

focused first upon God's glory and upon his reputation, believing that all would be well with us if his name was well served (Matt. 6:33)" (Oswalt 1986: 655-56).

v35 "But yet another possibility presents itself in the recognition of the messianic promises (9:7; 11:1; 55:3). If the true David were to sit upon the throne of Israel, then Israel must be enabled to survive whatever may befall her in the years ahead. Had Jerusalem succumbed at that point, might not the Judeans, like the Northern Israelites, simply have been absorbed into their new homes and disappeared as the covenant people? As it was, through this deliverance and through the subsequent prophetic ministries, there was sufficient commitment on the part of some for the faith to survive the Exile and to provide the basis for the messianic revelation in Christ" (Oswalt 1986: 667).

v38 "Isaiah's account makes an ironic theological observation. In contrast to Hezekiah, who worshiped a strong and powerful God who delivered him from an almost impossible situation, Sennacherib's god was so weak that it could not deliver him, even though Sennacherib was piously worshiping this god in his temple. This emphasizes the impotence of Sennacherib and his gods. The God of Jerusalem saved Hezekiah from thousands of hostile Assyrian troops, but the god of Sennacherib could not even save him from his own two sons. Both kings went to the house of their god/God, but one came away with the hope of deliverance while the other ended up dead" (Smith 2007: 633-34).

"Faith is a commitment to trust the will of God for whatever he may ask one to experience; it is not a key that will force God's hand to unlock his treasure house. Faith enables people to walk in a way that honors and glorifies God, but in practical terms it daily echoes the profound words of Jesus in the garden, "not what I will, but what you will" (Matt 26:39)" (Smith 2007: 634-35).

#### SOURCES CITED

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## ISAIAH 37: SENNACHERIB VS. GOD

### OUTLINE OF ISAIAH

- I. Facing judgment by Assyria, the nation is called to trust the Lord (1-35)
  - A. Judah's sin requires exile, but a remnant will return (1-12)
  - B. The nations will be judged, and therefore they should not be trusted (13-23)
  - C. The Lord will rule over the earth and redeem his people (24-27)
  - D. The Holy One of Israel will replace faithless rulers with a righteous king (28-35)
- II. Facing Assyria and Babylon, Hezekiah wavers in his trust in the Lord (36-39)
  - A. Hezekiah's faith is tested by the Assyrian attack (36)
  - B. Hezekiah trusts the Lord and is delivered from the enemy (37)**
  - C. Hezekiah's faith is tested by a fatal illness (38)
  - D. Hezekiah fails to trust the Lord and will be delivered to the enemy (39)
- III. Facing exile by Babylon, the nation is called to trust the Lord (40-66)

### OUTLINE OF ISAIAH 37

- I. Hezekiah humbles himself before the Lord (37:1-4)
- II. Isaiah prophesies that the Lord will deliver (37:5-7)
- III. Sennacherib accuses the Lord of lying (37:8-13)
- IV. Hezekiah turns the matter over to the Lord in prayer (37:14-20)
- V. The Lord declares his sovereignty over Sennacherib (37:21-35)
- VI. The Lord demonstrates his sovereignty over Sennacherib (37:36-38)

## NOTES

vv1 “We may be sure that when we cease to blame our troubles upon someone else and when we no longer care who knows our condition, help is not far away” (Oswalt 1986: 644).

vv3-5 “The metaphor of labor is a telling one. All too familiar to them was the breech birth, or some other complication, which caused the mother to be unable to deliver the child although she labored herself to exhaustion and death. Furthermore, once labor began there was no turning back; either the child was delivered or both mother and child died. Hezekiah sees himself in that predicament. Jerusalem *must* be delivered, but neither he nor his government nor his people has the strength to do it” (Oswalt 645).

vv4 “It is of great significance that both here and in the next incident Hezekiah’s greatest concern is the honor of God. This is surely a testimony to the essential greatness of Hezekiah’s heart. He is not first concerned with his or his nation’s survival. He is chiefly concerned that their actions have provided the vehicle whereby God’s name has been brought into contempt. Furthermore, he knows that if God’s glory is made paramount, then the nation will survive. It was the putting of survival first which had brought them to this perilous state” (Oswalt 1986: 646).

vv10 “While Rabshakeh attacked the people’s confidence in Hezekiah, lest he deceive them (36:14–15), Sennacherib’s letter attacks King Hezekiah’s confidence in God, lest God deceive Hezekiah (37:10)” (Smith 2007: 615).

vv11-13 “His opinion was not based just on a few minor victories that happened in the last few months; Assyrian dominance was not just a fluke. If these undeniable historical facts are true, then the question that should haunt Hezekiah is: “Will you be delivered?” How can Hezekiah be so blind that he does not realize the inevitable outcome of the Assyrian conquest of Judah? Sennacherib argues that the facts of history do not lie, so Hezekiah should surrender” (Smith 2007: 615).

vv14-20 “In the final analysis, God did not act to save his people because Jerusalem or Hezekiah deserved to be delivered; God acted based on his plan (37:26), his desire to defend his own reputation (37:35), his decision to cause all the kingdoms on earth to know that he is God (37:20), and his promises to king David (37:35)” (Smith 2007: 617).

vv14-20 “Hezekiah’s prayer is so magnificent because it arises from a deep and true understanding of who God is, and is fundamentally an act of worship. Such praying lifts people out of themselves and into the presence of God. And in that context, present problems are not lost sight of; they are just seen from a new perspective, and the cry for deliverance becomes a cry that God’s kingdom may come and his will be done (20). The context of worship purges the cry of all pathetic self-interest and binds together the one who cries and the one who hears in a common desire and a common purpose. If only we could learn to pray like this, what times we would have on our knees, and what a difference we would see in the progress of the gospel in the world!” (Webb 1996: 152).

vv16 “*you are God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth* sums up all that chs. 13–35 were about. Hezekiah has learned the truth which his father Ahaz refused to consider. The nations of the earth are not ultimate, nor are they to be trusted” (Oswalt 1986: 654).

vv20 “In view of the king’s evident dependence upon God, this would be the place to press that dependence as the motivation for God’s deliverance. *Because* Hezekiah depends, God *must* deliver. In fact, that is not what Hezekiah did. His concern remained for God and his glory. What happened to Judah was not of ultimate importance; what happened to God’s name mattered to all eternity. How rare this is. We can talk easily of the importance of God’s being glorified until we are hurting. Then it is of chief importance that we be delivered, and how God is perceived in it all is of no consequence. Not so with Hezekiah; the chief motive for Judah’s being delivered is that the world may know that God alone is God. How often the outcome of our lives and our praying might be different if we