

Isaiah 36:1-22

"Our Enemy's Devices"

How many of you realize/recognize that as believers, we are in a war? Not physically, we don't wrestle against flesh & blood. But against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, the scriptures exhort us to be *strong* in the Lord & in the power of *His* might. You & me, we have been called to "fight the good fight" of faith.

But that's hard to do if we're unaware. If we're *ignorant* of our enemy's devices. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul was urging them to forgive a brother who (though he had sinned) had repented. & To receive him back into the fold. Essentially, he said, if you continue to ostracize & exclude this individual, they'll be swallowed up in sorrow. Therefore, comfort him. Reaffirm your love to him. Forgive him. Then he said, "...lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."¹ The idea being that Satan will take advantage, or *exploit* our ignorance of the way he thinks, moves & maneuvers, for his own gain.

Your enemy is a master battle strategist. Bitterness, unforgiveness is just one of the ways that he will look to gain ground on you. Ch 36 of the book of Isaiah shines light on (exposes) other ways (not all of the ways) by which he looks to assume victory (tactically achieve your surrender) as well.

The former U.S. Secretary of State, Dr. Henry Kissinger, once told the New York Times, "There cannot be a crisis next week. My schedule is already full." It would be nice if we could calendar coordinate our crises, but we can't. Crisis never comes at a "convenient" time, but if we know the way our enemy operates, we'll be better prepared when he postures up on us.

Vs 1-3

Well, I trust that you (if you've been w/us) immediately pick up on the fact that Ch 36 is a departure from the way Isaiah has typically written. He takes a reprieve from the prophetic & leans into the historical nature of what's taking place (this reads like 1 & 2 Kings or Chronicles). And such will be the case through Ch 39.

I (for one) am *glad* that Isaiah did this. Because over the last several Ch's we've been reading of Assyria's encroachment upon Jerusalem & how God has said over & over again that He would see to it that they wouldn't take Jerusalem but that He would make an example of them & defend His city. Now, Isaiah takes the time to share w/us exactly how that happened!

¹ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [2 Co 2:11]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

As we've discussed previously, Sennacherib (the king of Assyria) had come down like a flood from the north, completely consuming everything in his path. He'd *captured* every nation & *conquered* every city that stood in his way. **The northern kingdom of Israel has been officially wiped off the map. & So far, he's seen nothing but victory in the southern kingdom of Judah as well. Vs 1 tells us that he's come up against *all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.* According to Sennacherib's own account (which archaeologists have unearthed) he took 46 cities of the nation of Judah (having carried off a little over 200,000 captives) & now he's stationed himself about 30 miles S.W. of Jerusalem in the city of Lachish.**

Btw we're told exactly (historically) when this took place, it was in the 14th yr of King Hezekiah which marks us at 701 B.C.

& As the king establishes his camp in Lachish, he dispatches his field commander (Rabshakeh isn't a name, it's a title. Think chief military officer), along w/a massive, opposing army to intimidate & negotiate (or more accurately demand) unconditional surrender. – Ladies & Gentlemen... it's showtime.

& It's interesting to note where the Rabshakeh stood when he began to challenge Hezekiah & his resolve. – (By the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field). This is the exact same spot where a little over 30 yrs before, Isaiah had exhorted king Ahaz (Hezekiah's dad) to trust the Lord & not be afraid when *he* fell under the threat of Rezin (the king of Syria, not Assyria).

Now, I doubt that Rabshakeh knew that, he's just posturing up where the city's water supply is in order to demonstrate that they're in control & that that there's nothing Jerusalem can do about it. If things escalate, they can shut off their water supply (not knowing that Hezekiah had built another one) & things can go from desperate to deadly in a quick! ... But it's in this place that Hezekiah will need to make a decision.

