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

Isaiah 37.

(2015)

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But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Isaiah 37.

Topics.

- King Hezekiah sends Eliakim, Shebna and the priests to the prophet Isaiah.
- The LORD will rebuke the words the Rabshakeh spoke against God.
- The LORD will put a spirit in Sennacherib so he returns to his own land.
- Has any god delivered the nations that the Assyrians have destroyed?
- Hezekiah prays to the LORD God of heaven and earth to save Jerusalem.
- Assyria scorns the virgin daughter of Zion and mocks the Holy One of Israel.
- I have cut down Lebanon's tallest cedars its choicest cypresses.
- I dug wells and with my feet I dried up the rivers of the besieged places.
- The LORD determined long ago that Sennacherib would make cities ruins.
- The LORD will put his hook in Sennacherib's nose and turn him back.
- The surviving remnant of Judah shall take root and bear fruit upward.
- A remnant shall go out of Jerusalem and survivors out of Mount Zion.
- The angel of the LORD strikes down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers.

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.

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.

King Hezekiah sends Eliakim, Shebna and the Priests to the Prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 37:1-3 ----- ¹As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the LORD. ²And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. ³They said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, 'This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth.'

The previous chapter ended with the the Rabshakeh (spokesperson) of Sennacherib the king of Assyria saying to Eliakim, Shebna and Joah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "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?" And then Eliakim Shebna and Joah going to Hezekiah and telling them all that the Rabshakeh had spoken. (Isaiah 36:20-22).

After Hezekiah king of Judah heard what the Rabshakeh had said he responded in the right way. He humbled himself and went into the House of the LORD and prayed and then sent his chief men to Isaiah to seek the word of the LORD. They tell Isaiah that shame has come upon Jerusalem.

Children have come to the point of birth: (v3) this expression carries the idea that there was the highest danger and a desperate need for help. It is likened to childbirth in which not only is the pain long-drawn-out and the women's strength exhausted, but also there is the most imminent threat of danger in regard to the mother and the child.

Likewise Hezekiah is in the most imminent danger trapped by the Assyrians in the city of Jerusalem. They had made all possible preparations for defence. And now, in the most critical time, they felt their strength to defend themselves utterly exhausted, and are in desperate need for God to intervene.

There is not strength to bring forth: (v3) this expression is to be understood of the deplorable, terrible and helpless condition they now find themselves in. The thing to bring forth is the completion of Hezekiah's reformation of the nation of Israel. Hezekiah was a good king who from the beginning of his reign not only began destroying the idols and pagan altars Israel had erected in the land, but also began establishing God's laws and true worship, but now because of the Assyrians Hezekiah is unable to complete this reformation.

The picture of a woman that has been in labour for some time and of the child having fallen down to the place of giving birth, but unable to make its way, because the woman has neither strength to bear it, nor strength to bring it forth and therefore without the intervention of doctors death of the child is certain is a very apt picture of the people of Jerusalem.

They like the woman in labour are in the utmost pain and distress and totally devoid of any strength to help themselves and without God's immediate assistance and relief utter destruction and death is certain. Like the woman in labour who cannot be delivered they are in great pain and sorrow, all Hezekiah's good plans and works in establishing a godly nation had not only come to a sudden halt but also had to be utterly aborted.

- Like a pregnant woman who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near to giving birth, so were we because of you, O LORD; ¹⁸we were pregnant, we writhed, but we have given birth to wind. We have accomplished no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen. (Isaiah 26:17-18).

The LORD will Rebuke the Words the Rabshakeh Spoke against God.

Isaiah 37:4 ----- ⁴It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master (Sennacherib) the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that the LORD your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left (in the city of Jerusalem)."

After Hezekiah had prayed he gathered together Eliakim, Shebna and the priests and went to seek the counsel of Isaiah. Isaiah tells them that God will rebuke Assyria for the mocking, scorning and blasphemous words the Rabshakeh has spoken against Him and encourages them to pray for the people.

The LORD will put a Spirit in Sennacherib so He Returns to His own Land.

Isaiah 37:5-7 ----- ⁵When the servants (Eliakim, Shebna and the priests) of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, ⁶Isaiah said to them, "Say to your master (Hezekiah), 'Thus says the LORD: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the young men of the king of Assyria(Sennacherib) have reviled me. ⁷Behold, I will put a spirit in him (I will send a blast upon him in KJV), so that he shall hear a rumour and return to his own land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land."

