

INITIATION INTO ISAIAH

by

J. Vernon McGee, Th.D., LL.D.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

THEME:

King Hezekiah's prayer and the destruction of the Assyrian hosts.

REMARKS:

This chapter continues and concludes the incident of chapter 36.

OUTLINE:

1. **REACTION of Hezekiah to the Messenger's Report.** Verses 1-4
2. **RETURN of a Word of Encouragement to Hezekiah from the Lord by Isaiah.** Verses 5-7
3. **RETIREMENT of Rabshakeh Temporarily from Jerusalem and His Letter to Hezekiah.** Verses 8-13
4. **RECEPTION of the Letter of the Assyrian by Hezekiah and His Prayer.** Verses 14-20
5. **RELEASE of God's Answer by Isaiah to Hezekiah's Prayer.** Verses 21-35
6. **RECORD of the Destruction of 185,000 Assyrians by the Angel of the Lord.** Verses 36-38

COMMENT:

Verse 1—**And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.**

Hezekiah's reaction to the report of his messengers reveals a man of great piety. In his extremity he turns to God and goes to the house of the Lord.

Verse 2—**And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.**

He now sends his messengers to Isaiah, the prophet. This is another act of faith.

Verse 3—**And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth.**

The message to Isaiah was surely ominous and black. It was a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy.

Verse 4—It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.

Here Hezekiah reveals an aberration of faith on his part, he speaks of the Lord as “**thy God**” and not as “our God.” Note that he corrected this in his prayer in verse 20.

Verse 5—So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

Verse 6—And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

God gives assurance to Hezekiah that the blasphemy of the Assyrian has not escaped His attention. Likewise, God cannot nor will He ignore it.

Verse 7—Behold, I will send a blast upon him, 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.

God declares the destruction of the Assyrian. This had literal fulfillment, as we shall see.

Verse 8—So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

Verse 9—And he heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying.

A rumor came that the main force of the Assyrian army was being attacked by the Egyptian army. Rabshakeh withdrew temporarily to assist the main force of the Assyrian army, but to “save face” he dispatched a letter from Sennacherib to Hezekiah.

Verse 10—Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.

He repeats the same words of Rabshakeh.

Verse 11—Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?

Verse 12—Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezep, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar?

Here he goes beyond the former word and boasts that no gods of any nation had delivered their people out of the hand of the Assyrian.

Verse 13—Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?

He quotes historical facts that were difficult to answer.

Verse 14—And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.

When Hezekiah received the letter, he went to God directly and spread the letter before Him. Then follows one of the truly great prayers of Scripture.

Verse 15—And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, saying,

Verse 16—O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

No instructed Israelite believed that God was a local deity who could occupy a house in Jerusalem.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee: how much less this house that I have builded (I Kings 8:27).

Solomon made it clear that God did not inhabit a man-made house, Hezekiah recognizes that the Shekinah presence of God abode between the cherubims and that man approached Him only by sacrifice and that he approached a mercy seat, he acknowledges that God is creator of all and God over all.

Verse 17—Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.

He shows God the letter and calls attention to the fact that it is directly against God.

Verse 18—Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries.

Verse 19—And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

He acknowledges the truth of the letter. There was no need to deny or ignore it. When we deal with God, it is wise to tell Him the truth, especially about ourselves, and not try to conceal anything.

Verse 20—Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only.

This is a simple appeal to God to save for His Name's sake. This is praying.

Verse 21—Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria:

God will answer.

Verse 22—This is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

Verse 23—Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes so high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

Verse 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.

Verse 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.

Verse 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 shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps.

Verse 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.

Verse 28—But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

The Assyrian has blasphemed God, and He will do something about it. The pride of the Assyrian caused him to boast, his success deceived him. God will humble him.

Verse 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.

God had heard the blasphemy of the Assyrian, and He had taken note of it (See verse 4).

Verse 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 primary thought is that the children of Judah would continue on in the land a little longer. Difficult days were in the future, but God would use them to strengthen His people.

Verse 31—And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward:

This would all lead to the vine producing fruit, note this lovely expression, “**take root downward, and bear fruit upward.**” which is applicable to all of God’s children in all ages.

Verse 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.

It is the remnant that is true to God.

Verse 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.

Note the boldness of this prophecy. If one of the 185,000 Assyrians had accidentally shot an arrow over the walls of Jerusalem, God’s Word would be inaccurate, how wonderful are the promises of God!

Verse 34—By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord.

This is specific and was also literally fulfilled.

Verse 35—For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David’s sake.

God promises to defend His city for His sake and David’s sake, has God promised to defend His own?

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand (John 10:27-28).

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are (John 17:11).

Verse 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.

This is solemn. Judgment is coming and that is sure.

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:31).

This is a great miracle. It is a preview and a forward of the Great Tribulation when Israel will again be hemmed in on every side. The Lord Jesus Christ will deliver them at His coming. Who is the angel of the Lord? Could it not be the pre-incarnate Christ?

Verse 37—So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

Verse 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.

Secular history states that this actually happened and Sennacherib was slain by his sons. The first chapter of sacred history ends with this great miracle of the slaying of the 185,000 Assyrians by the angel of the Lord.

We are now ready to turn the page of sacred history to the second chapter which concerns the personal life of Hezekiah. Another miracle is recorded.

~ end of chapter 37 ~

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