



Isaiah 35-36

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Isaiah 35-36
By Chuck Smith

Many of you realize that Isaiah is composed of sixty-six chapters. We know that there are sixty-six books in the Bible, and that the Bible is divided into the Old Testament, and the New Testament. There are thirty-nine books in the old testament, there are twenty-seven books in the New Testament, and thus, our Bible composed of sixty-six books. Isaiah has sixty-six chapters and interestingly enough, they are divided into the first section of the book of Isaiah, which is thirty-nine chapters, and the second section which is twenty-seven chapters.

It is interesting that the fortieth chapter, which would be the first chapter of the second section, opens with the prophecy of John the Baptist, the voice of him that cries in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths!" So you have sort of a miniature Bible in Isaiah.

Now we come to the end of the first section, as we get to chapters thirty four, and thirty five. Chapters thirty six, through thirty nine, are historic, historic. They are, they are really not the prophesies of Isaiah, but they are the historic background, in which these prophesies of Isaiah were being given. Thus, the history is parallel to that which you find in II Kings, chapter eighteen, and all. But the prophesies of Isaiah in the first section actually end with the thirty fifth chapter. So as we enter into the thirty fifth chapter, we are entering into the final prophetic section, of the first part of the book of Isaiah.

It is significant that chapter thirty four deals with the great tribulation of the last days. God's judgment that is coming upon the earth. God's judging of man's sin, and man for sin. The battle of Armageddon, the great destruction that God will bring, cataclysmic destruction upon the earth, as is recorded in chapter thirty four, and aspects of the great tribulation, "the host of heaven dissolved, heavens being rolled together as a scroll, their host falling down as a leaf falls from a vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree, and God's judgment coming upon the earth."

Now the Bible never ends on a dark note. There are dark notes in the Bible, because of the darkness of sin, it brings its resultant and inevitable consequences of destruction, death, desolation. So the Bible speaks of those dark days that will come upon man, upon a nation, because of sin. Over, and over again the prophets were warning the nation of Israel, the nation of Judah, that they were headed for difficult times, because they had turned their backs upon God, and were worshipping other gods, they were going to be carried away captive by their enemies. They were going to be destroyed, the cities were going to be ravished.

These prophets spoke to them of the great persecutions, and trials that they were to experience. But they never stopped there. They always went on, "and when you are in captivity, when you turn to the Lord, the Lord will hear you, and the Lord will bring you back into the land", and they always spoke of the restoration. God never leaves and ends the story with desolation. But there is always the glorious light, the hope that God lays out for the ultimate future.

Now in our lives, we do go through dark experiences. We are called upon many times to go through suffering, go through pain, go through hardships. We many times go through things that we don't understand. Things that in our heart, challenge God's love. "If God loves me, then why am I suffering like this? Why do I have these problems? Why", as David said, "go I mourning all the day long?" But God never leaves us in that state of darkness, or hopelessness. But He always points to a new day. He always points to the light that will come. He never leaves us without hope.

Now the world is without hope. They do not have that same hope for the future. As things become dismal, as things become desperate there's, there's no hope for the future. They're left in that desperate state of desolation. But not the child of God. So Isaiah speaks in chapter thirty four of this great cataclysmic judgment, the tribulation period, but that's not the end of the story.

Jesus spoke of the tribulation that is coming. He refers to it as, "A tribulation such as the world has never seen before, or will ever see again." The worst hours of man's history are not behind us, they're ahead of us.

We're entering in to the darkest period of history, of man. Nothing in history to equal what we're facing. It is quite possible that we are entering into the beginning of this time of sorrows that the scriptures speak about.

In the thirteenth chapter of Isaiah, he does tie this time of sorrows together with the destruction of Iraq. If Iraq is completely desolated and destroyed at this time, then there is good reason, very good reason to believe that we are entering into that day. For as he speaks of the destruction of Iraq, by this combination of nations, he said, "Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand", and he goes on and speaks of the great tribulation period that the world will enter into.

More and more we hear talk of the possible use of tactical nuclear weapons in this war against Iraq. I was listening to Dick Cheney last night on an interview. They were creating particular scenarios, and our Secretary of Defense said that, "If Hussein sends chemical weapons against Israel, that we expect Israel to retaliate with unconventional weapons". The interviewer said, "Are you saying that we believe that Israel will use nuclear weapons against Iraq?" He said, "I said they will use unconventional weapons. I will leave it there."

