

Isaiah 35

Is. 35:1 The wilderness and the desert will be glad, And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus

Verses 1-10 of Isaiah 35 continue to describe the blessings that Israel will receive during the Millennium. *The wilderness* (the Negev desert in the southern portion of the land of Canaan) *and the desert* (the Arabah, which is the portion of the land between the Dead Sea and the Red Sea at Elat) will flourish. At the present time these areas are fruitless due to a lack of moisture. During the Millennium, they *will rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus* (v.1), one of the reasons being the provision of *water* described in verses 6-7.

Is. 35:2 It will blossom profusely And rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, The majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the Lord, The majesty of our God.

Along with the *wilderness and...desert* (v.1), *Lebanon,...Carmel, and Sharon* are going to *blossom* during the Millennium, even though they will have been desolate during the Tribulation (read Isaiah 33:9). Why? The *glory and majesty* of the Lord will be seen by all who inhabit the Millennium. Jesus' presence will also provide an abundant *water* supply, addressed in verses 6-7.

Is. 35:3 Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble.

The fact that Christ will return should *Encourage...and strengthen* the weak within Israel.

Is. 35:4 Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you."

The Second Coming will save those of Israel who possess an *anxious heart*, for He *will come with vengeance* and with *recompense* (also read Isaiah 34:8 and 59:18).

Is. 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

As a result of the national regeneration of the nation of Israel, *the blind* will see and *the deaf* will hear so they might enjoy the benefits of the Millennium.

Is. 35:6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.

The lame will walk, even *leap*; *And the tongue of the dumb* will speak, even *shout for joy*—due to the presence of Jesus, the divine healer. (No believer will be sick or afflicted during the Kingdom.) The *breaking forth of waters...And streams* within *the wilderness and Arabah* will allow the land to flourish agriculturally.

Is. 35:7 And the scorched land will become a pool, And the thirsty ground springs of water; In the haunt of jackals, its resting place, Grass becomes reeds and rushes.

An abundant *water* supply will characterize the Millennium, thus vegetation will flourish in the *land*. In fact, the only thing preventing the *land* from producing today is a less than adequate water supply. However, it could not compare with the manner in which the *land* will flourish during the Millennium, for an abundance of *light* will illuminate the Kingdom (Isaiah 30:26).

Is. 35:8 And a highway will be there, a roadway, And it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, But it will be for him who walks that way, And fools will not wander on it.

During the Millennium, a *highway* will pass through the desert known as *the Highway of Holiness*. Only the redeemed will *travel on it*.

Is. 35:9 No lion will be there, Nor will any vicious beast go up on it; These will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there,

No lion or *vicious beast* will travel the Highway of Holiness—only the redeemed will have the right of entry. This means that those who reject Christ during the Millennium will not be permitted access. And who will these individuals be? They will be some of the offspring of the redeemed Gentiles living in their physical bodies during the Millennium. These offspring *will die at the age of one hundred* due to rejecting Christ (Isaiah 65:20).

Is. 35:10 And the ransomed of the Lord will return, And come with joyful shouting to Zion, With everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

The redeemed of Israel who travel the Highway of Holiness will be characterized by *joyful shouting* and *gladness of heart* as they *return...to Zion*. All *sorrow and sighing will vanish*.

Isaiah 36

Is. 36:1 Now it came about in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them.

The following background will help us realize the magnitude of the crisis that *King Hezekiah* faced *in the fourteenth year* of his reign. It will also allow us to appreciate how it eventually ended. The majority of this background can be found in the Scriptures, but a portion of it was taken from the Assyrian record included in this section as well. Consider the following:

When King Ahaz failed to trust God for deliverance from Pekah (of Israel) and Rezin (of Syria), and hired Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria instead, the southern kingdom of Judah began to experience Assyrian oppression (the notes associated with Isaiah 7 & 8 address this same issue). Tiglath-pileser III was eventually succeeded by Shalmaneser V, who was succeeded by Sargon II. It was Sargon II of Assyria who took the northern kingdom (Israel) into captivity in 722 BC. We learned in Isaiah 20 that Sargon II defeated the Egyptians after taking Ashdod (and other Philistine cities) in 711 BC, confirming that Egypt was no match for

