

(The Word for Today) Isaiah 35:8 - Part 2

by Chuck Smith

The sermon discusses the significance of Hezekiah's trust in the Lord to deliver them from the Assyrian king's army, and the Assyrian king's challenge to the gods of the nations.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: Isaiah 35:8, Matthew 22:37-39, Romans 8:6, Romans 8:14, 1 Corinthians 11:28, Galatians 5:16, Revelation 21:4

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck encourages listeners to examine their hearts and lives in light of the Scriptures. He emphasizes the importance of forsaking worldly desires and living a life that is pleasing to God. Pastor Chuck reminds believers that they have been redeemed by the Lord and will not experience the consequences of sin. He paints a vivid picture of the glorious future that awaits believers, where they will have eternal communion and fellowship with God, free from sorrow, suffering, pain, and death.

Transcript

Welcome to The Word for Today. The Word for Today is a continuous study of the Bible taught by Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently teaching from the Old Testament, and if you're following along in your Bible, we'll be continuing today in Isaiah chapter 35, beginning with verse 8, as we continue with an in-depth message entitled, The Coming Kingdom.

And now with today's study, here's Pastor Chuck. The redeemed of the Lord, the ransomed, will not experience the consequences of sin, but you'll see the world as God intended, and you'll live as God intended man to live, in communion and fellowship with God, everlasting joy upon your heads. Sorrow, suffering have flown away, no more existing, no pain, no death, only the glorious love of Jesus Christ, ruling and reigning in all of our hearts, because God will be first in all of our lives.

And we will be loving Him with all of our hearts and souls and minds, and because of our love for Him, we'll have love for each other, just like we love ourselves. There will be just love ruling, love reigning. Oh, what a day that will be.

And He shall reign forever and ever. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

No wonder. No wonder Handel got inspired. It's something to be excited about.

The glorious new age of God, and more exciting, we're getting close. We're getting close. Now the next portion, unfortunately, is not as exciting, because we're just entering in now to the history of the past, but history is important, because those that do not learn from history are doomed to make the same mistakes.

These all were written for us as examples unto us. History was written that you might learn from history the lessons, that you might know how to live. The problem is people don't learn many times from history.

They say, oh, I hate history. And so they fall into the same ruts and mistakes. So now looking at the historic background to what Isaiah, this is what was going on when Isaiah was writing these things.

Came to pass in the 14th year of King Hezekiah. Hezekiah began to reign in 715 BC. So the 14th year of his reign would be 701 BC.

At this time, Sennacherib was the king of Assyria. Assyria is again the area of Iraq today. Iraq actually is in the area of Assyria, Babylon, and Kedar.

So when you read in the Bible of Kedar, you read of Assyria, you read of Babylon, you're reading of the area of Iraq. And so Sennacherib was the king of Assyria, and he came up against all of the defense cities of Judah and took them. He had conquered Judah, the southern kingdom, with the exception of the capital city of Jerusalem, the city of King Hezekiah.

He had not yet taken the city of Jerusalem. But the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh, which is not the name of the man, but it is the title. And it is the title interpreted, Rabshakeh means the commander in chief, is what it would be translated.

The king of Assyria sent his commander in chief from Lachish to Jerusalem unto King Hezekiah. Now Lachish was one of the major Philistine cities. It was one of the cities they called of the plain.

It was south of Gath and north and west of Beersheba. It was one of the major Philistine cities, and he had taken the country of the Philistines also. And having conquered Lachish, he sent his commander in chief to Jerusalem unto King Hezekiah with a great army.

So here came the army of the Assyrians unto Jerusalem. And they stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the Fuller's Field. This would have been to the north of Jerusalem and probably in the area of Mount Scopus.

And then came forth unto him Eliakim, who was Hilkiyah's son, who was over the house or the treasury, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, who was Asaph's son. He was the recorder. And so here we have diplomacy going on.

The commander in chief of the Assyrian army coming to Jerusalem and these heads of state from Jerusalem coming out to the wall to talk with him. And the commander in chief said unto them, Go tell Hezekiah, thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, What is this confidence in which you are trusting? You say, but they are but vain words. You're trusting in empty words.

You're trusting in nothing. You say, I have counsel and strength for war. Now just on whom do you trust that you dare to rebel against me, Sennacherib? Lo, you are trusting in the staff of this broken reed on Egypt.

This staff on which you are trusting, if a man would lean on it, it would break and pierce his hand. So is Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to all who trust in him. Now it is true.

It is true that Hezekiah had sent men down to Egypt to try to encourage the Egyptians to help defend them. They sent money to them to hire the Egyptian army to come to help. And so he is ridiculing that.

