

# ISAIAH

## ISAIAH 37:14-20, KING HEZEKIAH'S RESPONSE, PART 2

During the preceding events when the Rabshakeh offered Hezekiah and Jerusalem the opportunity to surrender because Hezekiah was too weak and his God lacked the power to save the city from the god of Assyria, Hezekiah knew full well their only hope was in Yahweh's deliverance. That message was communicated to Sennacherib who replied with an attack on Yahweh and on His character in an effort to destroy Hezekiah's, and hence the people's, belief that Yahweh could indeed deliver them from the Assyrian assault. At that point, Hezekiah's response consisted of going to the Temple to praise God, to acknowledge His power and His sovereignty, and to beseech the all-powerful Creator God to save them from this impending disaster.

Isaiah 37:14 <sup>14</sup>Then Hezekiah took the letter [מִקְרָא] from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the LORD and spread [פָּרְשָׁה] it out before the LORD.

These messengers were apparently not powerful emissaries representing King Sennacherib, but simply men who delivered what must have been a scroll to King Hezekiah, although some theologians believe it may have been a reference to folded sheets. Their presence required no discourse between themselves and Hezekiah. The king read the letter and immediately went to the Temple to seek the Lord. After the first message, Hezekiah tore his clothes as an act of mourning over what was transpiring, but here he went before the Lord. The grammar of the text (waw consecutive) suggests that the king immediately reported to the Temple. In the Hebrew text, the word "letter" is plural, מִקְרָאִים from מִקְרָא, but only two English translations use the plural, the YLT and ISV. It is possible that the scroll had more than one letter intended for Hezekiah's attention; however, the pronoun referring to the scroll, "it," is singular, but that could be referring to a single scroll and not to the contents. According to 2 Chronicles 32:17, the purpose of the letters was "to insult the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against Him ..." In this verse, the word is again plural in the Hebrew, and it is translated as plural in the NASB and all the other English translations as well. Why the difference between 2 Chronicles and Isaiah is unknown to me; it should have been plural in both verses. Some theologians believe the plural word is nevertheless a reference to a single letter, but that still does not explain the interpretive discrepancy between the parallel passages.

Hezekiah obviously did not spread the letter out before the Lord so that God could read it. He is God; He already knew what it said. This was an action that served as a witness set before the face of Yahweh concerning the attitude of the blasphemous king towards Him—which He also already knew.

This was "a symbolic act to demonstrate visually the enormity of the hubris hurled by Sennacherib in the face of the living God" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 289].

"[This] is not an attempt to inform God of something he does not already know but an expression of shock and outrage. Hezekiah does not merely wish to tell God about the

offending document; he places it before him in its entirety, as if to say, 'Surely *this* cannot be left unanswered" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 653].

"He [Hezekiah] spread out the letter before the Lord, not that the Lord might read it, but by way of supplication. Isaiah does not state how Hezekiah did this, whether he himself was prostrate on the floor of the Temple and placed the letter before him, or whether he placed the letter on the altar. The action is symbolical, in which the king places before God all his need; it is furthermore an action of childlike trust, for the king is confident that God will come to his aid" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 2, 2:481-482].

There is merit to all these interpretations and possibly the thoughts expressed in all of them are applicable to this situation.

Spread, פָּרַשׁ, means to spread out or to spread; it carries the sense of spreading out or unfolding to open from a closed or folded state. This could apply to a scroll or to a paper that has been folded. As Young observed, we don't know whether it was spread out on the floor or on the altar, but the word does tell us that he placed it before the Lord with the writing visible and before His face.

After the first affront to the living God (Is. 37:4), the king asked Isaiah to pray to Yahweh to protect the remnant of Judah left alive and unconquered in Jerusalem. After this second message, Hezekiah went directly to the Temple and appeared before the Lord himself.

We do not know exactly where Hezekiah was in the Temple. He would not have been allowed into any space in which only the priests were allowed to enter. He could not have entered either the Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. We do know that when he spread the letters out before the Lord, he began to pray. This prayer "contains (a) an invocation in 37:16; (b) a petition to hear in 37:17-19, which includes a rationale for this petition in 37:18-19; and (c) a final petition for divine deliverance in 37:20 with an additional rationale at the end" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 1-39*, 618].

Isaiah 37:15–16 <sup>15</sup>Hezekiah prayed to the LORD saying, <sup>16</sup>"O LORD of hosts [יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת], the God of Israel [אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל], who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone [בַּדָּ], of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.