I will put a spirit in him: (v7) (I will send a blast upon him in KJV) the word blast/spirit comes from the Hebrew word (*ruwach*) it refers to a calm or violent wind by the resemblance of breath (i.e., a blast, breath). Figuratively it carries the idea of life and can refer to the mind and the spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions such as anger and courage etc.).

When Eliakim, Shebna and the priests came to Isaiah he tells them to go and tell Hezekiah not to be afraid of the threatening words they have heard, because the LORD will bring news (i.e., the rumour) to Sennacherib that will so strongly disturb his spirit that it will cause him to return to his own land where he will eventually fall by the sword. (The rumour is spoken of in the following verses).

Has any god Delivered the Nations that the Assyrians have Destroyed?

Isaiah 37:8-13 ----- ⁸The Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he (the Rabshakeh) had heard that the king had left Lachish. ⁹Now the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush (Ethiopia in KJV), "He has set out to fight against you"

(Sennacherib).” And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, ¹⁰“Thus shall you.” speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹Behold, you (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? ¹²Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? ¹³Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?’ ”

Libnah: was a Levitical city in Judah, it was a strong fortified centre and able to sustain the siege of Sennacherib for some time.

Lachish: was a town in Shephelah of Judah that occupied a strategic valley 25 miles south west of Jerusalem it was successfully besieged by Sennacherib and from it the Rabshakeh’s troops marched against Jerusalem.

Tirhakah king of Cush: (Ethiopia in KJV) was an Egyptian king who at the request of Hezekiah led the Egyptian armies in their initial conflict against Sennacherib king of Assyria while Sennacherib army was besieging Judean cities. Sennacherib heard that Tirhakah was coming against him and was successful against the armies of Tirhakah.

Tirhakah and Taharqa: the native name of the king of Cush (or Ethiopia) who opposed Sennacherib king of Assyria (2 Kings 19:9) (Isaiah 37:9) was Taharqa while his Assyrian name was Tirhakah. The biblical account is believed to have taken place in 701 BC, whereas the historical account records Tirhakah coming to the throne some ten years later, because of this there is some confusion over the exact date these events occurred. A number of explanations have been proposed to explain this confusion, the most common being that at the time of this account Tirhakah was most likely a chief military commander and therefore the title of king in the Biblical text refers to his future royal title when he later took the throne.

The Rabshakeh and Sennacherib: the Rabshakeh heard news that Sennacherib had left Lachish so he returns to Sennacherib and find him at war against Libnah. In earlier chapters of Isaiah we read of the inhabitants of Jerusalem sending ambassadors to Egypt with donkeys and camels laden with treasures and gifts to secure the aid of Egypt.

Tirhakah and Sennacherib: Sennacherib hears a rumour (i.e., news) that Tirhakah the king of Cush (an Egyptian king) has sent armies out to fight against him. It can be safely supposed that Sennacherib was aware that these armies were coming at the request of the people of Jerusalem which motivates him to send messengers with a threatening letter that he had written to the inhabitants of Jerusalem telling them that Hezekiah is deceiving them and that their God cannot save them.

Gozan: at Gozan the Assyrians deported the Israelites after they had laid Samaria the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel waste.

Haran: in the time of Hezekiah the Rabshakeh and officer and spokesman of Sennacherib king of Assyria when delivering his propaganda speech to the people of Jerusalem, mentions Haran, along with many other cities in the same area that the Assyrians had conquered.

Rezeph: was an important caravan centre that was ravaged by Assyria during Hezekiah’s reign.

Eden: (means delight) it is a city mentioned by the Assyrian Rabshakeh as being conquered by them along with Gozan, Haran and Rezeph, it is believed to be located on the Euphrates River near Damascus.

Telassar: is a place mentioned by the Rabshakeh of Assyria as inhabited by the children of Eden, whose gods could not deliver them from the Assyrian kings (Isa 37:12). It has not been identified.

Hamath: lay close to the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Arpad: was a town in the northern part of Syria near Hamath, the Rabshakeh, representing Sennacherib before the Jews of Jerusalem (701 B.C), boast that the gods of Arpad could not stand before his master and therefore reasoned that neither could the God of the Jews.

Sepharvaim: was a place located in the region of Hamath for which the Assyrians brought colonists to live in Samaria, it is also referred to in the Rabshakeh's threatening speech to Jerusalem as a place conquered by the Assyrian armies.

