

ISAIAH, PART 1 (JUDGMENT – BUT HOPE)
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SERIES: Isaiah, Part 1 (Judgment – But Hope)

TITLE: Program 67 – The Enemy’s Tactics

TUESDAY

OPEN

Adversity is never pleasant and adversity is, really, in a sense, never welcome. And yet, Precious One, if you and I could see that there was a benefit to adversity, if you and I could understand that God puts adversity in our lives to strengthen us, to give us power, to give us confidence, oh! What a difference that would make. We’ll look at that today.

PART ONE

O Beloved, do you realize, do you realize how blessed you and I are to have the Word of God? How blessed you and I are to have radio and television and the internet so that we can freely hear the Word of God taught to us, so that we can study together, so that we can communicate with one another and be mutually encouraged by the faith of one another. I want you to know before we get into the lesson today on Isaiah chapter 36; I want you to know, Precious One, that I devour your emails. I love hearing from you. It means so much to me. I feel like we’ve reached out and we’ve connected, and that

I've been speaking to you and trying to love you and teach you and mentor you, and do everything God's called me to do. And you've said, "Here I am! Here I am! I'm listening. I'm learning. I'm growing. I have a question. This is something I need to know." I love it! I love it. Thank you so very, very much. Well I'm excited about this week's theme. This week's theme, as we look at the last four chapters of the first segment of Isaiah, which is chapters 36 through 39, what you and I are going to see is, the blessings of enemies, of all things, and the blessing of illnesses. This is what we're going to see this week, and so we need to get with it. So I want you to open your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 36, okay? Isaiah chapter 36, and in Isaiah chapter 36, remember Rabshakeh is coming and standing at **"...the conduit of the...pool [that is] on the highway [to] the fuller's field,"** the same place that Isaiah stood when he delivered a message to Hezekiah's father, King Ahaz. **(Isaiah 36:2)** And he is standing there and he is threatening King Hezekiah and the people of Judah. And as he threatens them, in verse 4 it says, **"Then Rabshakeh said to them, '...Now [say] to Hezekiah, "Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria," 'What is this confidence that you have?' "I say, 'Your counsel and [your] strength for...war are only empty words.' [For] now on whom do you rely, that you have rebelled against me?"** **(Isaiah 36:4-5)** I'm going to give you a list of lessons, precepts for life, that we can get from these chapters about the blessings that our enemies give us, bring to us, and the blessings that illness bring to us. And so you might want to start a list. And the first thing I want you to see is, in chapter 36 in verse 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 is this: That "the enemy challenges our faith". The enemy challenges our faith. The enemy is the one that says, "Okay, where is your confidence? Who are you relying on?" And you know what? It is good to have your faith challenged. It is good to have your faith tested. As a matter of fact, I think, when you study Hebrews chapter 11, you are going to see that faith is not faith until it's tested. And as you move through all of Hebrews chapter 11, and you mark the key word "faith" over and over and

over again, there are so many occurrences of faith. But you'll find that these people are being challenged, and they rise to that challenge by believing God. So let's look at it in verse 6. He says, **"Behold, you rely on the staff of this crushed reed, even on Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go [through] his hand and pierce it."** He says, **"So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him. But if you say to me, 'We trust in the Lord our God,' is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away and has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar.'"** (Isaiah 36:6-7) All right now, what do I want you to see? In that last verse, what I want you to see is, that the enemy does not understand, does not have a full picture of the Word of God, or the truth of God. He's saying, ["Okay, who are you gonna rely on? Who's going to deliver you? Here is the great king of Assyria. He's coming up to conquer you. Nobody's been able to resist him. How do you think you can resist him? Oh, you say you're going to rely on Egypt. Egypt is just the reed of a staff, that if you even lean on it, it's gonna pierce your hand, but it's not going to do anything else to you. So either you're gonna rely on Egypt, or God forbid you would say, 'We trust in the Lord.'"] He says, "Do you think that God is going to support you when Hezekiah, your king, has gone through the land and torn down the altars and said, 'Only in one place are you to worship God.'"] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 36:5-7) Now listen, what was Hezekiah doing? Well when you study about it in 2 Chronicles, and if you got the study guide, we suggested that you read all the background on this in Chronicles and Kings. But you find out that when Hezekiah came to power, I mean, he brought revival. He brought revival because he went through the land and he began to clean up the land. (See 2 Kings 18:1-4) He got rid of those altars because there was only one place that they were to worship, and that was in Jerusalem. As a matter of fact, he said, "We're going to reinstitute the Passover 'cause we're supposed to be keeping the Passover." And he sent emissaries up north to the kingdom of Israel and

