

**ISAIAH**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 38 as we continue our study through the Word of God. The events we are going to read about in Isaiah chapters 38 and 39 focuses on another battle that King Hezekiah was dealing with and this was personal. It is a crisis dealing with his health. The other crisis that was going on around the same time was this threat from the Assyrians. The reason we know these two events happened around the same time is because of what Isaiah 38:6 tells us, **“I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.”**

Before we get to our text this evening, let me share with you these words from Raymond Ortlund regarding this portion of Scripture. He wrote,

Thomas Cranmer is a name you might not know offhand. Maybe you’ve heard his voice echoing in The Book of Common Prayer.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men, we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness. . . . The remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father.

As Archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer bravely advanced the gospel during the English Reformation. But when Mary became Queen in 1553, she had him arrested. From this prison window, he watched his fellow-reformers Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley burn at the stake. It was unforgettable, with Latimer encouraging Ridley, “Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall on this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.”

Cranmer did not play the man. He caved in. Government agents brainwashed him into recanting the gospel. He was set free and for several weeks enjoyed a comfortable life again. But they put him back in prison, and he signed more recantations. But when he realized that they were going to kill him anyway, his old courage returned.

On the day of his execution in Oxford, he sat through a two-hour sermon at the Church of St Mary denouncing him as a heretic. Then he was expected publicly to admit the error of his ways. But he stood firm:

And now I come to the great thing, which so much troubleth my conscience, more than anything ever I did or said in my whole life, and that is the setting forth of a writing contrary to the truth. . . . And forasmuch as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished.

The remembrance of his sins was grievous to him and the burden intolerable. In fact, he walked from the church to the stake so quickly, his guards could hardly keep up with him. An eyewitness described his death:

Fire being now put on him, he stretched out his right hand and thrust it into the fire, and held it there a good space, before the fire came to any part of his body, where his hand was seen of every man sensibly burning, crying with a loud voice, "This hand hath offended." As soon as the fire was got up, he was very soon dead, never stirring or crying all the while.

Thomas Cranmer was a martyr, but he was no superman. He was like us. Sometimes he lost his nerve. What is it that empowers us to live well for the Lord and to die well for the Lord? What is it that keeps us steady in life and in death? A living sense of the living God in our hearts. With that radiance within, we can face anything. Without it, we're defeated already.

Hezekiah, like Thomas Cranmer, like us, wavered. In Isaiah 36 – 37 he stood up to the whole Assyrian army. God was so real to him that God was all he cared about. Now, in chapters 38 -39, he's in trouble again. This time it isn't a national emergency. It's only personal. He gets sick. But his courage fails him, he becomes shortsighted and irresponsible. And he doesn't end well. Why? He loses his sense of God. Instead of praying for God's will and glory alone, now he's saying, "All I want is my own comfort and peace."

- Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., Isaiah, pp. 221-222

That is what we will be seeing tonight in our study and there are some valuable lessons for us to learn once again. And as you will see, as you don't seek God's perfect will for your life, there are consequences to that and it is never good. God has what is perfect and we might not always agree but we need to obey. With that said, let's begin reading in Isaiah chapter 38, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

## **ISAIAH 38**

### **VERSE 1**

1. We know from comparing II Kings 18:2 with II Kings 20:6 that Hezekiah was 39 years old when he was very sick. And in comes Isaiah with words of encouragement and tells him, "Fill out your organ donor card, we're going to be using it!" That is a paraphrase of course. But don't miss the point. Hezekiah is very sick, he feels miserable and here comes Isaiah in with these words, "You are going to die, the Lord told me to tell you to get your house in order!" We will see here shortly how he will respond to that news!

2. Now let's put ourselves in that position because this is going to happen to all of us unless the Rapture happens first. We are going to die but for most of us, we will not know the time only God will. But let's think about this for a minute. If we were to know the time, would our lifestyle change any? Would those things we think are so important today be important then?

I bet that these things would change. J. Vernon McGee put it like this,

Some years ago I received a letter from a fine young minister who had been told by his doctor that he had cancer and that his days were limited. He sent out a letter to some of his friends, and I was privileged to be included in that list. Here is a brief quotation from his letter so that you might know the thinking of a man under the shadow of death: "One thing I have discovered in the last few days. When a Christian is suddenly confronted with a sentence of death, he surely begins to give a proper evaluation of material things. My fishing gear and books and orchard are not nearly so valuable as they were a week ago."

