

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #54

Isaiah 39:1-8

We come now to the final chapter in the first part of the book of Isaiah and it is a chapter that truly reveals a failure on Hezekiah and Judah's part to do the will of God. This chapter warns every one of us that we had better take decisions we make seriously. We had better ask God for wisdom, especially when it comes to making decisions in our life because one wrong move concerning sacred things can be fatal and deadly.

We may notice that **Isaiah 39:1** begins with the phrase "at that time." The time is when Judah had been miraculously delivered by God and Hezekiah had been miraculously healed by God. News spread to the point that all surrounding nations, including the Babylonians, had heard about it (II Chronicles 32:23; Isaiah 39:1).

Hezekiah became a famous man and people realized God's hand was on him and as a result many were interested in getting to know him or in trying to get next to him. At the time the events of this chapter occur, Babylon was not a major power, Assyria was and no one except God would have known that in just a short time, Assyria would collapse and Babylon would be the dominant power of the world.

What is so tragic about what happens in this chapter is that Hezekiah was actually closer to God when he was sick and dying in bed than when he was healthy reigning on his throne. The point to see is this:

BECAUSE OF ONE WRONG DECISION MADE WITHOUT CONSULTING GOD OR HIS WORD, AN ESTEEMED LEADER OF GOD FOOLISHLY ENDED UP COSTING THE ENTIRE NATION THE BLESSINGS OF GOD.

Do not miss this point; Satan is out to devour us. He is out to defeat us. His goal is to prevent us from accomplishing great things for God. He is out to ruin everything God wants to do with us and for us. He is out to stop us from going forward for God.

Now I want to march us through this passage very carefully. It is a rich text. There are six responses of a variety of people in this context:

RESPONSE #1 – The son of the king of Babylon sent letters and a present to Hezekiah.
39:1

In a pure move of diplomacy, the leaders of Babylon decided to send an official envoy to Hezekiah in what appeared to be a move to congratulate and rejoice in all they had heard concerning what God has done for and with Hezekiah. The letters would have flattered Hezekiah and let him know how happy they were for all the things God had done and the present they brought him would have made him feel important and special.

Hezekiah was a great leader but he was not a prophet of God, and he should have taken time to consult with God's prophet concerning this somewhat odd event.

This was not the real motive of the Babylonians. Their real motive was to obtain as much information about Judah concerning their financial resources. The Babylonians were planning to make a major move to take over the world and they were interested in knowing how much money and loot the king and Judah actually had. They really were going to Jerusalem as spies to find out as much information as they could about Judah's financial condition.

We must be very, very careful as to whom we let get close to us. Satan will send spies into your world that will appear to be interested in you and your life and your faith, but their sole purpose is to see what they can find out so they can report it to someone else for evil purposes.

I have toured many companies where our people work, and in various companies you cannot just go in behind closed doors and analyze everything they do. When we were on vacation, we went to a place in Chandler, a suburb of Phoenix, and they had a soup that sent us back three times. We dropped hints that we would like the recipe for it, but the restaurant was not about to reveal their secret. God's people need to learn a lesson from this. Oftentimes God's people are quick to blab and share everything about everything which can be a deadly mistake. Some people will come into the church and their motives aren't pure and right and we need to realize this. That is the way it was with these Babylonians.

RESPONSE #2 – Hezekiah was pleased to show them everything he had. **39:2**

Because these men gave him positive greetings and a gift, Hezekiah was pleased and flattered. This was a real boost to his ego; finally people all over the world were beginning to honor him. He was so elated by this that he was happy to show them everything. All his own personal treasure and gold and his whole armory; he showed them everything and told them everything. The Hebrew words imply that he showed them everything, without exception. He probably figured these people would be his friends in a pinch, so he just showed them everything.

Hezekiah was a very wealthy man. In fact, his forefathers, David and Solomon, had stored up quite a fortune of which Hezekiah shared (II Chron. 32:27-28). Now remember when Hezekiah received a letter from the Assyrians, he took the letter in before God and prayed about it and God showed him what to do (Isaiah 37:14-35). However, Hezekiah never once went to God and prayed about this event. He never once asked God if he should share all of this information with Babylonians and he did not consult with Isaiah. He just went ahead and did it.

What I am about to say can probably be taken the wrong way, but I still am going to say it. I do not believe it is wise or smart to tell everyone in the organization, including the church, everything about a person's financial package. I do not believe it is smart in the business world and I do not believe it is smart in the church. I believe there needs to be a board of faithful men who oversee things and handle things and keep their mouths shut. The reason is this - some people in every organization, including the church, want to know these things, not because they need to know or because they really care about God's Word or work. Instead, they want to know so they can go out and use it to tell others and shoot off their mouths in a devilish and destructive way.

I know of a Christian businessman, who God had greatly blessed and there were some working for him who were sneaking around trying to find out how much he made. It was none of their business, but they made it their business like the Babylonians.

A few years ago, Dr. Chuck Swindoll, a wonderful man of God was thinking of buying a new home, and as I understand it, he wanted a private place where he could have some of his leaders in to meet. I said, praise God. God has blessed him. He is faithful. If any deserves that, he does. But some devilish people got wind of how much this place would cost and they spread it out, almost as if they wanted to destroy his ministry.

