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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Isaiah 36.

(2015)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Isaiah 36.

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### Topics.

- Sennacherib king of Assyria comes up against the cities of Judah.
- The king of Assyria sends his Rabshakeh to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem.
- Eliakim and Shebna come out to the Assyrian Rabshakeh.
- The Rabshakeh scorns Hezekiah for trusting in Pharaoh King of Egypt.
- The Rabshakeh scorns Hezekiah for trusting in the LORD their God.
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- Eliakim and Shebna ask Rabshakeh, to speak in Aramaic and not Hebrew.
- The Rabshakeh calls Jerusalem to make peace with Assyria.
- The Rabshakeh claims Assyria's gods are greater than Israel's God.
- The Rabshakeh tells Jerusalem the LORD their God will not deliver them.
- The gods of Assyria and of the nations.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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**INTRODUCTION:** Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C.

He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12).

The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.

2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).
3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22). The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

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#### **Sennacherib King of Assyria comes up against the Cities of Judah.**

Isaiah 36:1 ----- <sup>1</sup>In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

**Hezekiah:** means Jehovah has strengthened. He was a good king of Judah and twenty-five years old when he began his reign. He reigned twenty-nine years. His father Ahaz followed the abominable rites of the Moabites by burning children in the fire. One of the first acts of Hezekiah was to destroy the idolatrous altars and high places and cleanse the Temple.

The Assyrian king Sargon finally destroyed the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria and deported the people to Assyria. Later Sennacherib king of Assyria invaded the land of Judah (the two tribes) and by military conquest forced the nation into submission to Assyria.

Assyria compelled Judah to pay heavy tribute (taxes) and later decided to destroy Jerusalem, but God saved the city by sending an angel into the Assyrian camp that slayed in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrian soldiers after which Sennacherib departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. (2 Kings 19:35-36). After Hezekiah's death, his son Manasseh succeeded him and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

**Sennacherib:** was an Assyrian king (705-681 B.C), the son and successor of Sargon 11 He restored the capital to Nineveh and constructed palaces, temples, city-walls and a water system. He reduced the city of Babylon to ruins during the reign of Hezekiah and came against Judah and took all of its fortified cities. He surrounded the city of Jerusalem and boasted that he had shut up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage. Isaiah brought Hezekiah God's assurance that Judah would be delivered from Assyria. Jerusalem was delivered by the LORD, who sent His angel to smite the Assyrian armies and thus forced Sennacherib to retire to his homeland, back in Nineveh (2 Kings 19:35-36). Sennacherib was assassinated by two of his sons and Esarhaddon gained the throne.

**Galilee:** (the heathen circle) is a region in northern Israel on the west side of the lake or Sea of Galilee in the northern district of Palestine, it was a city of refuge (Joshua 20:7) (Joshua 21:32) (1 Chron. 6:76). Galilee was known as Galilee of the Nations (Isaiah 9:1) or Gentiles because the Jews (then tribes of Israel) were carried away captive by Assyria and replaced by a colony of heathen immigrants. The predominate mixture of Gentile races corrupted the worship of Judaism.

For the same reason the Galilean accent and dialect was noticeably peculiar, this caused the southern Jews of purer blood and orthodox tradition to despise them (John 1:46). Galilee's debasement, or fall made some of its people feel their need of the Saviour, this and its comparative freedom from priestly and pharisaical leadership may have been additional reasons for receiving the larger share of the Lord's ministry. The Sea of Galilee is a harp-shaped lake in Samaria (north of Israel, 13.5 miles by 7.5 miles). It is also called: -

- Sea of Tiberias (John 21:1).
- Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1).
- Sea of Chinnereth (Num 34:11) (Deut. 3:17) (Joshua 13:27).
- Sea of Cinneroth (Joshua 12:3).

### **The King of Assyria sends His Rabshakeh to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem.**

Isaiah 36:2 -----<sup>2</sup>And the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field.