Hena: was a city on the south bank of the Euphrates, about 180 miles north-west of ancient Babylon. It was mentioned by Rabshakeh, along with four other cities whose gods could not save them from destruction by Sennacherib, as a proof that Israel's God could not save Jerusalem.

Ivvah: was a city (probably in Syria), captured by the Assyrians, according to the boast of the Rabshakeh when making his threatening speech against Jerusalem on behalf of Sennacherib king of Assyria.

Have the gods of the nations delivered them: (v12) all ancient nations believe in gods and because Assyria had successfully overthrown the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria and destroyed all the fortified cities of Jerusalem they naturally believed their gods were far more powerful than the God of Israel.

What they didn't understand was that the God of Israel was using them to bring about His judgment and punishment upon His people for their rebellion, their worship of idols and pagan gods and their gross wickedness.

Added to this at the right time when God has finished using Assyria to accomplish His purposes He will turn His focus toward Assyria and judge them. (Later God used the Empire of Babylon to overthrow Assyria).

Hezekiah Prays to the LORD God of Heaven and Earth to Save Jerusalem.

Isaiah 37:14-20 ----- ¹⁴Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers," and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. ¹⁵And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: ¹⁶"O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. ¹⁷Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. ¹⁸Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, ¹⁹and have cast their gods into the fire. For they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. ²⁰So now, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are the LORD."

After reading the threatening letter that Sennacherib the king of Assyria had sent to Hezekiah he enters the house of the LORD and spreads the letter out before God and earnestly prays. The fact Hezekiah says in his prayer that the Assyrians had destroyed the gods of the nations (mostly nations of Israel and Judah) that they had defeated highlights how corrupt and rebellious God's people had become.

Hezekiah was a good and godly king he would not only have been extremely offended at all the idols and pagan altars of worship that his corrupt father Ahaz (while king of Judah) and the people of Israel has established throughout their land, but was also fully aware that such idols were simply the work of men's hands made of wood and stone.

It was because Israel had established so many idols and pagan gods in their land that the Rabshakeh and Sennacherib the king of Assyria not only viewed Israel's God as being no different to the gods that all other nations worshipped, but also believed they could destroy the God of Israel as they had destroyed the idols they worshipped.

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? ¹⁹Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? ²⁰Who 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).

Assyria Scorns the Virgin Daughter of Zion and Mocks the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 37:21-23 ----- ²¹Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, ²²this is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him: " 'She despises you, she scorns you—the virgin daughter of Zion; she wags her head behind you (laughed thee to scorn in KJV) —the daughter of Jerusalem. ²³"Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? Against the Holy One of Israel!

The virgin daughter of Zion: (v22) the title, daughter is a collective feminine personification of the population of a city or the whole nation of Jerusalem it is a term often applied to a beautiful city or town. There are times in Scripture when Jerusalem is pictured as the mother city and the lesser towns on Mount Zion (the hill Jerusalem sits on) are referred to as her daughters.

The expression, “virgin daughter,” is an honourable term that implies that a woman has not been violated or defiled. When applied to a city it carries the idea that the city had not been invaded and plundered or taken by force by an enemy and when applied to Zion and Jerusalem it also carries the idea of only having one husband (i.e., one God) in contrast to the surrounding nations having many husbands (i.e., many gods). The expression, “the virgin daughter of Zion,” in this context carries the idea that Zion has never been forced or taken.

She wags her head behind you: (v22) (hath shaken her head at thee in KJV) the following verses show that the expression “they wag their heads” carries the idea of being scorned, ridiculed and mocked or being confused and bewildered or being looked down upon with disdain.

- All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads. (Psalm 22:7).
- I am an object of scorn to my accusers; when they see me, they wag their heads. (Psalm 109:25).
- Those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads. (Matt. 27:39).

The word, “She” refers to Jerusalem laughing at Assyria. The LORD is telling Hezekiah that he and his people will be looking down upon Sennacherib, his Rabsbakeh and the Assyrian army with disdain and bewilderment. The idea is that Jerusalem will be exulted over the attempts of Sennacherib to overthrow and take Jerusalem and at the same time be somewhat bewildered. This bewilderment would of result from the news that was brought back to them that the 185,000 Assyrian soldiers lay dead in their camp (2 Kings 19:35).

It is after the destruction of Sennacherib army and when he flees to his own land that the inhabitants of Jerusalem will wag their head behind him as they look upon him fleeing their land.

I have Cut down Lebanon’s Tallest Cedars its Choicest Cypresses.

