

Scripture Text

Isaiah 37:1-20

Context

Chapter 36-39 form a narrative bridge between the mostly poetic chapters 1-35 and 40-66. Chapter 36-37 look back to 28-35, proving through Hezekiah that faith in God is met by his blessing. Chapter 36-37 show divine faithfulness even in the midst of the most outrageous threats. God is seen as the only hope of his people. Note that Isaiah 36-39 is paralleled in 2 Kings 18.13-20.19.

Observation and Meaning

- Read 37:1-4. The threat from Assyria is looming, but how does Hezekiah model a godly response to this terrifying threat?
- Why is 37:6 the turning point of this crisis?
- How is 37:7 an irony, in light of the mockery made by the Rabshakeh earlier in 36:5 that mere words have no power?
- Read 37:8-13. Libnah is about 15 miles away from Jerusalem. Sennacherib does not want to fight the King of Cush and Hezekiah at the same time, so the second threat is simply to hasten Jerusalem's surrender. What can we learn of the enemy's tactics from this?
- Read 37:14-20. What is the emphasis and focus of this prayer? How is this prayer grounded in the character and promises of God?

Big Idea

God's deliverance of his people and his glory revealed to the nations always go hand in hand throughout the bible. Prayer is the means that God has ordained for that to be accomplished.

Connecting to the Bible's storyline

Faith in God's Word and character is the foundation of a life of faithfulness to him. This passage shows us how the main attempt of the enemy is to get us to doubt God's Word during crisis, and the way to counteract is prayer of faith in God for his deliverance.

Application

- What are some difficult trials in our lives that are causing us to doubt God's Word and character? How do they reveal the weaknesses of our faith?
- What could be the voices from the enemy that seek to instil fear and doubt in our situations? What is God's Word from this passage saying to us instead?
- Hezekiah takes the threat he received and spreads it before the Lord in prayer (37:14). How can we do the same in our situations, as individuals and as a church family?
- What roles do the church family play in helping us stand firm in the midst of the enemy's intimidation?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?

What is the situation of the author and of the readers?

Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?

Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.