

# *The Millennium Forecast*

*The Book of Isaiah*

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Text

Isaiah 36:1-22

Topic

The commander of the invading Assyrian army mocks and insults the Jews.

Title

***“ Adding Insult to Invasion ”***

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**It was called propaganda, then psychological warfare, then PSYOPs.**

They are tactics intended to reduce an opponent’s morale and will to fight. Disinformation, misinformation, manipulation, and the dissemination of persuasive messages can do more damage than bullets and bombs.

In everyday language we refer to this as being psyched-out, or someone ‘getting into our head.’

**Isaiah recorded a textbook example of satanic PSYOPs.**

The Assyrian army was encamped around Jerusalem. Their Rabshakeh met with Jewish representatives. He employed PSYOPs to frighten the Jews into surrender.

There is a major satanic PSYOP in the third chapter of the Bible. The serpent, who is later identified as the devil - Satan - did a real number on our parents. He used

misinformation, disinformation, outright lies, manipulation, deception, maybe shape-shifting,<sup>1</sup> to psyche them out and achieve his sinister objective.

You know what I'm going to say next:

### **The serpent wages psychological warfare against us.**

He is the accuser, the greatest liar in the history of lying, playing a long con.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 You Counter Satan's PSYOPs With Confidence**, and **#2 You Counter Satan's PSYOPs By Repentance**.

#### **#1 - You Counter Satan's PSYOPs With Confidence (v1-10)**

- After eleven years and twenty-one feature films, the Avengers finally defeated Thanos. It was quite the build-up to the *End Game*.
- After thirty-five chapters spanning four kings of Judah, the prophesied invasion by the Assyrian army was at Jerusalem's gates.

No city or city-state or nation had been able to withstand the Assyrian advance. Humanly speaking, Judah's situation was hopeless.

**They would have been at the mercy of Assyria if not for the LORD's mercy upon them.**

Isa 36:1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah *that* Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them.

Historians report that they conquered forty-six cities en route to Jerusalem. Assyria was a juggernaut.

The United States is not Isaiah's intended audience. We can, however, glean from him as long as we are careful not to go beyond what is uniquely Jewish.

The enemy advance against God's people was destroying city after city. Our enemy, the devil, advances against countries, cities, and institutions. Most universities in the US, for example, were established as institutions of faith:

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor 11:14 says that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light. Might he have transformed himself into a serpent in the Garden?

- Harvard, Yale and Dartmouth were Puritan.
- The College of William and Mary was Church of England.
- Princeton was Presbyterian.
- Rutgers University was Dutch Reformed.

Forbes magazine said of them, "For almost all of these and similar elite schools, the answer to grow with the times and the country was to leave their religious legacy in the microfiche files."

### **Satan is advancing in the US.**

In 2019 the Pew Research Center noted, "In the US, the decline of Christianity continues at a rapid pace."

He is psyching people out:

- The confusing world of gender, transgender, gender dysphoria, etc., has people abandoning basic human biology. It's as if the devil is coming to folks and saying, "Has God really assigned your gender?" "Did God really make you male and female?"
- A federal court in Maryland ruled that parents do not have a "fundamental right" to opt their children out of classroom instruction in LGBTQ+. It's as if the devil is coming to school boards and judges, and saying, "Has God really given parents authority over their children?"

If you are old enough, or, if you studied history, you are familiar with the word blitzkrieg. It was a strategy of rapid advance against the enemy that was employed by the Germans. After decades of making important but slow inroads against Christianity, it seems like the devil is in blitzkrieg mode now. It seems like almost every day there is something new, satanic, to challenge our biblical values.

Isa 36:2 Then the king of Assyria sent *the* Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field.

He is **the** Rabshakeh. It is a title, not his name. He was a field commander, probably the equivalent to our rank of General. Lachish was the latest city to fall in his advance to Jerusalem.

Isa 36:3 And Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

We would call this an official delegation under a flag of truce. You've seen this reenacted on the big screen anytime there is a medieval battle brewing. Representatives come out from each army and try to psyche-out one another.

