

## ISAIAH 36

### *The Rabshakeh's Taunt*

#### *The Rabshakeh Taunts the Leaders of Judah*

1 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. 2 And the king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field. 3 And there came out to him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder. 4 And the Rabshakeh said to them,

Say to Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest (בטח) this confidence (בְּטָחוֹן) of yours?<sup>1</sup> 5 Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? In whom do you now trust (בטח), that you have rebelled against me? 6 Behold, you are trusting (בטח) in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust (בטח) in him. 7 But if you say to me,

We trust (בטח) in Yahweh our God,<sup>2</sup>

is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem,

You shall worship before this altar?

8 Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria. I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them. 9 How then can you repulse a single captain among the least of my master's servants, when you trust (בטח) in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? 10 Moreover, is it without Yahweh that I have come up against this land to destroy it? Yahweh said to me,

Go up against this land and destroy it.

11 Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh,

Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it. Do not speak to us in the language of Judah within the hearing of the people who are on the wall.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sennacherib's strategy is to demoralize Hezekiah and the leaders and people of Judah.

<sup>2</sup> "In God We Trust."

12 But the Rabshakeh said,

Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and drink their own urine?

*The Rabshakeh Taunts the People of Judah*

13 Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah:

Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! 14 Thus says the king: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you. 15 Do not let Hezekiah make you trust (בטח) in Yahweh by saying,

Yahweh will surely deliver (נצל) us. This city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.

16 Do not listen to Hezekiah. For thus says the king of Assyria: Make your blessing (בְּרָכָה) with me and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, each one of his own fig tree, and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern, 17 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. 18 Beware lest Hezekiah mislead you by saying,

Yahweh will deliver (נצל) us.

Has any of the gods of the nations delivered (נצל) his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? 19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered (נצל) Samaria out of my hand? 20 Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered (נצל) their lands out of my hand, that Yahweh should deliver (נצל) Jerusalem out of my hand?

*The Jewish Leaders Return to Hezekiah*

21 But they were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was,

Do not answer him.

22 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.

## *Biblical Worldview*

1. **Our best option, when we are taunted, is often to say nothing.**
  - a. God hears the taunts against us. We may trust him to act on our behalf.
  
2. One common argument of secular humanism is to say that the God of the Bible is make-believe, just like all other gods of ancient times.

*Notes*