& I think it's worth noting because although there are no doubt overtones here, connected to Hezekiah w/regard to his father. The simple truth (for the sake of our application) is this. **█ Every one of us, individually, generationally, will be brought (eventually) to the same place. That place where we have to decide, are we going to place our trust, our faith, our confidence in the Lord (trust Him to save us) or will we capitulate, give in, give up & go the way of the world? That's not a decision that we can give over to someone else, we can't ride on the coattails of our parents or grandparents, we have to make the individual decision, "Will I trust in the salvation of the Lord... will I believe on J.C.**

Or will I capitulate (be it through peer pressure, fear or intimidation) & give in *to*, go the way *of* the world?" Of course, that equally applies to the stand we take on the position of the world Vs the principles of the word of God. *Will we capitulate & say, "Ok, love is love... my body my choice, C.R.T. is probably harmless... D.E.I. signals progress..."* Or will we stand firm in the word of God, trust in the Lord, speak the truth & refuse to compromise? Ladies & gentlemen there really is no middle ground, no straddling the fence. *We're hot or we're cold, for or against, taking our stand on the word of God or we're not.* *

Hezekiah had already tried to negotiate w/the enemy. (Btw, that *never* works). He'd tried to pay Sennacherib off, sent him a huge sum of money. He asked him, "What will it take to get you to just leave us alone? Tell me, & I'll pay it." But *he* discovered what *everyone* discovers (eventually) when seeking to negotiate w/the enemy. He'll be glad to keep the wealth, but he'll never keep his word. *He'll take all you give him, then he'll turn on you & demand everything from you. He won't be satisfied until he has you in full submission, total subservience, he wants you as his slave & nothing less.*

So there they are. The people are holed up in the city, there's a massive army outside, poised & prepared to fight if necessary & the field commander steps up to speak to these delegates in order to demoralize & discourage the king.

Vs 4-6

Btw, I have no way of knowing this (truth is its total speculation), but the Rabshakeh has such accurate information of the conversations that have been taking place w/in those walls, we wonder if Sennacherib had spies imbedded w/in the city.

But we read this as if the Rabshakeh is almost stunned, he's shocked... They've taken nearly 50 cities (not to mention put down nations) & now the remanent has fled their homes & holed up w/in the walls of Jerusalem & he's essentially saying, "I don't get it. Have you got some sort of secret weapon that we don't know about? What is it that you're trusting in? Who is it that you're trusting in? Why are you resisting rather than immediately surrendering unconditionally?"

He says, "You have these plans, you speak of power... you've got nothing!" He's like, "You think I don't know about your 'alliance' w/Egypt?" & He accurately describes Egypt as a broken reed. Like a staff that if you were to lean on it'd pierce your hand, it was only going to snap back on them (Isaiah had told Hezekiah the same thing). *They had erred egregiously in seeking to align themselves w/Egypt. God had exhorted them to look to Him, to trust in Him, they had floundered at that point & had come to regret it.*

But he says, “Look, Egypt is weak. They don’t stand a chance in helping defend you & anyone who’s every trusted Egypt for help has only suffered for it.” He was right.

But here’s the thing. Here’s what I want you to see. Why was he saying this? Was it to help them refocus their eyes & place their trust in the Lord? No. It was to demoralize them, to discourage them & get them to give up.

This is what the enemy does to you (& to me). It’s another one of his devices. There are many times that Satan will speak truth to you. I’m sure you’ve heard it many times, “You are such a hypocrite! Who do you think you are? You’re a sinful mess. All you do is flounder & fail.” But does he speak those things so that you will recognize your helplessness, turn to the Lord & trust Him completely? “I’m a sinner, Jesus died for sinners, that means He died for me, hallelujah!” Is that the resolve he’s driving you toward? No. He’s seeking to demoralize you, to drive you to despair. He wants you to give up, give in & just throw in the towel.

Vs 7

We’ve got to give him this, he’s a master of psychological warfare. * How many of you recognize, you realize that the battle 1st takes place in the mind? This is why the scriptures place such emphasis upon our minds, what we do w/it, how we occupy it. Isa 26:3, “You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.”² Here’s one we quote quite a bit around here, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”³ I’d encourage you to make a study of looking up the scriptures that address the mind & see what the Bible has to say about it. You might be surprised. *

The Rabshakeh is systematically attacking & discrediting all that they might hold dear, all that they might hope/trust in & demonstrating why it’s foolish & won’t work. Btw how many of you know what propaganda is? It’s the spreading, disseminating of misinformation to support or prop up a narrative or agenda.