Isa 36:4 Then *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust?"

Isa 36:5 I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but *they are* mere words. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me?"

This is PsycheWarfare 101. He immediately disrespected Hezekiah by refusing to call him king while simultaneously calling his king, "the great king." Then he pointed out that whatever "plans and power for war" they made had failed 46 times.

The Rabshakeh didn't realize it, but he undermined his entire PSYOP when he, not once but twice, asked the Jews where their "confidence" and "trust" lie that they would dare to defy him. It was like a coded message within the message. A sensitive spiritual ear could hear, "remember when you trusted the LORD? It's not too late to trust Him and put your confidence in Him."

In fact, that is precisely what is going to happen in this narrative. The Jews trust the LORD and in their renewed confidence, they become observers of the battle rather than participants.

Christians sing about the Lord fighting our battles for us. It isn't a "Let go & Let God," do nothing response. It is active submission.

When Joshua went out to reconnoiter Jericho prior to the battle, suddenly someone else was there. Joshua asked, "*Are* You for us or for our adversaries?" The man said, "No, but *as* Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" (Joshua 5:13-14).

It was Jesus, in a pre-incarnation theophany called the Angel of the Lord. We must find Joshua's heart and respond appropriately. It is hard but rewarding spiritual work.

Isa 36:6 Look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him.

General James "Mad Dog" Mattis understood PSYOPs. Among his many unsettling quotes, he said, *"Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet."*

Judah had an alliance with Egypt. Egypt was no help. It was another part of the failed plans of the Jews.

Isa 36:7 "But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' is it not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar?'"

The Assyrians didn't study their enemy. They thought the "high places and... altars" that Hezekiah had "taken away" were places where they worshipped Jehovah. By removing these, they thought Hezekiah was blaspheming. These, however, were the high places and altars where the Jews worshipped idols. If the Assyrians had realized this, they may have been more careful. It signaled a *return* to God. Historically, when the Jews were right with God, no one could stop them. The exploits of Jehovah on behalf of His people were well-known.

If you GOOGLE 'the strategies of Satan,' you'll be directed to hundreds of sites that are all over the map, each having its own unique list. Do this instead. Study Ephesians 6:10-17. It is the famous passage about the armor of God we are to wear in order "to stand against the wiles of the devil." Go through the articles of your uniform. Is there something you are not wearing? Something on backwards? Some important item that you haven't maintained? It is rare, but every once in a while a police officer will report for duty without their sidearm. We could compare it to neglecting the sword of the Spirit, which is our offensive weapon, the Word of God.

Isa 36:8 Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses - if you are able on your part to put riders on them!

Rabshakeh demanded tribute as a public demonstration that Jerusalem was conquered. It is common to humble or even humiliate those you've conquered. At the end of WW2, Emperor Hirohito of Japan publicly declared that he was not a living god and that the concept of the Emperor's divinity was not true.

I think the offer of two-thousand horses was pure sarcasm. He was saying that Assyria was so powerful it would give Judah two thousand-horses to even the battle.

Isa 36:9 How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen?

This was a playground taunt. They could defeat Judah with one arm tied behind their backs.

Isa 36:10 Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.' "

In chapter eight we read, "Inasmuch as these people [the Jews] refused The waters of Shiloah that flow softly, And rejoice in Rezin and in Remaliah's son; Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them The waters of the River, strong and mighty - The king of Assyria and all his glory" (8:6-7).

The LORD did indeed use nations to discipline the nations of Israel and Judah. This was the worst taunt because the Jews knew it was true. The LORD was behind this invasion. It was discipline.

**Y**ou might think it strange for me to say this, but the Jews were in a great spot. There was no earthly help; they must rely upon heavenly hope. There was no one to call upon but the LORD. It was "repent or die" time.

If you feel like you are involved in psychological warfare, *it's because you are*. Somewhere in the devil's op against you is a message, a reminder, a teaching, an encouragement, an exhortation. Listen for it and watch the devil's plan backfire.