**Rabshakeh:** was the title of an Assyrian official and spokesman. Sennacherib the king of Assyria while attacking Lachish sent his Rabshakeh with a great army to Jerusalem to deliver an ultimatum to the city. The representatives of Hezekiah protested that the Rabshakeh should speak in Aramaic so that the people on the wall of Jerusalem would not understand what he was saying.

They most likely did this because they did not want the inhabitants of the city to be struck with fear by the mocking and scolding words that the Rabshakeh spoke. The Rabshakeh in defiance to Hezekiah officials request deliberately addressed his challenge in Aramaic to those onlookers and then left to join the Assyrian forces at Libnah.

It is interesting to notice that Sennacherib sent his messengers with a great army to the nation he was intending to attack, no doubt to intimidate his enemies and strike fear of Assyria into them. Nations today do the same thing by displaying the might of their weapons of war and their destructive power to the nation they are about to attack.

**Lachish:** was a town in Shephelah of Judah it occupied a strategic valley twenty-five miles south west of Jerusalem. It was successfully besieged by Sennacherib king of Assyria and from it the Rabshakeh's troops marched against Jerusalem.

**The Washer's Field:** (v2) the conduit of the upper pool refers to a channel of water from a pool used as a reservoir for the purpose of supplying water to the city or to different areas outside of the city for the supply of water to the people and the fields. The upper pool lies in the basin forming the head of the valley of Hinnom or Gihon, about seven hundred yards west of Jerusalem. The sides of this pool are built of hewn stones laid in cement, with steps at the corners by which to descend into it.

Today this reservoir lies in ruin and there is no visible means, by which water is now brought into it, but it is probable that it was filled in the rainy seasons by the waters which flowed from the higher ground round about. From this upper pool a part of the water was conveyed into the city of Jerusalem to a lower pool lying within the walls of the city. The area is referred to as the washers' field because the water channel ran alongside a main highway and was commonly used for washing cloth prior to drying and bleaching it.

## Eliakim and Shebna come out to the Assyrian Rabshakeh.

Isaiah 36:3 ----- <sup>3</sup>And there came out to him (the Rabshakeh) Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder.

**Eliakim:** comes from the Hebrew word (*'Elyaqiyim*) it means God of raising which carries the idea of God setting up and establishing (it is the name of four Israelites). Eliakim the son of Hilkiah was the successor of Shebna who was the master of the household of Hezekiah the king of Judah. Eliakim was in all things faithful to the trust of the king and the trust the LORD had given him.

From (Isaiah 36) we see that he was head of the rulers of the palace; that he was the spokesman for the delegation from Hezekiah which attempted to negotiate with the representatives of Sennacherib the king of Assyria who was besieging Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:17-37) (Isa 36:1-22).

Upon the failure of these negotiations, Eliakim headed the delegation sent to implore the help of Isaiah the prophet (2 Kings 19:2) (Isa 37:2). The LORD said the following three things of Eliakim: -

1. I will call my servant Eliakim, (Isaiah 22:20) these words of the LORD show that Eliakim's character was such that he was by God considered a good, diligent and faithful man and a constant servant of the LORD and because of his good character the LORD delighted to raise him to a position of great honour and dignity. Eliakim did not seek great things for himself, nor did he thrust himself into the office, but the LORD called him and put him into it.
2. I will clothe him with Shebna's robe: ((Isaiah 22:21) this not only refers to the peculiar type of robe and girdle that was worn as the badge of the royal office that was to be taken from Shebna and given to Eliakim, but also carries the idea that all the royal authority Shebna had would be taken from him and given to Eliakim.
3. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: ((Isaiah 22:21) this is one of the most beautiful testimonies a king, ruler or leader can have said of them. The apostle Paul wrote: -
  - Though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. (1 Cor. 4:15).

To rule, guide or teach as a father carries the idea of not only having the authority of a father, but also ruling, guiding and teaching with fatherly care and affection.

**Hilkiah:** comes from the Hebrew word (*Chilqiyah*) it means the portion of Jehovah, he was the father of Eliakim who was the manager of Hezekiah's household (2 Kings 18:18). (It is the name of eight Israelites).