LORD of hosts, יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, means God of armies which is probably a reference to the angelic realm, but the primary idea that name carries is one of protection. The God of hosts who is the God of Israel is absolutely capable of destroying the Assyrian Army that is threatening His people.

God of Israel, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, is the king's acknowledgement that Yahweh is in a unique covenant relationship with Israel; He created Israel to be a nation of priests to serve Him and to be a set apart people in His program for history as a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6), assigned to be the revelatory conduit tasked with the assignment

of revealing Him to the world beyond what is available by means of general revelation. They failed, but He was still their God, and they were still His people, and that concept was part of the king's prayer to Yahweh.

"Enthroned ( or dwelling) above the cherubim" is, in this context, a reference to the Holy of Holies in the Temple where Yahweh was dwelling (1 Kings 8:10-13), and from which He departed immediately prior to the Babylonian destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C. (Ezek. 10:1-22). Yahweh dwelling with His people in His Temple was such an important concept concerning Israel, that Hezekiah, who was in the Temple at the time, clearly had to have had that fact in mind in the midst of this very serious crisis. He was crying out to the God who was right there in front of his face in that place at that time. The New King James Version has the best translation of this clause: "The One who dwells between the cherubim." That emphasizes the Lord's presence in the Holy of Holies where the cherubim were over the Ark and where the Lord's presence was permanently located.

We know the cherubim were located at each end of the mercy seat, and Yahweh dwelt in the Temple's Holy of Holies between the cherubim located at each end of the mercy seat. We must add, however, that Yahweh was not confined to this space, He is omnipresent after all, but, in a special way, His presence was uniquely enshrined in that space in the midst of His people.

Exodus 37:6-9 <sup>6</sup>He made a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. <sup>7</sup>He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat; <sup>8</sup>one cherub at the one end and one cherub at the other end; he made the cherubim of *one piece* with the mercy seat at the two ends. <sup>9</sup>The cherubim had *their* wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces toward each other; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat.

1 Kings 8:10-13 <sup>10</sup>It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD, <sup>11</sup>so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD. <sup>12</sup>Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud. <sup>13</sup>"I have surely built You a lofty house, A place for Your dwelling forever."

Hezekiah acknowledged Yahweh as the one and only true God, and he recognized Elohim as the God who alone was the Creator God of heaven and earth.

Alone, בַּדְּ, means a separation or something separated, a part, apart from, or a member referring to being alone, by one's self, or apart which is the marker of the only item of a class in a place. It refers to being a part or a share of a whole. In this context, it refers to the class of gods, none of whom exist except in the vain imaginations of fallen men, except for the only One who was capable of creating the heavens and the earth. Yahweh is the God of the God class, and no other god exists alongside Him. As such, Yahweh is unique and separate from everything else that exists, and He alone has the capacity to create everything out of nothing. Because He is the Creator of all things, He is sovereign over all things and that includes King Sennacherib and his army.

Psalms 96:5 <sup>5</sup>For all the gods of the peoples are idols [אֱלִילִים], But the LORD made the heavens.

Idol, אֱלִיל, means idols and idolatries referring to a pagan and material effigy that is worshiped as a representation or in lieu of a deity. The concept behind the word is that of worthlessness, insufficiency, emptiness, vanity, and weakness. Idols are nothing, and they can do nothing. Yahweh, on the other hand, the one true God created the heavens and the earth.

The prayer Hezekiah is offering up in the Temple is as much or more of an acknowledgement that Yahweh is the one true God of Israel as it is a petition for help in the midst of this crisis that will decide whether Judah continues to exist as an independent nation or not. As the one true God, He is the only One who can rescue them from this upcoming disaster. There is no hope in the nations; Judah's hope was only in Yahweh.

"These descriptive titles are not just a means of identifying God; instead, they are affirmations of trust, assurance, and praise. Hezekiah is not justifying his beliefs to others, developing an abstract doctrine of theology, or informing God at this point; he is primarily calling out to the only divine king who controls the world because Hezekiah needs this Almighty God to use his power in a very practical way to rectify what Sennacherib has falsely claimed" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 1-39*, 618-619].

Hezekiah beseeched Yahweh to defend His honor by defeating the Assyrians so the world would know that He alone is God.