You remember the prophet had said in chapter 31, Woe to those that go down to Egypt for help, that are trusting in horses and in chariots because they have many of them and because their horsemen are very strong. They do not look to the Holy One of Israel, neither do they seek the Lord. And he talks about the Egyptians are men, they're not God.

Their horses are flesh, they're not spirit. And when the Lord stretches out His hand, they're going to be destroyed. And so the Lord told them, don't trust in Egypt, trust in Me.

Now here is the pagan king rebuking them for trusting in Egypt. You think you're going to lean on Egypt. It's like a broken reed.

You're going to lean on it and the thing's going to snap. And you know, like a cane, you've got your hand, you're resting, and you're leaning your weight on it and the thing breaks. And then the thing comes up and pierces your hand.

That's what he said, Egypt's going to be, it's going to pierce you. It's not going to help you. It's going to break under the strain and you're going to be hurt by this alliance with Egypt.

It is always a sad day when the servants of God are rebuked by the pagan world. We've seen some of that of late. Where men who were supposed servants of God have done things that have brought the name of Christ into disrepute and they have received the rebuke of the pagan world.

It's sad when that happens. And here is Hezekiah, basically a good king. But he is receiving rebuke from this pagan king, Sennacherib.

Sennacherib goes on, if you say, we trust in Yahweh, our God. Is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, you shall worship before this altar. Now this shows that he had an understanding but not complete of the God of Israel.

He knew his name, but he didn't know his ways. For God had said that they weren't to build altars all over the land. But the place of worship would be in Jerusalem, that God would establish that and they were to come to Jerusalem.

And so the people had built altars throughout the land in defiance to the law of God. Hezekiah in part of his reformation, spiritual reformation, was the destroying of all of the altars through the land and again centering worship for God there at the altar in the temple in Jerusalem. And Sennacherib saw this as a weakness.

That he thought that Yahweh would be angry in a sense with Hezekiah for destroying his altars throughout the land. But he was actually fulfilling the law of God. Now he said, give me some money.

I pray thee for my master the king of Assyria and I will give you 2,000 horses. You want to just make a wager? Just give me some money and I'll give you 2,000 horses and see if you can find 2,000 men to ride them. You know here's a challenge.

If we gave you 2,000 horses you don't even have the men to ride those horses in a battle against us. If you're able to, in your part, to set riders on them. Now if you can't even raise a cavalry unit of 2,000 if we provided the horses, how do you think you're going to turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants? In other words he's saying, the best that you can put up against us really can't compare with the least that we've got.

We can send in the smallest battalion, the least captain and they could wipe you out if you were much stronger than you are. If you could put 2,000 riders on the horses we would give you. You still don't have a chance against us.

And how is it that you put your trust on Egypt for the chariots and for horsemen? And then he goes on to say, and this is rather blasphemous. He said, do you think that I've come up against you without Yahweh? Actually Yahweh has ordered me to come and destroy this land. And so he's saying, hey you think that I'm here without your God? Your God's the one that sent me here to destroy you.

Now at this point Eliakim and Shevna and Joah were standing on the wall and there were a lot of men from Jerusalem standing on the wall and they were listening to this guy and all of these things that he was saying. And so they said, hey fellow, wait a minute. Speak to us in your Syrian language, we understand Syrian.

Don't speak to us in the Jews language that all of these people on the wall can understand what you're saying. But this commander-in-chief of the Assyrian forces said, hath not my master sent me to your master and to thee to speak these words? You think that we came to talk to you guys? We came to talk to these men who are on the wall. You know, my message isn't for you and for your gang.

My message is for the common people on the wall. Here is propaganda at its worst. That they may experience deprivation and starvation as the result of the siege against the city.

And then the commander-in-chief stood and he cried with a loud voice in the Jews language, directed it now to the people, defiant. Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, don't let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you.

Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Yahweh, saying, Yahweh will surely deliver us. This city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Now, this is where they get into trouble.

Start talking about the Lord, Israel's God. The prophet Isaiah had been saying, trust in the Lord. The Lord will deliver.

The Lord will, you know, destroy the Assyrians. Just put your trust in the Lord. And so Hezekiah was encouraging people, we're gonna just trust in the Lord.

Hezekiah, what are we doing to prepare for battle? Well, we're taking the necessary steps. It's not foolhardy. We've dug the tunnel to bring the water into the city.

And we've fortified the walls. But really, our trust is in the Lord to deliver us. And so he is ridiculing this.

He's mocking them. Don't let Hezekiah tell you, trust in the Lord. Saying, the Lord will surely deliver us.

