

**ISAIAH, PART 1 (JUDGMENT – BUT HOPE)**  
**PROGRAM 66 (#911111)**  
**WEEK 14 (#911323)**  
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**SERIES: Isaiah, Part 1 (Judgment – But Hope)**

**TITLE: Program 66 – The Enemy’s Challenge**

**MONDAY**

**OPEN**

O Precious One, let me ask you a question. Has an enemy reared his ugly head against you? Do you feel frightened, intimidated and wondering what’s going to happen to you? Or possibly, have you been told about an illness that you have and it’s like a death sentence over you? I’ve got good news for you today. There are blessings that come from enemies and blessings that come from illness. We’ll talk about it today.

**PART ONE**

I am so excited, Precious One, as we come to the end of the first segment of Isaiah. This week we’re gonna look at Isaiah 36, 37, 38 and 39, and it brings Isaiah to a break in the book, a transition in what Isaiah is saying and the emphasis of Isaiah. And as we look at it, what I’m excited about is, as this segment comes to a close, you and I are going to see the blessings of enemies and the blessings of illnesses. You say, “You’re crazy! An enemy can be a blessing?” Oh yes! An enemy can be a blessing. “But not an

illness!” Yes, Precious One, an illness can be a blessing, and that is going to be a comfort to many of you who are suffering from enemies—the attack of the enemies in your life; or because you are suffering with an illness, and people have told you, “You know, if you just had enough faith, you could be well.” Joni Eareckson Tada is a very good friend of mine, and she is such a woman of God, held in such high esteem. She has a ministry called: “Joni and Friends.” And she was paralyzed from the neck down, left a little bit of muscle control so that she can move her arms. She can’t move her fingers, but she can feed herself, and Joni has lived in that wheelchair since she was a teenager, and yet when people had come to her and just told her that she didn’t have enough faith, that if she had enough faith she could be healed, and I want you to understand this, her sitting in the wheelchair rather than being healed is a greater testimony to the power of God’s grace, to the sufficiency of His grace, because she has become a testimony to all of us of what it means to trust in the Lord. Well we’re going to look at this final four chapters of Isaiah in this first segment, as I said. And I want you to know that as we talk about the blessings of enemies and the blessings of illnesses, I can say this with confidence: That if your heart belongs to God, if you are called according to His purpose, then you have the promise of Romans 8:28, which says, “[For] **we know...**” and that know is an “I know that I know that I know.” “[For] **we know...**” with an absolute certainty, “**...that God causes all things...**” and that’s in the present tense in the Greek, so it’s like repetition, it’s over and over and over, it’s a continuous action. God keeps on causing and keeps on causing and keeps on causing. “**...All things to work together for good...**” even your enemies, even your illnesses. It says, “**For...whom [God] foreknew, He...predestined...**” he marked out beforehand for you and I, “**...to become conformed to the image of His Son...**” (Romans 8:28) So God doesn’t waste anything, even enemies and even illnesses, and this is what we’re going to see. Now as we do this, and as we come to these final four chapters in this first segment of Isaiah, you need

to understand that we have moved into a historical period. I mean, this portion opens up this way, and I want you to turn in your Bibles, if you're able to, to Isaiah chapter 36. It opens this way, **“Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them.” (Isaiah 36:1)** I mean, they've got an enemy camping right outside the city of Jerusalem. They've got an enemy that has conquered all the cities of Judah. This is an awful enemy. This is Assyria. This is the scourge, the power, the biggest and greatest power in all the Middle East. So as you look at this, I want to take you, by way of review up to this point. And I want to do that because it's so important for you to keep this book in context. But not only that, it shows you why God brings in this historical element at this point in Isaiah's message, a message that He has preserved for His church down through the ages; for Israel and for the church. So this is what I want you to see. In Isaiah chapter 1 through chapter 6, God shows Israel their sin. He shows them their sin. I mean, He doesn't miss a beat. He shows them their sin, and then He lets them know, though, that there is a remnant, that there is a faithful remnant. (See Isaiah 1:9, KJV) And as He shows them their sin, we see this faithful remnant as He touches on these words before He gets to chapter 6, but in chapter 6, what you have is, you have Isaiah, all of a sudden, seeing the Lord. He sees the Lord. (See Isaiah 6:1) He sees his sin. He confesses his sin. (See Isaiah 6:5) God takes a coal off of the fire. Purges his sin, and when He does that He says, [“Your sins are forgiven. Your iniquities are taken away.”] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 6:7) Then Isaiah is able to hear the voice of the Lord. (See Isaiah 6:8) [And when he hears the voice of the Lord, he volunteers, he says, “I'll go. You want to send someone? I'll go.”] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 6:8) [And God says, “Now listen. You keep going. Even though they won't hear, even though they won't believe.”] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 6:9) He says, [“There is a holy seed. The holy seed is the stump, so there's a remnant.”] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 6:13) All right,

