

Review (69): *It's a Wonderful Life: Trusting in Man Compared with Using a Reed as a Crutch: The Assyrian Invasion of Judah, Jer 17:5; Isa 36:6*

- 19) It is interesting to note the Greek word for discouragement:

ἀθυμέω /athumeo /: It contains a root word that means “feeling and passion.” Please note it begins with an alpha privative which negates that concept: “no feeling or passion.”

ἀθυμέω /athumeo / came to be defined as “to be disheartened, to lose heart, faintheartedness, spiritless, and despondency.”

- 20) The word is used in Colossians 3:21 and is an *hapax legomenon*: a phrase or word used only once in the New Testament.

Colossians 3:21 - Fathers, stop irritating and embittering [ἐρεθίζω / erethizw / your children lest they become discouraged [ἀθυμέω / athumeo].

- 21) Children as well as others become embittered when they do not know how to obey authority because the authority figure does not consistently communicate his wishes. If children don't understand what they are to do but are punished for failure they become discouraged.
- 22) George is to that point. He thinks he has done everything any decent and fair person could ask yet he finds himself in the position to be characterized as a common criminal.
- 23) To him this is unfair, unjust, and undeserved. In self-righteous arrogance he cannot discern how he could be to blame, therefore he begins to strike out at his relatives, fellow townspeople, and his immediate family. George might be thinking, “Since someone is to blame here and it's not me, it must be Uncle Billy, or the house, no, it's Mrs. Welch, or the children—‘Why do we have to have all these kids?’”
- 24) What George decides he really needs at this point is somebody to touch. And the only man in town with the capital to fix George's problem is none other than Henry Potter.
- 25) This indicates desperation and loss of integrity. George is not only functioning under in three arrogant skills he also manifests several categories of the cosmic system.
1. Mental Attitude Arrogance: Self-pity was reflected in his conversation with Mrs. Welch. He alleged it was Mrs. Welch's fault Zuzu was sick because she allowed her to leave school improperly dressed. Then he began to justify the poor quality of Zuzu's clothes implying Mrs. Welch did not approve of her wardrobe.
 2. Self-righteous Arrogance: he believes he is a good person and this is all unfair. His malice toward Uncle Billy indicated he wanted to project blame on him.
 3. Arrogance of Unhappiness: This is commonly reflected by those who blame their environment such as his comments, “It's this old house ... drafty old barn of a place. Might as well be living in a refrigerator. Why do we have to live here in the first place and stay around this measly, crummy old town?”
 4. Irrational Arrogance: George became very emotional and hypersensitive toward his children's normal activities around Christmas.
 5. Psychological Arrogance: This will occur later when he contemplates and almost attempts suicide.
- 26) Right now George has to come up with a lot of money. He does not consider rebounding all his sins beginning with fear followed by malice, judging, and arrogance in its several forms. He does not consider going to the local police and reporting the loss of the money. He is blinded by the fact he knows he is innocent but that his reputation is about to become history. There's only one man in town that he believes can give him the quick fix he needs: Henry Potter.