Now we are making that statement in the highest levels of government. In essence, we are saying, that if Hussein uses chemical weapons against Israel, we wouldn't blame them to retaliate with nuclear weapons. It could be still that this whole situation with Iraq will escalate into the complete desolation of the country, described in Isaiah chapter thirteen. Which then would lead into the great tribulation period.

So it is possible that we are coming into those darkest hours that the prophet spoke about, that Jesus spoke about. That we're on the verge of this darkest period in the history of man. If that be so, then that also means that we're on the verge of a glorious new day! As Paul the apostle said, "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed, the night is far spent, and the day is at hand." The glorious day of the Lord. So the hope for the believer. The hope for the church is that glorious new day that God has promised for His people!

Now Isaiah having gone through the darkness of the tribulation period in chapter thirty four, ends this section of the book, apart from the history that we have from thirty six on, he ends it with the glorious aspects of that new day. The new world, the conditions in that new world, and who will dwell in that new world.

So as we enter into chapter thirty five, we enter into that time when Jesus Christ has returned to God's kingdom upon the earth. Jesus said, "And immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall they see the sign of the Son of man, coming with clouds, and great glory." The Lord Himself coming to the earth, to establish God's kingdom upon the earth! The prayers of the church through the centuries, will be fulfilled, as we have been praying, "Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven". The earth renovated by fire, the sinners having been destroyed, the Lord will establish now, His righteous reign over the earth. Chapter thirty five, in this time...

The wilderness and the solitary place will be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. [The rose is thought to be the anemone.] It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and with singing: and the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, and they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God (35:1-2).

As you look at the world today, you do not see the world that God created. God created a perfect world, a beautiful world. But you see a world that's been spoiled as a result of sin. We see vast areas of desolation. We see vast areas that are covered with ice, and uninhabitable. We see other areas that are desert and practically uninhabitable. But in that new world, the deserts will blossom as a rose, they will blossom abundantly. The deserts will be turned into lush forest, woods, and meadows, as Sharon is a meadow, Carmel the woods, and Lebanon the forest. So the Lord said...

Strengthen the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees (35:3).

"Encourage the people." He had just told of the horrible darkness that is coming. Now the Lord says, "Encourage the people! There's hope for the future. It doesn't end, the story doesn't end for the child of God in defeat, or in a fiery judgment. The end of the story is the kingdom of God being established, and the reign of Jesus Christ over the earth!

So say to those that are fearful of heart, Be strong, don't be afraid: behold, your God will come with

vengeance, even with a recompence; but he will come and save you (35:4).

Yes, God is coming in vengeance, God is coming in judgment. He's gonna repay the sinners for their sin. But He will save you. You are His children. Now the conditions...

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. And the lame man will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will sing (35:5-6):

Prophecies that have to do with the kingdom age. Prophecies that have to do with the Messiah. In the eleventh chapter of Matthew's gospel, he tells us that, "As John the Baptist was in prison, he sent his disciples to Jesus, and he asked them to ask Jesus, Are you the one that we are looking for? Or, should we start looking for someone else?"

Now when he had baptized Jesus, he testified that the one who sent him to baptize told him that whoever he saw the Spirit of God descending and abiding upon, that was the Messiah. That when Jesus was baptized, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended as a dove upon Him. So later, as John was standing with some of his disciples, and Jesus passed by, John said, "There goes the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". He testified of Jesus.

John was like the disciples, in that he expected Jesus to set up the kingdom immediately. So when John was placed in prison, as he was sitting there in prison, time goes very slow, and so he began to think, "Well Lord when are you gonna get this show on the road? When are you gonna get me out of here, and let's get things moving. Let's establish the kingdom!" It was sort of a little subtle message that he said to Jesus through his disciples, "Hey what's going on? Let's get things moving! Are you the one that we're looking for, or should we look for someone else? When you gonna get going here? When you gonna demonstrate your power? When are you gonna take over?"

The Bible tells us that, "In the same hour, there were multitudes that came to Jesus, many who were blind, those that were lame, those that were deaf, and those that were mute, and Jesus healed them so that the blind were able to see, the lame were walking, and the deaf were hearing. After many of these miracles were wrought, Jesus just turned to John's disciples, and He said, Go back and tell John what you have seen. Blind eyes are being opened, the lame are walking, the deaf are hearing, and unto the meek the gospel is being preached." These were the signs of the kingdom age. These were the signs of the Messiah.

