

When Boasting Men Meet the LORD

Isaiah 37:8-38

Halifax: 21 March 2010

Introduction:

Last week, we began to look at these four chapters in the middle of Isaiah in which he gives us a history lesson.

- It is essentially a historical section in which Isaiah tells us about two pivotal events in Judah's history that occurred during the reign of King Hezekiah...
 - In chapters 36 & 37, we are shown how the Assyrian assault against Judah is brought to an end through Hezekiah's prayers...
 - And in chapters 38 & 39, we are shown how the Babylon assault is introduced and prophesied because of Hezekiah's folly.
- These four historical chapters are, in many ways,
 - a bridge between the first 35 chapters in Isaiah which have to do mostly with Assyria...
 - and the last 27 which have to do mostly with Babylon and grand deliverance that will come from out of Babylon so as to bring in at last the glorious reign of the Messiah.
- In chapters 36-37, King Hezekiah is the hero who, by faith and prayer, leads his people into salvation and faithfulness...
 - But in chapters 38-39, the same King is the one who brings trouble upon his people by putting his trust in Babylon...
 - not as Ahaz who had utterly rejected the LORD when he turned to Assyria,
 - but as one who in weakness looked to Babylon as a backup...
 - This is not to say that the captivity was all Hezekiah's fault—
 - far from it.
 - But his foolish confidence in Babylon (as we shall see in future weeks) was what occasioned Isaiah's announcement of the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon.

But today, our focus is on chapter 37 verses 8-38 where we see how the boasting Assyrian who seemed so large to Jerusalem was made to seem so small through the prayers of Hezekiah.

- And so as we come to this passage,
 - I want to ask you to think about something—
 - What is it that seems large and invincible to you today?

- Is it the arrogant intellectuals who boast that they can account for mankind's existence without God?
- Or is it the libertine who boasts of moral freedom and lives in reckless disregard of God's moral law?
 - the one who laughs at very idea of commandments and mocks at you?
 - Does it seem that such persons have won the day and that there is no turning back.
- Or perhaps it is not a person that looms large in your life:
 - perhaps it is a personal problem—
 - a sin that seems too great to concur...
 - a lifestyle that seems impossible to escape...
 - a habit that seems impossible to break...
 - a bad relationship that seems impossible to fix...
 - a sickness or some difficulty that seems impossible to bear...
- Any of these may be the boasting "man" in your life that seems so invincible...
 - The king of Assyria is for you whatever there is that seems to you to have some power to oppose the Lord and His kingdom...

I. Boasting men can seem so big to us!

A. They can become so fearless as they experience success

1. As we come to our text this week,

- we need to remember that in Isaiah 37:1-7,
 - the LORD had assured Hezekiah that he did not need to fear the boasting King of Assyria and the Rabshakeh who came with all his boasting threats against Jerusalem.
- In verse 7, the LORD said,
 - Isa 37:7: Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.
- As first, this seemed to be a promise that was fulfilled immediately!
 - In verse 8-9 we learn that the King of Assyria has shifted position,
 - even while the Rabshakeh had been delivering his boasting threat to Jerusalem.
 - and the reason was because he had heard that the Ethiopians were coming against him!
 - He had moved from Lachish to Linah which is further away from Jerusalem and a little closer to his home in Nineveh.
- What an encouragement this news might have been to Hezekiah!

- Already, it might have been supposed, the boasting Assyrian has heard the rumour and started to withdraw!
 - Soon he will be headed for home!

TRANS> That would have been nice,

2. But Isaiah's prophecy was not quite as simple as that.

a. The LORD often stretches our faith by comforting us initially and then making things go from bad to worse!

- You remember what happened at Egypt!
 - Moses came with God's promise of deliverance and the Hebrews were greatly encouraged,
 - but instead of deliverance, they got increasing oppression at first!
 - Almost all of them despaired of deliverance and grumbled at Moses.
- That is something to expect my brothers and sisters!
 - The Lord, in His wise and gracious dealings with us,
 - knows that we need to be stretched that we may come to trust Him even more...
 - and so He stretches us by making promises that are not at first realised.

b. See how he stretches Hezekiah's faith here—and the faith of all the people of Jerusalem!