- 27) It would have helped if George could have remembered these two principles:
 1. In problem analysis, if your volition is not involved and the problem involves circumstances, then you utilize the Faith-Rest Drill.
 2. If the problem involves people, then you apply unconditional love to all, including Uncle Billy, Mrs. Welch, and his wife and children.
- 28) Please note that when George left the house neither Mary nor the children began to feel sorry for themselves. They realized something was wrong and thus did not judge their husband or father. Instead they prayed for him.
- 29) This demonstrates the principle of unconditional love under pressure even when people are obviously out of line. Grace orients and then adjusts with doctrinal orientation. The children decided to pray for their father. Mary got on the phone and asked the same of her relatives, friends, and neighbors starting with Uncle Billy.
- 30) We hear some of those prayers at the very beginning of the movie. As they are being offered, George is on the way to Potter's office to hopefully cut a deal with the devil.
- 31) The deal he seeks to cut will, if successful, be like a sharp reed that pierces the hand. This is the illustration used to describe reversionistic Judah that once sought military assistance from Egypt when it should have relied upon the Lord.
- 32) In the year 701 b.c., Sennacherib, king of Assyria, undertook a pan-Arabic campaign to broaden his power base. He defeated the Phoenicians, the Palestinians, and the Egyptians in a sweep down the Mediterranean coast.
- 33) Sennacherib then turned his attention to Judah which was ruled at that time by King Hezekiah. He had come to the throne of the Southern Kingdom in 725 b.c. at age 15 but his formal rulership did not begin until 10 years later in 715 b.c.
- 34) Second Kings 18:5-7 documents that Hezekiah began his reign as a mature believer and the Prophet Isaiah was assigned by the Lord to advise and counsel him.
- 35) Unfortunately Hezekiah went into a period of reversionism that almost cost him his life and Judah its freedom. It was God's desire that the kings of Israel depend upon Him for security and provision.
- 36) This calls for the execution of the spiritual life of Israel which is the faith-rest drill. Historical circumstances are not to change this approach to foreign policy.
- 37) It is easy to depend upon God when there is no threat from some predator. But when the threat is obvious, men seek other men to insure their position of safety.
- 38) Jeremiah had a comment to make on such an attitude:

Jeremiah 17:5 - Thus says the Lord, "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord."

- 39) Hezekiah in his reversionism developed this problem. He entered into a treaty with Egypt to protect Judah against any invasion attempt by Assyria and Isaiah vociferously implored Hezekiah against it.

Isaiah 30:1 - "Woe to the rebellious children," declares the Lord, "Who execute a plan, but not Mine and make an alliance but not of My Spirit in order to add sin to sin;

v 2 - who proceed down to Egypt without consulting Me to take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt!

v 3 - “Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be your shame and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt your humiliation”

- 40) According to 2 Kings 18:13 it was in Hezekiah’s 14th year on the throne, 701 b.c., when Sennacherib, King of Assyria, invaded Judah attacking and capturing the fortified cities around Jerusalem.
- 41) It was during that campaign that Sennacherib defeated the Egyptian army.

Blaiklock, Edward M. and R. K. Harrison (eds.). *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology*. Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1983, P. 178:

Sennacherib in his annals of 701-702 B.C., mentions the place as Altaku along with Timnah, among his conquests. In 701 B.C. there was a significant confrontation there between Sennacherib and the allied forces of Ethiopia and Egypt.

The last two Judean strongholds secured in the campaign were Libnah and Lachish.

- 42) Simultaneous with the Assyrian campaign, Hezekiah was taken ill and in Isaiah 38 is informed by Isaiah that he has committed the sin unto death. Confronted with this knowledge Hezekiah prays that the Lord would spare his life. His reprieve is recorded in:

Isaiah 38:4 - Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying,

v 5 - “Go and say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of your father David, “I have heard your prayer. I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life.

v 6 - “And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city.””

- 43) Down at Lachish, Sennacherib’s G-2 informed him of Hezekiah’s illness and he decided to take advantage. He dispatched three of his highest officials to meet with Hezekiah’s cabinet.

2 Kings 18:17 - The King of Assyria sent Tartan, his field marshal, Rabсарis, his battalion commander, and the Rabshakeh, his Secretary of State, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem.”

- 44) We learn the names of the diplomats Hezekiah sent out to meet them at Jerusalem’s city walls in:

Isaiah 36:3 - Then Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the State Department, Shebna, the royal secretary, and Joah, the royal historian, came out to meet the Rabshakeh.

- 45) The Jewish delegation is greeted with a scathing speech by the Assyrian Secretary of State who uses a reed to illustrate that Hezekiah made a strategic mistake when he signed a mutual protection treaty with Egypt.

Isaiah 36:6 - “Behold, you have trusted in a staff, a crutch; this reed being crushed on Egypt, a crutch on which anyone resting, will skewer his hand and pierce it; so is Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all who depend on him.”