
ISAIAH 37: 1 When king Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the LORD's house.

Hezekiah is greatly distressed, and sends to Isaiah the prophet to pray for him, Isa 37:1-4. Isaiah returns a comfortable answer, and predicts the destruction of the king of Assyria and his army, Isa 37:5-7. Sennacherib, hearing that his kingdom was invaded by the Ethiopians, sends a terrible letter to Hezekiah, to induce him to surrender, Isa 37:9-13. Hezekiah goes to the temple, spreads the letter before the Lord, and makes a most affecting prayer, Isa 37:14-20. Isaiah is sent to him to assure him that his prayer is heard; that Jerusalem shall be delivered; and that the Assyrians shall be destroyed, Isa 37:21-35. That very night a messenger of God slays one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians, Isa 37:36. Sennacherib returns to Nineveh, and is slain by his own sons, Isa 37:37, Isa 37:38.

ISAIAH 37: 2 He sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.

ISAIAH 37: 3 They said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, 'This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of rejection; for the children have come to the birth, and there is no strength to give birth.

ISAIAH 37: 4 It may be the LORD your God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master has sent to defy the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

ISAIAH 37: 5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

ISAIAH 37: 6 Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master, 'Thus says the LORD, "Don't be afraid of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

Verse 6

Thus shall ye say - כה תאמרון ko tomerun, "thus shall ye (explicitly, earnestly, and positively) say. "The paragogic nun deepens and increases the sense.

ISAIAH 37: 7 Behold, I will put a spirit in him and he will hear news, and will return to his own land. I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.'"

Verse 7

I will send a blast "I will infuse a spirit into him" - "נותין בו רוח" nothen bo roach never signifies any thing but putting a spirit into a person: this was πνευμα δειλιας, the spirit of deceit." - Secker. "I will send a blast" - I do not think that Archbishop Secker has hit the true meaning of these words. I believe רוח ruach means here a pestilential wind, such as the Arabs call simoom, that instantly

suffocates both man and beast; and is what is termed "the angel of the Lord," God's messenger of death to the Assyrians, Isa 37:36.

ISAIAH 37: 8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

Verse 8

Rabshakeh returned - From Isa 36:2, we learn that the king of Assyria had sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem; now it is likely that Rabshakeh had besieged that place, and that the king of Assyria had taken his station before this city, and dispatched Rabshakeh against Jerusalem. But, as in the verse above it is said, "he had departed from Lachish," probably he had been obliged to raise the siege, and sat down before Libnah, which promised an easier conquest.

ISAIAH 37: 9 He heard news concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He has come out to fight against you." When he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,

Verse 9

He heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia - When he heard that Tirhakah king of Ethiopia had come out against him, then he sent that blasphemous manifesto which is contained in Isa 37:10-13, to terrify Hezekiah into submission. How much was this like, in words and spirit, to the manifesto sent to the Parisians by the late Duke of Brunswick, from the plains of Champagne, in 1792, which was the forerunner of the mighty torrents of human blood which was shed in the French revolution! And what a blast of God fell upon him and his army - nearly like that which fell on the army of Sennacherib!

He sent messengers "He sent messengers again" - The word וישמע *vaiyishma*, "and he heard," which occurs the second time in this verse, is repeated by mistake from the beginning of the verse. It is omitted in an ancient MS. It is a mere tautology, and embarrasses the sense. The true reading instead of it is, וישב *vayeshab*, "and he returned," which the Septuagint read in this place, ἀπεστρεψε, and which is preserved in the other copy, 2Kgs 19:9 : "He returned and sent, "that is, according to the Hebrew idiom, "he sent again."

ISAIAH 37: 10 "Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, 'Don't let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem won't be given into the hand of the king of Assyria."

ISAIAH 37: 11 Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly. Shall you be delivered?

ISAIAH 37: 12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them, which my fathers have destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the children of Eden who were in Telassar?

Verse 12

As Gozan, and Haran - חרן Charan: but הרן Haran is the reading of four of Kennicott's MSS. and one of De Rossi's.

ISAIAH 37: 13 Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivvah?"

ISAIAH 37: 14 Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it. Then Hezekiah went up to the LORD's house, and spread it before the LORD.

Verse 14

And read it "And read them" - ויקראם vayikraem. So MS. Bodl. in this place; and so the other copy; instead of ויקראהו vayikraehu, "and read it."

