

The Kings of Israel

Hezekiah – Isaiah 36 – 37



Sermon Discussion Guide

August 16, 2020

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STUDY NOTES

King of Assyria (36:4).

Sennacherib and his proud army believed themselves invincible. They believed they were gods. The field commander did not even acknowledge Hezekiah as king in this message.

High places and altars (36:7).

High places were the locations of pagan worship. The Assyrian commander knew that Hezekiah had removed many pagan sites that his father Ahaz had built in Judah (2 Chr. 31:1 – 3). The commander may have thought Hezekiah had stopped trusting in any god altogether.

The Lord . . . told me to march (36:10).

Ancient conquerors often claimed that the gods of their defeated enemies had joined their side (2 Chr. 35:21). The commander used this tactic to intimidate the Israelites.

1. What is one of your typical ways of dealing with crisis?

Read Isaiah 36:1 – 22.

2. Notice the people and places in verses 1 – 4. How do they help you define what was about to happen?
3. What reasons in verses 4 – 10 did Hezekiah have to take this meeting seriously?
4. Looking at verses 11 – 22, what ways did the Assyrian field commander misuse truth to undermine Hezekiah's people?
5. If you had been on the wall listening to this conversation, what would you have worried about?
6. How must the faith of Hezekiah have appeared to the Assyrians? Have you been in situations where your faith in God's promises appeared equally foolish?

Read Isaiah 37:1 – 20.

7. Notice the dialogue and activities throughout verses 1 – 20. In what sense was this a spiritual as well as political confrontation?

Would the spiritual dimension bring comfort or fear to Hezekiah? Why?

STUDY NOTES

Went up to the house of the Lord (37:14). Hezekiah says nothing to the messengers. His business is with God, for it is God's glory at stake.

Save us (37:20). Isaiah's life message was that the Lord alone saves (Isaiah 12:2-3; 25:9; 26:1; 30:15; 33:2, 6, 22; 35:4; 37:35; 43:3, 11; 45:15, 17, 21-22; 49:6, 25-26; 51:5-8; 52:7, 10; 56:1; 59:1, 16-17; 60:16, 18; 62:1, 11; 63:1, 5).

That all kingdoms on earth may know (37:20). Now Hezekiah gives voice to his faith, bringing the message of the book of Isaiah to a focal point: "that all the kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God." The ultimate reason God intervenes for his people is to make them living proof of his glory.

8. How was Hezekiah's response in verses 14 – 20 to Assyrian letter rooted in the character of God? (both words and actions)

9. When challenges came, Hezekiah modeled how to live faithfully by cleaning out idols from the house of God and trusting God when he could do no more. What can you do to live faithfully when you face your own challenges?

10. How do the following passages provide additional encouragement to be faithful in light of the challenges you face?
 - 2 Chronicles 32:7 – 8

 - 1 John 4:4

"He (Hezekiah) did what he could do and then he trusted the one who could do more."