What we saw in the ministry of Jesus when He was upon the earth, is only a foreshadowing of the kingdom age. When God restores the earth, He will also restore man physically, so that there will be no aging process. There will be no lameness, there will be no physical infirmities. There will be no blindness, deafness, no mutes. But when God establishes the kingdom age, we will all have perfect health in that perfect world, that Jesus will establish. That's basically the hope that Isaiah is giving to us here, of that coming day of the Lord, when He shall reign, and God's will, will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven.

There's no sickness in heaven, there's no death in heaven, there's no sorrow, or pain, or suffering, and thus you'll come to a world with Jesus reigning, and you'll see what the world could be like if the world was only living in obedience to God. You'll see what God designed and what God desired for mankind! Not what we see today. You see a world that has been corrupted by sin. You see mankind that has been corrupted by sin. You see the awful consequences of sin. The death, the sorrow, the pains, the suffering, the infirmities.

But a new day is coming. God's gonna give man another chance. He's gonna restore! He said, "I'm making all things new". A new start for man, and mankind, and this time Jesus will be here on earth, reigning over the earth! "The lame will leap like the deer, the tongue of the mute will sing."

for in the wilderness [the deserts] there will be artesian wells just breaking out, and streams flowing out of the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool in the thirsty land, springs of water: in the habitation of jackals [Now jackals can inhabit the most desolate areas.] where they lay, there will be grass with reeds and rushes. [It'll be like the banks of the Nile river.] There will be a highway there, and it will be called, The way of the holy; [Great boulevard!] the unclean will not pass over it (35:6-8);

So those that will not be there are the unclean, the sinner. You see, if God would allow the sinners to dwell there, they would soon be seeking to corrupt it, even as they have corrupted this world. They would soon again be demanding their rights, and wanting to have special treatment, and special favors be allotted to them, that they might continue in their sin. They would pollute, and corrupt, so the sinners are excluded,

“without”, the Bible says, “the dogs, the sorcerers, the whoremongers”, and all. The unclean will not pass over this highway. It’s the highway of holiness.

but it will be for those: even though they are strangers, [Or have never been there before, the word “fools” in this instance, should be translated “novices”, or have never been there.] they shall not err therein (35:8).

They’re, you can’t go astray, this, this highway is a broad highway of holiness, and you can’t go astray. Walking in holiness, not going astray. There will be no predatory beasts.

The lion will not be there, nor any ravenous beast will go thereon, nor be found there; but [Who will be there?] the redeemed of the Lord shall walk there: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing [On this way, highway of holiness] unto Zion and everlasting joy will be on their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (35:9-10).

Glorious, glorious day of the Lord! Glorious kingdom age! The redeemed, the ransomed.

In Bible days, if you owed a debt that you could not pay, then you would be sold as a slave in order to cover your debt. You would have to serve for a six year period, in order to cover your debt. Your wages would go to pay your debt.

Now had you been sold into slavery because of a debt, if one of your relatives would come along, they could redeem you out of slavery by paying the debt for you. They were called the “Goel”, or “the kinsman”, the family redeemer. They could come in and pay your debt, and you would be set free from slavery.

Now the idea of redemption comes from that. For as Jesus said, “Whosoever sins is a servant, or bondsman of sin”. So man who have become a slave of sin, man who was held in the bondage of corruption, man who owed a debt that he could not pay, Jesus came, and paid the debt to set you free from your sin. He is our Kinsman Redeemer! He paid the price to redeem you. He ransomed you from your sin. So redeemed and ransomed come from the same idea. The ransom was the price demanded, Jesus paid it. He gave His life for us. So the redeemed of the Lord. Those that have been purchased by Jesus Christ, those that belong to Him, will be there. The ransomed of the Lord, coming to Zion.

The Bible tells us that, yearly, annually, we’ll be coming to Jerusalem for a great festival with our Lord! Worshiping Him! Annual festival. I can hardly wait! Coming to Zion with songs! Everlasting joy upon their heads! They shall obtain joy and gladness! Sorrow, pain, suffering? Gone! No more tears, no more death, no more sorrow, no more pain, for the former things are passed away! The death, the sorrows, the suffering, the agony, the pain of this world is all the result of sin. It all comes from man’s basic rebellion against God.