And spread it "And spread them" - ויפרשהו viyiphreahu. הו hu is upon a rasure in a MS., which probably was at first מ mem. The same mistake as in the foregoing note.

ISAIAH 37: 15 Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying,

Verse 15

Unto the Lord "Before Jehovah" - That is, in the sanctuary. For אל el, the Syriac, Chaldee, and the other copy, 2Kgs 19:15, read לפני liphney, "before the face."

ISAIAH 37: 16 "LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, who is enthroned among the cherubim, you are the God, even you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

ISAIAH 37: 17 Turn your ear, LORD, and hear. Open your eyes, LORD, and behold. Hear all of the words of Sennacherib, who has sent to defy the living God.

ISAIAH 37: 18 Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed all the countries and their land,

Verse 18

The nations - הארצות haratsoth, "the lands;" instead of this word, which destroys the sense, ten of Kennicott's and five of De Rossi's MSS. (one ancient) have here גוים goyim, "nations;" which is undoubtedly the true reading, being preserved also in the other copy; 2Kgs 19:17. Another MS. suggests another method of rectifying the sense in this place, by reading מלכם malcam, "their king," instead of ארצם artsam, "their land;" but it ought to be מלכיהם malcheyhem, "all the countries and their kings."

ISAIAH 37: 19 and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they have destroyed them.

ISAIAH 37: 20 Now therefore, LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you are the LORD, even you only."

Verse 20

Save us "Save us, we beseech thee" - The supplicating particle, נא na, is supplied here from eighteen MSS., three ancient, of Dr. Kennicott, and ten of De Rossi, and from the other copy; 2Kgs 19:19.

That thou art the Lord, even thou only "That thou Jehovah art the only God" - The word אלהים Elohim, "God," is lost here in the Hebrew text, but preserved in the other copy; 2Kgs 19:19. The Syriac and Septuagint seem here to have had in their copies אלהים Elohim, instead of יהוה Yehovah.

ISAIAH 37: 21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria,

Verse 21

Then Isaiah - sent unto Hezekiah - The Syriac and Septuagint understand and render the verb passively, was sent.

Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib "Thy prayer unto me concerning Sennacherib - I have heard" - שמעתי shamati; this word, necessary to the sense, is lost in this place out of the Hebrew text. One MS. of Dr. Kennicott's and one of De Rossi's have it written above the line in a later hand. The Septuagint and Syriac found it in their copies; and it is preserved in the other copy; 2Kgs 19:20.

ISAIAH 37: 22 this is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him. The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you and ridiculed you. The daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you.

ISAIAH 37: 23 Whom have you defied and blasphemed? Against whom have you exalted your voice and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel.

Verse 23

Against the Holy One of Israel - For אל el, to, the other copy has על al, against, rather more properly.

ISAIAH 37: 24 By your servants, have you defied the Lord, and have said, "With the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, to the innermost parts of Lebanon. I will cut down its tall cedars and its choice fir trees. I will enter into its farthest height, the forest of its fruitful field.

Verse 24

By thy servants "By thy messengers" - The text has עבדיך abdeycha, thy servants; but the true reading seems to be מלאכיך malacheycha, thy messengers, as in the other copy, 2Kgs 19:23; and as the Septuagint and Syriac found it in their copies in this place.

Reproached the Lord - יהוה אדני Adonai: but one of my MSS. has יהוה אדני Yehovah Adonai, Jehovah the Lord. This reading is not found, I think, in any other MS., but several have יהוה Yehovah for אדני Adonai.

I will enter into the height of his border "I will penetrate into his extreme retreats" - The text has מרום marom, the height which seems to have been taken by mistake from the line but one above. Two MSS. have here מלון malon, the lodge or retreat; which is the word in the other copy, 2Kgs 19:23, and I think is the true reading.

The forest of has Carmel - The forest and his fruitful field; that is, I will possess myself of the whole country.

ISAIAH 37: 25 I have dug and drunk water, and with the sole of my feet I will dry up all the rivers of Egypt."

Verse 25

Water "Strange waters" - The word זרים zarim, strange, lost out of the Hebrew text in this place, is supplied from the other copy. A MS. supplies the word רבים rabbim, many, instead of it.

With the sole of my feet - With my infantry.

All the rivers of the besieged places "All the canals of fenced places" - The principal cities of Egypt, the scene of his late exploits, were chiefly defended by deep moats, canals, or large lakes, made by labor and art, with which they were surrounded. See Harmer's Observ. 2 p. 304. Claudian introduces Alaric boasting of his conquests in the same extravagant manner: - "Subsidere nostris

Sub pedibus montes; arescere vidimus amnes. -

Fregi Alpes, galeisque Padum victricibus hausi."

