

(Through the Bible) Isaiah 36-40

by Chuck Smith

God's sovereignty and power are demonstrated through the Assyrian invasion and Hezekiah's trust in the Lord.

Duration: 1:29:29

Scripture: Isaiah 40:3-5, Isaiah 40:9-11

Topics: "Gods Sovereignty", "Eternal Word"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by expressing anticipation for the glorious day of Jesus Christ's return. He then contrasts the weakness and frailty of man with the glory and power of God. The speaker emphasizes the brevity of life, comparing it to the withering grass and fading flowers. However, he highlights the enduring nature of the Word of God, which will never pass away. The sermon also references Isaiah's proclamation of the coming of the Lord and Jesus' role as the good shepherd. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the greatness of God and His sovereignty over all creation.

Transcript

Shall we turn to Isaiah chapter 36? Last week as we completed the 35th chapter of the book of Isaiah, of course we got into those glorious prophecies of the future kingdom age, when Jesus Christ will be reigning over the earth, and how God is going to restore the earth to its Edenic glory. Now, we always, it seems, have sort of curious minds, and we wonder often just how God proposes to do the things that He says He is going to do. And in reality, the whys aren't really our real concern, however we so often make them a concern.

You know, well, if He did this or if He did that. And there are many suggestions as to how the earth might be restored to the Edenic glory and beauty. Here in the 35th chapter, there are references to there being streams in the deserts, pools in the dry places, and so forth, and how that the whole earth is going to be more or less restored.

As far as the deserts will be gone, they will blossom as a rose, and the whole earth will become very fertile and productive. And with the prophecies of Isaiah, there are also those prophecies of the earth being moved out of its place, staggering to and fro as a drunken man, and things of this nature, which has caused some people to theorize that it is quite possible that we will have another polar axis shift. And it could very well explain many of the cataclysmic events that are declared to be taking place during the Great Tribulation.

As the earth shakes and as the mountains and the islands disappear, and it talks really of a tremendous cataclysmic upheaval of the earth. At the present time, the earth is tilted at about, as far as the polar axis and its relationship to the sun, it's tilted at about 23 and a third degrees, which causes our summer and winter seasons, because of this tilt on the polar axis. And now being in the northern hemisphere, the sun is, because of our tilt, we are now receiving longer days and will do so up until the 22nd of June when we come into the summer equinox.

There is a suggestion that there will be another polar axis shift, at which time it could be that the earth will come in to pretty much a straight alignment with the sun and the earth revolving on its axis. Now if this should result, what would happen is, of course, you would have a medium climate all the way around the earth, you wouldn't really have your seasons any longer. But you'd have pretty much a medium climate around the earth, it would heat up the earth sufficient to melt the ice pack at the north and the south pole, which would raise the water level around the entire earth.

With a greater warmth, it would cause more evaporation of the water on into the atmosphere and would create a much larger moisture barrier within the atmosphere itself. Because of the polar ice packs being melted, you would not have your tremendous cold air, arctic air moving, so all of your winds would become much more mild than they presently are, as the air would move much slower than it now does as a result of the polar arctic winds and so forth that bring these. You have your warm air rising and the cold air moving in, but it would sort of minimize the air movement, much milder winds and so forth than what we presently have.

Probably increase rainfall around the earth, it of course would raise the water level on all of the shorelines and it would give us a little bit more of a water-earth ratio rather than two-third, one-third, and would result probably in the disappearance of all of the desert regions and also all of your extremely hot zones and extremely cold zones, so that you'd have a pretty much of a temperate climate all around the world. We do know that at one time at the North Pole there was tropical vegetation. Mammoths that have been found encased in ice in Siberia have had tropical vegetation still in their digestive tracts.

The mammoths were fast frozen there by some cataclysmic event of the past, quite possibly the flood of Noah. We do know that at one time at the South Pole there were great forests because they have found tremendous deposits of charcoal 200 feet under the ice pack, indicating that there were once forests down there. And again it could be accountable back to the flood that at that time there was a polar axis shift causing the tremendous movement of the waters, the oceans, and so forth and creating whole new type of continents and entirely new kind of a geography around the earth.

So there are hints and indications in the scripture that this indeed might be what will cause these changing effects, but however God works it out, as I say, we only guess. We really don't know, but God is going to work it out and the earth is going to be a beautiful place to live, and so it really doesn't matter. You don't have to put a claim on Hawaii.

I don't even know if Hawaii will still be here because during the great cataclysmic changes it talks about the islands disappearing. It would be a shame, I agree, if Hawaii would go, but you know, no matter where you live it'll be beautiful and verdant as God restores the earth. So chapter 35 is prophetic as it looks ahead into that glorious kingdom age.

Now from 36 to 39 Isaiah just takes out of the historic records and you'll find that this particular area parallels 2 Kings beginning with around chapter 17 or 18, and so he evidently took the historic records. In

fact, chapter 37 of Isaiah is identical to 2 Kings chapter 19, so he has just more or less copied the historic records of which 2 Kings is a part of the history of the nations of Israel and Judah, and he copied out of the historic accounts these chapters in order to give you the historic background for the prophecies that he has just made of the destruction of the Assyrian forces and so forth. Having prophesied these things, he now gives the historic background that you might see that God's word was accurate and true, and what God foretold would come to pass did indeed transpire.