**Shebna:** was the steward and secretary of Hezekiah. Isaiah chapter twenty-two speaks of another Shebna who Isaiah rebuked, because he in pride made a sepulchre for himself (Isaiah 22:15-21) and because of this pride the LORD said He would clothe Eliakim with Shebna's robe and his sash (worn as the badge of the royal office) and give him his authority and that he would be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah and the LORD would give to him the key of the house of David. (Isaiah 22:15-22).

Some feel that the Shebna that Eliakim had been placed over was the same Shebna that Isaiah had rebuked, but this is very unlikely considering that the Shebna that Isaiah rebuked was such an offense to God that Isaiah prophesied the following concerning him: -

- The LORD will hurl you (Shebna) away violently, O you strong man. He will seize firm hold on you <sup>18</sup>and whirl you around and around, and throw you like a ball into a wide land. There you shall die, and there shall be your glorious chariots, you shame of your master's house. <sup>19</sup>I will thrust you from your office, and you will be pulled down from your station. (Isaiah 22:17-19).

Considering this fierce judgment against the Shebna Isaiah rebuked it is more likely that the Shebna that Eliakim had been placed over was another man with the same name which is common in Scripture.

**Joah:** (the son of Asaph) Joah means, Jehovah is brother. He was a recorder under King Hezekiah and one of the three men sent by Hezekiah to speak to the Assyrian envoys at the siege of Jerusalem.

### **The Rabshakeh Scorns Hezekiah for Trusting in Pharaoh King of Egypt.**

Isaiah 36:4-6 -----<sup>4</sup>And the Rabshakeh said to them (Eliakim, Hilkiyah and Joah), "Say to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria (Sennacherib) (v1): On what do you rest this trust of yours?' <sup>5</sup>Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust, that you have rebelled against me? <sup>6</sup>Behold, you are trusting in Egypt, 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.

The Rabshakeh speaking on behalf of Sennacherib the king of Assyria tells Eliakim and Shebna that it is no use putting their trust in Egypt because compared to Assyria they are weak and broken and besides this the Pharaoh king of Egypt is like a serpent that bites the hand of all who lean on it, meaning that the word and covenants of the Pharaoh cannot be trusted since he will turn against those who put their trust in him if it is to his advantage to do so.

The Rabshakeh's rebuke toward Jerusalem for trusting in Egypt is a valid one since it was also against word of the LORD for Israel to make covenants with foreign nations and seek for their protection and help. What they should have been doing was repenting from their rebellion and their worship of pagan gods and their wicked ways and seeking for God's help and trusting in Him, but rather than turn from their wicked ways they sent ambassadors with camels and donkeys loaded with treasures and gifts to the Pharaoh of Egypt to secure his help and protection from the Assyrians.

**You have rebelled against me:** (v5) refers to Hezekiah rebelling against Sennacherib the king of Assyria. In the book of kings we are told: -

- The LORD was with him (Hezekiah king of Judah) wherever he went out, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him. (2 Kings 18:7).

Hezekiah desiring to return Israel to their full and independent sovereignty which God had established with the house of David refused to pay the oppressive yearly tribute (taxes) which Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria had imposed on the Jews. (2 Chronicles. 28:20-21).

Hezekiah was a king of Judah that trusted in the LORD the God of Israel; did what was right in His eyes; kept all His commandments; did not depart from following Him (2 Kings 18:3-4) and prospered in whatever he did because the LORD was with him. Scripture says of him, "There was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, or among those who were before him." (2 Kings 18:5-7).

The words, "he rebelled," (2 Kings 18:7) are explained by the following words, "and he served him not." In this context the word rebelled is better thought of as a king's refusal to bow down to the oppressive subjection which another nation was forcing upon him and his people. Through Hezekiah's desire to throw off the yoke of subjection to the Assyrians is spoken of as rebelling against Sennacherib it was really no more than asserting the just rights of his nation to be free of the oppression of another.

