don't want to see that happen. I want to see God judge them. I want to see God nuke them. That's why he ran away. I won't preach Sue's message here.

He says he went and lived in Nineveh. Verse 38:

*"<sup>38</sup> And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his God, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword. (In other words, they assassinated their father.) And after they escaped into the land of Ararat, (which would be modern day Turkey) Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place." (ESV)*

And so, God's deliverance. Can you imagine going out after being walled in, and you go out and the army is like, they're not coming out to do their threats, and all this stuff, so they go to send somebody to investigate, and they come back, and they go, they're all dead (185,000)? That's a lot of men, a lot of warriors. They're all dead. They're all just dead. They're slain. They're dead.

By the way, it was one angel. Now, it tells you the angels don't look like those little naked things with the bow and arrow. They're not going to go out and kill 185,000 warriors. We can go, ping (the sound of shooting an arrow). It's not going to happen. No, these (angels) are big strong dudes!