1) They find that instead of withdrawing on account of the rumour,

- the arrogant King of Assyria renews his intentions to destroy Jerusalem.
- Yes, the Ethiopian threat has hindered him from coming to Jerusalem as soon as he might have.
 - But he has every confidence that he will still carry out his purpose against Jerusalem and that this little hindrance will in now way keep him from his ultimate design against Jerusalem.
 - He is not the least bit frazzled—
 - He is completely undaunted.

2) And just to make sure that Hezekiah knows this, he sends him a boasting letter...

- a letter designed at assuring Hezekiah that he is still going to come!

- He makes a deliberate point of sending his messengers to renew his threats.
- Look at verse 10 and following:
 - Isa 37:10-13: Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: “Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, ‘Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’ Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who *were* in Telassar? Where *is* the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?”

TRANS> It is difficult for us when our enemies are so full of confidence like this.

- It is intimidating!

- You see what the king of Assyria’s main point is...

B. He is confident that God’s kingdom will be destroyed.

1. That is the point at which the enemy especially attacks if you are a true Christian.

- He wants to make you think that the kingdom of God will not stand...
 - that it is nothing special and will never amount to anything.
 - And sometimes it does not seem all that special in this world.

2. But brothers and sisters, you must not believe this!

a. So many people have come to believe this lie over the generations—even people who go to church!

- They have come to suppose that it makes very little difference whether a person serves God or not.
- They have, with the help of their own ministers, denied hell and denied the glory of God’s kingdom and the power of the gospel to save.
- That is why there are so many people who have given up and want to die.
 - They are without hope.
 - Their hope has been destroyed by the lies of the enemy telling them again and again that the kingdom of God is nothing special...
 - That it will not stand but will all come to nothing.

b. My brothers and sisters, the enemy sees to it that this message is sounded again and again—every where you go...

- in university classroom, in the bar, in the street, in the schools, and yes, even in the churches.

- And when you hear it again and again and you see everyone accepting the message and starting to live as if it is true...
 - When everyone around you seems to believe that there is nothing special or unique about the city of God...
 - It can start to wear you down so that you start to believe what they are saying.
- c. That is why we need to keep on encouraging one another,
- and keep on spending time in God's word
 - and keep on speaking the truth in love to those who are in opposition...
 - And why we need to rejoice when they persecute us...
 - Jesus tells us to be happy about it.
 - When persecution comes, we have a chance to show everybody that we really do believe the good news about God's city...
 - That we really do believe that Jesus has saved His people and that He will preserve them until the end and bring them to glory...

TRANS> And when they come with all their boasting threats that by their strength they will bring down the city of God...

II. Let these boasting men teach you to pray

- That is what King Hezekiah does as soon as he gets this boasting message from the King of Assyria!
 - He does the same thing we saw that David did when we studied Psalm 3 recently...
 - in the days when Absalom came against him in Jerusalem.
 - He presented the whole matter to the Lord.
- We are to learn from these godly men to...

A. Present the situation to the Lord.

1. Isn't this marvellous?
 - As soon as the letter comes, Hezekiah goes straight to the house of God—
 - to the place where God's mercy and fellowship was revealed to His people...
 - and he opens that letter up and shows it to the Lord and he prays!
2. Lay it all out before the LORD people of God!