the Assyrian army. When Sargon II died (either in 705 or 703 BC), his son Sennacherib ruled in his place. It was upon Sargon's death that King Hezekiah of Judah *rebelled against the Assyrians* (2Kings 18:7) by entering into an alliance with Egypt. In fact, Hezekiah became the head of the revolt, other nations joining him such as Edom, Moab, and Ammon. Hezekiah gained the support of the Philistines as well. To prepare for a siege, and to prevent the Assyrian troops from having an adequate water supply while besieging Jerusalem, he dug an underground tunnel to divert the waters of the *Gihoh* Spring, which was located outside the city, to a *pool* within the city walls (2Kings 20:20; 2Chronicles 32:30; also read notes on Isaiah 7:3). The alliance with Egypt was in direct disobedience to Isaiah's counsel, for Isaiah desired that Hezekiah trust God for deliverance rather than the Egyptians. When Sennacherib and his Assyrian troops arrived at Mount Carmel in 701 BC, Edom, Moab, and Ammon (all located east of the Jordan) surrendered without a fight. It was at Mount Carmel that Sennacherib divided his army into two armies, sending one toward Jerusalem, invading from the north. The cities this army defeated are listed in Isaiah 10:28-32. The other army Sennacherib took with him and moved south against the Philistines. While fighting against the Philistine cities, the Egyptians attacked. Under the leadership of Tirhakah, king of Cush (Ethiopia), the Egyptians moved north against the Assyrians only to be defeated by Sennacherib in the plains of Eltekeh (according to Sennacherib's annals included in this section). It was after the Egyptians and the Philistines fell that the army with Sennacherib began taking the fortified cities of Judah, invading the land from the south as it progressed in a northerly direction toward Jerusalem. The cities taken by this army are listed in Micah 1:8-16 as well as the annals of Sennacherib. The two Assyrian armies took *all the fortified cities of Judah* (Isaiah 36:1), forty-six in all according to the Assyrian record. It was while *Lachish* was still being besieged by Sennacherib (evidently *Lachish* was more difficult to take than the other cities in the southern portion of Judah) that Hezekiah attempted to establish peace with the Assyrians (2Kings 18:13-14). Sennacherib demanded many things, one of which was heavy tribute, which Hezekiah paid (2 Kings 18:13-16). Sennacherib then sent *Rabshakeh*, *Tartan*, and *Rabsaris* to Jerusalem for the purpose of convincing Hezekiah and the citizens of Jerusalem to surrender (2Kings 18:17-37), desiring to eventually exile the inhabitants of the city. Hezekiah refused (receiving encouragement from *Isaiah*—Isaiah 37:1-7), and *Rabshakeh* and his cohorts returned to Sennacherib at *Libnah* (2Kings 19:8). When Sennacherib heard that *Tirhakah king of Cush* desired to confront him, *he sent a scathing letter to Hezekiah* as he departed (2Kings 19:9-13). *Hezekiah took Sennacherib's letter, read it, and went immediately into the temple to pray* (2Kings 19:14-19). *Isaiah* the prophet promised deliverance due to Hezekiah's prayerful heart (2Kings 19:20-34); and soon afterwards *the angel of the Lord*, the second Person of the Trinity (that we know to be Jesus Christ), intervened and killed *185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians* (read 2 Kings 19:35-37). This is the background needed to properly interpret Isaiah 36-37. Don't forget to reference this information if you have difficulty placing the events of Isaiah 36 and 37 in their proper chronological sequence.

You can go to the internet under "Sennacherib," click "Sennacherib's Hexagonal Prism," and find the following. In other words, what follows was taken from the annals of Sennacherib.

Sennacherib, the great king, the mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters, the wise shepherd, favorite of the great gods, guardian of right, lover of justice, who lends support, who comes to the aid of the destitute, who performs pious acts, perfect hero, mighty man, first among all princes, the powerful one who consumes the insubmissive, who strikes the wicked with the thunderbolt; the god Assur, the great mountain, an unrivaled kinship has entrusted to me, and above all those who dwell in palaces, has made powerful my weapons; from the upper sea of the setting sun to the lower sea of the rising sun, he has brought the black-headed people in submission at my feet; and mighty kings feared my warfare, leaving their homes and flying alone, like the sidinnu, the bird of the cave, to some inaccessible place.

In my third campaign, I went against the Hittite-land. Lulê, king of Sidon, the terrifying splendor of my sovereignty overcame him, and far off into the midst of the sea he fled. There he died. Great Sidon, Little Sidon, Bît-Zitti, Zaribtu, Mahalliba, Ushu, Akzib, Akko, his strong, walled cities, where there were fodder and drink, for his garrisons, the terrors of the weapon of Assur, my lord, overpowered them and they bowed in submission at my feet. I seated Tuba'lu on the royal throne over them, and tribute, gifts for my majesty, I imposed upon him for all time without ceasing. From Menachem, the Shamsimurunite, Tuba'lu the Sidonite, Abdi-liti the Arvadite, Uru-milki the Gublite, Mitinti the Ashdodite Budu-ilu the Beth Ammonite, Kammusu-nadbi the Moabite, Malik-rammu the Edomite, kings of Amurru, all of them, numerous presents as their heavy tribute, they brought before me for the fourth time, and kissed my feet.

