

ISAIAH, PART 1 (JUDGMENT – BUT HOPE)
PROGRAM 69 (#911114)
WEEK 14 (#911323)
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Precept Ministries International
P.O. Box 182218, Chattanooga, TN 37422-7218
1-888-734-7707/ www.preceptsforlife.com

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SERIES: Isaiah, Part 1 (Judgment – But Hope)

TITLE: Program 69 – A Living Epistle To The World

THURSDAY

OPEN

When an enemy or an illness, Beloved, threatens your life, threatens your future, threatens your security, what do you need to know? What do you need to cling to? You need to remember who God is. You need to know what God is able to do. You need to understand that [He's the God of all flesh, and nothing is too hard for Him]. (PARAPHRASE, Jeremiah 32:27) That's what we'll see as we continue our study in Isaiah.

PART ONE

Put on your running shoes, Beloved, we are going to have to make tracks! I've got still two chapters after Isaiah 37 to finish as we talk about the blessings of enemies and the blessings of illness. What do I mean by that? Well we've been seeing all week long how our enemies can be the one that drives us to God, drives us to think about who God is. Watch what happens. Remember Rabshakeh or Rabshakeh has left now Jerusalem because God has put a spirit within Sennacherib. And Sennacherib is going to leave, and

so Rabshakeh is leaving a letter with Hezekiah saying, “Hey, I’ll be right back. You’re in trouble. Don’t think that you’re going to escape.” Let’s look at it, Isaiah chapter 37, verse 14. **“Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the LORD and [he] spread it...before the LORD. [And he] prayed to [God] saying....” (Isaiah 37:14-15)** Now watch what he prays because this gives you an insight on how God can use the enemies of God to bless you. Because when you’re in trouble, when you’re life is being threatened, you stop and think about God. Now watch what happens. He says, **“O LORD of hosts....” (Isaiah 37:16)** Watch how he talks to God. Watch what he remembers about God. “O LORD of hosts,” that means “You’re over all the kingdoms in heaven and on earth.” **“...The God of Israel...,” (Isaiah 37:16)** You’re the One that is the God of this nation. **“...Who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth....” (Isaiah 37:16)** Here’s this kingdom of Assyria threatening You, but You are the God of all the kingdoms of the earth. **“...You have made heaven and earth.” (Isaiah 37:16)** You’re the Creator. You’re in charge of all this. You’re the supreme, sovereign Ruler of all of it. Everything that has breath, You have made. You have made the trees. You have made the mountains. You have made it all. He says, **“Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to all the words of Sennacherib, who sent them to reproach the living God.” (Isaiah 37:17)** God, they’re coming against You, because we belong to You! And you’ve got to remember that. If anyone’s coming against you and you belong to God, they’re coming against God. God’s standing right behind you when an enemy wants to punch your headlights out, you simply duck. There is his fist, face to face with God Almighty. It kind of causes the fist to withdraw and to open up. He says, **“Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria...,”** verse 18, **“...have devastated all the countries and their lands, and [they] have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not**

gods but the [works] of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them.” (Isaiah 37:18-19) “God, You’ve used the king of Assyria when he’s gone up against these other countries. Their gods were not like You. They were wood. They were stone. And they just plain destroyed them.” He says, “But who is God?” He’s the Creator of the heavens and the earth. **“Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, LORD, are God.”** (Isaiah 37:20) What is he concerned about? He is concerned, not about his own safety, but he is concerned about God’s name and God’s glory. And listen, Precious One, whenever an enemy comes against you, or an illness happens in your life, you are secure as long as your primary goal and passion is God’s glory. No matter what they threaten, no matter what you’re going to face, if you just want God’s glory, you are the winner. And this is what I want you to see. This is number 10. That “An enemy causes us to remember who God is, and what God’s Word says about Him, and that He alone is our deliverance.” Now that does not always mean that we’re not going to die. Because you see, in 2 Timothy chapter 4, Paul knows that he’s going to die. And he says, [“Everyone has forsaken me, Demas has forsaken me, loving this present world,” And he says, “They’ve all fled, but the Lord has stood with me like a dread champion.”] (PARAPHRASE, 2 Timothy 4:10, 17) He was the victor. And you and I will be the victor, whether in life, or whether in death. God says in Revelation chapter 2, and it is to the church in Smyrna. He says in verse 9, **“I know your tribulation and your poverty...,”** he says, **“...(but you are rich)....”** He says in verse 10, **“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you [in] prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”** (Revelation 2:9-11) We always triumph. And those people that are martyred will come back with, so to speak, a hero’s reward. Well as we look at it in verse 21 of

