

Isaiah 36:1–22

As we turn to Isaiah chapter 36, we leave behind the glorious prophecies of Isaiah chapter 35, where the Lord promises that one day the deserts will blossom, the lame will leap, the blind will see, and the earth itself will be renewed in the coming Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. That chapter gave us a glimpse into the restoration of the earth to something of its Eden-like beauty. But now, Isaiah takes us from prophecy into history.

From chapters 36 through 39, Isaiah records events that also appear in 2 Kings 18–20. By including them here, Isaiah shows that God’s Word is not just lofty promises but is anchored in history. What God foretold about Assyria’s invasion came to pass exactly as He said.

The Setting (Isaiah 36:1–3)

“Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.” (Isaiah 36:1, NKJV)

The Assyrians were the dominant empire of the time. Their armies were ruthless and their record of conquest was unmatched. One by one, the fortified cities of Judah fell. Eventually, Sennacherib’s field commander, known as the Rabshakeh, marched against Jerusalem itself.

Hezekiah, the king of Judah, had been a godly king who tore down the high places and cleansed the land of idolatry. Yet even faithful believers face times of testing. The threat against Jerusalem would test not only Hezekiah but the faith of all God’s people.

The Challenge of the Enemy (Isaiah 36:4–10)

Rabshakeh’s message to Jerusalem dripped with arrogance and mockery:

- He ridiculed Judah’s trust in Egypt, comparing it to leaning on a broken reed that pierces the hand.
- He mocked their trust in the Lord, misrepresenting Hezekiah’s reforms as if he had insulted God rather than honored Him.
- He even claimed that the Lord had sent Assyria to destroy Judah.

This is a picture of how the enemy of our souls operates today. Satan whispers doubts, distorts truth, and twists God’s Word to make us feel weak and defenseless. He points to the failures around us and tells us that trusting God is pointless.

The Pressure of Intimidation (Isaiah 36:11–20)

The officials of Judah asked Rabshakeh to speak in Aramaic rather than Hebrew so the people on the wall would not understand. But he deliberately shouted in Hebrew, aiming to demoralize the people.

He told them not to trust their king and not to trust the Lord. Instead, he promised them ease, prosperity, and safety—if they would simply surrender. This was the enemy’s most dangerous tactic: the temptation to compromise in exchange for comfort.

Rabshakeh compared the God of Israel to the false gods of other nations, boasting that none of them could save their people. His logic was simple: “If their gods failed, your God will too.” But he did not realize that the God of Israel is not like the gods of the nations. He alone is the living and true God.

The Response of God’s People (Isaiah 36:21–22)

“But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king’s commandment was, ‘Do not answer him.’” (Isaiah 36:21, NKJV)

Sometimes the wisest response to the enemy’s taunts is silence. We do not need to match the world’s arguments word for word. Instead, we turn to the Lord in prayer and let Him answer on our behalf.

The officials tore their clothes in grief and brought the message to Hezekiah. Their despair would soon be met by God’s deliverance.

Practical Application

1. **Trust God above human strategy.** Judah was tempted to look to Egypt for help, but God had told them to trust Him alone. Likewise, we are tempted to lean on human solutions when life overwhelms us. Wisdom is valuable, but ultimate security comes only from the Lord.
2. **Don’t be surprised by mockery.** Just as Rabshakeh mocked Judah’s faith, people today mock Christians for trusting in God’s promises. But mockery does not nullify truth. Stand firm in your faith even when others belittle it.
3. **Guard against compromise.** The enemy’s offer—“surrender and life will be easy”—is still whispered to us. But compromise with sin never brings peace. True peace comes from trusting the Lord, even in trials.
4. **Be still before the Lord.** When faced with attacks or doubts, sometimes the best response is to be quiet and bring the matter before God. He is our defender, and His Word is our answer.

Invitation

Isaiah 36 leaves us at a moment of great tension. The city is surrounded, the enemy is mocking, and the people are afraid. Yet in the chapters that follow, God will prove Himself faithful.

Maybe you feel surrounded today—by fear, by temptation, by guilt, or by circumstances you cannot control. The same God who delivered Jerusalem is the God who sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to deliver you from sin and death.

Jesus died on the cross and rose again so you could be forgiven and have eternal life. But His deliverance is not forced upon anyone. It is received by faith.

The Bible says, *“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out”* (Acts 3:19, NKJV). That means turning from sin, trusting in Jesus, and giving your life into His hands.

Today, you can pray and say, *“Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I turn from my sin and put my trust in You. Come into my life, forgive me, and make me Yours.”*

And for those who already believe: this passage reminds us to trust Him every day, not leaning on our own understanding, not giving in to fear, and not compromising with the world. Stand firm. Trust the Lord. He is faithful.