said, “Any of you that want to come, come and worship with us as brothers here in Jerusalem, and we will celebrate the Passover.” (See 2 Chronicles 30:1-2) So what you have to understand is, when you listen to an enemy, listen to him carefully, because usually there is a flaw in the enemy’s thinking in respect to God, and you don’t want to be caught up in that flaw. So the first thing: How is an enemy a blessing? An enemy is a blessing because “The enemy causes you to see: Who am I trusting in?” Who are you going to trust in? Are you going to trust in God? Where is your confidence going to be? Now what I did in my Bible is, I put a little red cloud around this so it would pop out. Because I want to remember this: **“...What is this confidence that you have?” (Isaiah 36:4)** If you have confidence in God, why do you have confidence in God? And then he says, **“...Now on whom do you rely, that you have rebelled against me?” (Isaiah 36:5)** In other words what he is saying is, the enemy will say, “I’m gonna get you because I’m stronger than the one on whom you are relying.” You’ve got to know this, if you are relying on God, God is omnipotent. God is all-powerful. There is no one that can keep God from moving. So this is the first thing that I want you to see. An enemy causes you to stop and think. “Okay, who am I trusting in? Am I going to be shaking like the wind?” As we saw in the last program, “Because the enemy is threatening me.” Or am I going to stop my shaking, get a hold of myself and say, “God I am trusting in you, and that enemy cannot do anything to me without your permission.” Know your God. Now in verse 8, watch what it says. **“Now therefore, come make a bargain with my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses...,”** to ride on, **“...if...on your part [you are able] to set riders on them.” (Isaiah 36:8)** Now you have to stop and think. At this point in warfare, horses were like a new weapon, a new instrument of warfare. They were like what happened when tanks were invented, and all of a sudden, they could move men through the enemy lines and these tanks. And and they would be protected and that was a great advantage to the enemy. Well horses

were a great advantage. You could move swiftly. You could come upon your enemy, and surprise him. And so he's saying, "Okay," he's saying, "You are relying on this crushed reed." And then he says, "**Now...come [and] make a bargain with...the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses....**" (Isaiah 36:8) What he's trying to do, and I would put this down: An enemy tests our loyalty to God. An enemy tests our loyalty to God's Word. Because what the enemy wants him to do is, the enemy wants him to compromise. "Come on over to my side. Come on over to my side and I will reward you." You see this in an adulterous relationship. You see this strange woman, as Proverbs 6 and 7 says, trying to entice them. ["Come on. The master's not at home. Come over here and I will reward you, I will delight you, I will cover my bed with flowers, etc., and perfume and that."] (PARAPHRASE, Proverbs 7:16-19) And yet the end of that chapter in Proverbs says, "**Her [bed] is the way [of] hell, going down to the chambers of death.**" (Proverbs 7:27, KJV) So enemies test your loyalty. They let you see, "Okay, am I going to be loyal to God and to the Word of God, or am I going to compromise." We're going to look at a scripture that is going to help you, Beloved, answer this question. It's going to be a scripture that is going to keep you strong in the day when you're tempted to compromise. We'll be back in just a minute.

PART TWO

The enemy says, "Compromise with me! Compromise with me, and I'll reward you." That's what we're seeing in Isaiah chapter 36 as we look at the blessings of enemies. As we look at how the enemies can be a blessing in our life, because the enemy stands there as a test, a test of our loyalty, a test of whether we are going to compromise, whether we are going to go after a temporal reward instead of waiting for an eternal reward. Now listen, some of you have gotten hooked on the internet, haven't you. You've gotten hooked on the internet because you typed in some innocuous word and all of