What’s the narrative? You can’t win, you should surrender immediately, unconditionally. Now I need to create a case for that, that’s what he’s doing. He’s says, “You can’t trust Egypt. & If you think you can trust in the Lord your God... Hezekiah has been wiping out His altars, do you think He’s going to rescue you after that?”

² *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Is 26:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ro 12:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Now this is interesting. He's reasoning from a lack of scriptural understanding & thinks he has his point on lock. People do this all the time. He's aware of the reform that Hezekiah instituted. That he had the altars & high places destroyed throughout the land. What he *didn't know* was that what Hezekiah did was in accordance w/God's word!

God didn't want people worshipping *anywhere* they wanted, *any way* they wanted. He had a very specific way that people were to approach Him & what He wanted from the people was obedience. To *obey* is better than sacrifice. The field commander (being an idolater & a polytheist) thought, "the more places to worship the better." But God had distinguished Himself among/above anything else & any ol' way people might want to worship. He wanted a centralized place (Jerusalem) to be the place of worship/sacrifice.

But this is where he may've had a modicum of success. How so? Listen, it's true that what Hezekiah did was in accord w/scripture, but *if you don't know what your Bible says...* then you might track w/what seems to be the logic of the Rabshakeh. * Listen to me. The enemy *counts* on your ignorance of God's word in order to lead you to believe a logical sounding lie. It's been a "device" of his from the beginning. It's Gen 3:1. "Has God indeed said..." Again, "Isn't love, love? After all, love God & love others, right? Isn't that what this is?" If you don't know what the word of God teaches in *truth*, you can be easily, seemingly logically misled. *

In this case, it seems to make sense that the more places you have to worship God, the more pleased God would be w/you. * But the truth is that we don't have the right to worship God however we feel like it. We're to worship Him in the manner that He Himself has prescribed in His word... if you don't know His word, you're liable to find yourself in a bit of lurch w/that. Doing all kinds of weird things in the name of the Holy Spirit, or thinking you get closer to God when you smoke joint, or your church is out fishing on the lake, on the back 9, hunting in the woods or going on a nature walk... But is that what the Bible teaches? That's kind of like having your own altar, your own high place, approaching God how you feel like it. & I'm not saying that you can't worship God when you're out fishing. I'm saying that God doesn't give us the liberty to relate to Him however we feel like it. *

* How many religions are there in the world? There are between 5-12 major world religions. But you may be surprised to realize that there are over 4,000 recognized religions in the world...

Obviously, there are people who have a problem w/the concept that Jesus is the only way to God. As a Christian you're just "narrow minded". But it's the way that God has prescribed. It wasn't *my* idea, it was *God's*. Jesus excluded any other option when He said, **"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."**⁴ & He verified it, ratified it through the resurrection. It's incredibly exclusive, yet completely inclusive. Anyone can come to God. But they can't come anyway they want to. We gain access exclusively by grace through faith in J.C. *

Vs 8-9

Do you see what I mean by his efforts of complete demoralization? He's said, "Egypt won't help you. Your God certainly won't help you & the least of our commanders have ranks that completely out number you! Make us an offer, we'll even give you 2,000 horses (not that you'll have enough men to ride them) & you still can't hold a candle to the shock & awe w/which we will utterly destroy you."

& This is *another* of our enemy's devices. * Listen, Satan isn't really itching for a fight w/you. He'd much rather intimidate you, demoralize you, drive you to despair so that you just give up & give in. Because the truth is, if he picks a fight, chances are, you'll win. Greater is He who is in you than he who is of this world. Not only that, but win or lose, the battle will more than likely cause you to draw closer to the Lord... **Beyond that, what God does in your life *through* the battle can be a tremendous testimony turn blessing for those who are looking on... No, he doesn't want a fight... He'd rather convince you of the overwhelming, unfathomable odds against you so that you just toss in the towel rather than trust in the Lord...**

When Satan was tempting the Lord in the wilderness he said, "Just bow down & worship me & I'll give you all the kingdoms of the world." He was trying to avoid the battle, talk Jesus into throwing in the towel. But Jesus *did* what we should *do*. He trusted *in* & drew strength *from* the principles & promises of the Word of God. *

Vs 10

Man, talk about saving the best for last! "Not only have you made God mad by destroying the altars, *your* God is on *my* side! He *told* me to come & destroy this land, that's why I've been so successful!" & He *had been* successful, maybe that means God *was* on their side. & We know that Isaiah had prophesied of the success of the Assyrians up to a point.