Isaiah 37:17–20 <sup>17</sup>"Incline [נָטָה] Your ear, O LORD, and hear [שָׁמַע]; open [פָּקַח] Your eyes, O LORD, and see [רָאָה]; and listen [שָׁמַע] to all the words of Sennacherib, who sent *them* to reproach [רָרַף] the living God. <sup>18</sup>"Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have devastated all the countries and their lands, <sup>19</sup>and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. <sup>20</sup>"Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, LORD, are God."

Hezekiah issues five requests of Yahweh, but they are presented in the form of commands: incline, hear, open, see, and listen are all in the imperative verb form which is a command. Since it is not the place of the creature to boss the Creator around, we need to understand that in Hebrew the imperative verb may also be used to communicate a request or a wish making the use of that verb form not as harsh as we might otherwise think it to be. "Through the volitional forms a speaker aims to impose his or her will on some other person (or, in figurative language, thing). The force with which that will is exerted depends on various factors, including the speaker's social standing vis-à-vis the addressee, the social context of the discourse, and the meaning of the verb. For these reasons the precise nuances of the volitional forms may range from command, advice, and permission to request, wish, etc." [Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Hebrew Syntax*, 565].

Incline, נָטָה, means to stretch out, to spread out, to extend, or to incline. In this context, it figuratively refers to bending or turning one's ear towards a speaker in order to listen well.

Hear and listen, שָׁמַע, mean to hear and to listen. Implied in the use of these words is the fact of not only paying close attention, but to usually responding in conformity with what was heard.

Open, פָּתַח, means to open to unstop. In this context, it has the sense of making a body part perceive, conceived of as opening the body part, i.e., the eyes or the ears.

See, רָאָה, means to see, that is, to perceive by sight. Figuratively, it refers to seeing physically outside of oneself, to see so that one can learn to know.

Hezekiah knew he did not have to inform Yahweh about the specifics of the situation, but together, these verbs are Hezekiah's way of imploring Yahweh to take action against this blasphemous, pagan king who is intent on destroying God's people. The honor of the living God was at stake. Yahweh is the living God, the only true God, the Creator God as opposed to lifeless images which are made of wood and stone and which are not living, but are instead inert and worthless. The living God can see and hear and know all things as opposed to idols which know nothing and can never know anything. The living God is all powerful and can do all things, whereas idols can do nothing but sit where they are placed.

What does it mean to say that God is the living God?

"The God of the Bible eternally has life in himself. As theologians have sometimes put it, he has *aseity*, or life from and by himself in independent freedom. His essential life does not correspond merely to his personal relations to the cosmos and to human beings. Nor should the life God has in himself be contrasted with the life of creatures by asserting merely that creaturely life exists through his will and purposes. The fact is that though heaven and earth, the work of his hands, shall perish, God himself "endures." He neither became the living God by his creation of the universe, nor did he become the living God at some point in eternity past; he is the one living God, and is so eternally. He lives in eternal self-affirmation. His life is all that he thinks, decides, and wills in creative freedom. God perpetually wills and purposes his own being; this being depends upon nothing external to himself yet is not internally necessitated as if he exists forever whether he wills to do so or not. He wills eternally to be himself in the fulness of his independent vitality, and never ceases to be himself. God exists in absolute plenitude and power. He is wholly free to be himself and removes the mystery of his own being by making known his inner nature by voluntary self-disclosure" [Carl F. H. Henry, "The Living God of the Bible," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* Volume 1 no. 1 (1997): 18–19].

These things cannot describe any being other than Yahweh. Satan and every demonic spirit are created beings and have no life apart from the life granted them by Yahweh. Everything is subordinate to the Creator God and nothing has any power to overcome Him.

The words of Sennacherib were a reproach to Yahweh which is a situation that Hezekiah thought must not be allowed to stand. "Hezekiah ... is arguing against Sennacherib's demotion of a powerful living God to the level of lifeless chunks of carved wood and

stone. God does hear and see; he does act to rule creation and human history. It is a blasphemous insult to classify the glorious God who rules the universe as just another useless god who cannot defend his own people" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 1-39*, 619].

Reproach, תָּרַף, means to reproach, to taunt, to discredit, and to treat with contempt. It refers to taunting or agitating someone about something.

