

**The Book of Isaiah**  
*Chapter 36-39*

**Introduction:**

This section before us (36-39) forms the last section in the second major subdivision in Isaiah (7-39), all dealing with this question: “Shall we put our trust in God or in the nations?”

- Chapters 7-12: Ahaz answers incorrectly and implications are explored.
- Chapters 13-35: Explanation of why trusting the nations is foolish—all people under God’s judgment
- Chapters 36-39: Test to trust God or nations is now administered to Son of Ahaz, Hezekiah

Has anyone listened to the prophets words? In the short-term, yes.

- This section begins well, but the “trust” is only short-term (Chapters 38-39)

**I. Preliminary Contextual Issues**

A. Dating of this section (36-39)

1. Sennacherib’s (King of Assyria) invasion of Judah is 701 BC (supported by Assyrian and Biblical records) 14<sup>th</sup> year (Isaiah 36:1)
2. Conflicting Dates
  - a. 2 Kings 18:1—3<sup>rd</sup> year of Hoshea (727 BC Hezekiah King)
  - b. 2 Kings 18:13—14<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah’s invasion (715 BC)
  - c. 715 BC or 701 BC?
  - d. Coregent with Ahaz until death in 716 BC
  - e. Dating is referring to Sole Kingship
  - f. Traditional date 701 BC

B. Lack of chronology with this section

1. Chapters 36-37 speak of Assyria invasion and their defeat (36:1; 37:36-38)
2. Chapters 38 and 39 events likely happen prior to the 701 BC invasion and Assyria’s destruction

See: Isaiah 38:6

3. Why the reordering of 36-37 and 38-39?
  - a. Chronological Transition: end with Babylonian exile prediction move on from Assyria.
  - b. Theological Transition: Attempts to answer the following question: “Who is the promised Davidic Messiah?”
  - c. Could it be Hezekiah?
  - d. His faithfulness secured continued life
  - e. He restored justice and religious faithfulness in the land

*And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done. 4 He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nebushtan. 5 He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6 For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. 2 Kings 18:3-6 NKJV*

*In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. 2 Chronicles 29:3 NKJV*

*Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God. 21 And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered. 2 Chronicles 31:20-21 NKJV*

- f. Is he the child of Isaiah 9?
- g. Is he the root from the stump of Jesse in Isaiah 11?
- h. Is he that man on the throne in Isaiah 16:5?
- i. Is he the righteous, beautiful king in Isaiah 32-33?
- j. Chapters 38-39 reveal to us Hezekiah is not the promised Messiah—death is fate, cannot usher in eternal kingdom, he is NOT Almighty God and he is NOT infallible.

Lessons:

- 1) Trust is a way of life, not an affair of the moment.
- 2) Trusting our circumstances instead of our Creator will produce a scattered instead of a steadfast character and integrity.
  
4. What is the overall purposes of these chapters?
  - a. Prepare us for the coming Babylonian exile
  - b. Prepare us for further revelation of the nature and character of promised Messiah (40-66)

## II. Historical Context of Isaiah's Message

### A. Ahaz, King of Judah

1. Formed alliance with Assyria (TPIII) for protection from Aram and Israel (see Isaiah 7)
2. Trusted nations, not God
3. Assyria (TPIII) destroys Aram (Damascus) in 732 BC (see 3 Kings 16)
4. Father of Hezekiah

### B. Hoshea, King of Israel

1. Reigned at the end of Ahaz and beginning of Hezekiah's reign (see 2 Kings 17)
2. Assyria (Shalmaneser) came up against Israel, so Hoshea agrees to be servant and pay tribute
3. Israel/Assyria relationship compromised when tribute stopped and people send to So King of Egypt

*And the king of Assyria uncovered a conspiracy by Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. 2 Kings 17:4 NKJV*

4. Assyria captures/destroys Samaria (Israel) in 722 BC

*Until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day. 2 Kings 17:23 NKJV*

### C. Hezekiah, King of Judah

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1. Was in leadership when Israel (North) fell to Assyria in 722 BC
2. Godly King

*He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nebushtan. 5 He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6 For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. 2 Kings 18:4-6 NKJV*

3. Broke alliance (likely formed by Ahaz) with Assyria

*The Lord was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 2 Kings 18:7 NKJV*

4. Eventually Assyria would invade Judah—after Israel is destroyed, which is where chapters 36-39 pick up
5. Events occur around 701 BC—on either side

NOTE: Hezekiah's response to Assyria's pressure will be different from his father's (Ahaz) to Aram/Israel

### **III. The Invasion of Assyria Against Judah**

#### **A. The speech of the Field Commander (36:1-21)**

1. Rabshakeh is the third highest-ranking officer in Assyrian army (2)
2. Main army is engaged in siege at Lachish—30 miles southwest of Jerusalem (2)
3. Lachish and Jerusalem are the only remaining walled cities in Judah (1)
4. To persuade Jerusalem that situation is hopeless will help Assyria with Lachish

NOTE: Location of Field Commander

*And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field. Isaiah 36:2b NKJV*

*Then the Lord said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Abaz, you and Shear-Jashub your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field. Isaiah 7:3 NKJV*

NOTE: Warnings Isaiah gave of folly of trusting Assyria (7) are coming true (36)

Who will Hezekiah trust?