- Whatever it is, take it to Him and show it to Him!
 - Tell Him all about it and turn to Him in prayer.
- Brothers and sisters, too often we don't really do this because we don't really think that it will do any good.
 - I don't mean to tell you that the problem will always go away,
 - it may even get worse at first...
 - but I do mean to tell you that God will hear you and that if you pray according to His promises—
 - and you keep praying even when it seems to get worse—
 - you will obtain what you have asked for.
 - If you come to the place where God's mercy is revealed...
 - No longer at the temple, but to Jesus Christ who has been revealed in the gospel...
 - If you come to God whose mercy is revealed in Christ and you cry out to Him to preserve His church and to preserve you,
 - He will!
 - Even though 46 cities of Judah may have been destroyed, the city of God will not be utterly destroyed despite what the enemy says.
 - Show the LORD the threat, tell Him all about it, and turn it over to Him to deal with it.

TRANS> And when you pray, it is very important that you:

B. Remember who the Lord is.

1. Too often we jump into prayer and just start pouring out our supplications without stopping to think about to whom we are speaking!
 - We come asking for many things without a word of praise...
 - You might wonder if we really realise the majesty of the One to whom we are speaking!
 - The model prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples begins with the remembrance that God is our Father, near to us to care for us,
 - who is heaven...high and exalted about all things...
 - And then it says,
 - Hallowed be your name!
 - Let people see your glory!
 - Let me see your glory!

- Make your glory known to all...
 - It is really important to do this in prayer!
 - God's glory is what heaven is all about—it is about seeing the glory of God fully revealed to us at last.
 - That is what eternity is all about.
 - That is what happiness is all about.
 - If you are praying for God's glory to be revealed,
 - You can be sure that your prayers will always be answered.
 - If you just want to get out of a bad situation and just want things to go better for you and have not interest in His glory being revealed...
 - If you just want your enemies to go away
 - or you just want healing or relief from trouble at work...
 - You may not get much confidence when you pray and you may not get what you want.
 - But if your goal is that God would glorified in life or death, in sickness or in health, in pain or in ease,
 - if his glory is what drives you to prayer...
 - then you can know that you will have what you ask for.
2. Look at what Hezekiah says about the glory of the LORD!
- a. He calls Him the LORD of Hosts...
 - That name speaks of Him as Jehovah, the self-existing eternal God who is over all the armies and all the forces of heaven and earth...
 - The great hosts (or armies) of the earth and the great hosts of heaven and of nature are all under His authority and power.
 - They rise and fall, succeed and fail, at His decree.

TRANS> And Hezekiah does not stop here

- b. He goes on to say that the LORD of hosts is the God of Israel...
 - This is very important because it was to Israel (Jacob) that God made His promises of old...
 - Hezekiah remembers that God has promised to set them apart as His people and to be their God.
 - Remember that God is your own God when you pray to Him—that He is "*Our Father* which art in heaven."
 - He has made promises especially to us as the people He has called out to be His own.

- And now that Jesus has come and has wrestled with God (as Jacob did when His name was changed to Israel)
 - and won the prize of our eternal salvation as His people,
 - we no longer come to Him as the God of Israel (per se),
 - but we come to Him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...
 - When we call Him the God of Israel, we think of our Lord Jesus who is now the true Israel who prevailed with God for us.
 - How certain God's promises to Him are!
 - How good it is to remember who He is to us...

TRANS> But Hezekiah does not stop here either...

- c. Next he mentions that the Lord dwells between the cherubim.
 - What a great way to think of our LORD.
 - In the temple, God had the mercy-seat between the cherubim to represent His footstool on earth in the midst of His people.
 - This is where atonement was made and where God revealed to His people that He accepted them on the basis of His mercy.
 - He was connected to His people not as an angry judge, but as a God reconciled to them by the blood of the covenant.
 - And now we have the cross!
 - We have confidence in prayer when we remember that God is joined to us through the cross of Jesus Christ by mercy...
 - through the blood that He shed to atone for your sins.
 - You cannot connect with Him unless you come through Christ crucified...
 - You can pray all day long, but it will come to nothing until you repent of your sin and come to Christ as Lord and Saviour.
 - Until then, all your prayers are worthless!
- d. And finally, Hezekiah speaks of the uniqueness of the LORD.
 - He remembers that he is not praying to some half-baked local deity who gets into quarrels with other gods...
 - He says, "You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth!"
 - He is the One who will at last dispose of them as He chooses...
 - He has no rival, for He is the one who "made heaven and earth."