So these next four chapters are just out of the Kings and other historic records that he had available to him that we do not have now, and they just cover this period of history over which he has been prophesying, the period of history when the Assyrians would be bringing their armies in an invasion of Jerusalem, but would be turned back by the hand of God. So this is the history of it. Now, it came to pass in the 14th year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, came up against the defense cities of Judah and took them, and the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh.

Now, Rabshakeh is the title. We really don't know what the name of the man was, but that is the title of this particular person. From Lachish to Jerusalem unto King Hezekiah with a great army, and he stood by the conduit of the upper pool.

Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shibnah, the scribe, and Joah and Asaph's son, the recorder. And Rabshakeh said unto them, Go tell Hezekiah, thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, what is this confidence wherein you trust? I say, but they are vain words, I have counsel. He said, you're saying actually that you have counsel and strength for war.

Now, on whom are you trusting that you would rebel against me? Lo, you are trusting in the staff of the broken reed of Egypt, whereon if a man would lean, it would go into his hand and pierce it. And so is Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and all that trust in him. But if you say unto me, 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, ye shall worship before this altar.

Now Rabbeckshak shows his ignorance of the worship of the God of Israel or the God of Judah. For Hezekiah did indeed destroy the altars and the high places and the groves in which the children of Israel were worshipping the gods of the Canaanites. The worship of Molech and Baal and Mammon was done in these groves and in these high places.

And so one of the pluses of Hezekiah is that when he came to the throne, he tore down the altars to the false gods that the children of Israel had been worshipping. But as is so often the case, those that are looking from the outside in presumed to know a lot of what is being taught or said, and really they know nothing of the truth. And in this case, Rabbeckshak was totally wrong in that he is accusing Hezekiah of tearing down the altars or tearing down the high places of Jehovah.

Jehovah actually commanded them not to build the high places and always spoke out against them. And it was established that there was only one place that they should gather to worship Jehovah and to offer sacrifices, and that was in Jerusalem at the temple. And so Rabbeckshak shows his total ignorance of Jehovah in his remarks.

Now, he also is assuming that the children of Judah had gone to Egypt for help, but Hezekiah had been counseled by Isaiah not to go down to Egypt for help, but just to trust in the Lord. Now, the natural thing to do in this situation, the wise natural thing would have been to go down to Egypt to seek their help,

because Egypt was also being threatened by Assyria. And so it would have made good natural sense to go down to get Egypt's help.

But what often is to us good natural sense isn't always good spiritual sense. And where naturally it would have been a smart move from a spiritual standpoint, it would have been a bad move, and God recommended and counseled them against it. He said, trust in me and not in the arm of Egypt or in the arm of flesh.

And so Rabbeckshak shows two cases of his ignorance of the situation. One is ignorance of their worship of Yahweh. Secondly, his ignorance of the counsel that God had given to them not to trust in Egypt.

So they were not trusting in Egypt. They were trusting completely in the Lord through the encouragement of Isaiah to just trust in the Lord to deliver the Assyrian host into their hand. Now he is belittling them.

He said, look, give me some money and I'll give you 2,000 horses and let's see if you can find enough men to sit upon those horses. You know, we'll help you to fight us. Just give us some pledges and we'll give you 2,000 horses if you can put men upon them, if you're able to set riders on them.

How then will you turn away the face of just one captain of the least of my master's servants? And you put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen. And now I come up out of. And do you think that I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it? Yahweh said unto me, go up against this land and destroy it.

So now he is blaspheming God. He's saying, hey, God's giving me directions. You know, you think I'd come out up here without God's instructions? For Yahweh said to me, come on up and besiege this place.

Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joash to this Sheka, speak, I pray thee unto thy servants in the Syrian language or in Aramaic, for we understand it. Don't speak to us in the Jews language in the ears of the people that are upon the wall. Now, here are all of the men of Israel sitting there on the wall.

And so these emissaries of Hezekiah figure, man, this guy must be demoralizing these people. He's, you know, saying, hey, you know, if we gave you 2,000 horses, you couldn't put men on them. And how are you going to ever defy us and all? And so they said, hey, you know, don't talk to us in Hebrew.

Talk to us in the Syrian. We can understand your Syrian tongue or Aramaic. We understand that.

Speak to us in Aramaic. But this Rav Sheka picked up on what they were noticing. And so he said, hey, wait a minute.

Didn't the King send me to talk to you men on the wall? You know, I don't care about your King Hezekiah. And he stood and he cried with a loud voice, verse 13, in the Jews language and said, hear ye the words of the great King, the King of Assyria. Thus saith the King, don't let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you.

Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord or in Yahweh, saying, the Yahweh will surely deliver us, for this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the King of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah, for thus saith the King of Assyria, just make an agreement with me by a present. Just pay some tribute and come on out and just work in your fields, eat of your own vines and of your own fig trees, drink waters out of your own cistern until I come and repopulate you in another land that is just as nice and pleasant as this one.

Now, Sennacherib, the Assyrian King, had the habit or custom of repopulating the peoples from their lands because as they would move them out of their land, away from their families and away from their friends, they had to learn a whole new culture and with different people and it kept them from banding together in a rebellion. And so he's offering them, here, we'll just take you away and we'll give you another land that's just as pleasant and nice as this, you know, just pay tribute and just wait for us to come and repopulate you. And then again, he said, beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying that Yahweh will deliver us.

Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the King of Assyria? So he's now exalting himself against the God of Jacob. Where are the gods of Hamath, Arphad? Where are the gods of Seraphim? And those, and they, have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these lands that have delivered their land out of my hand that Yahweh should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? But the men on the wall wisely held their peace. They didn't answer a word for the King's commandment was, don't answer him.

So then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that was over the household of Shebna, the scribe, and Joah and the son of Asaph, the recorder to Hezekiah, with their clothes rent and they told him the words of Rabbe Shekeh. Now it was a custom that when you were very upset or when you were in real trouble, the thing to do is just tear your clothes. And so these guys have been receiving all of these threats now from this emissary of the King of Assyria.

And it's been a bad experience. So they tear their clothes. It's sort of a, you know, woe is us.

We've had a kind of a thing. And they came into Hezekiah with their clothes torn. And so it came to pass when King Hezekiah heard it that he tore his clothes.

Yeah, man, it is bad drip, you know. And he covered himself with sackcloth. Now sackcloth was something that they put upon themselves to more or less afflict themselves.

It was whenever you were in mourning, you would put on sackcloth. Sackcloth, as you can well imagine, against the skin must be very irritating. And so the King himself put on sackcloth and he went into the house of the Lord, or he went into the temple.

And they said unto him, let's see, and then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shibna, the scribe, and the elders and the priests, they were covered with sackcloth. And they came to Isaiah, the prophet. And they said to Isaiah, thus saith Hezekiah, this day is a day of trouble and of rebuke and of blasphemy.

For the children are come to birth, but the mothers do not have enough strength to bring them forth. Actually, they were beginning to suffer from the ravages of being closed in by the Assyrian forces. And so with the shortage of food, the strength of the mothers was ebbing.

And they didn't have enough strength. When it came time for a child to be delivered, they'd be in labor. And yet they didn't have enough strength to bring the children forth.

He said, it may be that Yahweh thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria, his master, hath sent to reproach the living God and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard. Wherefore, lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left. So it's really a request to Isaiah, pray.

You know, this guy's been down here and we're in trouble, pray. 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 that you have heard wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria hath blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast 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. So God's answer to these threats of Sennacherib is that he is going to return to his own land and there fall by the sword. So Rabshakeh returned and he found the king of Assyria warring against Libna, for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

And he heard saying concerning Tirhaka, the king of Ethiopia, that he has come forth to make war with thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah saying, thus shall you speak to Hezekiah, the king of Judah saying, let not thy God in whom you trust deceive you saying Jerusalem shall not be given to the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all of the lands by destroying them utterly.

And you think you're going to be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them, which their fathers have, which my fathers have destroyed as Gozan and Haran and Rezeph and the children of Edom, which were in Tiler. Where is the king of Hammah and the king of Arphed and the king of the city of Sepharvaim and Hena and Iva? And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers. And he read it and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord and he spread it out before the Lord.

I like this. He gets a threatening letter. It is a disturbing letter.

And what does he do with it? He goes into the house of the Lord and he just spreads it out before the Lord said, look, Lord, what they're saying about you now, take care of them, God. And so he spreads this thing out before the Lord. Oh, if we would only learn to take our problems and our trouble to the Lord, you know, just spread it out before the Lord.

Lord, look what's going on. What a wise thing to do. Just take your problems and spread them out before the Lord.

And he prayed unto the Lord saying, oh, Lord of hosts, God of Israel that dwells between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone of all of the kingdoms of the earth. Thou hast made the heaven and the earth. God is above all gods.

There are many gods for a God is the master passion of a person's life. The Bible speaks that the gods of the heathen are vain. There's only one true and living God.

Francis Schaeffer said the time has come when we as Christians must really just we can't just talk about God anymore because God is so many things to so many people. You talk about God and to some person, it's an essence of love and it's so many things. So he said the time has come when we need to more or less qualify the term God and not just use the term God, but qualify it by saying the eternal living God who created the heavens and the earth.

Then we know what God we're talking about. For there is only one eternal living God who has created the heavens and the earth, though there are many gods that people bow down to worship. Yet there's only one true eternal living God, creator of heaven and earth.

So here of all of the kingdoms of the earth and the gods of all of the kingdoms, you're the only one who is really the creator of heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear. Open your eyes, O Lord, and see.

And hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent, which he hath sent actually to reproach the living God. So here he is, he addresses him as the living God who has made heaven and earth, the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel who dwells between the Jeroboams. Now he acknowledges a certain truthfulness to this threatening letter of a truth.

Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their countries surrounding territories, and they have cast their gods into the fire because they were not true gods, but the work of men's hands. They were gods of wood and stone. Therefore, they were able to destroy them.

Now, therefore, O Lord, our God, save us from his hand that all of the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord and you only. Marvelous prayer, a prayer in the recognizing of the greatness of God who he is, a prayer in which he lays out the facts as he understands them and then asks God's help in the situation. Then Isaiah sent to Hezekiah saying, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, inasmuch as you have prayed to me against Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, this is the word which the Lord has spoken concerning him.

The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee. Talking about Sennacherib now, this powerful Assyrian king. Hey, our little girls despise thee and they've laughed thee to scorn.

