

**Commentary on Isaiah chapters 36 and 37 verses 1 -7
by Chuck Smith 7.26.23**

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July memory verse Proverbs 30:5 (NKJV) Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

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CHAPTER 36

Last week as we completed the thirty-fifth chapter of the book of Isaiah, of course, we got into those glorious prophecies of the future Kingdom Age when Jesus Christ will be reigning over the earth, and how God is going to restore the earth to its Edenic glory. Now we always it seems have sort of curious minds and we wander off on just how God proposes to do the things that He said He is going to do. And in reality, the whys aren't really our real concern. However, we so often make them a concern. You know, "Well, if He did this or if He did that." There are many suggestions as to how the earth might be restored to the Edenic glory and beauty. Here in the thirty-fifth chapter there are references to there being streams in the deserts, pools in the dry places, and so forth. And how that the whole earth is going to be more or less restored, as far as the deserts will be gone. They will blossom as a rose and the whole earth will become very fertile and productive.

With the prophecies of Isaiah there are also those prophecies of the earth being moved out of its place, staggering to and fro as a drunken man, and things of this nature, which has caused some people to theorize that it is quite possible that we will have another polar axis shift. And it could very well explain many of the cataclysmic events that are declared to be taking place during the Great Tribulation. As the earth shakes and as the mountains and the islands disappear. And it talks really of a tremendous cataclysmic upheaval of the earth.

At the present time, the earth is tilted at about, as far as the polar axis in its relationship to the sun, it's tilted at about 23 1/3 degrees, which causes our summer and winter seasons because of this tilt on the polar axis. And now being in the northern hemisphere, the sun is, because of our tilt we are now receiving longer days and will do so up until the twenty-second of June when we come into the summer equinox.

There is a suggestion that there will be another polar axis shift at which time it could be that the earth will come into pretty much a straight alignment with the sun and the earth

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revolving on its axis. Now if this should result, what would happen is, of course, you would have a medium climate all the way around the earth. You wouldn't really have your seasons any longer. But you'd have pretty much a medium climate around the earth. It would heat up the earth sufficient to melt the ice pack at the North and the South Pole, which would raise the water level around the entire earth.

With the greater warmth it would cause more evaporation of the water on into the atmosphere and would create a much larger moisture barrier within the atmosphere itself. Because of the polar ice packs being melted, you would not have your tremendous cold air, arctic air moving, so all of your winds would become much more mild than they presently are, as the air would move much slower than it now does as a result of the polar arctic winds and so forth that bring these. You have your warm air rising and the cold air moving in. But it would sort of minimize the air movement, much milder winds and so forth than what we presently have.

Probably increased rainfall around the earth, of course, there would be a raise in the water level on all of the shorelines and it would give us a little bit more of a water-earth ratio. And would result probably in the disappearance of all of the desert regions and also all of your extremely hot zones and extremely cold zones so that you'd have a pretty much of a temperate climate all around the world.

We do know that at one time at the North Pole there was tropical vegetation. Mammoths that had been found encased in ice in Siberia have had tropical vegetation still in their digestive tracts. The mammoths were fast frozen there by some cataclysmic event of the past, quite possibly the flood of Noah. We do know that at one time at the South Pole there were great forests because they have found tremendous deposits of charcoal 200 feet under the ice pack, indicating that there were once forests down there. And, again, it could be accountable back to the flood, that at that time there was a polar axis shift causing the tremendous movement of the waters, the oceans and so forth and creating whole new type of continents and entirely new kind of a geography around the earth.

So there are hints and indications in the scripture that this indeed might be what will cause these changing effects. However, God works it out, as I say, we only guess. We really don't know. But God is going to work it out and the earth is going to be a beautiful place to live. And so it really doesn't matter. You don't have to put a claim on Hawaii. I don't even know if Hawaii will still be here because during the great cataclysmic changes, it talks about the islands disappearing. It would be a shame, I agree, if Hawaii would go, but you know, no matter where you live it will be beautiful and verdant as God restores the earth.

