

Second Isaiah Renewed Judgment

Interpreting the Text:

1. In what ways are the events narrated in Isaiah 36-39 concrete examples of the theological themes introduced in Isaiah 6? How do the stories about the salvation of Jerusalem during the Assyrian invasion illustrate the notion of God's total power over the cosmos? The use of human agents to achieve the divine will? The mixture of judgment and promise in Israel's history? The inevitable fulfillment of the divine word delivered through the prophet?
2. Is the story of Hezekiah's actions during the Assyrian invasion in any way related to the promise of a future king in Isaiah 9:1-7? Could Hezekiah be yet another fulfillment of the promise of a royal child in Isaiah. 7:14?

Applying the Text:

1. In Isaiah 34-39 the prophet seems to advocate for a governmental policy that relies solely on God's protection of Israel. Is this a viable position to adopt in the modern world? How does the historical timeframe of this story make this a contextual piece of wisdom rather than a universal one?
2. Isaiah in these chapters gives several examples of God's absolute control over human events, and the prophet suggests that God has a divine plan that determines the events of human history (Isaiah 37:26-27). What are the theological and practical implications of adopting such a view? Can it still be maintained today?
3. These chapters clearly illustrate the alternation between judgment and blessing that Israel's life with and experience of God involved. Even the faithful Hezekiah eventually made the wrong decision and led the nation into the punishment of exile in Babylon. Do you experience God's involvement in the world and in your own life this way?