

WEEK 07

ISAIAH 37

God actively responds to and protects those who are humble and prayerful. God will keep His promises and fight our battles when we are faithful.

Preface

In the previous weeks, we learned about God's wrath and judgment upon His enemies and His promise to redeem those who are faithful. **Last week**, we learned that obedience to God requires standing firm in faith when being confronted.

This week, we will learn that God protects the humble and prayerful and keeps His promises to fight their battles.

Context and History: This story is part of the narrative account of King Hezekiah's life in his 14th year of reign (701-700 BC). After being attacked and taunted by King Sennacherib of Assyria (Isa. 36), King Hezekiah sought help from God through the prophet Isaiah, prayed for deliverance, and God miraculously saved the people of Judah (also in 2 Kings 19).

Observation

1. After hearing the challenges raised by the Assyrian field commander in Isa. 36, what were King Hezekiah's two reactions? (Isa. 37:1-4)

Leaders' note: 1) Mourned and repented, 2) sought God through the prophet Isaiah, and asked him to pray for the remnants that still survived.

2. What was so powerful about King Hezekiah's prayer? (Isa. 37:14-20)

3. For what reasons was King Sennacherib of Assyria condemned? (Isa. 37:23-25, 26-27, 28-29)

Leaders' note: v.23-25 pride, v.26-27 destroyed Jerusalem and the people, and v.28-29 raged against God.

4. What were the reasons for Judah's deliverance and protection? (Isa 37:32, 35)

5. How was the LORD's word in Isa 37:7 fulfilled? (Isa. 37:9, 36-38)

Interpretation

1. How did King Hezekiah describe his nation's situation in 37:3? What does Isa. 37:1-4 tell us about King Hezekiah's heart and priorities when facing attacks and insults?

Leaders' note: King Hezekiah recognized that Judah was facing an urgent situation - the crisis had peaked, and victory was near, but there was no human strength left to bring it to completion. He knew that this matter could only be resolved by divine help. His actions showed that (1) he sought the LORD before making any response to his enemies and (2) his repentance and humility came first when seeking the LORD.

2. Based on Isa. 37:3-4 and Isa. 14-20, what was the focus of King Hezekiah's prayers, and why?

Leaders' note: Hezekiah's prayer began with the LORD's titles and attributes, and ended with the petition to glorify the LORD's name. While his prayer included a plea for the deliverance of his people, its primary focus remained on glorifying the LORD.

3. How do Isa 37:32 and 37:35 pave the way for the Messiah?

Leaders' note: "For the sake of David" - The LORD remembered the covenant He made with David that the throne of his kingdom would be forever, which culminated in the Messiah.

Application

1. When you are in a desperate situation, would you resolve it first and pray afterward, or would you pray first and resolve it afterward? Why?

2. In light of King Hezekiah's prayer in Isa 37:15-20, is there anything that you would want to change in the way you pray? (E.g. focus, premise, heart)

3. We often sing "For the battle belongs to you Lord..." but what does this mean to you personally? Do you have any struggles in trusting God to fight your battles?

Optional Follow-Up Exercise: Start your prayer with God's attributes

King Hezekiah's prayer in Isa 37:15-20 was powerful, even the LORD explicitly acknowledged that in Isa 37:21: "Because you have prayed to me..." Even in the most desperate situation, King Hezekiah did not start his prayer with his own agenda, but with the LORD's attributes. He declared God's glory and asked God to be God.

Try to list out at least 5 attributes of the LORD that you can think of, and start your prayer by praising His attributes before you ask anything. Observe how this may shift your posture and focus of your prayer.

Example list of the attributes of God found in Isaiah 37:

- Lord Almighty (v.16)
- God over all the kingdoms of the earth (v.16)
- Creator of heaven and earth (v.16)
- The one and only God (v.19)
- Omniscience / All-knowing (v.26, 28)
- Provider and sustainer (v.30-32)
- Protector (v.33)
- Promise keeper (v.35)