So chapter 35 is prophetic as it looks ahead into that glorious Kingdom Age. Now from thirty-six to thirty-nine, Isaiah just takes out of the historic records and you'll find that this particular area parallels Second Kings beginning with around chapter 17 or 18. And so he evidently took the historic records. In fact, chapter 37 of Isaiah is identical to Second

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Kings, chapter 19. So he has just more or less copied the historic records of which Second Kings is a part of the history of the nations of Israel and Judah. And he copied out of the historic accounts these chapters in order to give you the historic background for the prophecies that he has just made of the destruction of the Assyrian forces and so forth. Having prophesied these things, he now gives the historic background that you might see that God's Word was accurate and true and what God foretold would come to pass did indeed transpire.

So these next four chapters are just out of the Kings and other historic records that he had available to him that we do not have now. And they just covered this period of history over which he has been prophesying, the period of history when the Assyrians would be bringing their armies in an invasion of Jerusalem but would be turned back by the hand of God. So this is the history of it.

Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib the king of Assyria came up against the defended cities of Judah, and took them. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh ([Isa 36:1-2](#))

Now Rabshakeh is the title. We really don't know what the name of the man was, but that is the title of this particular person.

from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder. And Rabshakeh said unto them, Go tell Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What is this confidence wherein you trust? I say, (but they are but vain words) I have counsel ([Isa 36:2-5](#))

He said, "You're saying, actually, that you have counsel,"

and strength for war: now on whom are you trusting, that you would rebel against me? Lo, you are trusting in the staff of the broken reed, of Egypt; whereon if a man would lean, it would go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him. But if you say to me, 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, Ye shall worship before this altar? ([Isa 36:5-7](#))

Now Rabshakeh shows his ignorance of the worship of the God of Israel or the God of Judah. For Hezekiah did indeed destroy the altars and the high places and the groves in which the children of Israel were worshipping the gods of the Canaanites. The worship of Molech and Baal and Mammon was done in these groves and in these high places. And so one of the pluses of Hezekiah is that when he came to the throne, he tore down the altars to the false gods that the children of Israel had been worshipping. But as is so often the case, those that are looking from the outside in presume to know a lot of what is being taught or said and really they know nothing of the truth. And in this case,

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Rabshakeh was totally wrong in that he is accusing Hezekiah of tearing down the altars or tearing down the high places of Jehovah. Jehovah actually commanded them not to build the high places and all. He spoke out against them. And it was established that there was only one place that they should gather to worship Jehovah and to offer sacrifices and that was in Jerusalem at the temple. And so Rabshakeh shows his total ignorance of Jehovah in his remarks.

Now he also is assuming that the children of Judah had gone to Egypt for help. But Hezekiah had been counseled by Isaiah not to go down to Egypt for help but just to trust in the Lord. Now, the natural thing to do in this situation, the wise natural thing would have been to go down to Egypt to seek their help because Egypt was also being threatened by Assyria. And so it would have made good natural sense to go down to get Egypt's help. But what often is to us good natural sense isn't always good spiritual sense. And where naturally it would have been a smart move, from a spiritual standpoint it would have been a bad move and God recommended and counseled them against it. He said, "Trust in Me and not in the arm of Egypt or in the arm of flesh." And so Rabshakeh shows two cases of his ignorance of the situation.

One is ignorance of their worship of Yahweh. Secondly, his ignorance of the counsel that God had given to them not to trust in Egypt. So they were not trusting in Egypt. They were trusting completely in the Lord through the encouragement of Isaiah to just trust in the Lord to deliver the Assyrian host into their hand. Now he is belittling them. He said, "Look, give me some money and I'll give you two thousand horses. And let's see if you can find enough men to sit upon those horses. We'll help you to fight us."