For this city shall not be delivered into the hands of the king of Assyria, which was the declaration of Hezekiah. Now, they must have had some spies in the city. They knew what was going on.

They knew the God of Israel. They knew His name. And they knew what Hezekiah was saying.

So they had their spy system, their KGB was operating inside. Don't listen, he said to Hezekiah. For thus saith the king of Assyria, If you make an agreement or a treaty with me, and buy me off, give me some money, and you come on out to me, surrender, give up, capitulate, then every one of you will be able to eat of your own vine, and eat every one of his own fig tree, and you can drink the waters out of your own cisterns, until I will come and I will take you away to another land.

It's a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Now, the Assyrians, when they conquered people, had the custom of taking them to another land, and they would transfer people around, which was completely demoralizing. You come into a strange place, and being separated from your families, and separated from your own people, you feel like a stranger, and you're sort of cowed into submission, because you can't really unify against the Assyrians.

And thus, their whole strategy was this movement of people. And basically, that's what they're saying. Look, just go ahead and make a treaty with us, surrender to us, and pay us off, and then you can go back out.

You don't have to be confined within the city. You can go back out to your houses in the fields. You can eat of your own fig trees, and drink the waters out of your own cisterns, until we come, and then we'll take you to another land.

It's a good land. You can plant your vineyards and so forth in another place. But this repopulating movement of the people to another land for the purposes of demoralizing them, and making them incapable of rebelling against Assyria.

And then they said, Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying that Yahweh will deliver you. Have any of the gods of the nations delivered their lands out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Why do you think that your god is any better than the gods that were in Hamath or Arphed? These gods that were worshipped in Seraphim or Samaria. They weren't able to deliver it out of the hand of the king of Assyria.

And so now he is exalting himself above God. Pride goes before destruction. A haughty spirit before a fall.

And so the challenge, where are these gods? Who are they among all of the gods of these lands that have delivered their land out of the hand of, that you think that Yahweh would deliver Jerusalem out of my hand. You trusting in Yahweh. He's no better than these other gods.

They weren't able to help. Neither will Yahweh help you. But it says the people that is on the wall, they held their peace.

They didn't answer a word. For the king's commandment was, don't answer them. Don't give them the benefit of an answer.

Don't comfort them. Just be quiet. And so the people obeyed the king and they just sat there and they listened, but they didn't answer.

So Eliakim, who was one of the emissaries of Jerusalem, who was over the household of Hezekiah, and Shevna the scribe and Joab the son of Asaph the recorder, they came to Hezekiah and their clothes were torn. I mean, tearing your clothes was a sign of grief, consternation, don't know what to do. Things are

horrible.

Things are going down the tube. Don't have any answers. You just rip your clothes.

And it was a sign of mourning. It was a sign of frustration. And so here they came into Hezekiah.

Their robes were torn. And they repeated to Hezekiah the words of the commander-in-chief of the Assyrian forces. Face to face, Lord let me know you.

Face to face, Lord let me see you. Pastor Chuck Smith will return with a few closing comments. But first I'd like to remind you that today's message is available in its unedited form on cassette or CD.

Simply write or call and ask for ordering details on tape or CD number C3258. Again, that's tape or CD number C3258. As we come to a close in today's program, we'd like to discuss the true meaning of Christmas and why a man born 2,000 years ago can still affect the world today.

Do you know the prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus' birth and death and why they had to take place? The word for today presents two Bible studies by Pastor Chuck Smith entitled Tidings of Great Joy and The Purpose of His Coming, discussing the reasons why Jesus was born, including the fulfillment of prophecy and the historic background. In the Christmas season, there is so much focus on presents that we may forget the greatest gift of all, God's only beloved Son, our Savior. Pastor Chuck examines the birth of Christ and leaves no room for doubt that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah.

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And for those of you who would like to visit our website, you can do so at www.twft.com. Or if you would like to email us, you can do so at info@twft.com. Well, coming up next time on the word for today, Pastor Chuck will be continuing his fascinating study through the book of Isaiah. That's coming up next time on the word for today. And now, with a few closing comments, here's Pastor Chuck.

I pray that you'll have a wonderful week. As the word of God dwells in your heart and as you meditate upon it, and as you sort of take inventory of yourself, or let a man examine himself, the scripture said, and thus we will not be judged of the Lord. Looking at your own heart, looking at your own life, looking at your own thoughts, especially those in the semi-conscious realm, and may God give you that resolve and determination to forsake the flesh and the world and the things of this world, that you might live a life that is wholly pleasing unto God, living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit and being led by the Spirit, feeding the Spirit.

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