I can tell you a story of a pastor in this state just north of here that was in a church and a devilish woman wanted to know everything about his package and the board foolishly gave in to her because she was a wealthy woman who contributed large sums of money. The Pastor was well cared for but he was certainly not getting rich. This woman took this information and went on a devilish crusade against this man of God and it not only demoralized him and his work, but caused him to want out of a good ministry, and God ended up sending him to another ministry and the next man who came to the church had terrible moral problems. This all happened because one woman snuck in and said, "Show me everything."

These Babylonians had no business seeing or knowing about all the financial things that pertained to Hezekiah and his household. Be very careful about who you tell everything to for there are satanic agents who can use that information against you.

RESPONSE #3 – Isaiah questions Hezekiah concerning what he did. **39:3-4**

Isaiah was God's prophet and he went straight to the king and asked, what did the men want and where are they from? Isaiah is not going to visit Hezekiah as a private person, he is going as a powerful prophet. There is no hint that Hezekiah initiated this visit, or was even interested in seeing Isaiah. The questions that Isaiah asks are not designed to gain information, but are designed to bring Hezekiah under conviction about the wrong he has done.

Notice carefully at the end of **verse 3**, that Hezekiah answers the second question - they came from afar, from Babylon. Hezekiah must have sensed that there was something wrong about all of this because he seemed to avoid answering the first question. Furthermore, notice how he tries to minimize who these people were - these were men from afar and then he adds they were from Babylon.

But notice, Isaiah was not sidetracked by any of this and immediately followed up and asked - "What have they seen in your house" (**39:4a**)?

RESPONSE #4 – Hezekiah answers Isaiah. **39:4b**

Hezekiah said they have seen everything. I showed them everything in my house and I showed them all of my finances and resources. I didn't hold back a thing. Dr. Warren Wiersbe said, "Hezekiah was safer as a sick man in bed than as a healthy man on the throne" (*Be Comforted*, p. 102).

Not one time did Hezekiah pray and ask God if this were the right thing to do. Not one time did Hezekiah consult with Isaiah, God's prophet. There wasn't one time when he asked God for His wisdom. He just blindly gave in to the Babylonians.

RESPONSE #5 – Isaiah gives Hezekiah the Word of God. **39:5-7**

What Hezekiah should have done was to tell the Babylonians about the greatness and power of God and the grace that God had extended to him personally. He should never have showed them everything, especially without consulting with God or His prophet. Hezekiah had blown it big-time and Isaiah gave him two negative promises:

Negative Promise #1 - Everything you have and everything your fathers had will be taken by the Babylonians. **39:6**

This is the first time that Isaiah predicts that the Babylonians would take over the Promised Land. As we know, Biblical prophecy may always be interpreted literally and even though it may have appeared that Babylon was the friend of Israel, God knew what would happen and what He would do.

Hezekiah was the steward of everything he had, not the owner. God had blessed him and God had blessed Judah and Hezekiah would lose everything because he had showed all sacred things to people who had no business seeing them. We need to remember that in whatever we have; we are the steward and not the owner.

Negative Promise #2 - Some of your own sons will be taken to Babylon and will serve the leaders of Babylon, not the leaders of God. **39:7**

It is one thing to lose your stuff because of spiritual stupidity, but it is another to lose your sons. Instead of the sons growing up and becoming leaders in Jerusalem, they would grow up and become leaders in Babylon.

This prophecy did end up being literally fulfilled in a little over 100 years. In 586 B.C., Babylon came into Judah and destroyed Jerusalem and took temple items and the people captive (Daniel 1).

This was certainly not all the fault of Hezekiah. Truth is, many leaders in Judah refused to turn to the Lord and hear the Word of God which was presented by God's men (II Chron. 36:13-16). However, his one bad decision brought God's judgment into position.

RESPONSE #6 – Hezekiah responds to the Word of God. **39:8**

This verse shows that Hezekiah truly did have a heart for God and His Word even when it stepped all over him. Even though Hezekiah had done something bad, he knew God's Word was good. He knew the importance of the truth of God for in the truth of God is where you find peace.

Even though he had made bad decision, he was thankful that God was gracious to him and that the fulfillment would not take place in his lifetime, but it would occur with his children and grandchildren.

What is so interesting about all of this is had not God extended his life 15 years, none of this would have ever happened.

Actually, it wasn't just Hezekiah's sin that led God to cause these negative things to happen, but it was a contributing factor. Truth is, Hezekiah had been a very godly king and ultimately it would be the rebellion of the rulers and priests and false prophets that would eventually lead God to permit the Babylonians to dominate Judah (II Chronicles 36:13-16).

But there is truly a lesson for us to glean from this - no matter how great we may be and no matter how godly we may be, it is possible for us to become proud to the point where we stop consulting with God or His Word and ultimately make wrong decisions that can leave us in a disaster.

God loves a broken and contrite spirit and He despises a proud and arrogant spirit (Psalm 51:17). He loves His people seeking to know Him and His Word.

PRACTICAL INSIGHT:

1. When we find ourselves in prosperous times, we need to be on special guard that we do not lose sight of God and His Word that brought about these blessings. We must never get sloppy in our spirituality when things are going good.
2. We need to be willing to pray about everything. We need to consult with God.
3. Before we make decisions, we need to carefully consider God's Word and perhaps even discuss things with those who accurately know it.
4. Wrong decisions that we may make apart from God's Word may lead to some devastating consequences.
5. No matter who we are or what we have seen God do, we must never become so proud and arrogant to the point that we refuse to consult with God and His Word. Pride is satanic and when we become proud we are heading to disaster.