

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 257 – Letters From Babylon Through Peace In Hezekiah's Days (Isaiah 39:1-8)

1. Why were letters and a present sent from Babylon to Hezekiah?

They sent them because they heard Hezekiah had been sick and was recovered: *“At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered”* (Isaiah 39:1; cf. II Kings 20:12).

- Babylon, the Chaldean Empire, was a glorious kingdom prior to God destroying them (Isaiah 13:19).
- Babylon will eventually be invading Jerusalem (II Kings 24:10-11) by God's doing (Ezra 5:12 and Jeremiah 21:1-10).
- Gifts were sent prior to this by all nations when Assyria was defeated (II Chronicles 32:22-23). This is done for obvious reasons (Proverbs 18:16, Proverbs 19:6, and Proverbs 29:26). Gifts like these were and are common among rulers (I Kings 4:21 and I Kings 10:10).

2. What did Hezekiah do in response to the letters and present from Babylon?

He showed the Babylonians all his good, armor, everything: *“And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not”* (Isaiah 39:2; cf. II Kings 20:13).

- Hezekiah had a lot (II Chronicles 32:27-30).
- Was Hezekiah wise with his show and tell (cf. Luke 11:21-22)? Caution must be used spiritually (Colossians 2:8) and carnally (Micah 7:5 and Matthew 10:16-18). Be wise (Ephesians 5:15-17).
- God left (cf. Psalms 27:9) Hezekiah to do what he pleased here to test his heart (II Chronicles 32:31; cf. Deuteronomy 8:2).
- God tries hearts (Psalms 7:9, Proverbs 17:3, Jeremiah 17:9-10, I Thessalonians 2:4, and Revelation 2:20-23).
- That being said, God did not create this situation as a temptation to cause Hezekiah to fail (James 1:13-16).

3. Who enquired of Hezekiah's visitors?

Isaiah: *“Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon”* (Isaiah 39:3; II Kings 20:14).

- Faithful prophets [there were false ones – Jeremiah 27:9-10, Lamentations 2:14, and Ezekiel 13:2-3] were sent to correspond between God and man (II Chronicles 25:15 and Hosea 12:10).

4. Was Hezekiah willing to talk about what he had shown the Babylonians?

He fessed up: *“Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them”* (Isaiah 39:4; cf. II Kings 20:15).

- In one way, maybe Hezekiah is confessing his ignorance (**Joshua 7:19**, **Proverbs 28:13**, and **I John 1:9**).
- In another way, you have to wonder if he is naïve to the fact that he just showed a conquering (**II Kings 24:7**), future enemy state (**Jeremiah 20:4-7**) all that he has (**Proverbs 22:3; 27:12**). If he was being naïve, naïve is not good (**Proverbs 14:15** and **Proverbs 14:18**).
- God had forewarned Israel that He would use their enemies against them if they erred (**Leviticus 26:15-17**). Now Hezekiah is showing them everything. Talk about opening the door for destruction!
- Here is another thought, was Hezekiah possibly setting up for a potential bribe if Babylon invaded during his reign? Was he showing them the goods for this reason? He did it before (**II Kings 18:14-16**).

5. Who did Isaiah speak on the behalf of to Hezekiah?

The Lord: *“Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord of hosts”* (Isaiah 39:5; cf. II Kings 20:16).

- Prophets spoke God’s word (**II Samuel 23:2**, **Jeremiah 1:9**, **I Corinthians 14:37**, and **II Peter 1:20-21**).
- That doesn’t mean the people listened (**II Chronicles 36:14-16**) and kingdoms like Babylon were then used to punish (**II Chronicles 36:17-18**).

6. What did Hezekiah learn about the future of his house, family, and kingdom?

Captivity to come: *“Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon”* (Isaiah 39:6-7; cf. II Kings 20:17-18).

- They’re going to take it all (**II Kings 24:11-20** and **Daniel 1:1-2**).
- Even Zedekiah and his sons with cruelty (**Jeremiah 39:6-8**).

7. Was Hezekiah devastated by the news of what was to come concerning his house, descendants, and kingdom?

No, he was happy it was going to be delayed: *“Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days”* (Isaiah 39:8; cf. II Kings 20:19).

- While it’s good not to complain about punishment (**Lamentations 3:39**), this is not that (cf. **Psalms 25:12-13**, **Psalms 128:1-6**, and **Proverbs 13:22**)!