now this next portion is very, very important. In Isaiah chapter 7 all the way through chapter 12, we're introduced to Ahaz. Now listen carefully. Isaiah 1:1 tells us that this is: **"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem...during the [reign] of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah...."** (Isaiah 1:1) In Isaiah 6, we know that Uzziah dies. (See Isaiah 6:1) We know that he is followed: Uzziah then Jotham, and so Jotham reigns and then Ahaz reigns, and then Hezekiah. Well what he does is he skips over the reign of Jotham. He doesn't tell us anything about the reign of Jotham. So if we want to hear about Jotham we have to go to Kings and Chronicles. And we find out, "Hey! He was a good king." All right now, when we come to Ahaz, we come in chapter 7 through chapter 12, and what we see is, we see what happens because Ahaz does not believe God. So you wanna write this down: in chapter 7 to 12, he shows Ahaz' lack of faith. Now this is during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. So Ahaz is the father of Hezekiah. So we see Ahaz' lack of faith. Then in chapter 13 all the way through chapter 23, what we see is, we see God's power, His purpose with the nations, His authority over the nations. He lays out the destiny of nations. Now all this is important for you to remember as we talk about the blessings that come from enemies and the blessings that come from illness. So I'm setting you up. So I want you to get this down and I want you to understand. All right then, in chapter 24 to 27, God shows that He is the God over the earth, and that [He is going to lay the earth waste. He is going to devastate it because man has corrupted the earth.] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 24:1, 5) And then He is going to put in His kingdom. So we see that blessing. And that's 24 through 27. Then in chapter 28 through chapter 33 we see "Woe, woe," and He turns again to Judah and Jerusalem and He pronounces His "woes." But as He pronounces those "woes," and you want to put this down: They are woes that are going to come upon people because they have not listened to God; that's Israel; Judah. They're going to come on people who have destroyed and He's going to take care of the destroyers.

They're gonna come on people who have dealt treacherously and He's going to deal with those treacherous people. (See Isaiah 33:1) But He tells us in that passage that they are going to **"...see the King in [all] His beauty...."** (**Isaiah 33:17**) Now who is this "King?" Well, 2 Samuel chapter 7, God made a covenant with David, and that covenant was that David would never lack a king to sit on the throne. (2 Samuel 7:13-14) And we saw in Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6, that that king is going to be: a son that is given and a child that is born: and the government is going to be upon His shoulders. (See Isaiah 9:6) So he's pointing to the King of kings. He's pointing to Messiah. Then in chapter 34 and 35 what He wants them to know is this: He is coming with vengeance. He is coming with vengeance on His enemies. But there is a highway of holiness, a highway of holiness, Precious One, upon which the redeemed will walk. The ransomed of the Lord will walk and they will be full of joy. (See Isaiah 35:8, 10) Now all this leads us up to this point, and all of this was important for Hezekiah to know and understand and it's important for you and me to know and to understand if we're going to see the blessing of enemies and the blessings of illnesses. We'll be right back and get into the text.

## **PART TWO**

O Beloved, it is so important for you and me to give time to meditate upon the Word of God. To think through, "Why did God put this particular historical account in Isaiah, when He did? What is His message for me?" Because the way the God lays out truth when He tells us something, and how He tells it is all-important. And so finally we have come to Isaiah chapter 36, and there's a big change here. And there's a big change here because it is a historical segment in the book, even as Isaiah 7 begins a historical segment in the book and takes us from 7 through 12 as God talks to Ahaz. So I want to show you something in chapter 36, verse 1. **"Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria**

