

# (The Word for Today) Isaiah 37:1 - Part 1

by Chuck Smith

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*Hezekiah, facing a present threat from Assyria, goes into the house of the Lord to seek the Lord's guidance and help, and to gain the eternal perspective.*

**Duration:** 25:59

**Scripture:** Isaiah 37:1, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 15:27

**Topics:** "Expositional"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of seeing things in their eternal light rather than getting caught up in temporary discomfort. He highlights how we often become short-sighted and only focus on immediate consequences, failing to see the bigger picture and eternal consequences. The speaker also discusses the significance of having a relationship with God in prayer and addresses the importance of faith. The sermon concludes with a reminder that the true meaning of Christmas lies in the birth of Jesus and the fulfillment of prophecies.

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## 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 37, beginning with verse 1, as we continue with an in-depth message entitled, The Coming Kingdom.

And now with today's study, here's Pastor Chuck. The 37th chapter of Isaiah is almost word for word a repeat of 2 Kings chapter 19. And chapters 38 and 9 cover the same portion of Hezekiah's life as does 2 Kings chapter 20.

So, in a sense, we have a repeat of history that we have already covered as we were going through 2 Kings. But that was long enough ago that you've probably forgotten it, and so we can go through it again. One further note, and that is, when they wrote this portion of Hezekiah's life, they were not seeking to record history in a chronological order.

Now, with them, it was just giving you series of events that took place with no concern as to the chronological order of the events. This is one of the difficulties that we have in cross-cultural, seeking to relate to people in a cross-cultural type of an environment. Because people of different cultures think of things in different ways.

They don't follow the same kind of logic, for instance, that we follow. The Hebrew poetry does not rhyme. It is more a poetry of thought rather than our poetry, which is rhyme and rhythm.

Theirs is just ideas to them are poetic. And so the repetition of an idea in a slightly different way to them has a poetic beauty. Where to us, it's a redundancy, and we like a rhythm and we like a rhyme.

So in setting down the events, they weren't interested in last year this happened, this year, and then, you know, or five years ago, and then four years ago, and then three years ago. But it could be, this is what happened today, and then in the next chapter, they'll tell you what happened 12 years ago. And so what it is, is giving you sort of a collection of stories about King Hezekiah and his reign with no thought or desire to set it in a consecutive order.

So the events that we will read about in chapter 37 actually covered a pretty broad period of time. It deals with the two invasions by Assyria. And there was a separation of five years in these two invasions, but it doesn't bother to bring that out in the text.

The first part of the chapter begins about 706 BC. The latter part of the chapter is 701 BC. But then, the next chapter, you know, in our minds, it should be 699 or 695 or something, but the next chapter is 712 BC.

So you actually go backwards from a chronological order, and yet, the way it is set out, you see, our minds are set to go 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. And theirs isn't, it's just whatever hits them, 12, 7, 4, you know, and 15. So that it's just a collection, not in sequential order as far as a chronological history. So with that background, let's take a look at chapter 37.

Now, chapter 36 deals with this commander-in-chief that was sent by Sennacherib unto Hezekiah to demand the complete capitulation and unconditional surrender to Assyria. At this particular time, the Assyrians were down in the plain of the Philistines, and the king, Sennacherib, was in process of besieging Lachish. He had sent his commander-in-chief with these threats and with the demands for unconditional surrender.

So the servants of Hezekiah had talked with this commander-in-chief there at the wall, and when they heard these demands, they tore their clothes, they came to Hezekiah, and they told him the words of this commander-in-chief of the Assyrian armies. So, chapter 37, verse 1, it came to pass when King Hezekiah heard it, the demand for unconditional surrender, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth, and he went into the house of the Lord. His first reaction in response to this very troubling news was to go into the house of the Lord.

Ostensibly, to seek the Lord's guidance and help in the hour of crisis. Going into the house of the Lord is a wise move when you're in trouble. When you are facing circumstances that are troubling you, you cannot understand them.