Just give us some pledges, and we'll give you two thousand horses, [if you can put men upon them] if you're able to set riders on them. How then will you turn away the face of just one captain of the least of my master's servants, and you put your trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? And do you think that I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? Yahweh said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it ([Isa 36:8-10](#)).

So now he is blaspheming God. He is saying, "Hey, God is giving me directions. You think I'd come out up here without God's instructions? For Yahweh said to me, 'Come on up and besiege this place.'"

Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language [or in Aramaic]; for we understand it: don't speak to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are upon the wall ([Isa 36:11](#)).

Now here are all of the men of Israel sitting there on the wall and so these emissaries have had to kind of figure, "Man, these guys must be demoralizing these people saying, 'If we gave you two thousand horses you couldn't put men on them. And how are you ever going to defy us?' and all." And so they said, "Hey, don't talk to us in Hebrew. Talk to us in the Syrian; we can understand your Syrian tongue. We're Aramaic, we

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understand that. Speak to us in Aramaic." But this Rabshakeh picked up on what they were noticing and so he said,

[Hey, wait a minute.] Didn't the king send me to talk to you men on the wall? ([Isa 36:12](#))

I don't care about your king Hezekiah.

And he stood, and he cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Don't let Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD [or in Yahweh], saying, Yahweh will surely deliver us: for this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Harken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Just make an agreement with me by a present [just pay some tribute], and come on out ([Isa 36:13-16](#)): And just work in your fields. eat of your own vines, and of your own fig tree, drink waters out of your own cistern; Until I come and repopulate you in another land that is just as nice and pleasant as this one ([Isa 36:16-17](#)).

Now Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, had the habit or custom of repopulating the peoples from their lands, because as they would move them out of their land, away from their families and away from their friends, they had to learn a whole new culture and were with different people, and it kept them from banding together in a rebellion. And so he's offering them here. "We'll just take you away and we'll give you another land that's just as pleasant and nice as this. Just pay tribute and just wait for us to come and repopulate you." And then again he said,

Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, Yahweh will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? ([Isa 36:18](#))

So he's now exalting himself against the God of Jacob.

Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that Yahweh should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? But the men on the wall wisely held their peace, they didn't answer a word: for the king's commandment was, Don't answer him. Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and they told him the words of Rabshakeh ([Isa 36:19-22](#)).

Now it was a custom that when you were very upset or when you were in real trouble, the thing to do is just tear your clothes. And so these guys have been receiving all of these threats now from this emissary of the king of Assyria and it's been a bad experience, so they tear their clothes and sort of, "Hey, woe is us. We've had it," kind of a thing. And they came in to Hezekiah with their clothes torn.

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CHAPTER 37:1-7

And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes ([Isa 37:1](#)),

Yeah, man, it is bad. Just ripped his clothes, you know.

and he covered himself with sackcloth ([Isa 37:1](#)),

Now sackcloth was something that they put upon themselves to more or less afflict themselves. It was whenever you were in mourning you would put on sackcloth. Sackcloth, (like burlap bags) as you can well imagine, against the skin must be very irritating. And so the king himself put on sackcloth.

and he went into the house of the LORD ([Isa 37:1](#)).

Or he went into the temple. And they said unto him... let's see,

And then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, and they came to Isaiah the prophet. And they said to Isaiah, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and the mothers do not have enough strength to bring them forth ([Isa 37:2-3](#)).

Actually, they were beginning to suffer from the ravages of being closed in by the Assyrian forces. And so with the shortage of food, the strength of the mothers was ebbing and they didn't have enough strength when it came time for a child to be delivered. They'd be in labor, and yet they didn't have enough strength to bring the children forth. He said,

It may be that Yahweh thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left ([Isa 37:4](#)).

So it's really a request to Isaiah, "Pray. This guy has been down here and we're in trouble. Pray."

So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that you have heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land ([Isa 37:5-7](#)).

So God's answer to these threats of Sennacherib is that he is going to return to his own land and there fall by the sword.