

ISAIAH: GOD'S DIRECTIVES TO THOSE TROUBLED AT GOVERNMENTAL APOSTASY
Part XXVI: God's Salvation From Our Enemies Through Our Aligning With God
(Isaiah 36:1-37:38)

I. Introduction

- A. There are times when we face formidable opposition to our welfare in some context.
- B. The **wrong way** to respond is to focus on the opponent in our own strength and thus flee from him or fight to defeat him: either way, we abandon God's will and fellowship to our own harm.
- C. Hezekiah exemplified the right response -- that of aligning with God so that God can handle the opponent:

II. God's Salvation From Our Enemies Through Our Aligning With God, Isaiah 36:1-37:38.

- A. Judah's king Hezekiah came to be opposed by the Assyrians who threatened to destroy Judah, Isa. 36:1.
- B. In so doing, the Assyrian military commander, Rab-shakeh communicated the will of his king, Sennacherib to Hezekiah so that Hezekiah might surrender to Assyria without a fight, Isaiah 36:2-4.
- C. Rab-shakeh's message from Sennacherib aimed to belittle not only the trust the faithless put in Egypt, but to belittle Judah's God so that Hezekiah and Judah would be intimidated into surrendering, 36:5-20:
 - 1. Rab-shakeh told Hezekiah's messengers that were Judah to rely on some protection treaty with Egypt, she would be harmed since Egypt was an unreliable ally, Isaiah 36:5-6, 9.
 - 2. Then, ignorant of God's Law that He was to be worshiped only at the Jerusalem temple site (cf. Deut. 12:2-5), Rab-shakeh assumed Hezekiah's former destruction of many places for worshipping God apart from the Jerusalem temple meant Hezekiah distrusted God; Rab-shakeh thus referred to Hezekiah's destruction of these errant sites to try intimidating the people of Judah by implying Hezekiah's trust in God's power to rescue them from the Assyrians was a limited trust, Isaiah 36:4b, 7.
 - 3. Rab-shakeh also suggested the God of Jerusalem was not able to deliver Judah from the Assyrian army, for other peoples had not seen their gods able to deliver them from the Assyrians, Isaiah 36:15, 18-20.
- D. When Hezekiah's messengers heard this taunt from Rab-shakeh, they remained silent in accord with Hezekiah's command and brought message to Hezekiah of what Rab-shakeh had said, Isaiah 36:21-22.
- E. Realizing Assyria's king through his messenger, Rab-shakeh had countered **God**, Hezekiah humbly sought God's deliverance from Assyria, **aligning** himself with **God**, Isaiah 37:1-5, 15-20:
 - 1. Hezekiah reacted to Rab-shakeh's blasphemy by tearing his clothes and covering himself with sackcloth and ashes in grief and entering the Lord's temple to seek His intervention, Isaiah 37:1.
 - 2. He then sent messengers dressed in sackcloth to God's prophet, Isaiah to express his grief at the blasphemy and to beseech the Lord's deliverance of Judah from the Assyrians, Isaiah 37:2-5.
 - 3. Hezekiah asked God to deliver Judah, citing the blasphemy as just cause for His intervention, 37:15-20
- F. God responded both by word and then by deed to Hezekiah's intercession as follows, Isaiah 37:21-38:
 - 1. God first responded to Rab-shakeh's taunt by word, countering his taunt at each point, Isaiah 37:21-35:
 - a. Through the prophet, Isaiah, God told Hezekiah of Judah's coming scorn of the Assyrian invaders, a scorn in response to the fact Assyria had scorned not only Judah, but Judah's God, Isaiah 37:21-25.
 - b. Through Isaiah, God revealed God had allowed Assyria to conquer the other nations, that this conquest was not due to Assyria's power over these nations' idols; since Assyria was biting the hand of God that had given her these victories, God would destroy Assyria, Isaiah 37:26-29.
 - c. Through Isaiah, God predicted Judah would be saved and blessed for trusting Him, 37:30-35.
 - 2. Then, by deed, the Lord acted to fulfill His response to Rab-shakeh: the Angel of the Lord destroyed 185,000 soldiers of the Assyrian army in one night; Sennacherib returned in humiliation to Assyria only to be assassinated in his false god's temple by his own sons where his false god was unable to protect him similar to how he had charged Judah's God would be likewise powerless to help, 37:36-38.

Lesson: *When threatened with destruction by the invading Assyrians, king Hezekiah rightfully trusted in God and aligned with God's will so that GOD would defeat the Assyrians FOR him!*

Application: *May we like Hezekiah resist the temptation either to fight or to flee from destructive foes; rather, we must trust in God and align ourselves with God's will in our lives as did Hezekiah (when he humbled himself before the Lord and sought His help in the true place of worship). We will then enjoy God's blessing on what we do, for it is GOD Who will handle our opponents FOR us!*