came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them. 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." (Isaiah 36:1-2) Now this is very important and as we do this, you're gonna see the importance of marking the geographical locations. Now remember we have a free study guide for you, a free study guide for you that you can download by going to <preceptsforlife.com>. But as we look at this, I want you to see where he is. You've marked the geographical location: He is at **"...the conduit of the upper pool on the highway of the fuller's field."** (Isaiah 36:2) Now what is he doing? He is facing, I mean, it is the king of Assyria's top man, "Rabshakeh," which can mean "field commander," or it could be his name. You find the name "Rabshakeh" with several other people, so whatever it is, he's standing there and he's the messenger for Sennacherib king of Assyria who is down fighting at Lachish. And he is standing there with this large army, and this is what he is saying: **"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."** (Isaiah 36:3) So they're all standing there. **"Then Rabshakeh said to them, 'Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king...of Assyria 'What is this confidence that you have?' I say, 'Your counsel and strength for...war are only empty words.' Now on whom do you rely, you [that] have rebelled against me?'"** (Isaiah 36:4-5) He's saying, "You, Hezekiah, and your people have rebelled against the king of Assyria." These are Sennacherib's words, delivered by his field commander whom we're gonna call "Rabshakeh." And so he's standing there now. Now you've got to get the picture because what I'm going to show you in 36 and 37 and 38 and 39, have an antithesis in Isaiah chapter 7. Go to Isaiah chapter 7. I absolutely love this. Go to Isaiah chapter 7. And there, if you were studying with us, you marked another geographical location, and you marked time. And now it says in verse 1,

**“Now it came about in the days of Ahaz, [that] the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not conquer it.” (Isaiah 7:1)** So what do you have? In Isaiah 7 you have the king of Israel, which is the northern kingdom, aligning himself with Aram and coming together against Jerusalem to conquer it. What do you have in Isaiah 36? You have a worse king. You have a worse threat. You have the guy that has just, in 722 B.C., taken the northern kingdom into captivity, has wiped out Aram, and is the mighty power, and is now standing there threatening the safety and the security of Jerusalem, the holy city; Zion the city of the living God. And so you have “father” over here in Isaiah 7. You have “son” over here in Isaiah 36. And where are they standing? I love it. I love it. Look at it. It says in verse 3: **“Then the LORD said to Isaiah, ‘Go out now to meet Ahaz, [and] you and your son Shear-jashub....’” (Isaiah 7:3)** Now “Shear-jashub” means this: A remnant shall return. He says, **“...at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the fuller’s field.” (Isaiah 7:3)** Hey, they’re standing, Ahaz and Isaiah and Shear-jashub, are standing the same place in Ezekiel 36 where Rabshakeh is standing with Shebna and Eliakim who are representatives of King Hezekiah. It’s déjà vu, isn’t it? It is “all over again.” It is an enemy. It is a king being threatened, and it is at the same place. But now look at what’s happening in verse 2 of Isaiah 7. **“When it was reported to the house of David, saying, ‘The Arameans have camped in Ephraim,’ his heart and the hearts of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind.” (Isaiah 7:2)** And when you go and you read, and if you’ve already done that, if you’ve done the study guide, if you’re studying along with me you’ve already read it, but we’re going to see that the hearts of the people were very troubled, and Hezekiah is troubled because he is being threatened. These men that are representing Hezekiah are going to tear their clothes. They’re gonna go to Hezekiah. Hezekiah is going to tear his clothes.

Hezekiah's going to head for the house of the Lord because he's in trouble. But now when you look at them there's one more thing that I want you to see. I want you to see what Isaiah said to Ahaz as this threat was there. It's at the end of verse 9. It's a key verse in Isaiah. **"...If you will not believe, you surely shall not last." (Isaiah 7:9)** He has just said, "I'm going to deliver you from those two kings, and **"...If you will not believe, you surely shall not last." (Isaiah 7:9)** "[Now] ask [Me] a sign...." (Isaiah 7:11) And [Ahaz says, "I'm not gonna ask you a sign, that's presumptuous."]  
(PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 7:12) And God get's angry with him! And he says to him, he says, **"...Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of...God as well?" (Isaiah 7:13)** "You won't ask for a sign, I'll give you a sign."  
When we study Hezekiah and these chapters, you're going to see that Hezekiah wants a sign from God and gets a sign from God. So it is a contrast in the two: The contrast between a man who does not believe, and the contrast between a man who does; one king who does not last because he will not believe God, and one who does. O Precious One, which one would you be like? You don't wanna miss this week's lessons so you'll know how to have a blessing from your enemy, or from your illness.