It's good to go into the house of the Lord because there we get the eternal perspective. Living in this world and caught up with the day-by-day circumstances of the world, it is very easy to lose the consciousness of the eternal. I am prone to measure things by how they affect me today, what effect this is going to have on my life next week.

Whereas, when I view them from the eternal perspective, that which is so troubling to me now, that which disturbs me so much now, is really of no consequence from an eternal standpoint. We used to have sort of

a saying when we were in Bible college, when things would go wrong and somebody would be all upset over a grade that he got or whatever, we'd say, hey, a hundred years from now it won't make any difference. You know, see things in their eternal light rather than in the temporary discomfort that I might have.

But we get so caught up in this present, ooh, you know, and we get just all churning inside over this present dilemma. And we lose sight of the eternal so many times. Peter spoke of the problem of not being able to see that which is afar off.

We only see that which is near. And this is so true of our lives. We are short-sighted and we can only see the immediate, the immediate consequence, the immediate effect, the immediate result.

And we fail to see the eternal consequences or realize that it really is of no eternal consequence at all. It really doesn't make any difference from an eternal standpoint. Now, this makes it difficult with us trying to understand the work of God in our own lives.

Because as God is working in your life, He's in the eternal, and He's always working the eternal plan. He is interested in your eternal welfare. Now, in working out that eternal plan, it may be that you're going astray and He has to put you in temporary discomfort.

And because I live in this temporary consciousness, I am uncomfortable in this situation in which I find myself. And God, why? If you really love me, why would you allow this to happen to me? And I complain over these present circumstances that I am experiencing at this moment that are very uncomfortable for me. And God is working out the eternal plan.

And so God sees the thing from an entirely different perspective. And that's why I have difficulty so often in understanding the way of God in my life. And that is why it is so important when I am faced with this kind of a dilemma that I go into the house of the Lord.

Now, Hezekiah was facing a present threat. Here is the commander-in-chief of the Assyrian army saying, Hey, you either surrender unconditionally or we're going to come and we're going to starve you out. We're going to destroy you.

No city, no nation has been able to stand against our army. Don't you think you can stand? And don't let your King Hezekiah deceive you into thinking God's going to come through and save you. There are no gods that can save from the Assyrians.

And Hezekiah is disturbed. Things look very dark. And so he goes into the house of the Lord.

God, why? I've tried to be a good king. I've tried to live a right kind of a life. I've tried to do your will.

And yet, Lord, look what's happening. And so he went into the house of the Lord where we always should gain the eternal perspective. Purpose of gathering together here is to broaden the perspective of life that we might begin to see things from the eternal rather than just the temporary in which we live in the world outside.

Not only did he go to the house of the Lord, but he took and sent his servant Eliakim and Shevna, the scribe, with the elders and the priests who were covered with sackcloth. He sent these notable men unto Isaiah. It shows the trust that he had in Isaiah and the position that Isaiah the prophet had there within the

nation.

The king is sending his chief cabinet, actually, to Isaiah, the prophet who was the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This is a day of trouble. Trouble for the nation.

This is a day of rebuke. We've been rebuked by this pagan king. It's a day of blasphemy, for he has blasphemed our God.

For the children are come to birth, but there is not strength to bring forth. So he's talking about the nation. We're coming to a birth, but we don't seem to have the strength to get through.

And so it may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of the commander-in-chief, whom the king of Assyria, his master, has sent to reproach the living God, and will remove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard, and will reprove, rather, the words which the Lord thy God hath heard. Wherefore, lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left. So the plea that Isaiah would pray, the remnant being those in Jerusalem, the other cities of Judah have already fallen to Assyria.

And so Jerusalem is in a very weakened state. All of their ally cities have been taken. They alone remain.

And they have received this reproach against God. And so pray. Pray to God.

Lift up thy prayer. So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he will hear a rumor and return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. Now, this prophecy covers a period of time. This is about 706 B.C. Sennacherib was in the process of taking the Philistine city of Lachish.