God made a perfect world. God established a perfect order. God’s law is good. “He has shown you O man, what is good!” If man had only followed the perfect law of God we could be living in a utopia now! But man rebelled against God, and that rebellion has had its own inevitable, destructive consequences.

God said, “In the day you eat you will die”. The processes of aging, the processes of death. I believe that in that forbidden fruit in the garden, there was probably some kind of bacteria that was introduced in the body that began the breakdown of the mutation of the cells, and the aging process. The body is so marvelously designed that it could go on perpetually forever, just recreating itself, and you live in perpetual youth, and strength. But there’s been some kind of introduction into the body, and they’re trying to find out just what it is. That which causes the mutation of the cells, and the breaking down of the cells, and the aging process. They’re looking for that now. They realize that that’s an unnatural process in the body. I believe it was introduced with the forbidden fruit.

God was just trying to protect man! As God in His law is seeking to protect you from destroying yourself, from misery, and pain, and suffering that sin always brings. “The law of the Lord is perfect, it converts the soul. The statutes of the Lord are right, the judgments of the Lord are pure.” What God has, has shown you is, is good! But we have rebelled against the law of God, and we’re suffering the consequences in this world in which we live.

But in the new world, the redeemed of the Lord, the ransomed, will not experience the consequences of sin. But you’ll see the world as God intended, and you’ll live as God intended man to live, in communion and fellowship with God, everlasting joy upon your head. Sorrow, suffering, have flown away, no more existing! No pain, no death! Only the glorious love of Jesus Christ, ruling, and reigning in all of our hearts,

because God will be first in all of our lives, and we will be loving Him with all of our hearts, and souls, and minds. Because of our love for Him, we'll have love for each other, just like we love ourselves. There will be just love ruling, love reigning. Oh what a day that will be! So the end of the story, has no end! "And they shall live, and reign with Him for ever, and He shall reign for ever and ever! Hallelujah!, Hallelujah!" Ha, ha! No wonder, no wonder Handel got inspired! It's something to be excited about. The glorious new age of God. And, more exciting, we're getting close, we're getting close!

Chapter 36

Now the next portion, unfortunately is not as exciting, because we're just entering in now to the history of the past, but history is important. Because, those that do not learn from history, are doomed to make the same mistakes. These all were written for us, as examples unto us. History was written that you might learn from history, the lessons, that you might know how to live. The problem is, people don't learn many times from history, they say, "Oh I hate history!", and so they, they fall into the same ruts, and mistakes. So now looking at the historic background to what Isaiah, this was what was going on when Isaiah was writing these things.

Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah (36:1),

Hezekiah began to reign in 715 BC, so the fourteenth year of his reign, would be 701 BC, at this time,] *Sennacherib was the king of Assyria* [Assyria is again the area of Iraq today. Iraq actually is in the area of Assyria, Babylon, and Kedar. So when you read in the Bible of Kedar, you read of Assyria, you read of Babylon, you're reading of the area of Iraq. So Sennacherib was the king of Assyria.

and he came up against all of the defenced cities of Judah, and took them (36:1).

He had conquered Judah, the southern kingdom with the exception of the capital of Jerusalem, the city of king Hezekiah. He had not yet taken the city of Jerusalem. But...

The king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh (36:2)

Which is not the name of the man, but it is the title, and it is the title interpreted Rabshakeh, means "the chief commander in chief", is, is what it would be translated. The king of Assyria sent his commander in chief...

from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah (36:2)

Now Lachish was one of the major Philistine cities. It was one of the cities they called, "of the plain", it was south of Gath, and north and west of Beersheba. It was one of the major Philistine cities. He had taken the country of the Philistines also. Having conquered Lachish, he sent his commander and chief to Jerusalem, unto king Hezekiah.

with a great army. [So here came the army of the Assyrians, unto Jerusalem.] And they stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field. [This would've been to the north of Jerusalem, and probably in the area of mount Scopes.] And then came forth unto him Eliakim, who was Hilkiyah's son, who was over the house, [Or the treasury] and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, who was Asaph's son, he was the recorder (36:2-3).

So here we have diplomacy going on. The commander and chief of the Assyrian army, coming to Jerusalem and these heads of state from Jerusalem coming out to the wall to talk with him.