a sudden there was some compelling, fascinating picture on the screen. It was immoral, but it was tantalizing. You knew that you should not look at it. But the enemy is saying, “Come here.” And you think, “Well, you know, it would be good for me to just know what’s there so I could warn other people.” And so what you do is, you compromise. You compromise and, in a sense, you are rewarded by the enemy because your senses and your curiosity is stimulated and you’re enticed. You have just compromised and, Precious One, you are in danger. We have people on our staff that lived under communism, they lived in Romania. And this is what they said: “We understood that if we gave the enemy even a little finger that the enemy would get our whole hand, and with our whole hand the enemy would get us. You cannot compromise. And this, in a sense, is a blessing of an enemy, because all of a sudden, you are being challenged, your faith is being challenged, and that is compromise. Just a little bit. And what is he saying here? “Listen,” he says “If you’ll come over to our side, we’ll give you horses. We’ll give you horses. I don’t know if you have enough men to ride on them, or if they know how to ride, but we will give you horses. Compromise and we will reward you.” Now what’s the answer to that? Well in Galatians chapter 1, there are people that are following Paul around. They are preaching another gospel which he says, in these first verses, is not another gospel. There’s only one. But they have distorted it. And so he is coming along and he is saying that he is going to stand against them. Verse 10: **“For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God?”** The enemy causes you to stop and think. The enemy causes you to stop and think: “Where is my loyalty?” **“...Or am I striving to please men...?”** Now listen: **“...If I were still [striving] to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.” (Galatians 1:10)** [“I would not be a slave: A man who has chosen to enslave himself to God, to serve God.”] (PARAPHRASE, Galatians 1:10) And you and I have to make a decision. So that decision is, “I will not compromise. I will not sell myself. I will not allow my appetite to

entice me, and taste that reward because it's dangerous." So what's the third thing? Well the third thing we see in verses 11 and 12 of Isaiah 36. "The enemy challenges us, our knowledge of God's Word; the enemy talks God-talk." Let's look at it, and it is verses 9 through 11. He says, **"How then can you repulse one official [from] the least of my master's servants and rely on Egypt for...[horses] and...horsemen?" (Isaiah 36:9)** "How can you do that?" Now I want to tell you something, he didn't have his facts together, because as I have studied through the time of Hezekiah, they were not seeking help from Egypt. Yes, that was something that Ahaz did, but not Hezekiah. And not only that, what had Hezekiah heard Isaiah say? Hezekiah had heard Isaiah say, **"Woe to those who go down [for] Egypt[']s...help ...,"** in the time of trouble. **(Isaiah 31:1)** You see that in chapter 31, verse 1 of Isaiah. So now watch what he says. He says, **"How then can you repulse one official of the least of my master's servants and rely on Egypt for chariots and...horsemen? Have I now come up without the Lord's approval against this land to destroy it? The Lord said to me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it.'"** **(Isaiah 36:9-10)** What is this man doing? This man is talking God-talk. He's saying, "I'm here because the Lord told me to come." Listen. Everyone that claims to be from God is not from God. Everyone that claims to have a word from God is not a word from God. Sometimes those words are used to manipulate you. Sometimes those words are used to get you to become a follower and subservient, and a giver to that ministry. You've got to be careful. You've got to know the Word of God. Sometimes the enemies are not just without, sometimes they're within. Now what is he saying? He is saying in verse 11, **"Then Eliakim...Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, 'Speak now to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; and do not speak with us in Judean in the hearing of the people who are on the wall.'"** **(Isaiah 36:11)** Now what is he saying? He is talking God-talk to them. He's talking it in the presence of the people, and listen carefully, if those people don't know that the enemy can

use God-talk, they're liable to be taken in, even as those servants. Well what does this remind you of? Well what it ought to remind you of is, that you and I need to know God's Word. We need to know God's Word. In Matthew chapter 4, and I want you to go there. In Matthew chapter 4, we have Jesus being tempted by the devil. And when Jesus is being tempted by the devil, He quotes scripture to the devil. When the devil says, "...[turn] **these stones [into] bread,**" and feed Yourself, then Jesus turns and says: **"...It is written, 'Man shall not live [by] bread alone, but [by] every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'**" It says, **"Then the devil took Him into the holy city...had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple."** (Matthew 4:3-5) Now watch his strategy. **"And said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written....'"** (Matthew 4:6) So the devil is going to quote scripture. He's going to quote scripture but he's going to take it out of context. Listen to what he says. It says, **"...It is written, 'He will command his angels concerning You...on their hands they will bear You up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"** (Matthew 4:6) And that's true, and it's in the Word of God. But as you look at it, Jesus says, **"...On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"** (Matthew 4:7) In other words, what you have here is, you have a conflict over the Word of God. The devil was taking it out of context. O Beloved, if you're gonna have victory over your enemy, you've got to know that when the challenge comes, you need to know **"...the [whole] counsel of God."** (Acts 20:27, KJV) That is your sword against the enemy.