⁴ [The New King James Version](#). (1982). [In 14:6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But does that mean that God instructed them to do what they had done? Not at all. God can take what the enemy means for evil & use it for His purposes, but He doesn't inspire nor instruct people to do evil.

God would use the betrayal of Judas to redeem the world. Was Judas just doing God's will? No. It's the providential wisdom of God that can take the things that the enemy means for evil & use them for good.

Vs 11-12

He's dropping the brutal realities of a siege for them to think about... Eliakim, Shebna & Joah say, "C'mon man, we're out here in the spirit of diplomacy, speak in the language of diplomacy, we understand it. Don't be speaking our common language in a diplomatic meeting." They're afraid that what he's saying may be taking root in the hearts of the hearers on the wall.

But that's exactly what he wants! So he speaks in Hebrew all the louder. He says, "Hey, what I'm saying isn't just for the diplomats, negotiators & mediators. *Everyone* needs to hear this because *everyone* is going to die if they don't surrender!" He says, "They're the ones who will be eating & drinking their own waste!" This was the way battle was often done in the ancient world. We like to picture these armies rushing the walls, swords flying, people clashing & all the rest. & Certainly, in an open battlefield it would be just that way. But (generally speaking), when an army would come up against a *walled/fortified* city, rather than drawing near to the walls & taking casualties from arrows or catapults or boiling oil or whatever, they'd simply surround the city, cut off all supply of food/water in/out, & there they'd wait until everyone starved... Then they'd just walk in & take the city. A siege could take months, years, 10 yrs or more... They'd just literally wait until they all died because they had no access to food or water... So the field commander simply highlights the terrible deprivations that await them should they refuse to surrender.

What's the device of the enemy here? Fear. The enemy loves to intimidate you through fear.

Vs 13-18

* Here's *another* device of your enemy. He loves to diminish God's ability. He loves to put it out there how miserable you will be if you wait *on* & trust *in* the Lord. But my how great it will be in you'll only surrender to him...

"Serving God will only lead to your misery! If you want to please God, things will only go from bad to worse. Make peace *w/me*... come out *to me*... & life will be great."

“If you just give in to the temptation, if you’ll just surrender to your inclination toward sin, things will be a whole lot better.” Do you see how attractive he makes slavery & bondage out to be? “You can have it all, just make peace w/me.” *

Truth is, we don’t know that this field commander would even do what he said he would do, the track record shows, probably not. But he’s referring to the ancient practice of ethnic cleansing & forced resettlement. When the Assyrians would conquer a people, they’d deport them to far way places. It would keep their spirits broken; their morale low. But he’s trying to make this horrible bondage seem real appealing. The enemy of your soul does the same exact thing.

Vs 19-20

“Hey, no one else’s god has delivered *them* from my hand & it’s not going to be any different for you...”

Vs 21-22 (Close)

We’re going to give the people on the wall & the king’s representatives props here. Often times it’s best when confronted w/demonic logic to just be quiet. Don’t try to win an argument, just be silent & commit your cares to the Lord.

Walk w/the Lord, *talk to* the Lord, trust *in* the Lord, but answer the enemy of your soul not a word... So what then do we do? We’ll talk about that, next time... ☺

Prayer Points:

Father, we thank You for drawing back the veil on our enemy’s devices. We want to see his tactics, be aware of his tactics & wage wise/effective warfare for the glory of Your name. Fill us w/Your Spirit, use us for Your glory...

We talked about that place that we’re all brought to. That place of having to decide, will we go the way of the world, or will we trust in the Lord, believe on the Lord J.C. & be saved? If you’re in that place today & the decision is upon you, then don’t put it off another day. God loves you, Christ died for you & you’ll just believe upon Him, you’ll never perish but have everlasting life. For w/the heart one believes unto righteousness & w/the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.