

**Study 72: Isaiah, Part 28 Isaiah 38-39**

[We covered chapters 36-37 at the same time as chapter 33, since the former speak of the fulfillment of the latter. **Isa 38** and **Isa 39** are paralleled by **2 Kings 20**.]

**Isaiah 38**

In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."

2 Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, 3 "Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah:

[Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him: (**2 Kings 20:4**)]

5 "Go [back] and tell Hezekiah [the ruler of my people], 'This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; [On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the Lord (**2 Kings 20:5**).]

I will add fifteen years to your life. 6 And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city. [See **vs. 21-22** here.]

7 "This is the Lord's sign to you that the Lord will do what he has promised:

[Shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or shall it go back ten steps?"]

"It is a simple matter for the shadow to go forward ten steps," said Hezekiah. "Rather, have it go back ten steps" (**2 Kings 20:9-10**).]

8 I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz."

So the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down.

[Then the prophet Isaiah called on the Lord, and the Lord made the shadow go back the ten steps it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz (**2 Kings 20:11**).]

9 A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after his illness and recovery:

10 I said, "In the prime of my life  
must I go through the gates of death  
and be robbed of the rest of my years?"

11 I said, "I will not again see the Lord himself  
in the land of the living;  
no longer will I look on my fellow man,  
or be with those who now dwell in this world.

12 Like a shepherd's tent my house  
has been pulled down and taken from me.

Like a weaver I have rolled up my life,  
and he has cut me off from the loom;  
day and night you made an end of me.

13 I waited patiently till dawn,  
but like a lion he broke all my bones;  
day and night you made an end of me.

14 I cried like a swift or thrush,  
I moaned like a mourning dove.

My eyes grew weak as I looked to the heavens.  
I am being threatened; Lord, come to my aid!"

15 But what can I say?

He has spoken to me, and he himself has done this.

I will walk humbly all my years

because of this anguish of my soul.

16 Lord, by such things people live;

and my spirit finds life in them too.

You restored me to health

and let me live.

17 Surely it was for my benefit

that I suffered such anguish.

In your love you kept me

from the pit of destruction;

you have put all my sins

behind your back.

18 For the **grave** [Sheol] cannot praise you,

death cannot sing your praise;

those who go down to the **pit** [same word as the cistern into which Joseph was thrown by his brothers]

cannot hope for your faithfulness.

19 The living, the living—they praise you,

as I am doing today;

parents tell their children

about your faithfulness.

20 The Lord will save me,

and we will sing with stringed instruments

all the days of our lives

in the temple of the Lord.

21 Isaiah had said, “Prepare a poultice of figs and apply it to the boil, and he will recover.”

22 Hezekiah had asked, “What will be the sign that I will go up to the temple of the Lord?”

### **Isaiah 39**

[2 **Chron 32:24-30** says:

24 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the Lord, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign. 25 But Hezekiah’s heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the Lord’s wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. 26 Then Hezekiah repented of the pride of his heart, as did the people of Jerusalem; therefore the Lord’s wrath did not come on them during the days of Hezekiah.

27 Hezekiah had very great wealth and honor, and he made treasuries for his silver and gold and for his precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuables. 28 He also made buildings to store the harvest of grain, new wine and olive oil; and he made stalls for various kinds of cattle, and pens for the flocks. 29 He built villages and acquired great numbers of flocks and herds, for God had given him very great riches.

30 It was Hezekiah who blocked the upper outlet of the Gihon spring and channeled the water down to the west side of the City of David. He succeeded in everything he undertook. 31 But when envoys were sent by the rulers of Babylon to ask him about the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land, God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart.

At that time Marduk-Baladan\* son of Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of his illness and recovery. 2 Hezekiah received the envoys gladly and showed them what was in his storehouses—the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine olive oil—his entire armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.

3 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, “What did those men say, and where did they come from?”

“From a distant land,” Hezekiah replied. “They came to me from Babylon.”

4 The prophet asked, “What did they see in your palace?”

“They saw everything in my palace,” Hezekiah said. “There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them.”

5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the Lord Almighty: 6 The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the Lord. 7 And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

8 “The word of the Lord you have spoken is good,” Hezekiah replied. For he thought, “There will be peace and security in my lifetime.”

\* Marduk was the name of the patron god of the city of Babylon, where his temple tower, the ziggurat, Etemenanki (“Temple [that is] the foundation of the heavens and the earth”) served as the model for the famous “tower of Babel.” He was often referred to as “Bel” which is the Akkadian word for “Lord,” and his symbol was the “snake-dragon” (see illustration). Some people may have heard of the apocryphal tale, “Bel and the dragon.”

