

**“He has spoken to me and He Himself has done this...”**

Our last lesson showed Hezekiah wavering between fear and faith as invasion threatened—but God mercifully delivered His king and His people, in keeping with His unwavering promises! Now we'll see Hezekiah at another crucial time in his life *before* the events of chs. 36-37.

1. For great insight into Hezekiah, scan/briefly comment on II Chronicles 28:1-5, 16-25, about his father, and II Chronicles 29:1-11, 27-30, **36**, on his own early reign. (Opt. reading: 30:1, 10-12, 26-27; 31:1, **10**, 20-21. Bold print verses show a repeated theme.)
  
2. Hezekiah's early acts showed knowledge and appreciation of his great forefathers, David and Solomon. What promises to these kings were part of this heritage? I Kings 2:1-4, 3:14.
  
- Isaiah 38** takes us to 702-703 B.C., just before the Assyrian campaign of chs. 36-37 (some give an earlier date). The king is about 38 years of age and *it appears no heir has been born to him*.
3. What terrible situation is Hezekiah facing (38:1a), and what reactions might have been filling the palace, Jerusalem and the kingdom at this point?
  
4. The specific length and type of the king's illness aren't told, but notice v. 1b. What do vv. 2-3 communicate about the king's thoughts and feelings?
  
5. **Read Isaiah 38:4-8, 21-22.** Then **read** II Kings 20:1-11 for more detail. Outline the sequence of events, and tell what we learn about God from these accounts.

We're not told how, but God moves the shadow on Ahaz's staircase (it may have served as a sundial). In expectation of God's promise, a poultice is used on the dying king's painful boil (an effect of some more serious inner disease) and miraculous health returns. *Note: We aren't promised suffering can always be escaped or removed in this life. But Christ's heart is plain concerning our sorrows: recall His agony at Lazarus' death and the sisters' grief, remember His death for us. We can know that in every trial and each phase of life, He's fully with us; mightily, tenderly at work. And although now the believer's passing is a doorway into eternal joy, Jesus still sees death as a personal enemy He'll one day triumphantly destroy. I Corinthians 15:25-26*

**Only Isaiah 38:9-20** gives Hezekiah's personal response to his experience with God.

6. What kinds of struggles are recalled and revealed in vv. 10-14a? Explain his final response in v.14b.

Vv. 15-20 in the NIV, KJV (below) seem closest to the intended sense. *The grave cannot praise you* (v.18) may simply show loss of the chance to worship God here and witness His earthly deliverances. Other possibilities: it may show limited grasp of the afterlife or picture unrepentant death. In any case, this life is our time of opportunity, to decide to praise Him forever!

v. 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.***

v. 16. ***Lord, by such things men live; and my spirit finds life in them too.***

***You restored me to health and let me live.***

v. 17. ***Surely it was for my benefit [lit. shalom] that I suffered such anguish.***

***In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction [lit. you loved me out of the pit];***

***You have put all my sins behind your back.***

(KJV v. 17. “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.”)

v. 18. ***For the grave [sheol] cannot praise you, death cannot sing your praise;***

***Those who go down into the pit cannot hope for your faithfulness.***

v. 19. ***The living, the living—they praise you, as I am doing today;***

***Fathers tell their children about your faithfulness.***

v. 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.”***

(KJV v. 20. “The LORD was ready to save me [lit. was all for saving me]: And we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.”)

7. a. As Hezekiah now looks back, why do you think that some of his very first words of praise are, “He has spoken to me and He Himself has done this”?

b. Why might he respond the way he does in v. 15b? What would this “walk” look like?

8. Somehow, by means of this entire process, what wonderful reality did God make clear to Hezekiah, according to v. 17b? (This addresses a need *we* didn't know, but He did.)

- 9 What other truths are shared for us in vv. 15-17 (things not understood in vv. 10-14)?
10. a. What are some synonyms for the word *save*?
- b. What do you personally learn from Hezekiah's realization in v. 20, "*The LORD was ready to save me...*"?
11. Here are some ways God is *ready to save*. Read/enjoy/comment as you wish: Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 18:16-19; Isaiah 30:18; Acts 17: 26-27; Romans 5:6-8; 15:13; I Corinthians 10:12-13; II Corinthians 1:3-4; 12:9; Colossians 1:9-11; James 1:5; 5:11; Jude 24.
12. Notice the ways Hezekiah desired to share his overflowing praise for what God had done in his life. How is this a blessing for all involved?

**For your own heart:** Has Hezekiah's experience and response reminded you of something God accomplished for you in past "dark times"? Explain. What do you want to remember for today's path?

**Read Isaiah 39:1-4.** The independent spirit of the Chaldeans of Babylon made that area difficult for Assyria to fully conquer. A feisty Chaldean prince, Merodach-Baladan, took control there from 721-710 B.C., but was forced to submit to Assyria under Sargon II. He began rebuilding Babylonian independence at Sargon's death, and may have sent his envoys to Judah at that time.

13. a. What do the Babylonian representatives bring (v.1)? What reason is given for this visit?
- b. Tell Hezekiah's response (v. 2). What thinking might be behind this behavior?
- c. Notice Isaiah's questions in v. 3, and Hezekiah's reply. What question does he ignore?

II Kings 20:13 uses a word meaning *listen, yield to*, to describe Hezekiah's reception of the envoys. Since the visit and letter led to such display on Hezekiah's part, *it's believed Merodach-Baladan had sent a request to become his ally against Assyria, to which Hezekiah agreed*. The writer of II Chronicles (who assumes his readers know the details) also adds unique insight.

14. a. Write down your brief observations, first from II Chronicles 32:24-25a...

b. ...and then from 32:27-31. (Consider v. 29b carefully. Also, v. 31 in the Amplified says God *left him to himself*. God already knew Hezekiah's heart; but the king didn't.

c. God had poured out so much for Hezekiah, to bless and make him a blessing! What opportunity did Hezekiah miss? II Chronicles 32:31a (in contrast with I Kings 10:1-9)

**Read II Chronicles 32:25-26, Isaiah 39:5-8.** Isaiah 39:8 may well express humble gratitude for undeserved mercy, but it could also reveal something else—opinions differ.

15. What terrible results did Isaiah prophesy that were the direct outcome of a godly king caving in to the Babylonians' attentions and offer? What conclusions do you draw from this story?

16. As "his father David" had done so many times, what did Hezekiah do and discover (II Chronicles 32:26, Isaiah 39:8)?

The envoys reported all they'd seen. One day Babylon would come to lay claim to it all. Isaiah first specifically names them as Judah's coming conqueror in 39:6. And "just as his predictions about Assyria came true in 701 B.C., so this prophecy about Babylon would be fulfilled." (Wolf)

17. God's word is also certain that pride, the drive to glorify self, and lack of thankfulness **will** cause destruction in our lives. Prayerfully consider Hezekiah's story in ch. 39. Where/how do these attitudes show up in your life? What might be some good "safeguard" actions?

These attitudes are rooted deeply and subtly in our hearts, but God's grace and power can expose and address them in our daily lives. As you face into this process, remember all King Hezekiah learned of His Lord in chapters 38 and 39—and count on this: He is "ready to save"!

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