**Isaiah**

**The Revelation within Isaiah**

**Chapters 38-39**

Chapters 38 and 39 in Isaiah are a historical transcript of two incidences in King Hezekiah’s reign with the prophet Isaiah. A parallel account is written in 2 Kings 20 with almost the exact same text. These two stories reveal the faith and folly a believer in Christ can walk. With faith, in a cry to help, or folly, by agreeing with apathy and pride. As with many personal stories in the Bible, Hezekiah’s accounts are giving to us an example to heed wisdom for our own walk of faith.

**“**Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity- and in chapters 36-37 we saw how a nation came to within an inch of extinction, how all the cities of Judah fell bar one, Jerusalem, and how it looked as if she was facing utter disaster and destruction, and how God brought that city back from the brink and not an arrow was fired into it; and that city lasted another 115 years before it fell. It was a reprieve for a city. But what Almighty God can do for a city and a nation He can do for an individual, and chapters 38-39 describe how the king of that city came within an inch of his own death…”– Pawson, Come With Me Through Isaiah, p.176

**Chapters 38-39: The Passion Translation**

**Hezekiah’s Illness**

**38**Now, Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz, came and prophesied to him, saying, “This is what Yahweh has to say to you: Set your affairs in order, for you will not recover from this illness. You are going to die.” **2**Then Hezekiah *broke down and wept,* turned his face to the wall, and prayed, “O please, Yahweh, please. I beg you, *let me live.* **3**Remember how I have walked faithfully before your face. With all my heart, I have sought to do only what is good in your eyes.“ Bitter tears streamed down his face.

**4**Then Isaiah received another prophetic word for Hezekiah. Yahweh said to him, **5**“Go deliver this message to Hezekiah: ‘This is what Yahweh, the God of your ancestor David, has to say to you: I have heard your *heartfelt* prayer and I have seen you cry tear after bitter tear. I will give you another fifteen years. **6**I will defend Jerusalem, and I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. **7**This will be a sign to you from Yahweh as a confirmation that I will do for you what I have promised. **8**I will cause the sun’s shadow to retreat ten steps on the stairway of Ahaz.’”

Then the sunlight went back up the ten steps it had gone down.

**Hezekiah’s Psalm of Praise**

**9**Here is the poem of Hezekiah, king of Judah, which he wrote when he was healed from his illness:

**10**I was dying in the prime of life.  
    I thought, “Must I leave this world now?  
    Must I go through the gates of death  
    and miss out on the rest of my years?”  
**11**I thought, “I won’t get to see Yah again  
    in the land of the living.  
    No longer will I see my friends or family  
    nor enjoy the company of anyone living on earth.  
**12**My body is being folded up and taken from me,  
    taken down like a shepherd’s tent.  
    He cuts my life short,  
    as a weaver cuts his cloth from the loom and rolls it up.  
    From day to night, you bring my life to an end.  
**13**I felt as though a lion were crushing all my bones  
    as I cried out for help until morning.  
    From day to night, you bring my life to an end.  
**14**I *could only* chirp like a swallow or small bird;  
    I could only moan like a dove.  
    My eyes are weary from looking up into heaven.  
    Yahweh, I am so depressed. Come and be my strength.  
**15**But what can I say?  
    For he has spoken to me and told me  
    that he is the one who has done this.  
    I can’t sleep a wink because I’m overwhelmed with grief.  
**16**Lord, it is because of your kindness that life is given.  
    It is in you that my spirit lives.  
    Now restore my health and give me life *again!*  
**17**Truly, it was for my own good  
    that I had this bitter experience.  
    For you loved my soul out of the pit of oblivion.  
    You cast all my sins behind your back.  
**18**The grave and those buried there cannot praise you.  
    Neither the realm of death nor those who enter it  
    can give you thanks or hope for your faithfulness.  
**19**It’s the living who thank you as I do today.  
    One generation makes your faithfulness known to the next.  
**20**Yahweh is pleased to *heal me and* save me!  
    We will sing to the music of stringed instruments  
    every day of our lives in Yahweh’s house.”

**21**Now, Isaiah had said to Hezekiah, “Have the *physicians* apply a poultice of cakes of dried figs to your boil, and you will recover.”

**22**And Hezekiah had said, “What will be the sign from God that I will be healed and go up again to worship in Yahweh’s house?”

**Hezekiah’s Failure**

**39**Shortly after *Hezekiah was healed of his illness,* the king of Babylon, Merodach-Baladan, son of Baladan, heard that King Hezekiah had been deathly ill and had recovered. So he sent envoys carrying letters and a *lavish* gift. **2***Delighted by the king’s gesture, and having a desire to impress them,* Hezekiah welcomed the envoys from Babylon and opened the doors of the king’s storehouses of treasures and showed them to the envoys. He let them see all of his gold, silver, spices, and costly fragrant oils, as well as his entire armory. All of the king’s royal treasures, all that was in the king’s palace, and all the wealth of his whole kingdom was shown to them.