The daughters of Jerusalem just shake their heads at thee, which is a sort of a reproachful kind of a thing. Who have you reproached and blasphemed and against whom have you exalted your voice and lifted up your eyes on high even against the holy one of Israel and by your servants you've reproached the Lord, the Adonai, and hath said by the multitude of my chariots am I come into the height of the mountains and to the sides of Lebanon and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof and the choice fir trees and I will enter into the height of his border and to the forest of his Carmel. I have digged and drunk water and with the soul of my feet have I dried up all of the rivers of the besieged places.

Hath thou not heard long ago how I have done it and of ancient times that I have formed it now have I brought it to pass that you should be laid waste or that you should be to that thou should. Let's see. Now have I brought it to pass that thou shouldst be to lay waste defense cities into ruin and therefore their inhabitants were of small power.

They were dismayed and confounded. They were as the grass of the field and as the green herb and as the grass on the housetops and as the corn that is blasted before it has grown up. But I know thy abode and thy going out and thy coming in and thy rage against me and because thy rage against me and the tumult has come up into mine ears.

Therefore will I put my hook in your nose and my bridle in thy lips and I will turn thee back by the way which you came and this shall be a sign unto you. You shall eat and this is unto the children of Hezekiah. You shall eat this year.

In other words God has declared I'm going to turn you back and by the way you came this way you go. This is the end of the message to Sennacherib now to Hezekiah. This will be the sign that God is going to fulfill this.

This year you will eat that which just grows of itself out of the ground and the second year the same thing that which springs from the same. And in the third year you're going to sow the land and reap and you'll plant the vineyards and you'll eat the fruit thereof. God is going to restore and remove the enemy entirely out of the land and the remnant that has escaped of the house of Judas shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant and they that escape out of Mount Zion for the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria he shall not come into this city nor shoot an arrow there nor come before it with shields nor cast a bank against it by the way that he came the same he will return and shall not come into this city saith the Lord for I will defend this city to save it for my own sake and for my servant David's sake. Now this is the word of the Lord through Isaiah to King Hezekiah. Now if you were king and the prophet of God gave you this message how would you react to it.

Here you're facing the strongest army in the world and you are admittedly weak. The guys said hey we gave you two thousand horses you don't have enough men to put on them. They've wiped out all of the enemy all of the other lands which were many of them stronger and more powerful than you are and now the word of the Lord comes from the prophet Isaiah saying don't worry about it they'll never step inside of this city.

They won't shoot an arrow in by the way they came they're going to turn back. Well really what can you do you're really sort of defenseless anyhow you might as well just hope that the prophet's right because you can't do much else. But fortunately in this case the prophet is right for we read then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty five thousand and when they that is the children of Judah awoke early in the morning behold the Assyrian army were all dead corpses.

So Sennacherib the king of Assyria departed and he went and returned and dwelt at Nineveh which is the capital of Assyria. He returned to Nineveh in defeat his armies destroyed by an angel of the Lord and it came to pass. Remember he said he's going to go back to his land and there he would fall by the sword.

It came to pass as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his God that Adramelech and Sharizar his sons smote him with a sword and they escaped into the land of Armenia and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead. So God's word was fulfilled. Now in those days was Hezekiah sick unto death and Isaiah the prophet the son of Amos came unto him and said unto him thus saith the Lord set your house in order for you shall die and not live.

Now these are pretty heavy tidings. You get sick and a prophet of God comes and says hey set your house in order man this is it. You're going to die and not live.

There are things that we must take care of before we die. Important things to take care of. The most important thing that I take care of before I die is my relationship with God and that's really what the prophet was referring to.

Set your house in order. You're going to die and not live.

So Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and he prayed unto the Lord and he said remember now oh Lord I beseech thee how I have walked before you in truth and with a complete heart and I have done that which is good in your sight and Hezekiah wept and it then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah saying go and say to Hezekiah thus saith the Lord the God of David thy father I have heard thy prayer I have seen

your tears behold I will add 15 years to you and I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria and I will defend this city and this shall be the sign unto thee from the Lord that the Lord will do this thing that he has spoken behold I will bring again the shadow of the degrees which has gone down in the sundial of Ahaz 10 degrees backward so the sun returned

10 degrees by which degrees it was gone down interesting thing just to prove a point that what God said is true hey all right I'll give you 15 years you know don't cry and to prove it I'll bring the shadow on the sundial back 10 degrees so here is actually a long day 10 degrees backward and by the time it started again it would give you about a 45 minute lapse time here as God took now how did God pull that one off I don't know there are those who scoff at the miracles in the bible and try to either rationalize them completely or just say that they didn't exist we have the case in Joshua's time where the sun stood still for the space of almost a day in order that Joshua was able to completely wipe out the enemies now if the sun stood still in the evening time and the moon there in the

valley of a high agilon then it would mean that over here on this side of the earth they would have had a long night which of course the Aztec and Inca records do record and and Velikovsky in his book worlds in collision traces this long day of Joshua around the world now there are there are the scoffers who say well wait a minute the sun doesn't revolve around the earth anyhow we have that kind of an illusion only because the earth is spinning on its axis so rather than the sun standing still it must be that the earth came to a halt but the earth is spinning at a thousand miles an hour and if the earth would suddenly stop everybody would be thrown off and so they tried to deny the reality of that miracle through this idea that you know anything stopped spinning at a thousand miles an