And the commander and chief said unto them, Go tell Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, What is this confidence in which you are trusting? You say, (but they are but vain words) you're trusting in empty words, you're trusting in nothing, you say, I have counsel and strength for war: now just on whom do you trust, that you dare to rebel against me? [Sennacherib] Lo, you are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; this staff on which you are trusting, if a man would lean on it, it would break and pierce his hand: so is Pharaoh the king of Egypt to all that trust in him (36:3-6).

Now it is true, it is true that Hezekiah had sent men down to Egypt to try to encourage the Egyptians to help defend them. They, they sent money to them to hire the Egyptian army to come to help. So he is ridiculing that. You remember the prophet had said in chapter thirty one, "Woe to those that go down to Egypt for help, that are trusting in horses and in chariots, because they have many of them. But, and because their horsemen are very strong. They do not look to the holy one of Israel, neither do they seek the Lord." He talks about, "the Egyptians are men, they're not God. Their horses are flesh, they're not spirit. And when the

Lord stretches out His hand, they're, they're gonna be destroyed." So the Lord told them "don't trust in Egypt, trust in me".

Now here is the pagan king rebuking them for trusting in Egypt. "You think you're gonna lean on Egypt? It's like a broken reed! You go to lean on it, and the thing's gonna snap!" You know like a cane, you've got your hand and you're resting, and you're leaning on it, and the thing breaks, and the thing comes up and pierces your hand. That's what he said Egypt's gonna be. "It's gonna pierce you, it's not gonna help you! It's gonna break under the strength, and you're gonna be hurt by this alliance with Egypt."

It is always a sad day when the servants of God are rebuked by the pagan world. We've seen some of that of late. Where men who were supposed servants of God have done things that have brought the name of Christ into disrepute, and they have received the rebuke of the pagan world. It's sad when that happens. Here is Hezekiah, basically a good king, but he is receiving rebuke from this pagan king Sennacherib.

But if you say to me, [Sennacherib goes on, "if you say"], We trust in Yahweh our God: is it not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, You shall worship before this altar (36:7)?

Now this shows that he had an understanding, but not complete of the God of Israel. He knew His name, but he didn't know His ways. For God had said that they weren't to build altars all over the land, but the place of worship would be in Jerusalem, that God would establish it. They were to come to Jerusalem. So the people had built altars throughout the land, in defiance to the law of God. Hezekiah in part of his reformation, spiritual reformation, was the destroying of all of the altars through the land, and again, centering worship for God there at the altar in the temple, in Jerusalem. Sennacherib saw this as a weakness, that he thought that Yahweh would be angry in a sense, with Hezekiah for destroying His altars throughout the land. But he was actually fulfilling the law of God.

Now [He said] give me some money, I pray thee, for my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses, ["If you want to just make a wager, just give me some money, and I'll give you two thousand horses."] and see if you can find two thousand men to ride them (36:8).

"You know, here's a challenge, if we gave you two thousand horses, you don't even have the men to, to ride those horses in a battle against us. If you're able to, in your part to set riders on them." Now if you can't even raise a cavalry unit of two thousand, if we provided the horses."

How do you think you're going to turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants (36:9),

In other words he's saying, "The best that you can put up against is us, really can't compare with the least of what we've got. We can send in, in the smallest battalion, the least captain and they could wipe you out if you were much stronger than you are! If you could put two thousand riders on the horses we would give you, you still don't have a chance against us."

and how is it that you put your trust on Egypt for the chariots and for horsemen (36:9).

And then he, he goes on to say, and this is rather blasphemous. He said...

Do you think that I've come up against you without Yahweh, actually Yahweh has ordered me to come and destroy this land (36:10).

So he's saying, "Hey you think I'm here without your God? You're God's the one that sent me here to destroy you!" Now at this point...

Eliakim and Shebna, and Joah [were standing on the wall, there were a lot of men from Jerusalem standing on the wall, and they were listening to this guy, and, and all of these things that he was saying. So,] they said, Look, ["Hey fellow! Wait a minute!"] speak to us in your Syrian language; we understand Syrian: don't speak to us in the Jews language, that all of these people on the wall can understand what you're saying. [But this commander and chief of the Assyrian forces said,] Hath not my master sent me to your master and to thee to speak these words? do you think that we came to talk to you guys, we came to talk to these men who are on the wall (36:11-12),

"You know, my message isn't for you, and for your king, my message is for the common people on the wall." Here is propaganda at its worst.

that they may experience deprivation and starvation as the result of the siege against the city. And then

the commander and chief stood, and he cried with a loud voice in the Jews language, [Directed it now to the people, defiant.] Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Don't let Hezekiah deceive you: for he will not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Yahweh, saying, Yahweh will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria (36:12-15).