- In our day, we especially need to come to grips with the great difference there is between the Creator and the creature...
 - He is the fountain and source—
 - Everything is here by Him and for Him.
 - There is no other reason for you or me or any great king or angel to be but for God’s purpose and glory...
 - because He is God—He is on a whole different level of honour and glory!
 - If only we could see that—how it would change us everyday.
 - If only our concern was for His honour as the only true God!
 - How different our prayers would be!

TRANS> So Hezekiah has seen clearly that everything is for God...

- And with this in view, he now comes to present his petition to the LORD...
 - He comes to...

C. Ask Him to deal with the arrogant Assyrian!

1. You see His concern!

- It is a very God-centred concern!
 - He did not just praise God so he could get on with his requests,
 - but his very requests are saturated with his desire to see God honoured.
- a. He is burdened that this arrogant king is casting reproach on God’s name—on His glory!
 - He wants the LORD to act because of the honour of His name.
 - Look at verse 17
 - Isa 37:17: Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.
 - To often the relief we want is the relief of our own pain...
 - I don’t mean to say that the LORD does not care about that... nor do I mean to say you ought never to pray for that...
 - He has promised to ultimately deliver you from all pain...
 - But our greatest concern must be for the glory of His name.
 - As I said before, that is what heaven is about...
 - It is heaven because it is there that God reveals His glory.
 - So when the arrogant men of the earth are trying to make people think that the true God is pretty much irrelevant...

- that it makes no difference where we stand with Him...
 - Then it is time for you to become zealous and pray that He will act for His name!
 - Show Him what people are saying about Him and ask Him to act!
 - He will—He is going to come in His glory and show Himself.
 - Pray that He will—hasten His coming by your ardent prayers!
- b. Hezekiah goes on in his prayer to speak about how the King of Assyria has indeed trashed all the other nations, just as he has boasted of doing...
 - 1) But there is this great difference that the King of Assyria wants Hezekiah to forget...
 - The gods of these nations are wood and stone.
 - They are not the true and living God.
 - 2) Look carefully at the reason Hezekiah especially wants God to save Jerusalem...
 - Isa 37:20: “Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, **that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You *are* the LORD, You alone.**”
 - You see—it is all for the glory of God—
 - for His reputation among the nations!
 - So that all will know that He is the LORD.
- 2. This must be your great concern my brothers and sisters... the glory of God.
 - It will make so much difference in how you live...
 - in what is important to you...
 - in how much you are willing to suffer for Him...
 - in how your pray...
 - in your level of confidence!
 - God will always answer such prayers!

TRANS> And that brings us to third thing I want you to see... namely, that...

III. When you pray like this, the LORD makes boasting men seem very small.

- Verse 21 makes the connection between Hezekiah’s prayer and God’s action.
- The LORD says expressly that He will act **because** Hezekiah has prayed!
 - v. 21: “because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is my word concerning Him.

- Hezekiah's prayers are given as the reason that God acts!
 - Get this straight my brothers and sisters!
 - *God answers prayer*
 - You get the impression that God would *not* have acted here if Hezekiah had not prayed!
 - That is a very true principle!
 - James says,
 - James 4:2-3: "You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures [not for the glory and honour of God]."
 - If Jesus did not intercede for us, we would not be saved...
- But don't get this wrong...
 - It was true that God would not have delivered His people in this case if Hezekiah had not prayed,
 - but it is also true that He had ordained that He would deliver His people and that He would do it by Hezekiah's prayer.
 - In other words, He who saw to the deliverance also saw to it that His servant would pray.
 - He ordains the complete package—
 - the deliverance as well as the prayer for deliverance that goes with it.
 - Don't you see?
 - This is how God's electing grace works...
 - He chooses people for salvation, but He has ordained that those who are saved would believe.
 - Therefore, all whom He has chosen will come to Him—He will draw them...
 - That is why you cannot boast about your salvation—it is all of God's grace...
 - Nor can you boast about your prayer—for when God has purposed to work, He raises up people to pray by His grace.
 - All you can do is give thanks!
- Let us see how God responds to our prayers
 - even so as to make men that seemed so big seem small.

