

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

Part LVII: Hezekiah's Failure To Trust Him Humbly In His Future (Isaiah 39:1-8)

I. Introduction

- A. God knows the end from the beginning, and because He can see everything in the future, He can graciously prepare us to counter temptations that lie ahead of us in life's pathway that we might handle them well.
- B. However, once God warns us to prepare for future temptations, we are highly responsible to rely on His power to overcome those temptations, what Hezekiah failed to do in Isaiah 39:1-8, with a great lesson for us:

II. Hezekiah's Failure To Trust God Humbly In His Future, Isaiah 39:1-8.

- A. We learned in our past lesson from Isaiah 38:1-22 that Hezekiah had learned in his life-threatening trial of illness that God wanted him humbly to rely on Him to overcome future strong temptations to ruinous pride.
- B. That temptation came in the form of the event that is recorded in Isaiah 39:1 (as follows):
 - 1. Merodach-Baladan of Babylon sent letters and a gift to Judah's king Hezekiah upon hearing that he had been severely ill, but that he had recovered from the illness, Isaiah 39:1.
 - 2. This event may sound harmless on the surface, but there was much intrigue involved by the Babylonians:
 - a. Merodach-Baladan was Marduk-apal-iddina in secular history who had twice before this tried to break away from Assyrian domination, and he had once conquered the city of Babylon, B. K. C., O. T., p. 1090.
 - b. "After his second reign (of nine months in 703-702 B. C.) he was deported by [Assyria's king] Sennacherib and went to Elam," and "(w)hile there (and while still known as the king of Babylon) he actively tried to form an alliance with other nations to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Undoubtedly his friendly visit after Hezekiah's illness was intended to persuade the king of Judah to join the rebel alliance in the fight against Assyria," Ibid. (brackets ours)
 - 3. It was thus imperative that Hezekiah follow God in responding to this envoy, for "God was using Assyria to punish the whole region (chap. 10)," meaning also that "(t)he visit was also God's test of Hezekiah's heart (2 Chron. 32:31)" (Ibid.).
- C. However, Hezekiah did not carefully, closely follow the Lord in his response to the Babylonian envoy, but he welcomed them gladly as if they were close associates when their intent was to drag Hezekiah and Judah into an unbiblical alliance against a king whom God was using to punish other nations, Isaiah 39:2a.
- D. Relying on his own judgment versus humbly continuing to follow God in line with the lesson of his recovery from illness, Hezekiah proudly, carelessly tried to mimic his predecessor king Solomon when the Queen of Sheba visited him by showing off all the precious things in his kingdom, Isa. 39:2b NIV with 1 Kings 10:1-9.
- E. God's prophet Isaiah then came to Hezekiah to ask what the men in the Babylonian envoy had said to him and from whence they had come, and Hezekiah answered the latter question only, claiming they had come from the distant country of Babylon, Isaiah 39:3. Hezekiah was apparently reluctant to report what the envoy had wanted, for had they asked him to join ranks with them to counter Assyria in violation of the Law, Hezekiah knew Isaiah would have objected and critiqued Hezekiah's considering such a union, cf. Isaiah 31:1 et al.
- F. Isaiah then asked Hezekiah what the men from Babylon had seen in his house, and Hezekiah answered that he had shown them everything of all of his treasures, a very proud thing for him to do, Isaiah 39:4.
- G. Thus, for Hezekiah's proudly acting independently of the Lord before these pagan men of intrigue versus closely following Him, especially in light of his learned lesson of his previous healing, Isaiah pronounced God's judgment: all the treasures that his fathers had laid up until Hezekiah's era would be carried away to Babylon, and some of his sons would be taken to that land to serve the king's court there, Isaiah 39:5-7. This was an amazing prophecy, for Assyria, not Babylon, was then the dominant Middle Eastern power, Ibid.
- H. Hezekiah errantly responded to Isaiah, claiming his prophecy was good in that its prediction would not be fulfilled in his lifetime so that he would enjoy peace and truth in his days, a very selfish statement, Isaiah 39:8.
- I. Thus, Hezekiah significantly failed his test of temptation for which God had given him ample warning.

Lesson: *By neglecting to heed God's previous warning that he humbly follow the Lord in his future, Hezekiah carelessly acted proudly before the Babylonians who were trying to woo him by intrigue into a sinful alliance against God's will. In so doing, Hezekiah incurred God's discipline that would negatively affect Judah's future.*

Application: *If God before warns us to heed Him on a future issue, when we face it, we must carefully obey Him.*