Now this is where they get into trouble, start talking about the Lord, Israel's God. Now Hezekiah, the prophet Isaiah had been saying, "Trust in the Lord, the Lord will deliver, the Lord will you know, destroy the Assyrians. Just put your trust in the Lord." So Hezekiah was encouraging the people. "We're gonna just trust the Lord." "Hezekiah what are we doing to prepare for battle?" "Well, we're taking the necessary steps, it's not fool hardy, we've dug the tunnel to bring the water into the city, and we've fortified the walls. But really, our trust is in the Lord to deliver us."

So he is ridiculing this. He's mocking them. "Don't let Hezekiah tell you, Trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us! For this city shall not be delivered into the hands of the king of Assyria." Which was the declaration of Hezekiah.

Now they must have had some spies in the city. They knew what was going on. They knew the God of Israel, they knew His name. They knew what Hezekiah was saying, so they had their spy system. Their KGB was operating inside. Ha, ha!

Don't listen [he said] to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, If you make a agreement, or a treaty with me, and buy me off, ["Give me some money"] and you come on out to me: ["Surrender, give up, capitulate."] then every one of you will be able to eat of your own vine, and eat every one of his own fig tree, and you can drink the waters out of your own cisterns; Until I will come and I will take you away to another land, it's a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards (36:16-17).

Now the Assyrians, when they conquered people, had the custom of, of taking them, and to another land. They would transfer people around. Which was completely demoralizing. You come into a strange place, and being separated from your families, and separated from your own people, you, you feel like a stranger. You're sort of cowed into submission, because you can't really unify against the Assyrians. Thus, their whole strategy was this movement of people. Basically, that's what they're saying, "Look just go ahead and make a treaty with us, surrender to us, and, and pay us off, and then you can go back out. You don't have to be confined within the city. You can go back out to your houses and the fields. You can eat of your own fig trees, and drink the waters out of your own cisterns, until we come, and then we'll take you to another land. It's a good land. You know, you can plant your vineyards and so forth in another place." But this repopulating movement of the people to another land, for the purposes of demoralizing them, and making them incapable of rebelling against Assyria. Then they said...

Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, That Yahweh will deliver you. Have any of the gods of the nations delivered their lands out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Why do you think that your God is any better than the gods that were in Hamath and Arphad? these gods that were worshiped in Sepharvaim? or Samaria? they weren't able to deliver out of the hand of the king of Assyria (36:18-19).

So now he is exalting himself above God. "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." So the challenge. "Where are these gods?"

Who are they among all of the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of the hand of, that you think that Yahweh would deliver Jerusalem out of my hand (36:20)?

"You trusting in Yahweh, He's no better than these other gods. They weren't able to help. Neither will Yahweh help you!"

But [It says] the people [That is, on the wall] they held their peace, they didn't answer a word: for the king's commandment was, Don't answer them (36:21).

"Don't give them the benefit of an answer. Don't comfort them, just be quiet." So the people obeyed the king, and they just sat there and they listened, but they didn't answer.

So Eliakim, who was one of the emissaries of Jerusalem, who was over the household of Hezekiah, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, they came to Hezekiah and their clothes were torn (36:22),

I mean, tearing your clothes was a sign of, of grief, consternation. “Don’t know what to do, things are horrible, things are going down the tubes, don’t have any answers!” You just rip your clothes. It was a sign of, of mourning, it was a sign of, of frustration. So here they came into Hezekiah, their robes were torn.

and they repeated to Hezekiah the words of the commander and chief of the Assyrian forces (36:22).

Now what do you do when things are so bleak, there seems to be no way out? You do what Hezekiah did, and we’ll find out what he did next week. When I was a kid, we didn’t have TV, but we had radio. Little Orphan Annie, and Jack Armstrong, and the daily serials. I belonged to the club, secret society of Little Orphan Annie, I had my own decoder. And, I drank my Ovaltine! It was always at that exciting moment in the program you know, “Listen in tomorrow! Same time, same station, and find out what happened to Annie!”, you know. Always leave you in suspense.