hour everything would be thrown off of it well who said God put on the brakes that hard say God took 15 minutes to slow the earth to a stop oh my that's easing down because from a thousand miles in in 15 minutes you would hardly even notice the brakes being applied at that speed so if God say slowed it down in five minutes it would be like applying your brakes at 60 miles an hour to stop at a signal that is a half a mile away so there's no problem God didn't just slam on a brake yank you know and everybody goes flying off he just applied the brakes stopped the thing the miracle to me is how did he get it going again now here's a little bit better he actually reversed the thing a little bit let it go back 10 degrees before he fired it up so you know the only reason why people have

difficulty with these passages of scripture is because their concept of God is so small and the reason why their concept of God is small is because they've created their own ideas of God now if you believe in the God that is revealed in the Bible then these things present absolutely no problem at all in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth that's a pretty big God and if he created the heavens of the earth he has no problem in in guiding and directing and then stopping if he wants the rotation of this earth upon its axis for a moment starting it up again it's an interesting thing Velikovsky in his book believes that when God started it up again he started in the opposite direction that actually the earth used to rotate from west to east he believes and and seeks to prove it

in his book but interesting God just to prove to the king hey I mean it show you a little proof just to encourage you now when Hezekiah was sick this is what he wrote you talk about a negative confession I mean this guy had a classic negative confession so this is what Hezekiah wrote when he was sick I said in the cutting off of my days I shall go down to the gates of hell I am deprived of the residue of my years I said I shall not see the Lord even the Lord in the land of the living I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world my age has departed and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent I have cut off

my weaver I have cut off like a weaver my life and he will cut me off with pining sickness from day even tonight wilt thou make an end of me I reckon till morning that as

a lion so will he break all my bones and from day even tonight wilt thou make an end of me boy what a negative confession now if what you say is what you get then Hezekiah really would have been done in but in spite of all of his negative confessions God answered his prayer and gave him 15 years but that brings up a problem should he really have died at that time it would appear that God's primary will for Hezekiah was that he should die at that time there is a theological debate on to whether or not prayer really changes things can I by prayer really change the mind of God God declares behold I am God I change not should I by prayer seek to change the mind of God what would be the purpose of changing the mind of God the only purpose I can see of seeking to change the mind of God is that

I've got a smarter thought than God does now God I want you to see it my way it is interesting how that so often in our prayers they are really real hype jobs in trying to in a sense change the mind of God at least the way we pray it it is as though we're trying to make God see it our way and to convince God that our way is right to sell God on my program here but is that really the real thrust of prayer and the purpose of prayer to change the mind of God does prayer really change God now it would appear that there is a direct will of God for our lives but then there is this area that we might title the permissive will of God for us and quite often God's direct will is expressed first this is what is best but I get in there and I begin to push and shove and insist and God says well all

right you know if that's what you really want have at it it would appear that this did happen when Barak the king sent to Balaam to curse the people that were coming through the land and Balaam prayed unto the Lord and the Lord said unto Balaam do not go down to the king do not curse these people because they are my people so Balaam sent back a message to Barak and said I'm sorry king I can't come down the Lord won't let me neither can I curse these people for the same reason so king Barak sent other messengers with great rewards a lot of loot and said just come on down and counsel me concerning these people that are coming through the land so Balaam was a greedy fellow and when he saw all the loot that the king was offering for counseling fees he thought wow could I ever use that get me

a new donkey and a new house and greed really filled his heart so he prayed again now God had already said don't go down but I can hear Balaam this time oh Lord just please let me go Lord just you know I'll be good Lord but ah just let me go down Lord you know after all what can it hurt me going down Lord you know please God you know God finally said all right go ahead but you just be careful you don't say any more than what I tell you but the anger of the Lord was kindled against Balaam evidently you see though Balaam insisted in God more or less gave him a tentative sure do it yet it wasn't God's direct will for this guy's life because an angel of the Lord stood in the path with a drawn sword and that wise little donkey saw the angel though Balaam did it and he turned off the path and

Balaam beat him and got him back on the path but again the angel of the Lord stood where there was a cliff and and the donkey edged up against the side of the cliff and and got oh Balaam's ankle and he beat the donkey again and got him going the third time when the angel stood in the path there was no place for the donkey to go he just sat down and Balaam began to beat him and the donkey turned around and said do you think that's right beating me three times haven't I been a faithful donkey ever since you own me have I ever done anything to the like this to you before Balaam was so angry he answered the donkey back and said you bet your life I do right to beat you if I had a stick I'd kill you now he evidently was insisting that God allow him to go and God permissively said yes go and yet

it wasn't the direct will of God God allows things that are not his direct will I can I can force my will I can force my way where God more or less reluctantly says well that's what you want have at it but yet it isn't really pleasing to God now whenever these issues are forced then the consequences are always disastrous I believe that Hezekiah's time to die had come and I think he would have been much better off I know the nation of Israel would have been much better off had Hezekiah died at that time those extra 15 years that God allowed at him were disastrous for two years later he had a son named Manasseh who became the ruler the king over Judah when Hezekiah died and Manasseh was indeed the foulest rottenness king that ever reigned in Judah and it was the result of Manasseh's ungodly

reign that Judah got on the road downhill from which it was never able to recover now had Hezekiah died when God planned and wanted him to die then Manasseh would never have been born and the history for the nation could have been different whenever we insist upon our way over God's you're not getting the best God's way is always the best though we may not understand it or see it at the time God's way is always the best so it is possible that through our pig-headed bullishness we might be able to get God to consent to something that we desire but the result is always negative how much better that we learn to say oh God thy will be done and to flow in the center of God's will so Hezekiah prayed cried oh he really was going at it like a crane or a swallow so did I chatter all night long