Isaiah 37:24 -----²⁴By your servants you have mocked the LORD, and you have said, With my many chariots I have gone up the heights of the mountains, to the far recesses of Lebanon, to cut down its tallest cedars, its choicest cypresses, to come to its remotest height, its most fruitful forest.

Though Lebanon was never totally occupied it is included in God’s promise; it is a snowclad mountain range extending 100 miles along the Syrian coast with peaks reaching 10,200 above Sea Level. The melting snow creates great rivers including the Jordan River that meanders through Palestine to the Dead Sea. Writers of biblical poetry speak at length on the motion of Lebanon’s famous cedar trees; their massive branches; their fragrance and on their height as a symbol of dignity and pride and on their growth and resistance to decay as a symbol of endurance.

Lebanon’s isolated crags, supported watch towers and refuge-points and came to symbolize the exalted status of Judah’s royal house. The psalmists’ speaks of the greatness of the Creator who both plants the cedars and shatters them by His voice. The Lebanon’s were also famous for choice-wine the lion and the leopard.

Isaiah makes an amazing statement concerning Lebanon: Lebanon was not only famous for its cedar trees, but for the multitude of its animals, including the lion and the leopard, yet the LORD says: -

- Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. (Isaiah 40:16).

Even all the blood of Lebanon’s most glorious animals would not be enough for burnt offerings.

There was only one blood type that had the right DNA to cleanse us and make us whiter than snow in the eyes of God and it was not in an animal, but a man whose name was Jesus.

The expressions, the heights of the mountains; the far recesses of Lebanon; its tallest cedars, its choicest cypresses (v24) all signify the king, the priest, the chief men and the faithful inhabitants of Jerusalem. The king of Assyria and his Rabsbakeh had boasted that their armies would utterly overthrow the city of Jerusalem and take its inhabitants captive.

I dug wells and with My Feet I Dried up the Rivers of the Besieged Places.

Isaiah 37:25 ----- 25 I dug wells and drank waters, to dry up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt. The King James Bible says, I have digged, and drunk water; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places.

It is Sennacherib's boast that he had extended the boundaries of his empire into foreign lands and in regions, cities and towns that were lacking of water he dug wells that provided abundance of water for his armies and the populations of his mighty empire. In the book of Kings it is written: -

- I (Sennacherib king of Assyria) dug wells and drank foreign waters (strange waters in KJV), and I dried up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt. (2 Kings 19:24)

It is called strange waters because they are waters of a foreign land that they had not drunk before. The idea here is that even the natural lack of water did not hinder the march of Sennacherib armies. They would simply stop at the right place and dig wells that would supply his army with sufficient water to drink.

It was enormously difficult to find water in sandy deserts or rocky countries and therefore it was regarded by eastern nations not only to be an important achievement to dig wells, but was also such a highly valued possession it sometimes caused contention between neighbouring tribes.

- The herdsmen of Gerar quarrelled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they contended with him. (Gen. 26:20).

Many of the most magnificent works of the Romans consisted in building aqueducts to bring water from a distance into the capital city of their empire and into the principal towns of their provinces.

With the sole of my foot I dried up all the streams of Egypt: (v25) the word streams (rivers in KJV) come from the Hebrew word (*y^eor*), it can apply to a channel, a brook, a river or a stream and specifically to Egypt's River Nile including all its collateral trenches.

The idea here is that the Assyrian army could cut off Egypt's water supply which at this time would have been a defiant threat against Tirhakah and his armies that were marching toward Sennacherib to fight against his armies on behalf of Hezekiah at Jerusalem. The whole language of the verse is that of a proud and haughty Assyrian king desirous of proclaiming his might and the vast power of his armies to conquer whatever stood in their path.

With the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places: (v25) (KJV) carries the following two ideas: -

1. It is perhaps a strong hyperbole that carries the idea that the number of Sennacherib armies were so numerous (185,000) (2 Kings 19:35) that they drank up all the water of the regions, cities and towns they marched through.
2. Sennacherib armies cut off their enemies' water supply by throwing in rocks or sand in their wells which the following verses show was a common practise during warfare.
 - Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father. (Gen. 26:15).

- Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. (Gen. 26:18).
- You (the king of Israel, Judah and Edom) shall attack every fortified city and every choice city (of Moab), and stop up all springs of water (2 Kings 3:19).
- They overthrew the cities, and on every good piece of land every man threw a stone until it was covered. They stopped every spring of water and the slingers surrounded Kir-hareseth and attacked it. (2 Kings 3:25).

