

“I WILL DEFEND THIS CITY, TO SAVE IT”

Isaiah 36-39

Introduction

- 1) The historical narrative of **Isaiah 36-39** is a parallel account to the narratives found in 2 Kings 18-20 and 2 Chronicles 32
 - a) Each narrative adds key details about important events during the reign of king Hezekiah
- 2) In his historical section, Isaiah records the fulfillment of his earlier prophecies concerning the invasion of Judah by the Assyrians and the deliverance by the Lord (cf. 8:4-8; 30:30-33)
 - a) It ends with a look forward in a prophecy of the Babylonian captivity (39:5-7)
- 3) The city and nation were on the precipice of destruction – only faith in God could save them

I) **Timeline**

- A) The timeline of the events in this section can be confusing – it is *not* entirely in chronological sequence (i.e. some recorded events do *not* take place after previous events)
- B) Chapters 38-39 record events (Hezekiah’s sickness and visit of Babylonian envoys) that happened *before* the events of chapters 36-37 (Assyrian siege and God’s deliverance)
- C) The events of these chapters cover a period from the **713 BC** (14th year of Hezekiah’s reign) to **701 BC** (the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem)
 - 1) Over this period there was either two Assyrian invasions or one prolonged invasion

II) **The Sickness and Healing of Hezekiah (36:1; 38:1-22)**

- A) Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah and began the conquest of it (36:1)
 - 1) Takes place in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah’s reign (reigned total of 29 yrs [2 Kgs.18:2])
- B) That same year Hezekiah became sick and was near death (38:1a)
 - 1) Told to set his house “in order” for he would die; prayed and wept before God (38:2a-3)
 - 2) God had Isaiah tell him his prayer was heard and would add to him fifteen years (38:4-5)
 - 3) Also told that God would deliver him and Jerusalem from the king of Assyria (38:6)
 - 4) Sign given to confirm God’s word – shadow on the sundial reversed ten degrees (38:7-8)
- C) Hezekiah’s song of thanksgiving after recovering from the fatal sickness (38:9-20)
 - 1) His distress as he faced death in the prime of his life (vv. 10-14)
 - 2) His gratitude and humility in receiving healing from the Lord (vv. 15-20)
- D) Isaiah’s instructions for Hezekiah’s healing and Hezekiah’s request for a sign (38:21-22)

III) **The Visit of the Babylonian Envoys (39:1-8)**

- A) Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah after hearing that he had been sick and recovered (v. 1)
 - 1) Hezekiah showed the Babylonian envoys all his treasures (v. 2; cf. 2 Chron. 32:27-29)
- B) Isaiah questioned Hezekiah about it and he told what happened (vv. 3-4)
 - 1) Danger of pride: “all that is in *my* house...*my* treasures” (cf. 2 Chron. 32:24-25a, 31; Prov. 16:18)
- C) Prophecy of a future Babylonian destruction – Hezekiah’s treasure and descendants will be taken away into captivity (vv. 5-7)
 - 1) Hezekiah declares God’s word as good [just, right] and expressed confidence that he would enjoy peace in his days (v. 8)
 - a) His expectation of peace was threatened when the Assyrians besieged Jerusalem (cf. 2 Chron. 32:25b-26)

IV) The Boasts and Threats of Sennacharib (36:2-22)

- A) King of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh [a high official] with a great army to Jerusalem to boast against the Lord and threaten Hezekiah and the people (vv. 2-3)
 - 1) Foolish to trust in Egypt or their God (vv. 4-7)
 - 2) Give a pledge to Assyria; the Lord told me to come and destroy you (vv. 8-10)
 - 3) Do not listen to Hezekiah's words of encouragement (vv. 11-15; cf. 2 Chron. 32:6-8)
 - 4) Must surrender – no gods have been able to stop them, and the Lord will not (vv. 16-22)

V) Hezekiah's Faith and God's Deliverance of Jerusalem (37:1-38)

- A) Hezekiah reacted with grief and distress, and sent messengers to Isaiah (vv. 1-4)
 - 1) Lord told Hezekiah not be afraid of the Assyrian king for he would be punished (vv. 5-7)
- B) Again, Sennacharib sends a message boasting against the Lord (vv. 8-13)
 - 1) Boasted that no gods have stopped the Assyrians from destroying the nations
 - 2) Hezekiah took the letter to the temple, spread it before the Lord, and prayed (vv. 14-20)
 - a) Hear the words of reproach against You, Lord (vv. 17)
 - b) Save us so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you are the only true God (v. 20)
- C) The word of the Lord to Hezekiah and Jerusalem about the king of Assyria (vv. 21-35)
 - 1) The daughter of Zion/Jerusalem despised and laughed at Assyria's king (vv. 22)
 - 2) King of Assyria had boasted and blasphemed against the Holy One of Israel (vv. 23-25)
 - 3) God made it possible for Assyria to conquer nations (vv. 26-27)
 - 4) Assyria now raged against God and will be turned back the way they came (vv. 28-29)
 - 5) Jerusalem shall eventually sow and reap again; a remnant shall take root again (vv. 30-32)
 - 6) King of Assyria will not come into the city or even attack it; he shall return the way he came; Lord will defend Jerusalem to save it for His and David's sake (v. 33-35)
- D) The angel of the Lord killed 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp (v. 36)
 - 1) Sennacharib returned to Nineveh and was assassinated by his sons (vv. 37-38; cf. 37:7)

Conclusion

This inspired history is recorded by Isaiah to confirm the message that He preached concerning the invasion of Judah by the Assyrians and the deliverance by the Lord. It also affirmed that those who put their faith and trust in God, like Hezekiah, will be blessed by God and delivered from evil. The visit of the Babylonian envoys, Hezekiah's pride, and the prophecy of the Babylonian captivity is a transition to the latter half of the book (chs. 40-66) which records promises of restoration and more prophecies about the future messianic reign.