chapter 37, we see the next point, number 11, that I want you to write down. The enemy, “The enemy provides us with stories of God’s deliverance.” The enemy, who wants to kill us, the enemy who wants to persecute us, provides us with stories of God’s deliverance. We had an Iraqi brother. One that we had trained, one that we were working with that was captured, taken captive by Muslims. They were going to kill him, but they didn’t. We prayed fervently, I mean fervently; passionately. We sought God in prayer and fasting. And when they got ready to kill that man, they said to him, “Here.” And they gave him a sack. And in that sack were a number of I.D’s. And they said, “See if your name is on any of those identification tags because those are the people that we’ve killed.” He said, “I can’t find my name.” And they said, “You know, we intended to kill you, but for some reason we’re going to let you go free.” God is able to deliver. And so what we see is a story in verse 21. **“Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent word to Hezekiah, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, “Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word that the LORD has spoken against him....”’”** (Isaiah 37:21-22) You see when our enemies come against us, it drives us to our knees. It drives us to prayer. And then as we pray, God deals with our enemies. It’s that mystery of prayer. And he says, **“...She...,”** speaking of Assyria. **“...She has despised you and mocked you, the virgin daughter of Zion....”** It’s like Assyria has tried to rape you, in other words is what he is saying. **“...She has shaken her head behind you, the daughter of Jerusalem!”** I’m gonna get this gal. He says, **“Whom have you reproached and blasphemed...?”** (Isaiah 37:22-23) You’re coming against the daughter of Zion? You’re coming against Israel? Let me ask you a question, Assyria. “Who is it that you’ve reproached? Who is it that you have ‘...blasphemed? ...Against whom have you raised your voice and haughtily lifted up your eyes? [It’s] against the Holy One of Israel!’” (Isaiah 37:23) Why? Because God says that: [If we touch Israel, we’re touching Him, the pupil of His eye.]

(PARAPHRASE, Zechariah 2:8) If someone touches us, they are touching the children of God! And they've got God to answer to. He says, **“Through your servants you have reproached the Lord, and you have said, “With my many chariots I came...to the heights of the mountains, to the remotest parts of Lebanon; and I cut down its tall cedars and its choice cypresses...I will go [into the] highest peak, its thickest forest. I dug wells and drank waters, and with the sole of my feet I dried up all the rivers of Egypt.””** And God says, **“Have you [Assyria] not heard? [Do you not know that] long ago I did it, from ancient times I planned it.”** (Isaiah 37:24-26) Assyria, I was using you for My benefit. And you can remember this: that any enemy that comes against you, Precious One, God is using for His benefit. It will be for your good and His glory. He says, **“...Now I have brought it to pass, that you should turn fortified cities into ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants were short of strength, they were dismayed and put to shame; they were as the vegetation of the field and as the green herb, as [the] grass on the housetops is scorched before [it's] grown up. But I know your sitting down....”** (Isaiah 37:26-28) God knows your enemy. **“...And your going out and your coming in....”** Isn't this what Psalm 139 says? (See Psalms 139:2-3) **“...And your raging against Me.”** (Isaiah 37:28) I know what you're doing. God knows, listen He knows everything that your enemy is doing against you. And He says, **“Because of your raging against Me and because your arrogance has come up to My ears, therefore [I'm going to] put My hook in your nose....”** He says, **“...and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way which you came. Then this [will] be the sign for you...,”** (Isaiah 37:29-30) and He's talking now to Hezekiah. Remember Ahaz, his father, refused a sign. Now Hezekiah is getting a sign. He says, **“...you will eat this year what grows of itself, in the second year what springs from the same...in the third year [you will] sow, reap, plant**

vineyards and eat their fruit.” (Isaiah 37:30) You’re gonna come out of this alright. We’ll study it more in just a minute after this announcement.