De Bello Getic. 526. "The mountains have passed away under our feet; we have seen the rivers dried up. I have broken the Alps, and laden out the Po with our victorious helmets."

ISAIAH 37: 26 Have you not heard how I have done it long ago, and formed it in ancient times? Now I have brought it to pass, that it should be yours to destroy fortified cities, turning them into ruinous heaps.

Verse 26

Lay waste defended cities into ruinous heaps "Lay waste warlike nations; strong fenced cities" - גלים גללים gallim nitstsim. It is not easy to give a satisfactory account of these two words, which have

greatly embarrassed all the interpreters, ancient and modern. For גללים I read גוים goyim, as the Septuagint do in this place, εθνη. The word נצים netsim the Vulgate renders in this place compugnantium; in the parallel place, 2Kgs 19:25, pugnantium; and the Septuagint μαχιμων, fighting, warlike. This rendering is as well authorized as any other that I know of; and, with the reading of the Septuagint, perfectly clears up the construction. See the margin on all the preceding verses.

ISAIAH 37: 27 Therefore their inhabitants had little power. They were dismayed and confounded. They were like the grass of the field, and like the green herb, like the grass on the housetops, and like a field before its crop has grown.

Verse 27

Corn blasted - שדמה shedemah, parched: it does not appear that there is any good authority for this word. The true reading seems to be שדפה shedephah, blasted, as it is in six MSS. (two ancient) here, and in the other copy.

ISAIAH 37: 28 But I know your sitting down, your going out, your coming in, and your raging against me.

ISAIAH 37: 29 Because of your raging against me, and because your arrogance has come up into my ears, therefore will I put my hook in your nose and my bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way by which you came.

Verse 29

Will I put my hook in thy nose - Et fraenum meum: Jonathan vocem מתג metheg, interpretatus est זמז zamam, i.e., annulum, sive uncum, eumque ferreum, quem infigunt naribus camelae: eoque trahitur, quoniam illa feris motibus agitur: et hoc est, quod discimus in Talmude; et camela cum annulo narium: scilicet, egreditur die sabbathi. "And my bridle: Jonathan interprets the word metheg by zamam, a ring, or that iron hook which they put in the nostrils of a camel to lead her about, check her in her restiveness, etc. And this is what we mean in the Talmud, when we say, And the camel with the ring of her nostrils shall go out on the Sabbath day." - Jarchi in 2Kgs 19:28. Ponam circulum in naribus tuis. "I will put a ring in thy nostrils." - Jerome. Just as at this day they put a ring into the nose of the bear, the buffalo, and other wild beasts, to lead them, and to govern them when they are unruly. Bulls are often ringed thus in several parts of England. The Hindoos compare a person who is the slave of his wife to a cow led by the ring in her nose.

ISAIAH 37: 30 This shall be the sign to you. You will eat this year that which grows of itself, and in the second year that which springs from the same; and in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit.

ISAIAH 37: 31 The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

ISAIAH 37: 32 For out of Jerusalem a remnant will go out, and survivors will escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of Armies will perform this.'

ISAIAH 37: 33 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, 'He will not come to this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither will he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it.

ISAIAH 37: 34 By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come to this city,' says the LORD.

ISAIAH 37: 35 'For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake.'"

ISAIAH 37: 36 the LORD's angel went out and struck one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the camp of the Assyrians. When men arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.

Verse 36

Then the angel - Before "the angel, "the other copy, 2Kgs 19:35, adds "it came to pass the same night, that " - The Prophet Hosea, Hos 1:7, has given a plain prediction of the miraculous deliverance of the kingdom of Judah: - "And to the house of Judah I will be tenderly merciful:

And I will save them by Jehovah their God.

And I will not save them by the bow;

Nor by sword, nor by battle;

By horses, nor by horsemen." - L.

ISAIAH 37: 37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, went away, returned to Nineveh, and stayed there.

ISAIAH 37: 38 As he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons struck him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Esar Haddon his son reigned in his place.

Verse 38

His sons smote him - What an awful punishment of his blasphemy! Who can harden his neck against God, and be successful? God does not lightly pass by blasphemy against himself, his government, his word, his Son, or his people. Let the profligate take care!