- A. First, see how the LORD shows the boasting King that he has forgotten the most basic facts of reality...
- In short, he has forgotten that God is the LORD and that he is mere man!
1. The LORD portrays His people as laughing at the king of Assyria for his amazing stupidity!
 - Isa 37:22: this *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him: "The virgin, the daughter of Zion, Has despised you, laughed you to scorn; The daughter of Jerusalem Has shaken *her* head behind your back!" (Isa 37:22 NKJV)
 - a. The people of God are called "the virgin daughter of Zion" because they have been kept from this king that wants to rape them...
 - And she laughing at this puny little king who thought he could have her when the LORD was looking out for her!
 - This arrogant man has lost all perspective!
 - b. Brothers and sisters, we do not want to be flippant about the arrogant little men who think they are so big...
 - But there is a holy laughter about this kind of thing...
 - When you stop and look it—
 - You may think about a little tiny king, all decked out in his royal finery that is held up in the palm of God's hand (so to speak)...
 - And with a high squeaky voice he is shouting out threats and boasts and insults at God as if he could do something—
 - And really—its quite laughable!
 - The poor guy is completely out of touch with reality!
 2. Just look at how foolish the boast of man is
 - a. In verse 23 the LORD essentially says—
 - Hey pal, don't you realise who you are talking to?
 - Look at what He says:
 - Isa 37:23-36: Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised *your* voice, And lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel. By your servants you have reproached the Lord, And said, 'By the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, To the limits of Lebanon; I will cut down its tall cedars *And* its choice cypress trees; I will enter its farthest height, To its fruitful forest. I have dug and drunk water, And with the soles of my feet I have dried up All the brooks of defense.' "Did you not hear long ago *How* I made it, From ancient times that I formed it?

- The LORD is the one who made all the great mountains this guy boasts of ascending and the cedars he boasts of cutting down and the waters he boasts of stopping up!
 - Do you see how silly men are when they boast about whatever great things they may have done in God's creation?
 - Did you fly to the moon?
 - Guess what—the LORD made the moon as well as the space in between!
 - Did you figure out some great marvels of the universe—DNA or some law of physics?
 - God made all this and put it into motion!
 - Are you stronger or faster than other men?
 - Who made your arms and legs?
 - Who even designed a world in which there should be strength?
 - Are you a great moralist or philosopher?
 - Where do you think morality and philosophy came from?
 - There would be no morality and no philosophy if the LORD had not made it...
 - This is what arrogant little men forget in their hatred against God.
- b. The LORD goes on to tell this proud Assyrian that all the success he has had in mowing down nations has been from God.
- From the middle of verse 26, He says:
 - Isa 37:26-27: Now I have brought it to pass, That you should be For crushing fortified cities into heaps of ruins. Therefore their inhabitants had little power; They were dismayed and confounded; They were as the grass of the field And the green herb, As the grass on the housetops And grain blighted before it is grown.
 - All the success that the wicked have even in their wickedness is from God.
 - The Assyrian had an easy time crushing nations because God raised Him up to crush nations.
 - It's that simple!
 - An atheist who wins all the debates wins them because the LORD has a lot of ungrateful people He wants to blind and harden on account of their sin.