**3**Then Isaiah the prophet visited the king and said to him, *“What have you done?* What did these men say and where did they come from?”

Hezekiah replied, “They are envoys from distant Babylon.”

**4**Then Isaiah asked, “What did they see in your palace?”

“They have seen everything in my palace,” responded Hezekiah. “I showed them everything in my royal treasuries.”

**5**Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Here is what Yahweh, Commander of Angel Armies, has to say to you: **6**‘The days are coming when all the treasures in your palace and all the wealth that your ancestors have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon; absolutely nothing will be left,’ says the Lord. **7**’Some of your own sons who come after you will be deported, *be castrated,* and become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’”

**8**Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word Yahweh has spoken through you is good and right.” *For he thought,* “At least for me, there will be peace and security in my lifetime.”

**Chapters 38-39: New King James Version**

**Hezekiah’s Life Extended**

**38**In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’ ”

**2**Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord, **3**and said, “Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done *what is* good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

**4**And the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, **5**“Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. **6**I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.” ’ **7**And this *is* the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing which He has spoken: **8**Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward.” So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.

* It is possible that these steps functioned as some type of a sundial. See *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament,* 614, s.v. -TPT footnotes
* This was probably one of two things a square stone block with lines engraved upon a hemisphere to create a sundial, or a series pyramid-type stairs with a pillar set upon the top. The shadow of the pillar would be cast upon the exact measures of the steps to calculate time.

**9**This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness:

**10**I said,  
“In the prime of my life  
I shall go to the gates of Sheol;  
I am deprived of the remainder of my years.”  
**11**I said,  
“I shall not see Yah,  
The Lord in the land of the living;  
I shall observe man no more among the inhabitants of the world.  
**12**My life span is gone,  
Taken from me like a shepherd’s tent;  
I have cut off my life like a weaver.  
He cuts me off from the loom;  
From day until night You make an end of me.  
**13**I have considered until morning—  
Like a lion,  
So He breaks all my bones;  
From day until night You make an end of me.  
**14**Like a crane *or* a swallow, so I chattered;  
I mourned like a dove;  
My eyes fail *from looking* upward.  
O Lord, I am oppressed;  
Undertake for me!

**15**“What shall I say?  
He has both spoken to me,  
And He Himself has done *it.*  
I shall walk carefully all my years  
In the bitterness of my soul.  
**16**O Lord, by these *things men* live;  
And in all these *things is* the life of my spirit;  
So You will restore me and make me live.

* “We have here the Jewish picture of life after death. I heard it best described by a scholar in Cambridge. He said that Sheol was like a station waiting room at four o’clock in the morning. If ever you have been in that situation you will understand something of what it meant to the Jew: nothing doing, just a weary existence with no joy, no comfort. So the king dreaded death.” – Pawson, Come With Me Through Isaiah, p.183

**17**Indeed *it was* for *my own* peace  
*That* I had great bitterness;  
But You have lovingly *delivered* my soul from the pit of corruption,  
For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.  
**18**For Sheol cannot thank You,  
Death cannot praise You;  
Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.  
**19**The living, the living man, he shall praise You,  
As I *do* this day;  
The father shall make known Your truth to the children.

* Hezekiah’s prayer is not the earnest prayer of the Christian now. The earnest prayer of the Christian is the prayer of Paul. His attitude is: I am willing to stay here if you have more work for me to do, but I would rather be off (to be with the Lord). – Pawson, Come With Me Through Isaiah, p.183

**20**“The Lord *was ready* to save me;  
Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments  
All the days of our life, in the house of the Lord.”

**21**Now Isaiah had said, “Let them take a lump of figs, and apply *it* as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover.”

**22**And Hezekiah had said, “What *is* the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?”

* Because this verse seems so out of place, many contemporary translations place it between v. 6 and v. 7. See also 2 Kings [20:7-8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2Kgs.20.7&version=TPT). Hezekiah was not afraid of asking for a sign, not wanting to make the mistake of his father, Ahaz (Isa. [7:11-13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isa.7.11&version=TPT)). -TPT footnotes
* Stricken by a serious disease, Hezekiah was close to death; some suggest he has some form of cancer. Isaiah informed Hezekiah of the need to prepare his house and plan his funeral. Prior to this announcement, Hezekiah had removed the brass serpent from Moses’ time, breaking it in pieces (see 2 Kings 18:4).