5. Attempt to undermine Judah's trust (4-10) speech

“On what are you basing this confidence of yours?” (36:4)

— Attempts to demolish each basis

- a. Military power? Relying on “splintered reed” Egypt for strength—will break if put weight on it (5-6)
- b. Lord? Assumes God is unhappy with the destruction of high places therefore won't help Hezekiah who launched campaign (7)

NOTE: Commander's thinking is flawed

- c. Military Power?: Judah is weak, even if given assistance still no good (8-9)
- d. Divine direction? –Flawed (10)

6. Attempt to erode the morale of the city (11-12)

- a. Aramaic—common language of the Assyrian Empire and Judean officials would understand
- b. Common people would not understand
- c. Trying to cause panic and quick surrender

7. Attempt to appeal to a desire for peace (13-20)

- a. Trust human glory or the One who is glory?
- b. Hezekiah can't deliver you.
- c. Disguises the exile
- d. Look at other nations, their gods didn't deliver?

Lessons:

1. The LORD is UNLIKE other gods (READ: Isaiah 40:18-23) (READ: Acts 17:22-29)
2. We must guard our hearts and minds from the enemies lies—young people today (Philippians 4:8) (Romans 12:2)
3. Failure to trust God can have generational consequences (Ahaz and Assyria—Assyria against Hezekiah)

B. Hezekiah's Response (37:1-7)

1. Mourning (1)

NOTE: Hezekiah does not surround himself with counsel of advisors but goes into the house of the Lord

NOTE: This is a last resort, he already tried to buy protection

*Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15 So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord and in the treasuries of the king's house. 16 At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. 2 Kings 18:14-16 NKJV*

2. Seeks Godly counsel through Isaiah (2)
3. Aware of their need for divine intervention (3)
4. Concerned about the mocking of the Lord (4)
5. God is not afraid, He will be victorious, enemy will be defeated (5-7)

NOTE: Contrast between Isaiah 7 and 37

*"Trust entirely in God, and when He brings you to the venture, see that you take it. We act like pagans in a crisis, only one in a crowd is daring enough to bank his faith in the character of God."—Oswald Chambers*

C. Hezekiah's Prayer (37:8-20)

1. Sennacherib's fatal mistake: Judah's God is not man-made, He is unique (8-13)
2. Hezekiah not Isaiah (4) prays (16-20)

NOTE: Full access to God through Jesus, our mediator

- a. Ascription of praise regarding character of God (16)
- b. Recognizes God is over ALL
- c. Petition notes God is alive, not idol (17)

*Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. 5 They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; 6 They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; 7 They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat. 8 Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them. Psalms 115:4-8 NKJV*

- d. Focus is on God's vindication (18-19)
- e. Prayer of deliverance is not self-centered but divine-oriented—people may know you are Lord (20)

### Lessons

1. We have a 24/7 open communication line to God
2. Our prayers should note the character of God
3. Our petitions should be God-honoring

#### D. God's reply (37:21-38)

1. Reply given to Isaiah (21a)
2. Part 1—To Sennaecheirb (21b-29)
  - a. Pride is an issue (23)
  - b. Puppets in God's hands (26)
  - c. God is in control (28-29)
3. Part 2—To Hezekiah (30-32)
  - a. Sign given promoting faith
  - b. God will do what He says
  - c. God will preserve a harvest (32)

4. Part 3—of Sennecherib (33-35)
  - a. Assyria will NOT mount an attack against the city (33)
  - b. Assyria will leave area completely (34)
  - c. God will defend and save the city (35)
5. No-contest match (36-38)
  - a. No one or nothing can stand against the living God
  - b. It's foolish to trust that which will stumble

#### **IV. The Preparation of the Babylonian Exile**

##### A. Hezekiah's prayer for healing (38:1-8)

1. Hezekiah told he was going to die (1) at age 39
2. Hezekiah reminds God of his faithful conduct as meeting the requirements for long life (2-3)

*Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. 12 Who is the man who desires life, And loves many days, that he may see good? 13 Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit. 14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it. Psalms 34:11-14 NKJV*

3. God's response (4-8)
  - a. Different word 15 more years
  - b. Delivered from Assyria
  - c. Sign given to prove promise

##### B. Hezekiah's lament (9-20)

1. Meditation on mortality (10-14)
2. Everything belongs to God (15-19)
3. Note of praise (20)

NOTE: Does God “change” His mind?

- God's sovereign will vs. free choice of humanity?
- How does this impact our prayer life?

C. Hezekiah's interactions with Babylon

1. Meradach-Balodon—leader and King of Babylon (721-710 BC; 705-703 BC) (1)
2. Hezekiah was pleased to be noticed

NOTE: There is danger when we seek the pleasure and affirmation of humans instead of God (Jesus' baptism)

3. Hezekiah misuses an opportunity to glorify God
  - a. All about his own accomplishments
  - b. Large stage

QUESTION: How am I using my influence? To glorify God or self?

4. Prediction of Babylonian Exile

**Conclusion:**

Why this ending?

- End with 37 (chronologically) then room is left to believe Hezekiah is promised Messiah
- End with 39 know that hope is still available
- Trust is intended to be a way of life, not a one-time experience
- There is no final salvation in a human being, no matter how good he might be—Messiah is better