
ISAIAH 36: 1 Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all of the fortified cities of Judah, and captured them.

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, comes against Judah, and takes all the fenced cities, Isa 36:1. He afterwards sends a great host against Jerusalem; and his general Rabshakeh delivers an insulting and blasphemous message to Hezekiah, vv. 2-20. Hezekiah and his people are greatly afflicted at the words of Rabshakeh, Isa 36:21, Isa 36:22.

The history of the invasion of Sennacherib, and of the miraculous destruction of his army Which makes the subject of so many of Isaiah's prophecies, is very properly inserted here as affording the best light to many parts of those prophecies, and as almost necessary to introduce the prophecy in the thirty-seventh chapter, being the answer of God to Hezekiah's prayer, which could not be properly understood without it. We find the same narrative in the Second Book of Kings, chaps. 18, 19, 20.; and these chapters of Isaiah, 36, 37, 38, Isa 39:1-8, for much the greater part, (the account of the sickness of Hezekiah only excepted), are but a different copy of that narration. The difference of the two copies is little more than what has manifestly arisen from the mistakes of transcribers; they mutually correct each other, and most of the mistakes may be perfectly rectified by a collation of the two copies with the assistance of the ancient versions. Some few sentences, or members of sentences, are omitted in this copy of Isaiah, which are found in the other copy in the Book of Kings. Whether these omissions were made by design or mistake may be doubted. - L.

ISAIAH 36: 2 The king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem to king Hezekiah with a large army. He stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool in the fuller's field highway.

ISAIAH 36: 3 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.

Verse 3

Then came forth unto him - Before these words the other copy, 2Kgs 18:18, adds, ויקראו אל המלך, vaiyikreu el hammelech, "And they demanded audience of the king."

ISAIAH 36: 4 Rabshakeh said to them, "Now tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, "What confidence is this in which you trust?"

ISAIAH 36: 5 I say that your counsel and strength for the war are only vain words. Now in whom do you trust, that you have rebelled against me?"

Verse 5

I say "Thou hast said" - Fourteen MSS. (three ancient) of Kennicott's and De Rossi's have it in the second person, אמרת amarta; and so the other copy, 2Kgs 18:20.

But they are but vain words - דבר שפתיים debar sephathayim, a word of the lips. Thou dost talk about counsels, but thou hast none; about strength, but there is none with thee.

ISAIAH 36: 6 Behold, you trust in the staff of this bruised reed, even in Egypt, which if a man leans on it, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

Verse 6

The staff of this broken reed - A weakened, faithless ally.

On Egypt - The Bodl. MS. adds מלך melech, the king of Egypt; and so perhaps the Chaldee might read.

It will go into his hand, and pierce it - Will take subsidy after subsidy, and do nothing for it.

ISAIAH 36: 7 But if you tell me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' isn't that 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?'"

Verse 7

But if thou say "But if ye say" - Two ancient MSS. have תאמרו tomeru in the plural number; so likewise the Septuagint, Chaldee, and the other copy, 2Kgs 18:22.

Ye shall worship before this altar "To worship only before this altar" - See 2Chr 32:12.

ISAIAH 36: 8 Now therefore, please make a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them.

ISAIAH 36: 9 How then can you turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

ISAIAH 36: 10 Have I come up now without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said to me, "Go up against this land, and destroy it.""

Verse 10

Am I now come up without the Lord - Probably some apostate Israelitish priest might have encouraged the king of Assyria by telling him that Jehovah had given him a commission against Jerusalem.

ISAIAH 36: 11 Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; and don't speak to us in the Jews' language in the hearing of the people who are on the wall."

ISAIAH 36: 12 But Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me only to your master and to you, to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat their own dung and drink their own urine with you?"

Verse 12

That they may eat their own dung "Destined to eat their own dung" - לאכל leechol, that they may eat, as our translation literally renders it. But the Syriac reads מאכל meechol, that they may not eat, perhaps rightly, and afterward ומשתות umishshethoth, or ושתות ushethoth, to the same purpose. Seventeen of Dr. Kennicott's MSS., ten of De Rossi's and two of my own, read מימי meymey, the water; mine have מימי שניהם meymey sheneyhem, and write in the margin מימי רגליהם meymey regleyhem, the water of their feet, a modest way of expressing urine.

ISAIAH 36: 13 Then Rabshakeh stood, and called out with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria!

ISAIAH 36: 14 Thus says the king, 'Don't let Hezekiah deceive you; for he will not be able to deliver you.

ISAIAH 36: 15 Don't let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us. This city won't be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."

Verse 15

This city shall not be delivered - ולא velo, And this city. Ten of Kennicott's MSS., and nine of De Rossi's, with one (ancient) of my own, add the conjunction.

ISAIAH 36: 16 Don't listen to Hezekiah, for thus says the king of Assyria, 'Make your peace with me, and come out to me; and each of you eat from his vine, and each one from his fig tree, and each one of you drink the waters of his own cistern;

Verse 16

Make an agreement - ברכה berachah, make a blessing with me; i.e., Give me a ransom for the city, and I will not destroy it; give me the yearly tribute thou hast promised.

ISAIAH 36: 17 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

Verse 17

And vineyards - The other copy, 2Kgs 18:32, adds here: "A land of oil-olive, and of honey; that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah when he seduceth you."

ISAIAH 36: 18 Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Have any of the gods of the nations delivered their lands from the hand of the king of Assyria?

ISAIAH 36: 19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand?

Verse 19

Where are the gods - Many MSS. add the conjunction here also: And, or But, where are the gods, etc.

For other matters relative to this chapter, see the notes on 2Kgs 18:13 (note), etc.

Of Sepharvaim - The other copy, 2Kgs 18:34, adds, of "Henah and Ivah."

Have they delivered - וְכִי vechi. The copulative is not expressed here by the Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and three MSS.; nor is it in any other copy. Ib. Houbigant reads הֲכִי hachi, with the interrogative particle; a probable conjecture, which the ancient Versions above quoted seem to favor.

ISAIAH 36: 20 Who are they among all the gods of these countries that have delivered their country out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?"

ISAIAH 36: 21 But they remained silent, and said nothing in reply, for the king's commandment was, "Don't answer him."

Verse 21

But they held their peace "But the people held their peace" - The word הָעָם haam, the people, is supplied from the other copy, and is authorized by a MS. which inserts it after אָתָּו otho.

ISAIAH 36: 22 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.
