

## ISAIAH 36-39

### Introduction

These chapters are unusual in that they are written in prose. The story in these chapters is about Hezekiah, his illness, his plea to God to live, his blessing of 15 more years to live, and Israel's protection from Sennecherib, King of Assyria.

Sennecherib had taken over almost all lands surrounding Jerusalem. Jerusalem was in peril: Remember Isaiah's prophecy (8:8) regarding the King of Assyria that,

	(and)	He shall come up over all his channels,
	(and)	He shall go over all his banks.
Verse 8	(And)	He shall pass through Judah,
		He shall overflow and go over,
		He shall reach even to the neck,

Well, the time had come. God was faithful to Israel because of (1) the ancient promises made to David, (2) Hezekiah's righteousness, and (3) the prayers of Isaiah. God destroys a large part of the Assyrian army in one night and saves Israel.

I chose in these chapters to emphasize who was speaking in colors related to the speakers. I hope this is helpful and not distracting.

Also, these chapters are very similar to the account given in 2 Kings regarding Hezekiah's story. Tradition has it, that the books of Kings and Chronicles, were written by Jeremiah the Prophet. There is no definitive evidence. I am sure Jeremiah would have had access to Isaiah's writings and may have used them as a basis for his writings.

## ISAIAH 36

All Prose (I will use Pro. Gileadi's translation for this chapter and you may cross check with your KJ version.)

(See 2 Kings 18)

(King of Assyria – Pink, Hezekiah's Diplomats – Gold, Rabshakeh - Khaki)

Verse 1 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib King of Assyria marched against all the fortified cities of Judea and seized them.

Verse 2 And the King of Assyria sent Rabshakeh with a large army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he took up a position by the aqueduct of the Upper Reservoir, on the road to the Laundry Plaza.

Verse 3 And Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, overseer of the palace, Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the record keeper, went out to him.

Verse 4 And Rabshakeh said to them,

Please tell Hezekiah,  
Thus says the great king,  
The King of Assyria:

On what grounds do you behave with such confidence?

Verse 5 Do you suppose that in war mere words are sufficient tactics or show of strength?

In whom have you put your trust that you have rebelled against me?

Verse 6 It is clear you depend on the support of Egypt, that splintered reed, which enters and pierces the palm of any man who leans on it.

Such is Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to all who rely on him!

Verse 7 But if you tell me, "We rely on the Lord our God",

Is he not the one whose shrines and alters Hezekiah abolished,  
Telling Judea and Jerusalem to worship *only* at this altar? (Temple at Jerusalem)

(Hezekiah did tear down alters being used to worship heathen gods, wooden poles/trees being used to worship Asherah (Queen of Heaven – Mother God, Wife of God), and the bronze snake on a pole statue being used as a conduit to God, instead of the temple. See Num. 21:5-9, 2 Kings 18:4, 2 Kings 21:3. Many Israelites thought it was still righteous to worship Gods under God as long as they held Jehovah as supreme (Monolatry). This encouraged evils that the Canaanite societies practiced (fertility rites, sodomy & placing more faith in a statue of a snake than in the symbolism of the Messiah being raised to save Israel). Many Israelites were angry at Hezekiah for destroying their beloved alters, etc. Here the King of Assyria is making a play for those of Israel disaffected with Hezekiah.)

- Verse 8                    Come now, wager with my lord the King of Assyria:  
I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able to put riders on  
them.
- Verse 9                    How then shall you repulse even one of the least of my lord's servants,  
depending, as you do, on Egypt for chariots and horsemen?
- Verse 10                  Moreover, could I have marched against this land and destroyed it  
without the lord? For the lord told me to come against this land and  
destroy it.
- Verse 11                  Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to Rabshaketh,  
  
                                  "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, which we understand.  
Do not speak to us in Judean in the ears of the people who are on the  
wall. "  
  
                                  (Hezekiah's diplomats desire Rabshekeh to speak Syriac (or Aramaic) the common tongue of the  
Assyrians, so that the on-looking Jews cannot understand the negotiations. Rabshekeh, however, wishing  
to intimidate the diplomats and frighten the people of Israel, chooses to address all within earshot in  
Hebrew - Judean. UI pg. 322)
- Verse 12                  But Rabshakeh replied,  
  
                                  Did my lord send me to say these things to you and to your lord and  
not to the men sitting on the wall, who with you are to eat their own  
dung and drink their own urine?
- Verse 13                  Then Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in Judean,  
  
                                  Hear the words of the great king, the King of Assyria!  
Verse 14                  Thus says the king:  
  
Verse 15                  Do not let Hezekiah delude you! He cannot deliver you.  
Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord by saying,  
  
                                  "The Lord will surely save us, this city shall not be given into the hand  
of the King of Assyria."
- Verse 16                  Do not listen to Hezekiah!  
Thus says the King of Assyria:  
  
                                  Make peace with me by coming out to me.
- Verse 17                  Then every one of you will eat from his own vine and his own fig tree  
and drink water from his own cistern, until I come back and take you

to a land like your own, a land of grain and wine, a land of grain fields and vineyards.

Verse 18

Beware, lest Hezekiah mislead you by saying,

“The Lord will save us.”

Were any gods of the nations able to save their lands out of the hand of the King of Assyria?

Verse 19

Where are the gods of Spharvaim?  
Did they deliver Samaria out of my hand?

Verse 20

Who of all the gods of those countries saved his land from my hand,  
that the Lord should save Jerusalem from my hand?

Verse 21

But they remained silent, replying nothing, for the King (Hezekiah) had commanded them not to answer him.

Verse 22

Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, overseer of the palace, Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the record keeper, went to Hezekiah with their clothes rent and reported to him the things Rabshakeh had said.

**Asherah**  
אֲשֵׁרָה

Goddess of motherhood and fertility  
*Lady of the Sea*



<b>Major cult center</b>	Middle-East <i>Formerly Jerusalem</i>
<b>Symbol</b>	Asherah pole
<b>Consort</b>	El (Ugaritic religion) Elkunirsa (Hittite religion) Yahweh (ancient Israelite religion)
<b>Offspring</b>	70 sons (Ugaritic religion) 77 or 88 sons (Hittite religion)



Women would often hold small statues like this when they gave birth. Jeremiah was told that the Lord was very angry about this worship (Jeremiah 7: 16-18, and Jeremiah 44: 13-30) and he was even mad at the husbands for allowing the women to continue to show deference to the “Queen of Heaven”, make little cakes to her and burn incense to her. Many women felt that this worship of the “consort” or “wife” of Jehovah was not the same as idolatry.