



KJV Isa 35	JST Isa 35	Book of Mormon	DSS Isa 35	NRSV Isa 35
10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.				10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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1 NOW it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, <i>that</i> Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them. ^a 2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish ^b to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller’s field. ^c 3 Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiyah’s son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph’s son, the recorder. ^d			2 And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a very ^{1A} great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller’s field.	1 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. 2 The king of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem, with a great army. He stood by the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Fuller’s Field. 3 And there came out to him Eliakim son of Hilkiyah, who was in charge of the palace, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the recorder.

^{1a} Isa 36–39 creates a prose break in the poetic prophecy that precedes and follows. The historical account is also found in 2 Kgs 18:13–20:19. Isa 36–37 tells how Assyria came against Judah and how Judah was saved because Hezekiah trusted in the Lord. Compare King Ahaz in Isa 7–8. The events of Isa 36–37 occurred in ca. 701 BC; the “fourteenth year of King Hezekiah” is likely an error and should probably read the “twenty-fourth year,” a change of only two Hebrew letters.

^{2b} Sennacherib’s successful siege of Lachish is depicted on a relief (now located in the British Museum) that once hung on a wall of his palace in Nineveh. The city of Lachish guarded the entrance of a valley leading to Jerusalem. By taking it first, Sennacherib ensured that Jerusalem could receive no aid from Egypt.

^{2c} This probably refers to a pool outside of Jerusalem’s southern walls near the area where clothing was washed (by fullers), and is the same location where Isaiah earlier met King Ahaz to warn him not to trust in either the Syrian-Ephraimite alliance or in Assyria. See Isa 7:3.

^{3d} Both Shebna (Heb. “vigor”) and Eliakim (Heb. “my God will be lifted up”), the son of Hilkiyah (Heb. “Jehovah is my portion”), are mentioned in Isaiah 22:15–22. In Isa 22, Shebna is described as the officer “over the house” who is warned against pride, and Eliakim is depicted as the scribe who will later replace Shebna. Joah (Heb. “Jehovah is a brother”), the son of Asaph (Heb. “he will gather”), is a recorder.

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<p>4 ¶ And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah,^a Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence <i>is</i> this wherein thou trustest?^b</p> <p>5 I say, <i>sayest thou</i>, (but <i>they are but</i> vain words) <i>I have</i> counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?</p> <p>6 Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so <i>is</i> Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.^c</p> <p>7 But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: <i>is it</i> not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?^d</p> <p>8 Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if</p>	<p>5 I say, Thy words are but vain, when thou sayest, <i>I have</i> counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust [...] that thou rebellest against me?</p>		<p>4 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah {King of Judah},^{1A} Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence <i>is</i> this wherein thou thyself^{1A} trustest?</p> <p>5 Sayest thou,^{1A} (but <i>they are but</i> vain words) <i>I have</i> counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?</p> <p>7 But if you^{1A} say to me, We trust on^{1A} the LORD our God: <i>is it</i> not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar {in Jerusalem}?^{1A}</p>	<p>4 The Rabshakeh said to them, “Say to Hezekiah: Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: On what do you base this confidence of yours?”</p> <p>5 Do you think that mere words are strategy and power for war? On whom do you now rely, that you have rebelled against me?</p> <p>6 See, you are relying on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of anyone who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him.</p> <p>7 But if you say to me, ‘We rely on 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’?</p> <p>8 Come now, make a wager with my master the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them.</p>

^{4a} The Rabshakeh (Assyrian for “chief of the officers,” a title rather than a name, cf. DSS v. 12) refuses to call Hezekiah “king.” He sees him as a nobody beside Sennacherib, the “great king, the king of Assyria.”

^{4b} The Rabshakeh’s masterful speech is recorded in vv. 4–20. He shows a shrewd awareness of his audience, anticipating their responses and working to destroy their hope and their confidence in Hezekiah’s judgment. His first point (vv. 4–6) undermines Jerusalem’s confidence in Egypt and purposefully mirrors Isaiah’s own prophetic warnings not to trust Egypt (see Isa 19:14–16; 30:7; 31:3), twisting the word of God to destroy hope in a crucial moment.

^{6c} The Rabshakeh cleverly portrays Egypt as a ragged, broken staff. Not only will it not support the hand that leans on it, but the broken staff will likely pierce that hand.

^{7d} The Rabshakeh next misrepresents Hezekiah’s religious reforms, which had removed the old “high places” to centralize worship in Jerusalem. He suggests that these reforms are against God’s will and have raised Jehovah’s ire.