The LORD answers Hezekiah's prayer: the LORD begins in these verses to answer Hezekiah's prayer by acknowledging that He has heard it and then saying to Hezekiah that He is aware of king Sennacherib's scorn and mocking against His people and against the Holy One of Israel and of his great boasts in the might of his armies. The completion of the LORD'S answer to Hezekiah's prayer is found in the following verses.

The LORD Determined Long ago that Sennacherib would make Cities Ruins.

Isaiah 37:26 ----- 26ⁿ Have you (Sennacherib) not heard that I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should make fortified cities crash into heaps of ruins.

The expression, "the LORD determined it long ago," (v26) highlights the truth that God is in control of the nations. Those of the secular world looking upon Assyria's great victories over the nations would simply understand it as the more powerful nation conquering the less powerful, yet it was God who was allowing Assyria victory over His people.

The LORD'S statement, "I planned from days of old," takes us back to the covenant of blessing and curses Israel entered into at Mount Sinai. This covenant had three promises, the first one is positive, the second one is negative and the third one is about repentance and forgiveness,

1. In the positive section of the covenant the LORD promises Israel that He would establish them in fame and in honour high above all nations that He has made and that they would be a people holy to the LORD their God (Deut. 26:18-19).
2. In the negative section of the covenant the LORD promises Israel if they break His covenant then He will lay their cities waste and devastate their land so that their enemies settle in it, but will not utterly destroy them.
3. In the third section of the covenant the LORD promises if they humble themselves and confess their iniquity that they committed against Him and make amends then He will bless their land. (The full covenant is in Leviticus chapter twenty-six).

When the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to the Most Holy place underneath the wings of the cherubim (1 Kings 8:6) Solomon prayed if Israel sins against God and He allows them to be carried away captive to a foreign land and they repent with all their mind and with all their heart then forgive and grant them compassion (1 Kings 8:46-50).

The LORD answered his prayer saying, "If my people do all that I have commanded I will establish them forever, but if they do not keep my commandments and serve other gods then I will cut them off from the land and the house that I have set my name on will become a heap of ruins, because they abandoned the LORD their God." (1 Kings 9:3-9).

When John the Baptist was born his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying: -

- Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people ⁶⁹and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, ⁷⁰as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, ⁷¹that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; ⁷²to show the mercy promised to our fathers and

to remember his holy covenant, ⁷³the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us ⁷⁴that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. (Luke 1:67-75)

These verses show that within the covenant God made with Israel is the following four promises: -

1. The promise to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and to his seed forever.
2. The promise to protect Israel as a nation and to be their God forever.
3. The promise that if Israel was carried away captive into a strange land and while there humbled themselves and prayed, and turned to the LORD their God, He would mercifully restore them, to their pleasant land which He had given them.
4. The promise that when Israel repented God would remember their calamity and save His people.

(Gen. 9:15) (Lev. 26:38-45) (Deut. 4:13) (Deut. 5:1-2) (Deut. 26:18-19).
(1 Kings 8:46-50) (Ezek. 16:59-63) (Luke 1:67-75).

The LORD will put His Hook in Sennacherib's Nose and Turn Him Back.

Isaiah 37:27-29 ----- ²⁷while their inhabitants (of fortified cities), shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown. ²⁸"I know your sitting down and your going out and coming in, and your raging against me. ²⁹Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come to my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came.'

These verses highlight the truth that nothing good or bad is hidden from the eyes of the LORD. Though the conquered nations (mostly nations of Israel and Judah) were in confusion as they watched their cities being laid waste by the fierce armies of Assyria the LORD was not. He was only fully aware of Sennacherib wars against the nations and his victories and his boasting threats against the inhabitants of Jerusalem and. prideful mocking of the Holy One of Israel, but was also using Sennacherib to bring His judgment and punishment upon His rebellious and grossly wicked people.

The expression, "shorn of strength," (v27) refers to Assyria having laid the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria waste and having destroyed all the fortified cities of Judah. Because of these Assyrian victories the inhabitants of Jerusalem are utterly powerless to withstand the mighty armies of Sennacherib. They are pictured as tender grass that is blighted before it is grown.

This is because Hezekiah was a good and godly King who had inherited the throne from his corrupt father Ahaz king of Judah who had promoted the worship of pagan gods throughout his kingdom. Hezekiah had begun to destroy all the evil his father and previous kings of Judah and Israel had established throughout their land, but the armies of Assyria have brought all this good work Hezekiah had begun to a sudden halt in the same way that blight stunts the growth of newly planted grass.

