

Is. 39:1 At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered.

The Assyrian empire is coming to an end, and the rising of the Babylonian empire is on the horizon. The news of kings and kingdoms seemed to make its way from nation to nation. Upon hearing of the miraculous recovery of Hezekiah, the king of Babylon (at that time a small kingdom) sent letters of encouragement and a present to the Jewish king. Chronicles records another incentive for the visit. They had experienced the receding of the sun, the miraculous sign that God gave Hezekiah, and seemed to know that it had something to do with Hezekiah's recovery.

2Chronicles 32:31 Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.

As a small kingdom, they were surely thinking to ally themselves with other kings, especially one whose God could deliver from the Assyrians and turn back the sun.

The verse in Chronicles also lets us know that this visit was used by God to allow Hezekiah to see the wickedness in his own heart.

God declares that all things work together for good to them that love God (Romans 8:28). God is always allowing things to happen in our lives that will bring us to greater repentance toward and dependence upon Him. He is ever at work to refine us into precious jewels.

Malachi 3:3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

Is. 39:2 And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

It seems that Hezekiah was thrilled to be able to show off his wealth to the visiting ambassadors. He showed the men every valuable treasure in the kingdom. The fact that it provoked God's anger is proof that it was with a sense of pride that he displayed his wealth. It was not with a sense of gratitude and acknowledgement of the provision of the God of Israel.

I couldn't help but go back to 2Chronicles 32:31 and notice the little phrase "God left him." Evidently Hezekiah had been blessed to experience the presence of the Spirit in his life. This was a gift that David had cherished and knew could be taken away from him.

Psalm 51:11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Hezekiah had experienced so much blessing from the Lord that he needed to be reminded of who he really was without the provision of the Lord in his life. So God “left him,” took His Spirit from him.

Is. 39:3 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon.

Is. 39:4 Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

Isaiah was evidently in a position to know what happened in the palace. He came to Hezekiah and questioned him about who these visitors were and where they came from. So Hezekiah told him that they were from a country far away called Babylon. Then Isaiah wanted to know what Hezekiah had shown them. Hezekiah unhesitatingly declared that he showed them everything in “mine” house, all of “my” treasures. Hezekiah had forgotten God and the fact that He was the one who had blessed his kingdom with its wealth.

It’s a trap we can all fall into so easily. God blesses us with talents and abilities, and when we are successful in endeavors using those God-given gifts, we think we are deserving of any resulting honor and reward. There is a verse in John that applies here.

John 3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

God is the one that has a place and position of service for each of His children. Hezekiah would have been nothing except for the gifting and blessing of God. John the Baptist was chosen to be God’s representative to prepare the way for the Messiah. You and I have been set apart by God to serve Him in a special place and position as part of the body of Christ.

Is. 39:5 Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of hosts:

Is. 39:6 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

Is. 39:7 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Isaiah has made Hezekiah identify his actions (and hopefully his attitude) and now pronounces God’s judgment for Hezekiah’s sin. He prophesies that everything that Hezekiah took such pride in displaying as “his” will one day be carried off to Babylon as the spoils of victory. (JFB notes that this will occur 120 years into the future.) The next part of God’s judgment must have seemed

bittersweet to Hezekiah. He was told that he would have sons (120 years later would equate to great grandsons) and that some (not necessarily all) would be taken away to serve the king of Babylon as eunuchs (castrated servants dedicated to service—often assigned to guard the harem).

Is. 39:8 Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

At first read, Hezekiah's response sounds selfish, but I don't believe that is the case. God has allowed him to be tested, but he doesn't turn into a totally wicked man after living such a righteous life. He just messed up—just like we do when we don't acknowledge God in any given action. We need God's guidance step by step, day by day. He acknowledges that God's judgment is "good." In that acknowledgement, he is also admitting his sin before the Lord and that it deserved to be punished. It also included an acknowledgement of God's grace in promising that he would have sons with the hope that some would escape judgment. It also acknowledged God's mercy in allowing him to finish his days in peace and stability (from the Hebrew for the word *truth*).

We too should respond to God's chastisement in our lives with repentance and acknowledgement of God's justice, grace, and mercy, and love. God reminds us in His word that He only chastens those He loves.

Deuteronomy 8:5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Hebrews 12:6-7 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?