here he was chattering like a little bird I mourn like a dove my eyes fail with looking upward oh Lord I'm oppressed undertake for me you see he was really going at it then and God said oh come on you've got 15 years old right you know the guy's just really you know going at it you know just you know God said ah shut up you know 15 years go ahead take it what shall I say he has both spoken unto me and himself has done it I shall go softly all of my years in the bitterness of my soul oh Lord by these things men live and in all of these things is the life of my spirit and so wilt thou recover me to make me to live for behold for peace I had great bitterness but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption where thou has cast off all my sins behind my back for the

grave cannot praise thee death cannot celebrate thee they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth the living the living he shall praise thee as I do this day the father to the children shall make known thy truth the Lord was ready to save me therefore will we sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our lives so this is a song that he wrote during this time and it's a psalm of Hezekiah where Isaiah had said unto said let them take a lump of figs and lay it on as a polis on his boil and he will recover so Hezekiah also had said what is the sign that I should go up to the house of the Lord now at that time Merodach Baladan the son of Baladan the king of Babylon sent letters and a present to Hezekiah for he heard that he had been sick and that he had recovered

now here's another bad thing that came out of his recovery so the the king of Babylon sent his son to with a message of you know glad you're well and all Hezekiah was glad for them and he showed them the house of his precious things the silver the gold the spices the precious ointment and the house of his armor and all of his treasures and there was nothing in his house and all of his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them then came Isaiah the prophet to King Hezekiah and said unto him what did these men say to you and where did they come from and Hezekiah said there come from a far country and to me even from Babylon and Isaiah said what did they see in your house and Hezekiah answered all that I have in my house they have seen there's nothing among my treasures that I did not show

them then said Isaiah to Hezekiah hear the word of the Lord of hosts behold the days come that all that is in your house and that which your fathers have laid up in store until this day shall be carried to Babylon

and nothing shall be left sayeth the Lord and of thy sons that shall issue from thee which thou shalt beget shall they take away and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon then said Hezekiah to Isaiah good is the word of the Lord which you have spoken he said moreover for there shall be peace and truth in my days so it would appear that God's time for Hezekiah had come and that nothing but evil came out of the prolonging of his years 15 years and God's time comes to go man let's go now this is the end of what they call part one of the book of Isaiah 39

chapters comprise the first part which are more or less equivalent to the 39 chapters of the 39 books of the Old Testament now the next 27 chapters come into a whole new theme it's it's a whole in fact it is so different that it is caused some critics to say that there are actually two Isaiah's and that another Isaiah wrote this second part because it is so different in style and all than the first part of Isaiah but he's talking about a whole new message of God for the people as we get into the new covenant of God and so it is appropriate that this new section of Isaiah begins with the word of the Lord declaring comfort ye comfort ye my people saith your God speak comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished that her iniquity is pardoned for she hath

received of the Lord's hand double for all of her sins so the day of God's forgiveness reconciliation the voice of him that cries in the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord make straight in the desert a highway for our God now you remember when John the Baptist began his ministry that many people gathered out to him there at the Jordan River and the Pharisees came unto John and they said who are you are you Elijah he said nope are you Jeremiah nope are you the Messiah nope then who are you and he quoted this scripture I am the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness make straight the way of the Lord so he quoted to them this prophecy of Isaiah and so we are coming into the New Age into the New Testament era as from this point on Isaiah really begins to zero in on the coming

Messiah the voice of him that cried in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord make straight in the desert a highway for our God every valley shall be lifted up every mountain and hill will be brought down the crooked will be made straight and the rough places plain the Lord's gonna smooth out things gonna fill in the valleys and bring down the hills he's gonna straighten the crooked paths and smooth things up and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it so God declares the day when his glory will be revealed in all will say it what a glorious day and how we anticipate that glorious day of the return of Jesus Christ when every eye shall see him in his glory that's more or less an introduction to this new

section and now he cries out declaring the weakness and the frailty of man as it is contrasted with the glory and power of God the voice said that is the voice of the Lord to Isaiah cry and he said what shall I cry cry all flesh is grass and all of the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field the grass withers the flower fades because the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it surely the people is grass the grass withers the flower fades but the word of our God shall stand forever so men are as grass actually what is life James said it's just like a vapor it appears for a season and then is gone it's like the grass of the field which today is and is tomorrow cast into the oven speaking of the brevity of life and the frailty of life like a flower it blossoms forth and then it fades away

that's what it's all about I'm on the fading in so is life we're here for a time and then we pass on but there is something that endures the word of the Lord Jesus said heaven and earth will pass away but my word will never pass away oh the value and the power of the Word of God it is it's forever man one generation will come and another will go and you've got the changing generations of humanity but God's Word lasting

right on through from one generation to the next Oh Zion that bring us good tidings get thee up into the high mountain Oh Jerusalem that bring us good tidings lift up thy voice with strength lift it up be not afraid say to the cities of Judah behold your God behold the Lord God will come with a strong hand and his arm shall rule for him behold his reward is with him and his

