



Rabshakeh's Propaganda Objective 3: Discredit the Messenger to Discredit the Message, Isa 36:7; PROPOB 4: Rabshakeh's Indecent Proposal, Isa 36:8-9

Isaiah 36:7 - "But if you should say to me, 'In Jehovah, or Elohim we have trusted,' then I will say to you, 'Is it not Jehovah, whose high places and altars Hezekiah has destroyed and kept saying to Judah and Jerusalem, 'Before this one altar you shall worship'?"

- 1) One of the key tactics of ambassador demons is to use religious differences to cause tension and division in a client nation.
- 2) However, the Rabshakeh is confused about Hezekiah's program of ridding the land of all the sites of Baal worship and its idols. 2 Kings 18:1-6 documents these efforts which the Rabshakeh interprets as an affront to Jehovah.
- 3) It's possible the syncretism of Baal worship with that of *YHWH Elohim* in both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms confused the heathen Secretary of State.
- 4) Nevertheless, his confusion of the two could be effective were there a large number of Baal enthusiasts in the land who were supporters of the syncretism.
- 5) Both the Baal cult and Judaism were very ritualistic. One of the problems with ritual in Christianity is that it is so much a part of all heathen worship systems.
- 6) When Christian denominations or even independent churches emphasize ritual over doctrine then their parishioners will begin to place primary emphasis on the ritual rather than the Word.
- 7) Lazy and unprofessional, clergymen become disreputable because of their failure to study the Word and exegete its content. Constantly caught without an explanation for biblical passages they place restraints on their parishioners' access to the Scripture.
- 8) They insist that knowledge of Scripture must be left to them and they will issue mandates for the people to follow and enable them to become spiritual.
- 9) Therefore, being a good Christian is defined as doing what the clergy says without reference to biblical accuracy.
- 10) The Rabshakeh implies that Hezekiah is guilty of doing away with rituals required to please the God of Israel. He hopes the reversionists will buy this lie.
- 11) **PROPAGANDA OBJECTIVE #3:** When spiritual things are discussed they must be defined in Satan's terms and not God's. Religion is Lucifer's counterfeit of Christianity. If you discredit the messenger, you discredit his message. This is the intended consequence of attacking legitimate authority. If the authority figure can be discredited then his message will be rejected.
- 12) The Rabshakeh scoffed at Judah's attempt to gain an advantage by looking to Egypt or to *YHWH Elohim* for help. Now he employs sarcasm by making a facetious proposal to Hezekiah's delegation :

Isaiah 36:8 - "Now therefore, come, make a bet if you please with my master the king of Assyria. I will give you two thousand horses, if you are able on your part to set riders on them."



v. 9 - "How will you turn away one of the least of my cavalry division commanders? Or have you placed your confidence in Egypt for chariot corps and cavalry?"

- 1) To better understand this insult we need to understand something about the advent of chariotry and horse cavalry in the Middle East and Israel. For this we go to:

de Vaux, Roland. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*. Translated by John McHugh. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Livonia: Dove Booksellers, 1977), 222-24:

From about 1500 B.C., chariotry had become the essential, and sometimes the principle, arm in the military forces of the Near East. It was first introduced by the Indo-Europeans who helped to build the state of Mitanni \mi-ta' nē\ in Northern Mesopotamia; they were men skilled in breeding horses, and in the art of making light but strong two-wheeled chariots. The new weapon was quickly copied by the Hittites, and was soon adopted throughout Mesopotamia, Egypt and Syria-Palestine. Every little Canaanite state had its chariots and its charioteers, and they were known by the Indo-European name of *maryannu*. The Philistines and the other 'Peoples of the Sea' who lived along the coast of Palestine soon had their charioteers, too.

To set up and to maintain a chariot corps was an expensive undertaking, and in the early days the Israelites were poor; hence they were unable to adopt this new and important weapon for some time.

Solomon's great military innovation was the establishment of a strong chariot force. The King bought chariots in Egypt (where they made excellent ones) and horses in Cilicia (which had a reputation for stud-farms). As a result, he had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses, according to 1 Kings 10:26. (p. 222)

These troops were quartered in Jerusalem, where there was a 'Horses Gate' and in the 'Chariot towns' (mentioned in 1 Kings 10:26). These 'Towns for chariots and horses' or garrison towns, are listed in 1 Kings 9:15-19: Hazor \hā' zor\, Megiddo \me-gid' ō\, Gezer \gez' er\, Lower Beth-Horon \beth-hō' ron\, Baalath \bā' a-lath\, Tamar \tā' mer\. Fortified by conscripts of the national labour forces (according to 1 Kings 9:15), these places formed a defence network which straddled the main roads leading to the heart of the kingdom, and all lay close to level country where the chariots could manoeuvre. Excavations in Megiddo have shown what these 'chariot towns' looked like: part of the town was given over to enormous stables with a separate stall for each horse. In the middle was an open courtyard with drinking troughs; the courtyard was used to exercise and to train the horses. The stables discovered at Megiddo could hold 450 horses.

In Egyptian chariots, there were two riders, one to hold the reins and one to fight. In Assyria, at the time of the Israelite monarchy, the team had three men; this number was raised to four at some date between Tiglath-Pileser III and Ashurbanipal, but afterwards they reverted to a three-man team. The 'third' was called, in Assyrian, *shalshu* or *tashlishu*. Israelite chariots also carried three men, the driver (called simply *rakkab* or 'charioteer' in 1 Kings 22:34), the combatant and the 'third' (*shalish*: 1 Kings 9:22). (p. 223)



When the kingdom was split after the death of Solomon, the principle chariot garrisons (Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer and probably Lower Beth-Horon) fell into the hands of the Israelites [the Northern Kingdom]. Judah had very few chariot troops left, and we do not know whether [Rehoboam] posted any in the new towns he fortified. The chariot force of Judah seems to have been increased in the eighth century, when [Isaiah] says: 'It's a land full of horses, and of chariots too numerous to count' (Isaiah 2:7), and curses those who place their trust in horses and a large chariot force (Isaiah 31:1, 16). These armaments came from Egypt, where Judah had once more turned in quest of an ally (Isaiah 31:1-3), and [Isaiah] seems to be condemning this recourse to armaments as something new. The country did not benefit thereby, for in 701 Sennacherib captured every town in Judah except Jerusalem without fighting a single battle in which chariots were engaged. It seems that chariot troops were never again raised after this time. (pp. 223-24)

About 1000 B.C. mounted cavalry made its first timid appearance in the Near East. Warriors on horseback are represented on the bas-reliefs of Tell Halaf [Gozan 'gō' zan] at the beginning of the ninth century B.C., and some elements of cavalry were introduced into the Assyrian army about the same time. The Egyptian army never had any cavalry except for mounted scouts. Nor did the Israelites; Sennacherib's envoy made the ironical proposal to [Eliakim] that he would give him 2,000 horses if he could find horsemen to ride them. (p. 224)

- 2) What this tells us is that although well-supported and well-trained armies of the eighth century B.C. possessed corps of charioteers and cavalry, Judah under Hezekiah had neither. The Rabshakeh knew this and he taunted Hezekiah's national security advisor with this fact.
- 3) He proposes a wager to Eliakim: I will give you 2,000 horses if you can provide the riders. The people of Judah and Jerusalem are seated on the wall observing this exchange. They know they have no cavalry and thus no cavalymen.