

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part LV: God's Discipling And Deliverance Of Judah From Assyria (Isaiah 37:1-38)

I. Introduction

- A. When Assyria invaded Judah and threatened the city of Jerusalem, the weak faith in God expressed by king Hezekiah and his officers and people surfaced in such a way that God could address it and offer deliverance.
- B. Isaiah 37:1-38 details that deliverance, providing invaluable lessons for us in the life of faith (as follows):

II. God's Discipling And Deliverance Of Judah From Assyria, Isaiah 37:1-38.

- A. We learned before that had Judah heeded Isaiah, she would have far more easily handled Assyria's invasion.
- B. However, Judah lacked such faith at the time, so Isaiah 37:1-38 details the trials of faith that it took to teach Judah of God's desire and ability to deliver her from even the humanly overwhelming threat of Assyria:
 - 1. God gave Hezekiah and his officials initial encouragement to trust Him to handle Assyria, Isaiah 37:1-7:
 - a. After the Assyrian official Rabshakah had given a verbal threat to Jerusalem and slandered the Lord outside the Jerusalem city wall, and the officials of Judah's king had come to king Hezekiah with a report on the incident, Hezekiah himself rent his clothes and asked an official with the elders of the priests to approach Isaiah for a word from God regarding Rabshakeh's blasphemy against Him, Isaiah 37:1-4.
 - b. When Hezekiah's servants came to Isaiah, he told them that God did not want them to fear the words and the blasphemy against Him, for the Lord would send a spirit to motivate the Assyrian king along with a rumor to make him return to his own land and there fall by the sword, Isaiah 37:5-7.
 - c. Remarkably, **not one word** occurs here of God's imminent supernatural slaying of the Assyrian army outside Jerusalem's city walls. God likely wanted Hezekiah to trust Him with what little information He had given Hezekiah so as to build his faith, Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, v. II, p. 477.
 - 2. The Lord then let the trial of faith increase that Hezekiah might himself call on God for help, Isa. 37:8-20:
 - a. Though Assyria's king had moved from Lachish north to Libnah, closer to Jerusalem in hope that Rabshakeh might have led Hezekiah to surrender (Isa. 37:8; Ibid., p. 478), he had then heard a rumor that Ethiopia to his south might move against him (Isa. 37:9), creating a threat for Assyria in having to fight Jerusalem and the invading Ethiopians on two fronts, Ibid., p. 479. He thus intended to threaten Jerusalem again to surrender to eliminate it as a future front were he to have to fight the Ethiopians, Isa. 37:9; Ibid.
 - b. Thus, Assyria's king sent messengers once again with a letter (v. 14a) to Hezekiah, warning him not to be deceived in trusting the Lord's promise that Jerusalem would not be defeated by Assyria, Isaiah 37:10.
 - c. The Assyrian king repeated his former claim that since none of the gods of the nations he had conquered were able to protect their people from him, Judah's God could not then protect Judah, Isaiah 37:11-13.
 - d. Deeply troubled at this renewed, enhanced threat from the Assyrians, Hezekiah took the letter to the temple of the Lord, spread it out before Him so God could read it, and prayed, pouring out his soul to the Lord for His help, Isaiah 37:14-20: Hezekiah referred to the Lord as Creator of the universe and sole God of the kingdoms of the world, Who dwelt in the Holiest of Holies in the temple (v. 14-16), and he asked that God hear and see all that Assyria's king had spoken in reproach of the living God (v. 17). Hezekiah admitted that Assyria's king had laid waste many nations in his latest advance (v. 18), but that was because their gods were false gods (v. 19), so Hezekiah sought the Lord as the only true God to save Judah, v. 20.
 - 3. Isaiah the prophet sent word to Hezekiah, asserting that the king of Assyria had blasphemed the true God, unaware that he had been a mere instrument in God's hands to punish wicked nations (Isaiah 37:21-27). Thus, the Lord would punish Assyria for its sin against Him, forcing him to turn back to where he had come without harming Jerusalem while Judah would enjoy peace and blessing, Isaiah 37:28-35.
 - 4. Thus, the Angel of the Lord, the Preincarnate Christ, slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers outside Jerusalem in one night (Isaiah 37:36). Assyria's king then returned to his city of Nineveh (Isaiah 37:37) where he was slain by his own sons while he worshiped in the temple of his false god Nisroch (Isaiah 37:38a), and his sons fled to Armenia so that another man became king, Isaiah 37:38b. Assyria's king was thus utterly defeated to where his own false god was helpless to save him, a fitting end for blaspheming the Lord!

Lesson: *Through rising trials of faith, Hezekiah finally had no choice but to cast himself upon God to be delivered.*

Application: *May we trust God at the first sign of trouble and not have to face greater trials to learn to trust Him!*