work is before him the coming of our Lord he shall feed his flock like a shepherd now this is obvious of reference to Jesus Christ behold Jehovah God will come with a strong hand his arm will rule behold his reward is with him and his work before him Jesus said behold I come and my reward is with me in his messages to the churches for he shall feed his flock like a shepherd he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young so Jesus said I am the Good Shepherd I lay down my life for my sheep he shall feed his flock like a shepherd and then it declares of the greatness of his power and of his glory who measured the waters in the hollow of his hand the great oceans of the earth the Atlantic Pacific Antarctic Arctic Indian

measured them in the hollow of his hand that's a pretty big God when you fly over the Atlantic or Pacific you see all that water that is there there it is he's measured it out here let's create the oceans who how great but even more he meted out the heaven with the span the measurement for the universe now someone came to me this morning and said that he read an article the other day that we have just discovered a galaxy that is 50 billion light years away now I have to question that figure how do they know it's 50 billion light years away could be 49 I mean when you get that far off how can you really know you see there's a lot of assumptions that have to be made to come up with a figure like that one of the assumptions is that light always travels at 186,000 miles a second that may not

be a correct assumption there may be variables that will cause the change of the speed of light that we don't know aspects of physics that may be that the speed of light isn't constant so it's a lot of guesswork but at any rate when he told me that he read this article that they found this galaxy 50 billion light years away I said wow God's even bigger isn't he because he measured the thing with span I don't care how big it is he meted out the heavens with the span how big is your God it is so important that our theology be correct because if our theology is not correct then we're gonna have problems all the way along knowing God is the most important thing in the world knowing the truth of God and God has revealed the truth concerning himself in this book and God is so great and so vast

and so powerful so awesome that he measured the waters in the palm of his hand and he meted out the heavens with his span he comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance God comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure have you ever wondered how many grains of sand there might be here upon the earth do you know that they've actually sort of come up with a figure and you know that the figure that they have come up with is approximately what they figure to be the number of stars in the heaven now it is interesting that when God said to Abraham even as the stars of the heaven are innumerable and the sands of the sea so will your descendants be innumerable but God made a comparison between the stars of the heaven and the

sands of the sea and they believe that it is something like 10 to the 25th power is the number by weighing the earth and the grains of sand and so forth and then they've you know gotten a formula by which they came to that but you know who knows who counted once more who cares who have directed the Spirit of the Lord I have man I've directed God in so many things I've sought so many times to take over the reins and tell God how he ought to do it now Lord I've got it all figured out if you'll just do this and this and this you know just it'll be smoother to just really work like clock I've sought to direct God Spirit of the Lord or

being his counselor who has taught him and in reality we've all endeavored to do this a time or two to teach God what's best for us with whom did he take

counsel and who instructed him and taught him in the path of judgment and taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding now as we realize the greatness and the vastness of God and surely the power and the wisdom of God how foolish for me to attempt to instruct God in anything and yet so often our prayers are like little information times now Lord I want you to know what's going on and I don't like it you know and I and I start laying the trip on God you know this is what they did and this is what I said hey he you know what are you telling him that he doesn't already know who's giving God understanding who's instructed him our very endeavor to do so only indicates our lack of a true comprehension of the omniscience of God this is what makes these doctrines of you know

prosperity and everybody ought to be healed and all of this so ridiculous because the effect of these doctrines is to place man in the driver's seat and God in the servants seat and now I am directing God what to do and how to do it and rather than me taking my orders from God it's reversed and God's got to be taking orders from me and rather than my rather than God's will being done there's an insistence that my will be done and that whole system just is utterly blasphemous to think that I know better than does God what should be done in a given situation or I know what's best for me I don't I do what's best for me is God to work out his will perfectly and completely in my life that's what's best for me nothing finer could ever happen to me behold the nations are like a drop in a bucket

so that's where that phrase a drop in a bucket has come from they are counted as the small dust in the balance in those days of course they did all of their weighing in in in balance scales they had their little weights and in Proverbs you remember how God doesn't like diverse weights some of the crooked merchants would have one weight for buying stuff and another weight for selling stuff and they were both marked you know one pound but one of them was heavier than the other and so if you're buying you use one set of weights and in selling you use another set and God said I hate those diverse weights you know and he really came down on him in the Proverbs now other merchants in endeavoring to show how totally honest they were before they would put the merchandise in the scales they would

blow the dust off so give me a pound of the almonds and so he blows the dust off the scale and I think my he's such an honest man I'm not having to buy the dust you know he's gonna give me an honest weight after all he's he's taking care even to blow the dust off so it was a common practice of blowing dust off the scales before you waited in order to show how honest you were so it's a figure of speech that Isaiah used that would be very vivid and picturesque to the people because they could see the merchants blowing the dust off the scales and as that dust is blowing off the scales Isaiah saying hey that's how the nations are before God he can blow any of them out of existence in a moment nations that become so powerful so strong the Assyrian like dust in the balance God can blow them

right out into oblivion and God did you haven't met an Assyrian lately have you God blew behold he takes up the aisles is a very little thing and Lebanon the tremendous forest that were in Lebanon at that time should you cut the whole forest down it would not be sufficient to burn for an altar of sacrifice unto God or if you took all of the beast they would not be sufficient for the burnt offering sacrifice all of the nations before him are as nothing and they are counted to him less than nothing and emptiness whom then will you liken God what kind of a likeness will you compare unto him and he's talking now of the folly of the people making a little idol to represent God what are you gonna make him like so you take a piece of wood or you take gold or silver and you start to carve what