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible, p.280

Now here's the thing. Hebrews 9:27 tells us, "**And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.**" So this is going to happen, we are going to die. That is not the issue. Then what is the issue? Like Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "It is time to get your house in order!" Is your house in order? Are you ready to meet your Maker? We have the time to set things in order right now but don't waste the time because none of us know how long we have.

Some think that this talk about death is morbid? I am really not talking about death for the Christian though. I am talking about moving day. Moving out of this tent or temporary dwelling place and going to be with the Lord who is preparing a mansion or permanent dwelling place for my spirit and soul to dwell in! Now let's see how Hezekiah reacts to this news of his coming death!

### VERSES 2-3

1. I think it is easy to come against Hezekiah's response here. He does not want to die and yes God told him that he was going to die but he is not ready. How many of us are ready to die? I think for most of us it would be easy to say I am ready to go right now, but what about your family or whatever? You see, we know it is far better to be with the Lord but God has given us emotions, feelings and I see that here with Hezekiah. He had things he wanted to do and thus, he begins to weep before the Lord.

And as he weeps he is praying and he asks God to extend his life on the basis of his faithfulness to the Lord. Back in II Samuel 22:21 we read of David saying, "**The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.**" You see, God did extend peoples life for their faithfulness to Him and that is what Hezekiah is appealing to God for.

One writer expounds on this by writing, "We come across similar pleas again and again in the prayers of God's children of old. The Psalms abound with them. But we do not find them in the New Testament. The Church bases its pleas on Christ's righteousness." (Bultema).

But let's get a New Testament perspective on death. Like I have said, for us as Christians, we understand that in death we go to be with the Lord. The sting has been removed by Christ and thus, to live is Christ and die is gain! It is as Trapp wrote, "But why should a saint be fond of life, or afraid of death, since to him it is as his father's horse, to carry him to his father's house?"

That truly is the correct perspective to have and in having that, nothing will stop you from serving the Lord! Examine the life of Paul and you will see this in his life and that is why nothing stopped him, nothing moved him from the course that God had set for him! And folk's nothing should move us from the course that God has for us.

2. Now as Isaiah delivered this news to Hezekiah he leaves but he does not make it too far. In fact, he does not even make it out of the king's court before . . .

#### VERSES 4-5

1. Before Isaiah could make it out of the king's court the Lord tells him to go back and let Hezekiah know that He has heard his prayer and He is going to give Hezekiah 15 more years to live. Now as we read that what else can we say but "Praise the Lord" right? Wrong!

Now this is getting into a controversial area, but I will share with you what I believe God is saying here. There is God's perfect will and there is also God's permissive will for our lives. You see, I believe prayer is not to change the heart of God but to change our hearts to conform to His will. His ways are perfect and why would we want second or third best?

The reason I see this as bad is that during those 15 extra years extended to Hezekiah's life he had another son. Some 3 years into this period of time he had a son by the name of Manasseh. Again you might be saying, "Praise the Lord" right? Wrong!

Manasseh was a very wicked King, the worst that the Southern Kingdom of Judah ever had. It says of him in II Chronicles 33:1-9, **“Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. But he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. He also built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, ‘In Jerusalem shall My name be forever.’ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. He even set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, ‘In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers - only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.’ So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel.”**

And yes, at the end of his life Manasseh turned to the Lord, but it was too little too late. We are told in II Chronicles 33:10-17, **“And the Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. Therefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon. Now when he was in affliction, he implored the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God. After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and it enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord and in Jerusalem; and he cast them out of the city. He also repaired the altar of the Lord, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel. Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the Lord their God.”**

Manasseh lead the nation away from God and even though he came to know the Lord, the nation was in a spiritual dive that it would never be able to completely recover from and that would eventually led to their captivity.

As much as Manasseh turned to the Lord, as we have seen, the nation did not. In fact, the fall of the Southern Kingdom of Judah would be blamed on the sins of Manasseh, the destruction he brought to the people, the nation during his reign before he turned to the Lord. Our sin does affect people and not in a good way! And if you don't think that God saw his sins as responsible for the nations fall, look at a few verses here and I will show you how it was.