## **#2 - You Counter Satan's PSYOPs By Repentance (v11-22)**

He is Captain Kenneth Rich and his primary military specialty is PSYOPs. He earned his psychology degree from Berkeley and worked on various research projects involving the inducement of paranoia by means of low frequency radio waves. He enlisted in the Army and was posted to the Deceptive Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, and there continued his pioneering work in the field of wave-induced behavior modification.

His colleagues call him Psyche-Out. You can purchase his action figure on eBay for around \$50. He joined the *G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero* toy line in 1987.



### **See what I did there? I psyched you out**

Isa 36:11 Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it*; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall."

Morale was already at an all-time low as soldiers and citizens looked out upon a seemingly invincible foe. If everyone understood these mocking taunts, there would be no way to spin this as being not as bad as it seemed.

Isa 36:12 But *the* Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

In the 2011 feature film *The Help*, do you recall how Minny, a maid in the civil-rights-era deep South, exacts her revenge for being unjustly fired? She serves her former boss a poop-filled version of her famous chocolate pie.

### **Poop pie would be on Judah's menu if they were determined to resist.**

Isa 36:13 Then *the* Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria!

Isa 36:14 Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you;

Isa 36:15 nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." '

He says, Don't "let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD." This is a second misspeak by him. The reason Assyria was at the gates was precisely because they had quit trusting in the LORD. Their deliverance was one prayer of repentance away.

Alan Redpath said, "*It is Satan's delight to tell me that once he's got me, he will keep me. But at that moment I can go back to God. And I know that if I confess my sins, God is faithful and just to forgive me.*"

Isa 36:16 Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make peace with me *by* a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine

and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern;

Isa 36:17 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

Extreme evil is lurking behind these words. Rabshakeh promised the Jews could remain on their land, be a nation, in peace. With no segue he tells them that they will be relocated. No longer in their land, they would intermarry with Assyrians and other conquered peoples. They would lose their unique identity as God's chosen nation.

This part of Rabshakeh's psyche-out smacked of Satan. He hates the Jews and targets them specifically. He has tried many times to exterminate them.

Isa 36:18 Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria?

Isa 36:19 Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand?

Isa 36:20 Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?" "

Sennacherib was Assyria's king. God-after-god had fallen. Rabshakeh was confident the LORD would fall. But he doesn't say "The gods of Assyria will prevail." He says Sennacherib will prevail against all gods, including the LORD. It's subtle, but the king of Assyria was claiming to be god.

Back in chapter fourteen Satan said, "I will be like the Most High" (v14). He enjoys playing 'God' by influencing the kings of the world to do his bidding.

"It is a sort of disease when you consider yourself some kind of god, the creator of everything, but I feel comfortable about it now since I began to live it out."

Those are the words of George Soros from a 2004 L.A. Times interview that has just resurfaced.

Isa 36:21 But they held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him."

Albert Barnes writes, "*There are circumstances when it is proper to maintain a profound silence in the presence of revilers and blasphemers, and when we should withdraw from them, and go and spread the case before the Lord.*"



Isa 36:22 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of *the* Rabshakeh.

The Rabshakeh's insults contributed to Judah's repenting. They tore their clothes, and in the very next chapter we read, "And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it*, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD."

The outward manifestation of wearing sackcloth symbolized inward repentance. The prophet Joel gives us the inner look when he writes, "Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He *is* gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm" (2:12-13).

### **Maybe we can start the Sackcloth Squad?**

**A**ncient Jews at times pulled on their hair and beards to illustrate the internal suffering. They tore their clothes. They wore sackcloth. They put ashes on themselves and sat on the ground. Not just when someone died; repentance before God was another reason to mourn.

C.S. Lewis said, "*We all want progress, but if you're on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road.*"

- If you are not in Christ, an unbeliever, you are on the broad path that leads to destruction. God calls upon you to repent.
- If you are in Christ, a believer, Satan will try every possible sign up to stumble, you, or have you turn aside. Keep following your map. Walk with the Lord and discover the good works set before you.