And it is true he heard rumors that caused him to return back to Assyria. There were a couple of rumors. One, the Ethiopians are coming.

And the other was that Babylon is beginning to stir. And so the fear of Babylon, which was beginning to gain power. So Sennacherib returned from this siege back to Assyria.

But with the promise and the threat, You're not through with me yet. Don't think you're off the hook. I'll be back, was the idea.

So the commander-in-chief returned. And he found the king of Assyria was warring against Libna. For they had heard that they had departed from Lachish.

They had left off the battle against Lachish and they had gone to Libna. And he heard saying concerning Terhaka, the king of Ethiopia, that he has come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah.

He heard this rumor, so he sent messages back to Hezekiah. And says, Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah, the king of Judah, saying, Don't let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Don't be fooled there, man.

I'm not through with you yet. And don't take the word of the prophet as you're out of the woods. Because I'm still going to wipe you out.

Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands by destroying them utterly. And do you think that you are going to be delivered? Who do you think you are that you can stand against Assyria? Have the gods of the nations delivered them, which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan and Haran and Rezif and the children of Eden, which were in Twilaser? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arphed, and the king and the city of Shepharvim or Hena or Iva? These were cities that were destroyed. And so this is a letter again, that is again threatening and challenging the God of Hezekiah.

So Hezekiah, when he received this letter, in a period of time, Sennacherib had gone back to Assyria, but now in 701 he comes back with his troops. And here is the letter. So you have a period of time here that lapses between the letter that he receives and the first promise that he's going to go home.

So he's back again sending the letter and Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and he read it. And again, he follows the same tact as earlier. He went to the house of the Lord, but this time he just spread the letter out before the Lord.

Lord, look what this guy is saying about you. Look at these blasphemous things he's writing. And so he went up into the house of the Lord and he spread it out before the Lord and Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord saying, O Lord of hosts, and as we pointed out this morning, the address of the prayer is very important.

Who are you addressing your prayers to? So important that we have the right address on our prayers. Jesus said, when you pray, pray, Our Father which art in heaven. That's a good address.

It's an address that presupposes relationship and relationship is essential for prayer. It is important in prayer that you have a relationship with God, that you know Him as your heavenly Father. Our Father which art in heaven.

There's relationship. You see, as a son, you have the right to come to your father anytime for any reason. The door to the father is always open.

My kids don't even knock. They know the door is always open. Dad is always there.

And so the relationship, and so important in prayer, is relationship. You remember the woman, the Seraphim woman, who came to Jesus concerning her daughter and said, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me, for my daughter is grievously vexed with the devil. And the disciples said, Lord, do something about this woman.

She's bugging us. For Jesus seemed to ignore her. And Jesus said, it isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the little puppies.

He said that in her hearing. And she said, that's true, Lord, but the little puppies do eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table. He said, oh woman, I've not encountered this kind of faith.

And her daughter was healed. But the children's bread, there's a relationship. And that relationship is so important in prayer.

Our Father to have that relationship. Here he is addressing his prayer. Addressing it to Yahweh of Host.

Oh, Yahweh of Host. The God of Israel. Yes, he is.

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. To order Tidings of Great Joy and The Purpose of His Coming by Pastor Chuck Smith, call the Word for Today at 1-800-272-WORD. Or write to us at P.O. Box 8000, Costa Mesa, California, 92628.

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And now, with a few closing comments, here's Pastor Chuck. We begin that new section next week, and we see now the promises of God for this new day that God has promised. May the Lord be with you and bless you and help you to keep an eternal perspective concerning your life, so that the hope that is ours in our high calling in Christ will sustain us through whatever dark experiences that we might be facing.

May we never lose consciousness of God's eternal plan and eternal purposes for us. And may we see the experiences of our life as they relate to the eternal and thus be strengthened in our walk with Him. This program is sponsored by The Word for Today.

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