First of all in II Kings 23:26 we are told, **“Nevertheless the Lord did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.”**

Then in II Kings 24:3-4 we are told, **“Surely at the commandment of the Lord this came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon.”**

And lastly, in Jeremiah 15:4, **“I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.”** You see, God still held Manasseh responsible for the destruction he brought to the people, leading them away from the true and living God. Yes God forgave Manasseh and received him, but he was still accountable for his actions as well as the people were! May we learn the lesson and walk worthy of the high calling by which we have been called! People are watching us and they are coming to conclusions about the God we serve based on how we live out our lives. Also, Christians are watching us and we don't want to cause them to stumble by the things we say or the things that we are doing.

2. Also, in chapter 39 we are going to see another foolish thing Hezekiah did that encouraged the Babylonians to come and plunder the city. Yes, God allowed Hezekiah to live another 15 years, but I don't believe it was His perfect will as I have said, but He permitted it. We need to learn to rest in the promises of God for us and not try to think we know better than God. There is nothing wrong with praying for a healing if you are sick, we should. But we also need to remember that in all of our prayers it should be, "Not my will Lord, but Yours be done!"

Also, notice what is said in Matthew 6:10, "**. . . Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.**" You see, it is not our will we are praying for but for God's perfect will to be done through us. Thus, prayer is not to change God's will but to conform our will to His as I have said!

You don't go ordering God around telling Him what you want done; I don't care how positive your confession is! And if you do get your will, if you do get what you want instead of what God wants for you, you will lose out. Listen to what is said in Psalm 106:15 to those that desired to get their will instead of God's will done in their life. We read, "**And He gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul.**" You see, with God's permissive will you may receive what you want but it will affect your spiritual life. And I think you can see that we should desire God's perfect will for our lives!

#### VERSE 6

1. The Assyrians had not yet surrounded the city, they were only hearing rumors, but God says that He will defend Jerusalem and the Assyrians will not be victorious.

VERSES 7-8

1. In II Kings 20:8 we get a little more information of what transpired. As Isaiah told Hezekiah that the Lord would add 15 more years to his life we are told, “**And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ‘What is the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the Lord the third day?’**”

Now we read that and we think, “What in the world is wrong with you? God told you that He was going to add 15 years to your life and now you want a sign! Don’t you believe what He has told you? Don’t you believe His Word?” But what about us, do we trust God at His Word or do we need some kind of sign to convince us that what He has told us is true? We need to learn to trust God at His Word, that truly is faith.

Now the Lord does not rebuke Hezekiah for his lack of faith here but He does give him a sign, the sundial will be turned back 10 degrees! And as some read this sign that God gives to Hezekiah they laugh at the foolishness of this. The earth is spinning around 1,000 miles per hour at the surface and to stop it and reverse it would cause some very devastating affects on the land masses as well as upon us. Then how did God do it? I don’t know how God did it, but God did cause the sun to go back 10 degrees on the sun dial, or about forty minutes. I don’t have to understand how God can do these things but I do have to believe them by faith because God has said it in His Word. If I begin to doubt this or that then why do I believe anything that God’s Word has to say? And the reality is, you can’t. But I don’t have a problem with it because my God can do anything, He created the heavens and the earth and thus, He can surly turn back the sundial 10 degrees! You see, how big is your God?

VERSES 9-14

1. According to verse 20 this was a song of praise to God for healing him. Now it does not start out with praise but with sorrow because of the news of his impending death. The word “**Sheol**” is a Hebrew word for “the grave” or “the place of the dead.” Thus, Hezekiah is lamenting his impending death as I have said.

Now here’s the thing. None of us are guaranteed how long we will live, but I truly believe it will be just the right length of time, for God has our days numbered. But Hezekiah felt he was being cut down in the prime of his life.

And we see him speak of not being able to go to the Temple to worship God with the brethren if he is dead! He speaks of being cut down in the prime of his life, that God is somehow snuffing out his life and he just does not feel that this is fair! And he is just crying out to God to be healed!