Hezekiah did not sin in refusing to pay taxes to the king of Assyria seems evident, because God owned and assisted him and did not rebuke him for it, though He did later rebuke him for his vain-glory and pride which he repented of (2 Chronicles 32:25-26). It was in Hezekiah's power to shake off the Assyrian yoke, which is all that is meant by the words, "he rebelled against him," it simply means that he refused to be subject to the king of Assyria and pay the oppressive taxes imposed upon his nation.

## **The Rabshakeh Scorns Hezekiah for Trusting in the LORD their God.**

Isaiah 36:7 ----- 7 But if you (Eliakim, Hilkiah and Joah) say to me (the Rabshakeh), "We trust in the LORD our God," is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, "You shall worship before this altar"?

Being zealous for God, one of the first acts of Hezekiah was to cleanse the land of idolatrous altars and the high places he sent his officers throughout the land of Israel to crush the pagan altars Israel had erected in their land to dust and cut down the Asherah and break in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made (the people were making offerings to it). These are the gods the Rabshakeh is saying Hezekiah had removed.

In these verses the Rabshakeh is basically saying that it is foolish for Eliakim, Hilkiah and Joah to put their trust in the LORD that Hezekiah has called them to worship referring to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob the God of Israel the immortal invisible Holy Almighty God of creation and the source of all life, because there is no god greater than the gods of Assyria.

## **The Rabshakeh Mocks Hezekiah for Trusting in the Chariots of Egypt.**

Isaiah 36:8-9 ----- 8 Come now, make a wager with my (the Rabshakeh's) master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. 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?

The Rabshakeh goes on with his powerfully intimidating speech by telling the people at Jerusalem if they can't even find two thousand riders to sit on horses that he will give them, how do they possibly think that they can defeat the king of Assyria and his great armies especially since the Assyrian army had at least one hundred and eighty-five thousand warriors (2 kings 19:35). This is why Hezekiah was looking to the chariots and horsemen of Egypt to help and protect them.

## **The Rabshakeh claims the LORD said, "Go up Against Judah and Destroy It."**

Isaiah 36:10 ----- 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.' "

To understand the Rabshakeh's words, "The LORD said to me, Go up against this land and destroy it," it helps if we keep in mind that all ancient warriors consulted the gods, and sought by divinations, omens, and signs and prophecies to obtain the divine approval of their plans before invading an army. Added to this is the fact that though it was common for the people to believe in many gods it was also common for them to believe that there was one universal god that controlled all other gods.

Even today this is a common idea amongst the secular world, though they may acknowledge there are many god's of the many different religions they believe they are in fact all the one God. With these facts in mind the Rabshakeh's statement, "The LORD said to me, Go up against this land and destroy it." (v10) can carry any of the following ideas: -

1. After hearing that Hezekiah had destroyed all of the ashrams, high places and pagan gods in the land of Israel Sennacherib may have believed that the LORD was sending him on a mission to defend the faith of the god's of all people.
2. It may be that the Rabshakeh uses the name of the god he believed in as synonymous with the name of the LORD God and believed he was divinely directed by Him to destroy those who destroy other people's god's and religious altars and places of worship.
3. The statement was a deceptive pretence for the purpose of instilling great fear and doubt into the people the Rabshakeh was speaking to and to give his arrogant statement, "the inhabitants of Jerusalem are doomed to eat their own dung and drink their own urine," (v12) more authority and credibility.

4. It was a lie and an empty boast of his own making to induce Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem to surrender.
5. The Rabshakeh concluded from Assyria's success in taking the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria and from Sennacherib success in taking all the fortified cities of Judah that it was the LORD'S will and calling for him to do so.
6. The Rabshakeh had heard rumours of the following prophetic message that Isaiah had spoken: -
  - The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria." <sup>18</sup>In that day the LORD will whistle for the fly that is at the end of the streams of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. (Isaiah 7:17-18).