Hezekiah, godly king that he was, was concerned about Yahweh's reputation, and he correctly thought that Yahweh could not let His people be destroyed. At this point in time, the Northern Kingdom, Israel, had already been conquered and dispersed out of the land. If Judah falls, the nation will be no more. Therefore, God's preservation of Judah in the face of the unbeatable Assyrian Army would glorify Yahweh in the sight of all the kingdoms of the world. This is a reminder that Moses had once implored Yahweh not to kill off His people, the people He had just rescued from slavery in Egypt, because His reputation would suffer.

Numbers 14:11–19 <sup>11</sup>The LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst? <sup>12</sup>"I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they." <sup>13</sup>But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for by Your strength You brought up this people from their midst, <sup>14</sup>and they will tell *it* to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O LORD, are in the midst of this people, for You, O LORD, are seen eye to eye, while Your cloud stands over them; and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. <sup>15</sup>"Now if You slay this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say, <sup>16</sup>"Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness." <sup>17</sup>"But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as You have declared, <sup>18</sup>"The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations." <sup>19</sup>"Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

We know that in just over 100 years after Hezekiah offers this prayer, the Southern Kingdom, Judah, will be conquered by Babylon and taken out of the land, but Yahweh providentially kept them together as a national entity, did not allow them to be completely destroyed or annihilated, raised up a pagan king who would defeat their captors and return them to their land, and He ensured the national survival of the Israelites which is still an ongoing part of His plan for history.

Eventually, Yahweh and Israel will both be completely vindicated and the world will, in fact, know that He alone, Yahweh, is God. That is still something that is in the future. In the meantime, Israel will continue to face serious adversity and persecution in the world according to the divine disciplinary program Yahweh established for Israel's disobedience and rebellion.

Hezekiah did admit that there is truth to Sennacherib's bragging. He did, in fact, conquer other kings and their territory. The pagan king claimed that Yahweh was just another god to conquer, but Hezekiah says the gods Sennacherib conquered were wood and stone, the work of men's hands, which is nothing, but Yahweh is the living God and therefore a God of a wholly different class, a God who is capable of defeating this arrogant, pagan king and the spiritual forces empowering him, and delivering Judah from Sennacherib's hand.

Of course, pagans did not, and still do not, view their idols as dead and worthless; they were worshipping the dark forces those idols represented which are very real. On the one hand, things made with human hands are nothing, but on the other hand, the spiritual forces they represent do have power, although it is a dark, evil power.

1 Corinthians 10:19–20 <sup>19</sup>What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? <sup>20</sup>No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.

Assyria certainly did not think their god or gods were worthless; they credited them for the Assyrian king's conquests of the other nations. They simply thought their god was more powerful than the other gods in the pantheon of gods.

"While false gods are not authentic divine powers, the Old Testament indicates that through fallen man's imagination they gain a power of attraction in human experience, captivate the will and elicit religious response. Such response not only victimizes adherents but it also evokes Yahweh's displeasure, for Yahweh is a jealous God ... The living God is jealous not of false gods as real entities but of the power they exert over those who imaginatively invest idols with ontological existence and volition" [Carl F. H. Henry, "The Living God of the Bible," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* Volume 1 1, no. 1 (1997): 19].

We discussed the concept that idols are inert and have no life in them which makes them worthless, but the concept of death should impact our understanding of what it means to speak of dead idols. Death does not mean nothingness, and death does not mean the forces of evil represented by dead idols have no power and that they are therefore impotent. The powers that idols represent operate in an atmosphere of spiritual death, that is, total separation from God. Idols are worthless in the sense that there is nothing good about them; they are completely separated from all that is good and only evil characterizes all that idols are. Idols, although only physical things that in and of themselves simply sit and do nothing, represent real, malevolent forces that are bent only on death and destruction. For one pagan entity to destroy another pagan entity, just as Assyria did to other pagan nations, each of which is represented by different idols, means only that evil human beings are doing to one another what evil human beings do—deal in death and destruction. That represents a civil war in the arena of spiritual death. Assyria was very good at dealing in death and destruction, because, after all, they were simply serving the father of evil. That situation has been a constant throughout history; the Lord referred to it during one of His confrontations with His opponents.

John 8:44 <sup>44</sup>“You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

While idols are worthless pieces of various materials fashioned by man into representations of various things, they are the mask for satanic spiritual forces which makes them very evil and destructive. They have no power in themselves, but they represent powerful, but also thoroughly evil, spiritual forces. The point Hezekiah was making is that there is only one true, living God who is superior to these malevolent forces, and who are no match for Him.