2. Now we do need to understand that the concept of eternal life or a world beyond this life, immortality was not clearly understood in the Old Testament. Yes we do see glimpses of hope beyond the grave as Job 19:25-27 tells us, “**For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!**”

But again, it was not clear as we see in Psalm 6:5, "**For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks?**" And again in Psalm 88 we are told, "**For my soul is full of troubles, And my life draws near to the grave. I am counted with those who go down to the pit; I am like a man who has no strength, Adrift among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom You remember no more, And who are cut off from Your hand. . . . Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?**" Psalm 88:3-5, 11-12.

But the New Testament gives us hope, assurance that these bodies will go back to the dust of the earth but we will go to be with the Lord. And that assurance is brought to life through the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Paul reminds us in II Timothy 1:8-10, "**Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.**"

And in I Corinthians 15:53-57 Paul reminds us, **“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Jesus has taken the sting of death away because He has paid in full the penalty for our sins. There should be no fear in death because to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord!

#### VERSES 15-20

1. God heard his prayer and healed him. Because of that he was going to walk uprightly, honoring God the rest of his life. But as we shall see as we get into chapter 39, he makes some foolish mistakes.

2. Now as you read verses 18-19 you can see what they thought about life after death, there was none, even though there were glimpses of it in the Old Testament, many times they saw death as the cessation of life! Their concept of death was a little shaky to say the least. They thought of it as nothingness till the time of the resurrection and because of that many cults have jumped on this and speak of soul sleep, and-so-on. And they will point to Job to defend what they believe; the only problem is that God rebukes Job for not knowing what happens in death. And by the time we get to the New Testament Jesus makes it very clear that we are aware of our surroundings, and depending on where you are at, you will either find joy or pain, but no soul sleep or annihilation.

3. As Hezekiah finishes this song he does so with praise unto God for healing him.

#### VERSES 21-22

1. Hezekiah had some kind of boil that had gotten so bad it was killing him. Now I find this interesting for those who believe we are not to go to doctors or use medicine. Here God instructs Hezekiah to place some medicine on this boil, and it would heal him over time. Now God could have just healed him instantaneously, but He didn't. You see, God uses many ways, many things to heal us, even doctors and medicine. The thing we must remember is to bring it before the Lord first.

Because some believe that doctors and medicine are evil or it is not trusting in the Lord, we have seen the problems that have come up with these people because they refuse to take the medicine that will heal them or go to the doctor. Parents have said that they were trusting in God to heal their child of diabetes and refused to give their child insulin, and their child died. God is telling us here that He does use medicine to heal people with. Many of these false doctrines end up hurting or killing people, and that is the tragedy of them.

2. And here again we see that Isaiah tells Hezekiah that he will recover but Hezekiah wants a sign that his strength will return to him by the third day. Yes, he applied this paste to his body but he was still weak and he is inquiring to see when he will be completely made well. And as we have seen the sign will be that the sundial will go back 10 degrees!

3. Just a couple of things before we move on. First of all we need to seek God's perfect will for our lives. I am not saying we should not pray for healing if we are seek, but again, that His will be done in the matter. Also, we need to learn to trust God's Word in our lives. That what He has spoken is true and we don't need signs to prove it! Walk by faith and not by sight and see what God will do in you and through you for His glory!

**ISAIAH 39****VERSE 1**

1. Keep in mind that at this point the Assyrians were still in power but the Babylonians are beginning to rise up. And they send ambassadors to Jerusalem as a good will gesture. They had heard the Hezekiah was very sick, near death and that he has now miraculously recovered from this illness. But make no mistake about it, the presence of Merodach-Baladan, the son of Baladan the King of Babylon shows this was more than a courtesy call. This was an attempt to bring the kingdom of Judah on the side of the Babylonians against the Assyrians, to form an alliance you might say.

2. Now the Lord gave Hezekiah 15 more years to live and now it was up to Hezekiah to live those years in a way that would honor the Lord, bring glory to Him. Let's see what happens as these ambassadors from Babylon arrive.

**VERSE 2**

1. Now without consulting the Lord or even bringing this before Isaiah for his input of the situation, Hezekiah shows these ambassadors from Babylon the vast treasures of the kingdom, his abundant supplies of food, and his military armaments. God had given Hezekiah great wealth, so the visitors were duly impressed.