Upon hearing this, the Rabshakeh would consider Sennacherib to be an instrument of the LORD to punish the Jewish people for their sins, especially after having laid all the fortified cities of Judah waste. To support this idea are the following Scriptures: -

- Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury! <sup>6</sup>Against a godless nation (being Israel and Judah) I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. <sup>7</sup>But he does not so intend, and his heart does not so think; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few. (Isaiah 10:5-7).

Now go to verse twelve: -

- When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in his eyes. <sup>13</sup>For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding; I remove the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures; like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones. (Isaiah 10:12-13).

Now go to verse twenty: -

- In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. (Isaiah 10:13).

Now go to verse twenty-four: -

- Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: "O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did. (Isaiah 10:24).

Keep in mind the Rabshakeh is a professional orator he knows exactly what he is saying and how to manipulate and intimidate those who he is speaking to. He could be likened to the following two groups of people: -

- Today's professional political speakers who speak lies and deceptions when such lies and deceptions manipulate and influence the minds of the population to vote for them.
- False religious leaders that twist and distort the Scriptures for their own advantage and financial gain.

The apostle John wrote: -

- Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1).

Secular and religious people who have no care for God's honour and Jesus good name will not hesitate to deceptively use God's name if it is going to advantage them in some way, which is perhaps what the Rabshakeh is doing here.



## **Eliakim and Shebna ask Rabshakeh, to Speak in Aramaic and Not Hebrew.**

Isaiah 36:11-15 ----- <sup>11</sup>Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the 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?" <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. This city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."

The reason Eliakim, Shebna and Joah asked the Rabshakeh to speak in Aramaic and not Hebrew is most likely because they did not want the inhabitants of Jerusalem to understand what he was saying and be intimidated by his arrogant and fearful speeches. It is easy to see why Sennacherib the king of Assyria chose this guy to be his spokesperson, he defies Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah request and speaks to all the people of Judah telling them that they are not only doomed to destruction, but will also eat their own dung and drink their own urine because Assyria's armies will surround their city and cage them within its walls.

How fearful are these words, but the Rabshakeh does not stop there, with the full authority of the Assyrian king and his one hundred and eighty-five thousand strong armies he warns the inhabitants of Jerusalem not to let Hezekiah deceive them, with his words. In Isaiah chapter ten Isaiah prophesied that when the king of Assyria arrived at the walls of Jerusalem he would: -

- Shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem. (Isaiah 10:32).

Had the LORD not sent an angel into the camp of Assyria that struck down one hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers (2 Kings 19:35) the inhabitants of Jerusalem would have been utterly annihilated This is why the words of the Rabshakeh were so powerfully terrifying and why the people of Jerusalem had to have utter trust in the words Isaiah spoke.

## **The Rabshakeh calls Jerusalem to Make Peace with Assyria.**

Isaiah 36:16-17 ----- <sup>16</sup>Do not listen to Hezekiah. For thus says the king of Assyria: Make your peace with me and come out (of Jerusalem) to me. Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of 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.

It is an interesting exercise to ponder how our faith would stand if faced with such terrifying circumstance. Men, women, families and children are dwelling within Jerusalem's walls. They have absolutely no hope of defending themselves against the mighty armies of Assyria. Added to this their brothers and sisters in the land of Samaria have been taken captive by Assyria and all the fortified cities of Judah have been destroyed by the Assyrian armies and they themselves are facing certain destruction.

Now with all this fear and terror before them the Rabshakeh tells them if they refuse to listen to Hezekiah and surrender to Sennacherib the king of Assyria they will be permitted to come out of the city and eat of their own vines, fig trees and drink water from their own reservoirs (keep in mind they are enormously hungry and no-doubt very short of water) and afterwards be taken away to a land like their own full of an abundance of food, water and wine.

The Rabshakeh gives the people of Jerusalem two choices, utter destruction or a land of abundance, he clearly is a master of speech, but Assyria has already broken covenants they made with Israel and it is certain they will break this promise and instead of being given a land of abundance they would become oppressed servants to the Assyrian Empire.