Hezekiah simply requested that Yahweh save them from destruction at the hands of Assyria, not because they deserved it, but because Yahweh alone is God and His glory and honor and name are worthy of renown around the world. Not only will Yahweh grant Hezekiah's request, but He will do it in a way that leaves no doubt that it was the work of God (Is. 37:36-37) and there can be no mistaking it. Therefore, the world would have to acknowledge His power and His glory whether they wanted to do so or not.

This situation is similar to the plagues Yahweh inflicted on Egypt in the days leading up to the Exodus that forced the Egyptians to recognize the superiority of Yahweh over their gods (Ex. 8:19, 10:7). It is worth remembering that the Egyptian sorcerers were able to duplicate some of the plagues (Ex. 7:11-12, staff into a serpent; Ex. 7:22, water into blood; Ex. 8:7, hoard of frogs), but only up to a point. That illuminates the fact that there are real, dark, evil forces behind idolatry, animating and empowering it, and we would do well to remember that fact. But we would also do well to remember that these evil forces are no match for Yahweh; He is the omnipotent One, not Satan and his demons.

Exodus 8:19 <sup>19</sup>Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” ...

Exodus 10:7 <sup>7</sup>Pharaoh's servants said to him, “How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?”

The Egyptian sorcerers revealed the power Satan and his demons exercise behind the mask of the idols and the false gods that pagans serve. They are not harmless and benign; they are thoroughly evil and they can use their power to pursue evil.

Exodus 7:11–12 <sup>11</sup>Then Pharaoh also called for *the* wise men and *the* sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. <sup>12</sup>For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents....

Exodus 7:22 <sup>22</sup>But the magicians of Egypt did the same [water into blood] with their secret arts ...

Exodus 8:7 <sup>7</sup>The magicians did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

The Temple was built so that people who heard of the mighty Yahweh might visit it and know Him and fear Him as the Israelites did (1 Kings 8:41-43). The intention is that the world my know Him.

1 Kings 8:41–43 <sup>41</sup>“Also concerning the foreigner who is not of Your people Israel, when he comes from a far country for Your name’s sake <sup>42</sup>(for they will hear of Your great name and Your mighty hand, and of Your outstretched arm); when he comes and prays toward this house, <sup>43</sup>hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name, to fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by Your name.

In Psalm 59, David was praying for deliverance from his enemies and he prayed that they be so destroyed that the world would know that God ruled in Israel.

Psalm 59:13 <sup>13</sup>Destroy *them* in wrath, destroy *them* that they may be no more; That *men* may know that God rules in Jacob To the ends of the earth. Selah.

Even during the Tribulation, the world will know that it is the wrath of God that is causing the massive judgments that are falling on the earth.

Revelation 6:15–17 <sup>15</sup>Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; <sup>16</sup>and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; <sup>17</sup>for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Miracles, signs, and wonders confirm to all people—believers and unbelievers alike—that God is at work in the world. “These miracles, signs, and wonders always have very specific purpose. The major purpose is that God confirmed His messenger and/or message by signs, miracles, and wonders. He used other methods such as prophesy (Deut. 18:20-22): but by signs, miracles, and wonders, God miraculously confirmed His messenger and message” [David Olander, *The Greatness of the Rapture: The Pre-Day of the Lord Rapture*, 200].

This is exactly what Hezekiah is referring to in this verse although he had no idea at that moment how Yahweh would work to save Jerusalem from destruction. Subsequent revelation is that Yahweh sent an angel to kill 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night.

Isaiah 37:36 <sup>36</sup>Then the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead.

“Supernatural action proves divinity and divine proof engenders faith in those who come to realize that ‘you alone, O LORD, are God.’ This is an explicit monotheistic statement that excludes all other gods from claiming divine status. God’s supernatural action would undermine the false and blasphemous claims of Sennacherib and give people all over the world irrefutable proof that the God in Jerusalem was real. This is the kind of unselfish

prayer that God honors, for its primary purpose is to bring glory to the name of God” [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 1-39*, 621].

One other factor we cannot dismiss is the fact that Assyria was part of Satan's ages old plan to destroy Israel, kill all the Jews, and defeat God's plan to rule planet earth through man. Assyria was just one more actor in a long line of actors that Satan has used, and continues to use, in his plan to dethrone Yahweh and replace Him. Malevolent, satanic forces are, in fact, very involved in this situation.