But Sidka, the king of Ashkelon, who had not submitted to my yoke, the gods of his father's house, himself, his wife, his sons, his daughters, his brothers, the seed of his paternal house, I tore away and brought to Assyria. Sharru-lu-dari, son of Rukibtu, their former king, I set over the people of Ashkelon, and I imposed upon him the payment of tribute: presents to my majesty. He accepted my yoke. In the course of my campaign, Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Banaibarka, Asuru, cities of Sidka, who had not speedily bowed in submission at my feet, I besieged, I conquered, I carried off their spoil.

The officials, nobles, and people of Ekron, who had thrown Padi their king—bound by oath and curse of Assyria— into fetters of iron and had given him over to Hezekiah, the Judahite—he kept him in confinement like an enemy— their heart became afraid, and they called upon the Egyptian kings, the bowmen, chariots and horses of the king of Meluhha [Ethiopia], a countless host, and these came to their aid. In the neighborhood of Eltekeh, their ranks being drawn up before me, they offered battle. With the aid of Assur, my lord, I fought with them and brought about their defeat. The Egyptian charioteers and princes, together with the Ethiopian king's charioteers, my hands captured alive in the midst of the battle. Eltekeh and Timnah I besieged, I captured, and I took away their spoil.

I approached Ekron and slew the governors and nobles who had rebelled, and hung their bodies on stakes around the city. The inhabitants who

rebelled and treated (Assyria) lightly I counted as spoil. The rest of them, who were not guilty of rebellion and contempt, for whom there was no punishment, I declared their pardon. Padi, their king, I brought out to Jerusalem, set him on the royal throne over them, and imposed upon him my royal tribute.

As for Hezekiah the Judahite, who did not submit to my yoke: forty-six of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small towns in their area, which were without number, by leveling with battering-rams and by bringing up siege-engines, and by attacking and storming on foot, by mines, tunnels, and breeches, I besieged and took them. 200,150 people, great and small, male and female, horses, mules, asses, camels, cattle and sheep without number, I brought away from them and counted as spoil. (Hezekiah) himself, like a caged bird I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city. I threw up earthworks against him—the one coming out of the city-gate, I turned back to his misery. His cities, which I had despoiled, I cut off from his land, and to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Silli-bêl, king of Gaza, I gave (them). And thus I diminished his land. I added to the former tribute, and I laid upon him the surrender of their land and imposts—gifts for my majesty. As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendor of my majesty overcame him, and the Arabs and his mercenary troops which he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, deserted him. In addition to the thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, gems, antimony, jewels, large carnelians, ivory-inlaid couches, ivory-inlaid chairs, elephant hides, elephant tusks, ebony, boxwood, all kinds of valuable treasures, as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians, which he had brought after me to Nineveh, my royal city. To pay tribute and to accept servitude, he dispatched his messengers.

It is apparent that much of what has been recorded in the secular historical record lines up with the Scriptures. Therefore, the events recorded in God's word did not happen in a vacuum and must never be classified as myth or fable.

Is. 36:2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem to King Hezekiah with a large army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway of the fuller's field.

There are a few things we need to discuss before examining this verse. First off, "Rabshakeh" is not the name of a person but rather a term describing a high ranking Assyrian official. According to 2Kings 18:17, Sennacherib also sent Tartan and Rabsaris with him, Tartan and Rabsaris not being the names of two men but rather titles of Assyrian officials. Also, Lachish was a principle city and royal fortress within the border of the southern kingdom of Judah that was being besieged by the Assyrians. With this in mind we can understand that from Lachish, a city located in the southern portion of Judah, Sennacherib sent his officials with a large army to Jerusalem. When Rabshakeh and his friends arrived, Rabshakeh addressed Hezekiah from a very interesting location—by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway of the fuller's field (Isaiah 36:2). This is where Isaiah had met King Ahaz some twenty years earlier (read Isaiah 7:3), the same place that Ahaz had rejected Isaiah's counsel and trusted Assyria instead. Isn't God's sovereignty amazing? Due to the location, King Hezekiah would have been reminded of the price the nation

had paid for the rejection of the prophet's counsel in the days of his father. This would have encouraged *Hezekiah* to trust God's words through Isaiah regardless of what *Rabshakeh* had to say. We will find that through all of Rabshakeh's verbiage, *Hezekiah* never blinked! Why? Faith allowed him to appropriate God's promises, promises such as are addressed in Isaiah 7 (you may want to read the notes from that chapter). *Hezekiah* had to know that so long as he (or any king of Judah) walked in faith, nothing could take his throne, not even the Assyrians. Therefore, *Hezekiah* stood strong.

Is. 36:3 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

Eliakim was now *over the household* of *Hezekiah*, having replaced *Shebna*, partially fulfilling Isaiah 22:15-25. These verses in Isaiah 22 also address *Shebna's* exile, which would occur later. As to where he was exiled is uncertain. Both *Eliakim* and *Shebna* came out to Rabshakeh, as well as *Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder*.