

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

אָמַרְתִּי דְבַר אֶן

I say
H559

H389

words
H1697

שֹׁפֵת יִם

sayest thou (but they are but vain
H8193

עֵצָה

I have counsel
H6098

וְגִבּוֹרָה לְמִלְחָמָה

and strength
H1369

for war
H4421

עַתָּה מִי עַל

H6258

H5921

H4310

כָּטָהּ

now on whom dost thou trust
H982

כִּי מִכָּדָתְךָ

H3588

that thou rebellest
H4775

H0

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.