PART TWO

Did what I was saying before we went to break really sink in? Here was God saying, “Hezekiah, I’m going to give you a sign. And the sign is that you are not going to go into famine. You’re not going to do like Rabshakeh said. You’re not going to eat your own dung. You’re not going to drink your own urine. You’re going to eat the fruit of your own vineyard. You’re going to have a harvest that will feed you.” O Beloved, God is God. And this is what He’s showing him in this. He is showing him how He is able to deliver, but you’ve got to notice this. He says, [“I did this ‘because you prayed to Me’.”] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 37:21) I would mark that in verse 21 of Isaiah chapter 37. “**...Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib [the king of Assyria] (Isaiah 37:21)** O Beloved, when your enemies come against you, it can bless you by driving you to your knees, and by talking to God about the whole situation with the enemy, and listening carefully to Him. This is where you’re going to find your peace. This is where you’re going to find your comfort. This is where you’re gonna find your solace. This is where you’re going to find the strength to get up. Now watch what He says in verse 31. “**The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.**” I’m not kicking you out of the land yet. “**For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant and out of Mount Zion survivors....**” (Isaiah 37:31-32) So you want to mark “remnant” like we’ve been doing as we’ve marked the text. “**“...The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” (Isaiah 37:32)** God’s job, God’s going to do it. “**Therefore, thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, ‘He will not come [in] to this city or shoot an arrow there...he will not come before it with a shield, or throw up a siege ramp against it. By the way that he came...the same he will return, and he will not come**

to this city,' declares the LORD.” (Isaiah 37:33-34) Now just think of where we've come from since chapter 36 when he is saying that he is going to come against them. And he is going to take this city, and that they ought to surrender. So just stop and think about it. I hope you looked at your study guide and that you looked at the corresponding verses in 2 Kings and in 2 Chronicles, that talk about His deliverance. But listen to what he says. He says in verse 35 of chapter 37, **“...I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.” (Isaiah 37:35)** God had made a covenant with David, 2 Samuel 7. (See 2 Samuel 7:12-13) You can write it right there. And God made a covenant that David would have someone who would sit on the throne. That's who Jesus Christ is, Beloved. Jesus Christ is the One who is going to sit on the throne of David. This is the promise that you and I have. It says in verse 36, **“Then the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when the men arose early in the morning, behold, all these were dead.” (Isaiah 37:36)** The ones that he left to be eye witnesses stood up from sleep and saw 185,000 of the troops dead! **“So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Ninevah,”** the capital of Assyria, **“[And] it came about as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god....”** Now this is 20 years later. You might want to write it down. **“...that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons killed him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son became king in his place.” (Isaiah 37:37-38)** Awesome isn't it? So we have seen that God can make blessing come out of enemies, because the enemies drive us to God. And we learn all these different things, these points that I have given you. But now we move into the two last chapters of the first segment, chapter 38 and chapter 39. Now it says in chapter 38, **“In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live."'" (Isaiah 38:1)** “You're

gonna die. You have an illness. It is a fatal illness, so get your house in order.” Maybe the doctor has said that to you or to your loved one. Well God knows when you’re gonna die. What do you do? Well watch what Hezekiah does. **“Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD.” (Isaiah 38:2)** So what does illness do? Illness drives us to the One who wounds, who heals, Deuteronomy 32:39. Who wounds, who heals, who kills, who makes alive.” It drives us to the [God who has numbered our days when as yet there was not one of them]. (PARAPHRASE, Psalms 139:16) It drives us to the God who has said, “My time...” the psalmist has said, [“My times are in Thy hands O God...”] (PARAPHRASE, Psalm 31:15) And he says, **“...Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in Your sight.’ And Hezekiah wept bitterly.” (Isaiah 38:3)** And I’m sure, Precious One, if you’ve had an announcement of an illness, especially one that seems fatal, that you have wept bitterly. And it is alright to weep bitterly. God sees your tears. And God keeps those tears in a bottle. (See Psalms 56:8) It says, **“Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah, saying, ‘Go and say to Hezekiah, “Thus says the LORD...God of your father David, ‘I have heard your prayer, [and] I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life.’” (Isaiah 38:4-5)** Now listen to this next verse because it gives you an important clue on the timing on the timing of all of this. **“I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city.” (Isaiah 38:6)** Well we’ve just heard about His deliverance. We’ve just heard about how He took care of Sennacherib, and how He sent him home. And then how He eventually killed him. What is He talking about? When is the timing of all this? Well the timing of all this, Beloved, when you study it carefully, and if you’ve looked at your study guide, you know this. But the timing of all of this is before, listen carefully, before Isaiah 36. Before Isaiah 36 ever happens, God takes Hezekiah who was mortally ill and heals him. Now why is God telling

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us this at the end of this segment of Isaiah? Well you know what? I'm not gonna tell you today. You don't want to miss tomorrow. You want to make sure that you understand this, because there is a precept for life for you here, a very important precept for life. What you need to see though today is this: That God is the deliverer from your enemies or from your illness, or through your enemies and your illnesses.