I will put my hook in your nose: (v29) here Sennacherib is pictured as a wild ox with a ring through its nose being led by its master. The LORD is saying because of all the arrogant boastful and blasphemous words the Rabshakeh spoke on behalf of Sennacherib He will bring about an event that will cause Sennacherib to cease from his evil intention to invade Jerusalem and return to his own land. (We read of this event in v36-37).

The Surviving Remnant of Judah shall take Root and Bear Fruit Upward.

Isaiah 37:30-31 ----- ³⁰"And this shall be the sign for you this year you shall eat what grows of itself, and in the second year what springs from that. Then in the third year sow and reap, and plant

vineyards, and eat their fruit. ³¹And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward.

Verse thirty-six shows us that Jerusalem at this time is surrounded by 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, the inhabitants cannot go out of the city and no one can enter it, they are prisoners in their own city that have no hope of escape. Yet the LORD through Isaiah tells Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem that before the year ends they will be able to eat the food that is already full grown outside the city walls and in the second year they will be able to eat the food that sprouts from what is already growing and in the third year they will be able to farm and plant in abundance.

Ponder for a moment how impossible this amazing prophetic message would have sounded to the people at this time. In the face of what seemed like certain destruction Isaiah is telling them that once again they will not only be firmly established in their land, but will also abundantly flourish.

A Remnant shall go Out of Jerusalem and Survivors out of Mount Zion.

Isaiah 37:32-35 ----- ³²For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. ³³"Therefore thus says the LORD concerning (Sennacherib) the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city (Jerusalem) or shoot an arrow there or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. ³⁴By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. ³⁵For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David."

Isaiah's stunning prophecy continues in its miraculous wonder those trapped in the city are told that not one of the 185,000 (v36-37) Assyrian soldiers will even fire a single arrow into the city and that Sennacherib will return to his homeland without even attempting to invade the city. Keep in mind the people within the city walls do not have hindsight as we do, they would have absolutely no idea how such an amazing prophecy could come to pass.

The two motives of God's action to save Jerusalem are for His own sake and for the sake of David.

1. For God's own sake: Sennacherib the king of Assyria and his general the Rabshakeh with arrogant pride, insulted, reproached and mocked God's name and power and now God is about to assert His majesty against the blasphemy of the Assyrians and vindicate Himself for the honour of His own name and glory.
 - Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? Against the Holy One of Israel! (Isaiah 37:23).
2. For David's sake: on account of the promise which God had made to David that there should not fail a man to sit on his throne, and that the city and nation should not be destroyed until the Messiah should appear. Added to these the Messiah, David's son, and the LORD'S servant, was to spring from Hezekiah's race and therefore must not be cut off.
 - The LORD swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne. (Psalm 132:11).
 - There (in Zion) I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. ¹⁸His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine. (Psalm 132:17-18).
 - Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:7).

- There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse (the father of David), and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. (Isaiah 11:1).
- When your (David's) days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. (2 Sam. 7:12).

The LORD will defend Jerusalem: the following verses show that Hezekiah had done all that he could do to put Jerusalem in the best possible position of defence.

- When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem, he planned with his officers and his mighty men to stop the water of the springs that were outside the city; and they helped him. ⁴A great many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs and the brook that flowed through the land, saying, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?" ⁵He set to work resolutely and built up all the wall that was broken down and raised towers upon it, and outside it he built another wall, and he strengthened the Millo in the city of David. He also made weapons and shields in abundance. (2 Chron. 32:2-5)

However it mattered not what Hezekiah did there was no possible way he could win a battle against 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. His only hope was for God to intervene and be the city's shield and defender.

The Angel of the LORD strikes down 185,000 Assyrian Soldiers.

Isaiah 37:36-37-38 ---- ³⁶And the angel of the LORD went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁷Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh. ³⁸And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword. And after they escaped into the land of Ararat, Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

This event was the answer to Hezekiah's prayer for the LORD to save His people and fulfilled all the prophetic words that Isaiah has spoken in this chapter and brought to pass the fulfilment of (v30-31). Sennacherib the king of Assyria being killed by the sword of his two Sons fulfilled Isaiah's prophetic words, "the LORD will make him fall by the sword in his own land," (v7). Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon, reigned in his place. (The story is also found in 2 Kings 19:32-37).

End.