

Verse 10

Let not thy God in whom thou trustest - This letter is nearly the same with the speech delivered by Rab-shakeh. See 2 Kings 18:29.

Verse 14

Spread it before the Lord - The temple was considered to be God's dwelling-place; and that whatever was there was peculiarly under his eye. Hezekiah spread the letter before the Lord, as he wished him to read the blasphemies spoken against himself.

Verse 15

Thou art the God, etc. - Thou art not only God of Israel, but God also of Assyria, and of all the nations of the world.

Verse 21

The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee - "So truly contemptible is thy power, and empty thy boasts, that even the young women of Jerusalem, under the guidance of Jehovah, shall be amply sufficient to discomfit all thy forces, and cause thee to return with shame to thy own country, where the most disgraceful death awaits thee." When Bishop Warburton had published his Doctrine of Grace, and chose to fall foul on some of the most religious people of the land, a young woman of the city of Gloucester exposed his graceless system in a pamphlet, to which she affixed the above words as a motto!

Verse 23

The tall cedar trees - the choice fir trees - Probably meaning the princes and nobles of the country.

The forest of his Carmel - Better in the margin: the forest and his fruitful field.

Verse 24

I have dipped and drunk strange waters - I have conquered strange countries, in which I have digged wells for my army; or, I have gained the wealth of strange countries.

With the sole of my feet - My infantry have been so numerous that they alone have been sufficient to drink up the rivers of the places I have besieged.

Verse 25

Hast thou not heard - Here Jehovah speaks, and shows this boasting king that what he had done was done by the Divine appointment, and that of his own counsel and might he could have done nothing. It was because God had appointed them to this civil destruction that he had overcome them; and it was not through his might; for God had made their inhabitants of small power, so that he only got the victory over men whom God had confounded, dismayed, and enervated, 2 Kings 19:26.

Verse 28

I will put my hook in thy nose - This seems to be an allusion to the method of guiding a buffalo; he has a sort of ring put into his nose, to which a cord or bridle is attached, by which he can be turned to the right, or to the left, or round about, according to the pleasure of his driver.

Verse 29

This shall be a sign unto thee - To Hezekiah; for to him this part of the address is made.

Ye shall eat this year - Sennacherib had ravaged the country, and seed-time was now over, yet God shows them that he would so bless the land, that what should grow of itself that year, would be quite sufficient to supply the inhabitants and prevent all famine; and though the second year was the sabbatical rest or jubilee for the land, in which it was unlawful to plough or sow; yet even then the land, by an especial blessing of God, should bring forth a sufficiency for its inhabitants; and in the third year they should sow and plant, etc. and have abundance, etc. Now this was to be a sign to Hezekiah, that his deliverance had not been effected by natural or casual means; for as without a miracle the ravaged and uncultivated land could not yield food for its inhabitants, so not without miraculous interference could the Assyrian army be cut off and Israel saved.

Verse 30

The remnant - shall yet again take root - As your corn shall take root in the soil, and bring forth and abundantly

multiply itself, so shall the Jewish people; the population shall be greatly increased, and the desolations occasioned by the sword soon be forgotten.

Verse 31

Out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant - The Jews shall be so multiplied as not only to fill Jerusalem, but all the adjacent country.

And they that escape out of Mount Zion - Some think that this refers to the going forth of the apostles to the Gentile world, and converting the nations by the preaching of the Gospel.

Verse 32

He shall not, etc. - Here follow the fullest proofs that Jerusalem shall not be taken by the Assyrians.

1.He shall not come into this city;

2.He shall not be able to get so near as to shoot an arrow into it;

3.He shall not be able to bring an army before it,

4.Nor shall he be able to raise any redoubt or mound against it;

5.No; not even an Assyrian shield shall be seen in the country; not even a foraging party shall come near the city.

Verse 33

By the way that he came - Though his army shall not return, yet he shall return to Assyria; for because of his blasphemy he is reserved for a more ignominious death.

Verse 35

That night - The very night after the blasphemous message had been sent, and this comfortable prophecy delivered.

The angel of the Lord went out - I believe this angel or messenger of the Lord was simply a suffocating or pestilential Wind; by which the Assyrian army was destroyed, as in a moment, without noise confusion or any warning. See the note 1 Kings 20:30. Thus was the threatening, 2 Kings 19:7, fulfilled, I will send a Blast upon him; for he had heard the rumor that his territories were invaded; and on his way to save his empire, in one night the whole of his army was destroyed, without any one even seeing who had hurt them. This is called an angel or messenger of the Lord: that is, something immediately sent by him to execute his judgments.

When they arose early - That is, Sennacherib, and probably a few associates, who were preserved as witnesses and relaters of this most dire disaster. Rab-shakeh, no doubt, perished with the rest of the army.

Verse 36

Dwelt at Nineveh - This was the capital of the Assyrian empire.

Verse 37

Nisroch his god - We know nothing of this deity; he is nowhere else mentioned.

Smote him with the sword - The rabbins say that his sons had learned that he intended to sacrifice them to this god, and that they could only prevent this by slaying him.

The same writers add, that he consulted his wise men how it was that such miracles should be wrought for the Israelites; who told him that it was because of the merit of Abraham who had offered his only son to God: he then said, I will offer to him my two sons; which when they heard, they rose up and slew him. When a rabbin cannot untie a knot, he feels neither scruple nor difficulty to cut it.