- A military regime has victory because God is humbling the nations that we being defeated.
 - Our text could not set this forth more plainly than it does!
 - The nations were weak because God appointed that Assyria would crush them.
 - A lot of people are uncomfortable with this truth—
 - Uncomfortable?
 - Well of course!
 - that we are sinners and that God raises up wicked men to bring trouble down on us to judge us!
 - Of course we are uncomfortable with that!
 - But our discomfort does not make it go away!
 - We have to take what God says in His word whether we are comfortable with it or not.
 - And of course King Sennacherib is not comfortable with this reality!
 - He was living in the dream world that he had some kind of independent power... independent of God!
 - He was dreaming that he was like God!
 - He had actually come to believe that he had done all sorts of things apart from his Creator.
 - Such lunacy!
 - This foolish little man has forgotten that he has a creator in heaven.
 - He misses the fact that he is help up in God's hand to do all that he has done.
 - He has completely lost his perspective.
- c. But now the LORD assures the King of Assyria that He is going to put an end to his string of victories...
- He is through with him now and the time has come for him to be punished for his arrogance against the LORD.
 - God knows all about the Assyrian—and He does not like what He sees so He is going to send him home...
 - Isa 37:28-29: "But I know your dwelling place, Your going out and your coming in, And your rage against Me. Because your rage against Me and your tumult Have come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back By the way which you came."

- It is not like the LORD will have to struggle to bring him home!
- All He has to do is put his hook in the Assyrian's nose and drag him home.
- There will be nothing difficult about it at all for the LORD.

TRANS> My brothers and sisters, this is all written to encourage *us*.

- Your see from our text that...

B. The LORD comforts us when we pray...

- assuring us that our enemies will not harm us...
 - that despite all their boasting, they are really quite frail and helpless.
- 1. Understand that God's words addressed to the mighty Assyrian (in the portion we just looked at) are for our encouragement who seek Him in prayer...
 - He presents to His people the words that He speaks to the Assyrian for our encouragement!
 - He will avenge us of our adversaries who try to overthrow the kingdom of God.
 - They will only have success as long as God gives them success.
 - As long as it is His purpose to chasten us and to test...
 - But once He is through with them, He sends them home again.
 - Do not deny that God does these things!
 - Rejoice that the world is not running out of control—everything is according to His glorious purpose...
 - All of history must be referred to the glory of God as its ultimate purpose!

TRANS> His words to the Assyrian are for your comfort!

- But the comfort He ministers to us when we pray does not stop there...
- 2. He makes promises to us in our troubles
 - a. First, there is the promise that comes to us in the midst of our trials,
 - that things will be returned to normal,
 - and that even until that time, the LORD will give us what we need.
 - This is often a great burden to us in our trials and testings...
 - We feel that we will not be able to carry on...
 - We just not see that we have the resources to go on...

- But if you are in the LORD, He will give you what you need to survive.
- Somehow, you will make it through the winter of testing and enjoy the springtime.
- Here He promises that His people will eat what the uncultivated land brings forth—uncultivated because of the invasion of Assyria...
 - In verse 30, there is a promise of a return to normal times is given...and a promise of provision until then...
 - Isa 37:30: "This shall be a sign to you: You shall eat this year such as grows of itself, And the second year what springs from the same; Also in the third year sow and reap, Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.
 - It is difficult to understand why the second year is mentioned since Assyria was to be driven out very soon,
 - but perhaps the best explanation is that the second year was already upon them...
 - that it was already too late to plant for the second year...
 - nevertheless, the wild growth would be sufficient for them...
 - and then in the third year, normal conditions would return.
 - They would be able to plant in the normal fashion.

TRANS> But there is more that is promised... not only will they plant again...but

b. Secondly, they themselves will be planted again.

- It is a promise that God will plant them in order that they might bear fruit!
 - When you are in the midst of trials, sometimes it seems that you are not being any fruit at all—you are just trying to survive...
 - You are like a tree that has undergone radical pruning!
 - You feel as if your trials have destroyed you...cut you down to nothing...
 - But they have not—they have prepared you for more fruit!
 - That's what Jesus says in John 15—
 - “He prunes it that it may bring forth more fruit!”
 - And that is what the LORD says in verse 31-32:
 - Isa 27:31-32: And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah Shall again take root downward, And bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant, And those who escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.
 - Isn't that super encouraging?