are you gonna carve to make a likeness of God what are you gonna make him like now you think of the Hindu religion and and the gods that they have carved out ugly gargoyle kind of things you know multi-legged and armed and you know weird is that what God looks like if you're gonna make a likeness of God what kind of a likeness gonna make Isaiah says for the workman melts the graven image the goldsmith spreads it over with gold and he places silver chains on it he that is so impoverished that he has no oblation chooses a tree now you don't have enough money to make a gold God then you go out and get a tree and you start carving out a little wood an idol a tree that will not rot so you get to seek to get good strong wood and then he seeks a cunning workman to prepare a carved out image that

he can set it up and worship and say that's my God Oh have you not known have you not heard has it not been told you from the beginning have you not understood from the foundation of the earth it is he that sits upon the circle of the earth and inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers he stretches out the heavens as a curtain and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in the greatness of God now what are you gonna make him like and and what are you going to fashion to to look like your God don't you realize how vast and great and so overawing that he is that there's no representation that you can make in a likeness of him notice he sits upon the circle of the earth the Bible did not and does not and has never taught a flat earth that was the view of the scientist of those days not the men of

God the Bible has never taught that the earth rested on the back of an elephant or a turtle or was being held by Atlas that was taught by the men of science in those days but Job said he hanged the earth on nothing he was scoffed at how ridiculous and so here the circle of the earth the earth is round God's Word declared it scientists finally caught up with it he brings princes to nothing he makes the judges of the earth empty yea they shall not be planted I guess some of the judges are empty boy I'll tell you did you read in the LA Times this week God help us they've got new parlors in Los Angeles Hollywood in Hollywood's got everything where you can go in and get beat for a half hour going to get flogged and they said the majority of their customers are judges in Los Angeles and they

say that you know it relaxes you and stimulates you sexually so you go home and are ravished with your wife but they say it isn't really a sexual experience though of course the masochists can have an orgasm by being beaten all but you've go in and pay these people to flog you for a half hour now if that isn't sick I don't know what is and and the the you know trying to bragging about the fact that so many of their customers are judges in Los Angeles that they go in before the court in the morning and they get flogged and then they come to court and and decide the future of people's lives God keep me out of court in LA I'll tell you but what I know is some of the Orange County judges I wouldn't want to be in court here either I feel like have a cook something God please don't show me

anything else I can't take it Lord I don't want it I don't want to know it just it's better ignorance is bliss God I I just rather not know these things it just upsets me so much and have a cook with he said that Lord he's Lord he said please yeah the whole thing's going to down the tubes and you're not doing anything God I just rather not know God please just don't show me anything else I I just tired of seeing it Lord I just can't take it I just don't let me see it yea they shall not be planted yea they shall not be sewn yea their stock shall not take root in the earth and he shall also blow upon them and they shall wither and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble the princes and the judges of the earth to whom them will you liken God what are you going to compare him to what

kind of a standard would you use in trying to compare with God who's the equal you see how can you compare the finite with the infinite there is no even basis for comparison there's no standards lift up your

eyes on high and behold who is Greek created all of these stars that brings out the constellations and all by their number and calls them all by their names now the Bible says that God calls all the stars by their names and if there's 10 to the 25th power stars that's a good memory and in names aren't George and Joe and you know but there are tourists and you know a lot of really fancy names God calls them all by their names who you're gonna like in him like who you gonna make him equal to who's created all of these things by the greatness of his might for that he is strong in power

and not one failing why do you say Oh Jacob and you speak Oh Israel saying my way is hid from the Lord and my judgment is passed over from my God what makes you think you can hide from God what makes you think that God isn't going to judge you prophet is saying to the people you're only fooling yourself if you think that you've hidden it from God you're only fooling yourself if you think that God isn't going to bring judgment hath thou not known hath thou not heard that the everlasting God Yahweh the creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not neither is weary there is no searching of his understanding there is no way by which the understanding or wisdom or knowledge of God can be measured he is omniscient and yet he gives power to those who are fainting and to those who have no might

he increases strength how beautiful that is that this great God who created the universe will strengthen me and help me in my weakness Paul the Apostle said that he had a weakness but he said that weakness was something that he actually gloried in in order that God's power might be demonstrated through him for he said his strength is made perfect in our weakness and so it's a glorious thing that I recognize my weakness because then I learned to rely on him and trust in him as long as I think I'm strong as long as I think I can manage it as long as I think I've got you know I can handle it I've got it don't worry I'll take care of it man I'll tell you I'm heading for disaster but when I say hey there's no way I can't do it don't don't panic feel secure because in my weakness his strength

is perfected now we're so prone to feel secure when a guy says well don't worry I'll handle that for you you know I can do it we think all right this guy's really you know got it together hey watch out man that's the kind of guy that's gonna fold when the pressure really gets heavy but the guy who is not certain of himself but certain of his God is the one you want to be around when the chips are down because that is the man through whom the power of the eternal God will be demonstrated he gives power to the faint and to them who have no might he increases strength even the young the youth shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings as eagles they shall walk and not faint for the

strength of the Lord is their portion and shall sustain them this is the beginning of this glorious new section of the book of Isaiah and it is exciting these last 27 chapters of Isaiah are just thrilling to read of what God has in store for the future may the Lord be with you watch over and keep you through the week and may his strength be perfected in your weakness as you learn to just wait upon the Lord for his work and his help in your lives

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