

June 10th, 2018
“Enemy Tactics”
Isaiah 36:4-7, 14-20; 37:8-13
(ESV)

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

June 4 Job 11-13	June 8 Job 24-28
June 5 Job 14-16	June 9 Job 29-31
June 6 Job 17-20	June 10 Job 32-34
June 7 Job 21-23	June 11 Job 35-37

Lesson Introduction: As we have made our way through Isaiah, we have seen for some time the threat of Assyrian invasion of the land Judah. Isaiah continually warned God’s people to turn to Him, and not seek help from other gods or countries for their salvation, but they have not listened. In our passage this week, we come to a place where all the cities of Judah have been sieged except for Jerusalem (**2 Kings 18:13**). The Assyrians begin to taunt the people of Jerusalem, making untrue claims about their God, and trying to convince them to surrender before they are completely destroyed. As we study today, my hope is that we will be able to identify some ways that Satan attacks us and learn to be on guard against such tactics. To that end, we will consider how the enemy often seeks to destroy us by **reminding us of our failures, offering the world’s goods, and telling lies about God**, and next week we will dive into how we respond to these tactics, and where our hope lies.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH OF THE PASSAGE:

- We have an enemy who seeks to devour us by telling us lies and causing us to lose sight of the truth (**1 Peter 5:8, Ephesians 6:12**)

Isaiah 36:4-7, 14-20

4 And the Rabshakeh said to them, “Say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you rest this trust of yours? 5 Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? **In whom do you now trust, that you have rebelled against me?** 6 Behold, you are trusting in Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of any man who leans on it. **Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. 7 But if you say to me, “We trust in the Lord our God,” is it not he whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, “You shall worship before this altar?”**

14 Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you. **15 Do not let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord by saying, “The Lord will surely deliver us. This city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.”** 16 Do not listen to Hezekiah. For thus says the king of Assyria: **Make your peace with me and come out to me. Then each one of you will eat of his own vine, and each one of his own fig tree, and each one of you will drink the water of his own cistern, 17 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. 18 Beware lest Hezekiah mislead you by saying, “The Lord will deliver us.” Has any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? 19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? 20 Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their lands out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?”**

Isaiah 37:8-13

8 The Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he had heard that the king had left Lachish. 9 Now the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, “He has set out to fight against you.” And when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10 “Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: **‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. 11 Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? 12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? 13 Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?’**”

Discussion Section 1: Reminding us of our Failures (36:5-6)

-In these verses, what does the messenger from Assyria point out to the people of Judah about how they have failed?

-In what way is he trying to deceive them in these verses?

Note: The messenger from Assyria reminds the people of Judah that they have failed by trusting in the worldly power that is Egypt. The fact is, this **was** a failure on the part of the people of God to turn to the likes of Egypt to defend them against their enemies (**Isaiah 30:1-2; 31:1**), however, the Lord had not turned His back on His people, but had promised to be gracious to them, and show them the way to walk (**Isaiah 30:18-22**).

Just as the Assyrian messenger reminded the Judeans of their moral failures in the past, Satan also attacks us in the same way. **Revelation 12:10** calls him an “**accuser**,” and **Zechariah 3:1** shows us that he even does this in the presence of God Himself! Often, Satan will cause us to feel inadequate for the battle by reminding us of how miserably we have failed in the past. The truth of the matter is, we are utter failures in and of ourselves. We have no strength for the battle, and we will always fall woefully short. But the Scriptures are clear, those who are in Christ are not defined by their failures, but rather we are defined by the redeeming power of Jesus Christ as washed, sanctified, justified children of God who are indwelt by His Spirit (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**)! As you go, you will be tempted by the accuser to believe that your past failures mean a future of destitution and punishment. However, we can walk in victory as we praise God for wiping away our failures and graciously making us new creations (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

Discussion Section 2: Offering the World’s Goods (36:16-17)

-In what way did the messenger from Assyria try to entice the Judeans to surrender?

Note: In this section of our passage, we see the Assyrians attempt to make a deal with the Judeans to surrender. In doing so, they promise plenty of food and water, as well as a dwelling place that would be similar to the one the Judeans were used to. In short, they tell the people of Judah that if they surrender, they will have all the world’s goods they would need or want. This too, is a common tactic of Satan himself.

Even from the very beginning, Satan has always sought to entice people to sin by offering what is appealing to our senses. In **Genesis 3:6** we see that Eve ate of the tree that they were commanded not to eat of, in part, because she, “**saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eye.**” So often, the enemy tries to get us off track by making his option seem appealing or enticing (**2 Corinthians 11:14**), but

ultimately that path will only lead to death. It is vital that we be aware of the fact that our senses will deceive us, and the world’s goods will one day run out. The momentary fix that our enemy offers will ultimately rust away, or be eaten by moths, but God’s way will lead to an eternal weight of glory beyond our comprehension (**Matthew 6:19-24, 2 Corinthians 4:17-18**).

Discussion Section 3: Telling Lies about God (36:7, 10, 15, 18-20; 37:10-13)

-In what ways does the Assyrian messenger tell half-truths, or out and out lies about God in these verses?

Note: In these verses, the messenger from Assyria is clearly trying to call into question God’s ability to save His people, twisting the truth with the intent of deception. It is clear that he was attempting to cause the Judeans to believe that the Lord was just one of many gods, as he goes so far as to say “**Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria,**” and compares the Lord to other gods who had not been able to deliver their people from the grip of Assyria (**37:10-13**). The messenger was ultimately attempting to cause the people of God to cast away their trust in the Lord and call Him a liar!

Lying or twisting the truth about God and His word has been one of Satan’s tactics since the beginning of time. In **Genesis 3**, the serpent begins his evil work by questioning to Eve whether or not God “**actually**” said what she thought He said about eating from the tree in the midst of the garden. He then questioned God’s motive for telling them not to eat from the tree, saying that the only reason it was restricted is because He knew that if they did eat from it, “**their eyes would be open and they would be like God.**” Perhaps the greatest tactic of our enemy is twisting what God has said in our minds and causing us to doubt the only true and wise King. Since this is the case, it is vital that we know the Word of God, as Jesus did when Satan tried to twist the truth even to Him (**Matthew 4:1-11**). Our God never lies (**Numbers 23:19, 1 Samuel 15:29, Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:18**), and our only hope is to trust in Him, and not the ways of man or deception of Satan (**Proverbs 3:5-6, Proverbs 14:12, John 10:10**). Next week, we will continue in this section of Scripture and will discuss at much more detail what it looks like to trust the Lord in hopeless situations, and how and why He brings about incredible deliverance for those who trust Him.