If the Hebrew people in Hezekiah’s day were like believers in the church today, they probably made comments such as, “Well, I believe God is judging the king for destroying the serpent on the pole that Moses built!” Others may have said, “If he still had the healing snake of Moses, he could look at it, burn a little incense, and God would probably heal him!” The fact was, the serpent had become and idol, just as some people today tend to pray in front of different images, which is forbidden in Scripture. (Duet 7:5,25)

Instead of looking toward an image or an ancient relic, the king “turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord”. It could be that the “wall” was more than just a wall in the palace; as Hezekiah turned to it, he also may have been praying in the direction of the temple, which was what Solomon instructed the people to do when in distress. (1 Kings 8:22-53)

The practical lesson is this: When we are in dire need of a divine intervention or a miraculous answer to prayer, we tend to look for something to undergird our faith or for a person with a strong prophetic anointing, such as an “Isaiah”; we tend to call on the one person we believe is closest to God at that moment. However, all that we ever really need is a place to pray and turn our faces to God as we call upon His grace and mercy.

Before Isaiah left the palace yard, God spoke to him to return to the king’s chamber and announce that God had extended the king’s life by fifteen years. In the King James Bible, thirty words of prayer gave the king fifteen more years of life. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, p. 618

**The Babylonian Envoys**

**39**At that time Merodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. **2**And Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

* *Merodach-Baladan* means “god of blood and slaughter, mars, war, murder.” -TPT footnotes
* *Baladan* means “Baal is his lord.” -TPT footnotes
* Now you cannot just imagine people coming eight hundred miles with a present simply because a man had been sick and got better. You would imagine there must be something more behind it, and of course there was. If you study 2 Kings 20 and 2 Chronicles 32 you will find out what was in their minds. It says they not only came to give Hezekiah a present, they cam because they had heard of the miracle that took place in his land of the sun going back ten steps. They also came for a third reason: because they were interested in forming an alliance with Judah to rebel against the might of Assyria. – Pawson, Come With Me Through Isaiah, p.184

**3**Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?”

So Hezekiah said, “They came to me from a far country, from Babylon.”

**4**And he said, “What have they seen in your house?”

So Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that *is* in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.”

**5**Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: **6**‘Behold, the days are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,’ says the Lord. **7**‘And they shall take away *some* of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ ”

**8**So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the Lord which you have spoken *is* good!” For he said, “At least there will be peace and truth in my days.”

* Hezekiah, the reformer, went from being a man who was favored by God and divinely healed to one who thought only of himself. -TPT footnotes
* We see the very sad and sorry spectacle of a man who, when he was faced with death, made vows and promises to God which, when he was made well again, he did not keep. This is human nature and we see it in King Hezekiah. We can be brought face to face with the last enemy and still go back to our folly, self-centeredness and pride. – Pawson, Come With Me Through Isaiah, p.176
* If you had a warning that in the future you would lose your house and your possessions and that your children would be made slaves, how would you react? Most of us would begin to seek the Lord for a divine reversal of the prediction. Hezekiah seemed very passive about Isaiah’s warnings, and in a rather nonchalant manner accepted the warning of future captivity. His attitude seemed to be: “I receive that word; just as long as good things happen while I am alive.”  
  Many of us have the same mindset today. There are indicators that global governments are passing debts to the next generation that are not repayable, making them future economic “slaves” of the “now” generation. After all, as long as the crisis, recession, or future depression does not impact us today or in our lifetime, was can “kick the bucket” down the road for the next generation to deal with. Had Hezekiah known the grief, sorrow, and pain his descendants would experience, I believe he would have prayed just as hard for their freedom from captivity as he wept for his own healing. – The Perry Stone Hebraic Prophetic Study Bible, p. 619

**Why are the chapters not in chronological order?**

If you read carefully, Chapters 36-37 happen after the Hezekiah accounts in Chapter 38-39. We know this because Isaiah tells Hezekiah the Lord Himself will defend the city from the Assyrians. This already occurred in the previous chapters, and the army went home. The Assyrians didn’t come back against Jerusalem during Hezekiah’s time. So why are the chapters not placed in chronological order, but instead switched? David Pawson gives this explanation:

“The answer is this. Chapters 36 and 37 are concerned with Assyria because chapters 1-35 were prophecies about the Assyrian threat. But chapters 38 and 39 bring Babylon onto the scene, because Assyria was to go and Babylon was to become the mighty world empire and was to do worse things to Jerusalem than Assyria was ever able to do. The second half of the prophecy of Isaiah which we begin in the next chapter, with the wonderful majestic words of chapter 40 – ‘*Comfort, comfort my people*’ – are written against the background of the threat of Babylon.” – Pawson, Come With Me Through Isaiah, p.187