We see this in II Chronicles 32:27-30 as we are told, **“Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items; storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks. Moreover he provided cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much property. This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and brought the water by tunnel to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works.”**

Hezekiah was so overwhelmed that these guys traveled such a long distance to see him, that he opens up his kingdom and shows them everything. Maybe he was trying to impress these men with all that he had in his own kingdom. Maybe this made Hezekiah feel important but whatever the reason it was wrong as we will see.

Listen to what we are told in II Chronicles 32:31 regarding this, **“However, regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.”**

This was a test by God and Satan was going to use this as a temptation to cause him to sin. In this case Hezekiah faced and failed under a temptation common to many, especially those in ministry – the temptation of *success*. Many men who stand strong against the temptations of failure and weakness fail under the temptations of success and strength.

Make no mistake about it, Hezekiah started out as a godly king, and overall his reign was one of outstanding godliness. Yet his beginning was much better than his end; Hezekiah did not finish well. God gave Hezekiah the gift of 15 more years of life (2 Kings 20:6), but the added years did not make him a better or a more godly man. May we be wise in the years that God has allotted to us and may we finish the race well!

2. We are going to see Isaiah come and ask Hezekiah what he said, what he showed these Babylonian ambassadors and then, as we read on we are going to see Isaiah come and rebuke Hezekiah for what he did and the consequences of his actions. You see, this was nothing but proud foolishness on Hezekiah's part. He is in the dangerous place of wanting to please and impress man, especially ungodly men.

Paul rightly said in Galatians 1:10, **“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”** The Living Bible puts this verse like this, **“You can see that I am not trying to please you by sweet talk and flattery; no, I am trying to please God. If I were still trying to please men I could not be Christ's servant.”**

We need to understand that we will not impress people with the Gospel many times; it is a stumbling block to them. But don't negate the message or water it down to please people because you are serving the Lord and not man! It is a glorious thing to live to *serve* men, but not to live to *please* them. Also, it is easy to get puffed up when people compliment or recognize us, and then we begin to take their praise - and ourselves - too seriously. Be careful!

Listen to what one commentator had to say regarding what Hezekiah did. “Just as Samson revealed his strength to the whore, so Hezekiah revealed God’s glory to the devils as though he were their companion and had received favors from Babylon.” (Kohlbrugge, cited in Bultema).

#### VERSES 3-4

1. God may have already spoken to Isaiah about what was going on and He wanted Isaiah to confront the King and have him see the error of his way. But as Isaiah asks Hezekiah what these men said to him we see pride come forth in the answer that he gave to Isaiah. He basically said to them, “These guys came all that way just to see me!”
2. Next Isaiah asked him about what he showed these men and he showed them the wealth of the kingdom. Why did he do that? To impress them, to show them that he was somebody and as King his kingdom was wealthy, at least that is what he wanted them to think. He impressed them!
3. Now when these ambassadors arrived Hezekiah was more than pleased to show them all the wealth of the kingdom. What is wrong with that? Let’s think about what he showed them and what he didn’t show them. He showed them the wealth of the kingdom! What he didn’t show them is the Temple, the things of God.

Now that is interesting to me, why does he negate the Temple and show them the wealth of the kingdom? The reason is really very simple. What this shows me is that Hezekiah was prideful about his possessions and instead of showing them the things of God, he showed them the things of this world.

In fact, Knapp picks up on this and he wrote, “Why did he not show these learned heathen God’s house? ‘Every whit’ of which showeth ‘His glory’ (Psalm 29:9, margin). There he could have explained to them the meaning of the brazen altar, and the sacrifices offered thereon; and who can tell what the results might not have been in the souls of these idolaters?”

A very interesting point indeed, but what about us? Are we more concerned about showing off our new car or our new heart that the Lord has given us? You see, we have not learned the lesson, have we? What do we boast about, the Lord or what we have obtained, the possessions we have?

4. This pride in the heart of Hezekiah blinded him to what he was doing. He did not see the error of his way. Now before we are too harsh on Hezekiah here, what about our own lives? Do we try to be “players” in a sense? Do we try to impress people with what we have, the positions we occupy, the money we have or whatever? That is a dangerous place to be. All glory, all honor is to be given to God and our boast should be in Him! Yes God blesses us but do we boast about what we have to impress people or bring glory and honor to God?

