

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 256 – Hezekiah’s Sickness Through Seeking A Sign (Isaiah 38:1-22)

1. What did Hezekiah do when he learned he was going to die?

He wept and prayed about it: *“In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, And said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore”* (Isaiah 38:1-3; cf. II Kings 20:1-3).

- Setting your house in order, i.e. preparing for death (**II Samuel 17:23**; cf. **Ecclesiastes 9:10**).
- Sometimes a prophet’s message of doom brings a change of heart to people (**Jonah 3:4-10**).
- Isaiah did his job (**Ezekiel 3:18**).
- Having said all of that, death is a reality for all of mankind regardless of faithfulness (**II Samuel 14:14**, **Psalms 89:47-48**, **Psalms 90:10**, **Ecclesiastes 3:20-21**, **Ecclesiastes 9:5**, **Romans 5:12**, and **Hebrews 9:27**). Thus, Hezekiah will not prevent himself from death entirely regardless of his response.
- Hezekiah prayed to God (**Deuteronomy 4:29-30**, **I Kings 8:45-49**, **II Chronicles 7:14**, **II Chronicles 33:12-14**, **Acts 8:22**, and **Acts 9:11**).
- The request for God to remember was not a charge of Him forgetting, just a casual (i.e. **Nehemiah 13:14**, **Jeremiah 15:15**, **Luke 23:42**, etc.).
- Hezekiah was confident that his life was a testimony of his faithfulness (**I Chronicles 29:9**, **Psalms 101:1-3**, and **Psalms 119:80**). Not everyone could say that (**I Kings 15:14**).
- The Lord certainly sees (**II Chronicles 16:9**) and wants us to walk rightly (**I John 2:3-6**).

2. What was God’s response to Hezekiah’s prayer?

Through Isaiah, God said He would add 15 years to his life and deliver the city from the Assyrians: *“Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city”* (Isaiah 38:4-6; cf. II Kings 20:4-6).

- God spoke to prophets (**Numbers 12:6**, **Hebrews 1:1-2**, and **II Peter 1:20-21**).
- The mention of David is powerful, for promises past made (**I Kings 8:25**, **I Kings 9:4-5**, and **Psalms 89:3**; cf. **II Kings 20:6**).
- The fact that God heard his prayer is telling (**Proverbs 28:9**, **Isaiah 59:1-3**, **John 9:31**, and **I John 5:14-15**). However, Hezekiah had to HUMBLY himself first (**II Chronicles 32:24-26**).
- His tears and prayers to God are meaningful (**Psalms 34:18** and **Isaiah 51:17**).

3. What did God do to show Hezekiah that Isaiah's message was true?

“And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken; Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down” (Isaiah 38:7-8; cf. II Kings 20:8-11).

- Hezekiah asked for a sign and even somewhat had some inferred doubts (II Kings 20:8-11).
- Prior to the completion of the revealed word, signs were given to prove the messenger was really giving a message from God (Mark 16:15-20, Acts 2:22, Acts 14:1-3, Romans 15:18-19, and Hebrews 2:1-4). *Here is a gem for thought – When Jesus came God was not nearly as patient since His promises were fulfilled (Acts 17:30). You can see how here Hezekiah wanted a sign and God obliged, but when you notice Jesus teaching He was so willing towards those who should have known better (Matthew 12:38-42 and Matthew 16:1-4).
- God can do anything (Genesis 18:14, Jeremiah 32:17, Mark 10:27, and Luke 1:37), including moving the sun (Joshua 10:12-13 and Isaiah 13:10; cf. Jeremiah 31:35).

4. Use this space to make notes for discussing Hezekiah's words that conclude this chapter (Isaiah 38:9-22).

The text: “The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness: I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord. For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover. Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord” (Isaiah 38:9-22)?

- Kings write things and make written decrees (**Daniel 6:25**).
- Like Job, he felt his days were over and too short (**Job 17:1-11**).
- Seeing the Lord in the land of the living could refer to seeing the works of God on earth (**Psalms 27:13**).
- He felt like his dwelling was packed up like a temporary tent signifying how short he felt his life was. True point when you count your days (**James 4:13-16**).
- He compared himself to a lion that God broke the bones of (cf. **Psalms 39:10** and **Psalms 51:8**).
- He compared himself to a bird chattering and mourning (cf. **Job 30:29-31**).
- In a contradiction [for he is actually saying it], Hezekiah says he'll keep his complaints to himself (cf. **Job 10:1**) for he did realize that there is not challenging God [God said it that settles it] (**Job 33:13, Job 38:1-3, Job 40:1-8, Jeremiah 18:1-10, Romans 9:20, and I Corinthians 10:22**).
- Hezekiah felt beat down. He wanted to recover with God's help. God has humbled him like he has Israel in the past (**Deuteronomy 8:1-3**).
- Hezekiah's declarations show that his bitterness passed and God delivered him from the pit (**Psalms 88:1-7**). Now we see that attitude portrayed in the 30th Psalm (**Psalms 30:1-12**).
- In death, the hope for truth is gone (**Luke 16:19-31**).
- Hezekiah's thankfulness extends to the obvious point that the dead cannot praise God, such is for the living (**Psalms 115:17-18**).
- Songs of praise for salvation (**Psalms 51:14-15** and **Psalms 95:1**).
- Isaiah told Hezekiah how to have his boil healed and he recovered (**II Kings 20:7**). Many times things like this occurred in the Scriptures (**II Kings 4:1-7, II Kings 5:1-14, Mark 7:32-33, and John 9:1-8**).
- Hezekiah then wanted to know the sign, which we've already discussed the point of in verses 7-8 (**II Kings 20:7-10**).