## **The Rabshakeh claims Assyria's gods are Greater than Israel's God.**

Isaiah 36:18-19 ----- <sup>18</sup>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? <sup>19</sup>Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?

**Hamath:** one of the fortified cities assigned to the tribe of Naphtali, it lay close to the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

**Arpad:** a town and its surrounding region in the northern part of Syria near Hamath.

**Sepharvaim:** a place located in the region of Hamath in Samaria and to which the Assyrians brought colonists to live.

**Hamath, Arpad and Sepharvaim:** were all nations of Israel in Samaria that Assyria had taken into exile. The ten tribes of Israel that dwelt in Samaria are at this time in captivity to Assyria.

How hard would it be for the people of Judah (the two tribes) to trust the words of Hezekiah when they could see that the king of Assyria had already defeated the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria and destroyed all the fortified cities of Judah, but unbeknown to them was the reality that Assyria's victory over Israel was in the will of God.

This is because God was using Assyria to bring His judgment and punishment upon the people of Israel, because they had set their hearts diamond hard against the word of the prophets and continued in their rebellion and worship of other gods and their gross wickedness rather than repent, forsake their idols and gods and turn to the LORD their God and follow him.

## **The Rabshakeh tells Jerusalem the LORD their God will Not Deliver Them.**

Isaiah 36:20-22 ----- <sup>20</sup>Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" <sup>21</sup>But they were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was, "Do not answer him." <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 Rabshakeh.

**Asaph:** was the father of Hezekiah.

The Rabshakeh tells the people of Judah that no god of any nation has saved their people from the armies of Assyria so why do they think their God will deliver them? The expression, "with their clothes torn," signifies sorrow and despair poor Eliakim, Shebna and Joah have been brought to absolute distress by the Rabshakeh's very skilful and powerfully fearful speech. They leave the wall and go and tell Hezekiah the king of Judah all that has been spoken.

**The gods of Assyria and of the nations:** the Assyrian Rabshakeh in his speech to the inhabitants of Jerusalem said: -

- 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? <sup>19</sup>Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? <sup>20</sup>Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" (Isaiah 36:18-20).

Asaph in his Psalm wrote: -

- Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God? (Psalm 77:13).

The apostle Paul in his letter said: -

- Although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many gods and many lords. (1 Cor. 8:5).

These statements do not mean that there are other real god's besides the LORD God of all creation; it refers to gods that are created by the imagination in the mind by a strong belief in them. The human nervous system does not have a mind of its own and therefore automatically responds to whatever is pictured on the imagination of the mind whether it is real or false.

The stronger the belief the greater effect the mental image on the imagination of the mind will have on the human nervous system. This is why deception is so deceptive. It matters not if the god an individual believes in is real or not the nervous system responds accordingly. If the god an individual believes in is a wrathful, vengeful and judgmental god they will feel emotions of guilt and fear in contrast to this if the god an individual believes in is a god of love and compassion they will feel emotions of love and comfort.

The imaginary, but real images of the mind creates a real entity that affects the emotions and feelings through the human nervous system. These feelings convince those that believe in idols that there are evil gods and spirits, but in reality they do not actually exist, they are an entity created by a false belief of the mind, but to the individual believing in idols and false gods they are very real entities.

This is why faith should be based upon the Scriptures of the Bible and never upon on emotions. This does not mean emotions should be denied, God gave them to us to enjoy (especially in worship and praise) it just means that they should not be the foundation of our faith and what we believe. It is through reading the Bible that we learn who the one and only immortal, invisible, eternal God is and His eternal will, plans and purposes for the world, the earth and for eternity.

Clearly not one of these gods of the imagination have any power to create the earth, the mountains and the seas, there is only one God who has such awesome power and He is the immortal invisible, Holy Almighty God of all creation and the source of all life the great I AM the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the heavenly Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For further information concerning gods of the imaginations see: -

- Demons in, Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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This chapter and Hezekiah's answer is continued in the following chapter.

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End.