VERSES 5-7

1. Now let's look at what Hezekiah did as he was threatened by the Assyrians. He received a threatening letter from them and he spread it out before the Lord. Listen to what took place as Isaiah 37:14-20 tells us, **“And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. Then Hezekiah prayed to the Lord, saying: ‘O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. Truly, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands - wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the Lord, You alone.’”**

That was the right thing to do, give it to the Lord. Now another enemy comes in, the Babylonians with gifts for him and instead of bringing this before the Lord he receives the flattery from these ambassadors and shows them the wealth of the kingdom, not a good thing to do! Here is an important lesson, a warning for us. We need to be careful here because if the enemy can't cause you to crumble from fear, from threats, he will bring you down with flattery!

2. The consequences of his actions are given to us through Isaiah. The wealth of the kingdom will be carried away to Babylon and this was fulfilled in II Kings 24:10-13 and II Kings 25:11-17, under the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar.

Now it would be more than a hundred years before Babylon carried away the royal treasures of Judah, but they did come, just as Isaiah prophesied. The problem for some is that this prophecy is so remarkably accurate that many skeptics insist - without grounds other than unbelief - a later "Isaiah" must have written it after the fact. God knows the beginning from the end and He has told us exactly what will take place before it happens with 100% accuracy!

3. Not only will the wealth of the kingdom be carried away to Babylon but so will some of the sons who will come from Hezekiah. Leaders, princes, eunuchs will be carried away and we see this played out for us in Daniel chapter 1. Daniel and his friends were taken during that first invasion in 606 B. C. Daniel was one of the King's descendants taken into the palace of the King of Babylon (Daniel 1:1-4). And then, in the third and final invasion of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed and the rest of the people were taken captive and that took place in 586 B. C.

#### VERSE 8

1. You can look at the words of Hezekiah two ways. First, that Hezekiah learned his lesson, he trusted in God's Word. I don't see that here. Hezekiah started out well but did not finish well and the words he spoke here are disturbing to me!

You see, as you read what the response of Hezekiah is, it should trouble you. I see Hezekiah being self-centered. Make no mistake about it, as you read these words you can clearly see that Hezekiah is not "others-centered" in his response to this news that judgment was coming, he was "self-centered" like I have said.

Hezekiah is told that this will not take place in his days and his response is, "Praise the Lord for that!" Doesn't that seem self-centered, it does to me, it seems very selfish. Earlier, when he thought he was going to die, he was up all night praying to the Lord to be delivered, and that God would be merciful to him. Now that this won't affect him personally, he shows no concern, no need to pray, no need to bring it before God because it is not going to affect him!

Remember what Paul told us in Philippians 2:1-4, "**Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.**"

Paul is saying that we need to be others-centered and the only way that is going to happen is when you put on the mind of Christ, you focus on Him and allow His Spirit to guide you in all that you do!

Also, Paul tells us in I Corinthians 10:24, "**Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.**" Yes we are to be concerned for others and be in prayer for them. Too many times we are seeking to be on the top of the pile when in reality we should be helping others to the top.

Again, Paul tells us in Hebrews 10:24-25, “**And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**” We are to encourage others and not discourage them in the work of the Lord. Stir up in others love and good works and you will be blessed by it. Be others-centered and not self-centered!

As Christians may we not develop that kind of an attitude, only caring about ourselves. The mentality that says, “At least I’m saved and whatever happens to the next generation, happens!” May we care enough to bring it all before the Lord!

2. And yes we read of Hezekiah in II Kings 18:5 that, “**He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him.**” But we must remember that the best of men are men at best! He was a good King, the best since the time after David and Solomon. But he was still a man.

Let me close with this regarding Hezekiah and really our own lives. Time or age doesn’t necessarily make us any better. Consider that time does nothing but pass away. We sometimes say, “time will tell,” “time will heal,” or “time will bring out the potential in me.” But time will do nothing of the sort! Time will only come and go. It is only how we *use* time that matters. Hezekiah didn’t make good use of the extra time the LORD gave him. May we use the time that God has given to us to bring Him glory, to bring Him pleasure in all we do!