- The trials that *you* think are harming you are actually preparing you for more fruit.
 - God is going to fill you with more love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and self-control and holiness...
 - He is *zealous* to do this!
 - What more could you ask?
 - If He is zealous, it will surely come to pass, no matter how impossible it may seem to you!
 - He has plans for good concerning you!
- c. Thirdly, He promises that the Assyrian will accomplish nothing more against God's people!
 - Look at verse 33-34:
 - Isa 37:33-34: Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: 'He shall not come into this city, Nor shoot an arrow there, Nor come before it with shield, Nor build a siege mound against it. By the way that he came, By the same shall he return; And he shall not come into this city,' Says the LORD.
 - This is a very specific promise that no more harm will come from the Assyrian—he will not even shoot and arrow...
 - But it speaks to us in principle...
 - We are assured by this promise to Israel that God sets boundaries for our enemies and will at last take them out of the way.
 - Our enemies are those who try to destroy the kingdom of God and make us think it is worthless...
 - We are told that at the last day, they shall be judged and then cast into the Lake of Fire.
 - When that Judgement comes, they will be cast into the outer darkness, unable to assault the city of God ever again.
 - The LORD gives assurance that He will do all this for His sake and for David's sake...
 - **His sake**, because His glory and honour must be upheld—
 - He will not allow His enemies to blaspheme His name forever...
 - He will put an end to it at last and send them to their place...
 - **David's sake**, because he promised to David that His Son would sit on his throne forever,
 - blessing His people with righteousness and peace...

- His promise to David is ultimately His promise to Jesus Christ, the Son of David...
- who reigns until He brings in that kingdom of perfect righteousness and puts all His enemies under His feet...
- We shall behold the glory of God and be fruitful forever in His mercy and grace!

TRANS> All of this is promised to us now and we are waiting for the fulfillment...

- But in this historical account, we get to see the actual fulfillment.

C. Isaiah shows us that God did exactly what He said He would do.

1. You see that the Angel of the LORD actually comes in the night and kills one hundred eighty-five thousand of Assyria's troops!
 - a. This is real history brothers and sisters!
 - The Jews were, humanly speaking, completely helpless before this huge army!
 - But in one night the Angel of the LORD came and flicked them off—just like that!
 - Herodotus, the Greek historian, thought that the Bubonic plague must have destroyed the Assyrian army.
 - Sennacherib, whose journals are filled with boasting, wrote about how he had Hezekiah like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem...
 - but he did not write about this event that sent him home—
 - He just went home as fast as he could and never bothered Jerusalem for next 20 years—
 - He did not attempt a thing against them, and then one day his two sons came and killed him while he was worshipping his idol.

TRANS> Doesn't Sennacherib seem small now?

- This boasting king who seemed so big when God lifted him up to accomplish His purposes?
 - How He has been reduced!
- b. You see from this that our God who promises that He will take away our enemies will do just as He says.
 - He will act in history at the end of the age and will do just what He has spoken.

- There is no need to doubt it, no matter how badly we may be outnumbered and out muscled along the way!
 - Our enemies who may seem so big to us now will seem really small in that day.
 - Let the eyes of faith see clearly.
 - God's kingdom is sure!
2. The Angel of the LORD is none other than Jesus Christ...
- a. The Angel of the LORD is worshipped as God in the OT, yet He is the One who comes down to act for His people...
 - And He is the One who will come at the last day and will call all the dead forth from their graves,
 - both the just and the unjust...
 - And He will render to each their final reward.
 - b. If you are fighting against God's kingdom, you will be destroyed like the Assyrians and cast away into the outer darkness...
 - But if you are trusting in the LORD and serving Him in His kingdom with joyful hope,
 - you will be established in glory with the Angel of the LORD forever and ever to behold the glory of the Father and of the Son together.
 - So do not be disturbed by your enemies that seem so strong and so smart and so big...
 - When the angel of the LORD comes, they will seem very small and very helpless.