

Isaiah 36:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

Analysis

Rabshakeh's taunt "I say, thy counsel and strength for war are but vain words" attacks the foundation of Hezekiah's trust. The Assyrian accurately identifies that military preparedness requires both strategy ("counsel") and power ("strength"). His claim that Judah possesses neither is designed to demoralize. However, he fundamentally misunderstands the source of Judah's confidence—not military might but divine protection. This reveals the world's inability to comprehend faith-based confidence.

Historical Context

Assyria had crushed multiple rebellions through superior military tactics and overwhelming force. From a human perspective, Judah's resistance appeared foolish.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the world misunderstand confidence placed in God rather than military or economic power?
2. When has your faith been dismissed as "vain words" by unbelievers?
3. How do we demonstrate that trust in God is not mere words but substantive reality?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־עֲמָלֵךְ מִצְרַיִם
I say words sayest thou (but they are but vain) I have counsel
H559 H389 H1697 H8193 H6098

וְעַל־עַל־עַתָּה לְמַלְחָמָה וְגַבּוּךְ הַ
and strength for war now on whom dost thou trust
H1369 H4421 H6258 H5921 H4310 H982

בְּנֵי מִכְּדָפֶת
that thou rebellest H0
H3588 H4775

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 18:7 (Parallel theme): And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.