

Isaiah

The Lord Is Salvation

Sennacherib's

Messenger

Makes A

Speech

Isaiah 36:1-21

Lesson Forty

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

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The Lord Is Salvation

Sennacherib's Messenger Makes a Speech

The first thing we should know about the Scripture lesson for today is that it is the same as II Kings 18:17-36. This is because Isaiah, or the compiler of II Kings, were talking about the same event and one or the other of them decided to just make a copy. It is history. It is used by both writers to tell the story each needs to tell. Actually, the thirty-sixth through thirty-ninth chapters of Isaiah record the same message as II Kings 18:13 through II Kings 20:19. Read Isaiah 36:1-21.

This all takes place in the fourteenth year that Hezekiah was king of Judah. Remember, Hezekiah ignored Isaiah's advice and made a treaty with Egypt that guaranteed their mutual support in military actions. Assyria had defeated Samaria a few years before, and was coming after Judah. Forty-six of the walled Judean cities were under the control of Sennacherib. He sent his army to Jerusalem, the capitol city. There were thousands of soldiers.

Sennacherib also sent one of his most important people to be his spokesperson. He is called a field commander, but probably was not a soldier. He was one of Sennacherib's most trusted governmental officials. He speaks loudly and forcefully from a high place outside the city of Jerusalem. Hezekiah sent out three people to meet this person. He had a message from "the great king of Assyria."

He is standing close enough that the soldiers and others standing on the wall of Jerusalem can hear him speak. He was speaking in the Hebrew language and Hezekiah's representatives suggested that he speak in his own language. Sennacherib's spokesperson refused because he wanted the people of the city to know exactly what he was saying. He raised several issues to which Hezekiah's representatives had no response. They went something like this:

1. Can you really expect to get any real help from the Egyptians? He said this is like leaning on a staff that is broken and all you get is splinters in your hand.
2. Your king has just destroyed most of your altars and said that the only place you can worship is in Jerusalem. He doesn't seem to realize that he is speaking of destruction of altars to false gods, destroyed to encourage worship of the true God in the Temple in Jerusalem.
3. In verse eight he implies that Judah doesn't even have chariots and horses to defend themselves when they are attacked.
4. In verse ten he says that the Lord had ordered him to attack Judah. He had obviously heard of the Hebrew prophets who were saying that the Assyrians were God's instrument of punishment for Israel and Judah.

He was right on all counts. There was no real response from the Judeans.

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As we said, the representatives of Hezekiah try to get him to speak in Aramaic. He refused and spoke louder. He said that the Judeans were depending on Hezekiah and that Hezekiah could not deliver them from the attack of Assyria. He may have, at that time, pointed back at the thousands of soldiers behind him and suggested that since the city was surrounded with Assyrian soldiers there would be no connection with the outside world. Because of that, they would be so hungry that they would eat anything and so thirsty that they would drink any liquid.

Sennacherib's representative said that they should not believe Hezekiah when he assured the people that the Lord would save them. He was actually challenging God, whether he knew it or not. In his mind, the God of the Hebrews was no stronger than the gods of other nations who had tried to resist Assyria.

As examples he listed Hamath (HA'math) and Arpad (Ar'fad). He listed Sepharvaim (Sef-ar-vA'im). He even mentioned Samaria, many of the residents of which worshipped the true God. He said that the gods of these countries were no match for the mighty Assyria. He said that if this was true, the God of Jerusalem would not be able to help them either.

The three representatives of Hezekiah, Eliakim (E-II'-a-kim), Shebna (Sheb'-nuh) and Joah (JO'uh), did not respond. They kept their silence as the king had told them to do.

This is a frustrating story. Here an earthly king challenges the true God. We must admit that his representative had a good case. God had been silent up to this point. It seemed that no one could stop Assyria. They were taking over the world.

What should this story tell us? First, there will always be those who do not respect God. Second, there are times when everything seems hopeless, just like it did for Jerusalem. Third, there are times when we must wait on God...keeping our silence. Typically we don't have all the answers. Fourth, even when it seems like God is not around, we can be sure He is.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

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Scripture Memory: "Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away." Isaiah 35:10b

Lesson Goal: To show students that sometimes the situation seems hopeless. Sometimes the enemy seems to have the advantage over us.

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Student Worksheet

Sennacherib's Messenger Makes A Speech—Isaiah 36:1-21

As the teacher goes through the lesson, listen for answers to these:

1. What Scripture is the same as our lesson Scripture for today?
2. What were the issues to which Hezekiah's representatives would have no response?
3. In the mind of Sennacherib's messenger, the God of the Hebrews was no _____ than the _____ of other nations who had tried to _____ Assyria.
4. What four things should this story tell us?

Scripture Memory: "Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away." Isaiah 35:10b

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.