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<p>thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.^a</p> <p>9 How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master’s servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?</p> <p>10 And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.^b</p> <p>11 ¶ Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand <i>it</i>: and speak not to us in the Jews’ language, in the ears of the people that <i>are</i> on the wall.^c</p> <p>12 ¶ But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? <i>hath he not sent me</i> to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?^d</p> <p>13 Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews’ language, and said, Hear</p>			<p>9 How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain from^{1A} the least of my master’s servants, and put your^{1A} trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?</p> <p>10 And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, to^{1A} destroy it.</p> <p>11 Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto him,^{1A} Speak, I pray thee, with^{1A} {us}^{1A} thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand <i>it</i>: and speak not to these words,^{1A} in the ears of the men sitting^{1A} on the wall.</p> <p>12 But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to your^{1A} master and to you^{1A} to speak these words? <i>hath he not sent me</i> to the men that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?</p> <p>13 Then the^{1A} Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews’ language,</p>	<p>9 How then can you repulse a single captain among the least of my master’s servants, when you rely on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?</p> <p>10 Moreover, is it without the LORD that I have come up against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.”</p> <p>11 Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to the field commander, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don’t speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall.”</p> <p>12 But the Rabshakeh said, “Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the people sitting on the wall, who are doomed with you to eat their own dung and drink their own urine?”</p> <p>13 Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out in a loud voice in the language of Judah, “Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria!</p>

8^a The Rabshakeh sarcastically offers to provide Jerusalem with two thousand horses, a suggestion that may imply conscripted military service. He then suggests that they may not have enough men to ride them. In v. 9 he dismisses Egypt’s ability to provide a similar offer.

10^b The Rabshakeh next indicates that Jehovah, whom Hezekiah has offended, has actually enlisted Assyria’s help against them, again purposefully mirroring a teaching of their own prophet, Isaiah (see Isa 10:5–6).

11^c The Judean leaders ask the Rabshakeh to speak in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the day, because they did not want their people to hear the negotiations. The Rabshakeh’s defiant move to continue in Hebrew is another evidence of his cleverness and his disdain for them.

12^d The Rabshakeh uses siege and famine imagery to frighten those listening.

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<p>ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.</p> <p>14 Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you.</p> <p>15 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.</p> <p>16 Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make <i>an agreement</i> with me <i>by</i> a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern;</p> <p>17 Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.^a</p> <p>18 <i>Beware</i> lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?^b</p> <p>19 Where <i>are</i> the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where <i>are</i> the gods of Sepharvaim?</p>			<p>and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria.</p> <p>14 Thus saith the king of Assyria,^{1A} Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you.</p> <p>15 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us and^{1A} this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.</p> <p>17 Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, to^{1A} a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.</p>	<p>14 Thus says the king: ‘Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you.</p> <p>15 Do not let Hezekiah make you rely on the LORD by saying, The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.’</p> <p>16 Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: ‘Make your peace with me and come out to me; then everyone of you will eat from your own vine and your own fig tree and drink water from your own cistern,</p> <p>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.</p> <p>18 Do not let Hezekiah mislead you by saying, The LORD will save us. Has any of the gods of the nations saved their land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?</p> <p>19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?</p>

17^a The Rabshakeh promises the people riches in Assyria, but the underlying reality is of deportation and slavery.

18^b The Rabshakeh’s position becomes clear. He considers Jehovah to be simply one among many gods, less powerful than the gods of Assyria.

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<p>and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?^a</p> <p>20 Who <i>are they</i> among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?</p> <p>21 But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.^b</p> <p>22 ¶ Then came Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, that <i>was</i> over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, the son of Asaph, the recorder, to Hezekiah with <i>their</i> clothes rent,^c and told him the words of Rabshakeh.^d</p>				<p>20 Who among all the gods of these countries have saved their countries out of my hand, that the LORD should save Jerusalem out of my hand?"</p> <p>21 But they were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was, "Do not answer him."</p> <p>22 Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh.</p>

¹⁹a Hamath, located on the Orontes River, was a major Syrian city about 150 miles north of Damascus and 275 miles northeast of Jerusalem. It was conquered by the Assyrians. Arpad was another Syrian city-state, located about 85 miles north of Hamath and about midway between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates.

The site of Sepharvaim may have been between Hamath and Arpad. See Map Isaiah 36:19.

²¹b At this moment of crisis, the people remain loyal to Hezekiah.

²²c The rending of clothes was a sign of mourning. See fn. for Isa 37:1.

²²d See fn. for Isa 36:3 for a discussion of these names.