

Title: Hezekiah's Trial of Prosperity

Text: Isaiah 39: 1-8

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Within a few years after Hezekiah's trial of sickness, the Lord gave him a trial of prosperity. Prosperity is more dangerous to a believer than anything we face. It is easy to be lifted up in pride when the Lord has prospered us.

**Proposition:** This trial of prosperity shows that every believer is yet a sinner constantly saved by God, by the righteousness of Christ his Son.

The Lord delivered Hezekiah from two great trials: the Lord delivered him from the Assyrians and from sickness which was unto death. Hezekiah declared what God did for him. "What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done *it*: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul" (Is 38: 15). He said that he would remember this bitterness of his soul—his sin from his attachment to this world. Hezekiah said that he would go through my life remembering Christ was his life and not the things of this world. What a danger prosperity is to this!

Hezekiah rejoiced anew that God in Christ had delivered him from the pit of corruption, from himself, and by Christ God had put all his sins away. "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" (Is 38: 17). Nothing more quickly makes us forget our Savior as prosperity!

Hezekiah gave all the glory to God and resolved to worship and praise God all his days. "The LORD *was ready* to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD" (Is 38: 20). We are about to see how prosperity made Hezekiah forget all about his resolve to give God all the glory!

Let's get some background as to what happened after Hezekiah's trial of sickness. After the Lord healed Hezekiah of sickness and delivered him from the Assyrians, the nations around Judah heard about it and sent gifts.

2 Chronicles 32: 23: And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth...27: And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels; 28: Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks. 29: Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for God had given him substance very much.

Remember, when the Lord told Hezekiah he would live fifteen more years, the Lord gave Hezekiah a sign. God made the sun go backward ten degrees. The Babylonians worshipped the sun. So this great wonder caught their attention. They heard about Judah's defeat of the Assyrians. The king of Babylon wanted to be in an alliance with Hezekiah and Judah against the Assyrians. This was a political move by the king of Babylon.

**Isaiah 39: 1: At that time Mero-dach-baladan, 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. 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.**

Now, picture Hezekiah taking these ambassadors around his estate. When the Babylonian princes said, "We heard you defeated the Assyrians." Hezekiah said, "Oh yes, I did that!" When they said, "We saw the sun go back 10 degrees." Hezekiah said, "Oh yes. I asked for that sign. That was done for me!" When they marveled at all Hezekiah's treasures, Hezekiah said, "Oh yes, all these are my treasures which I have gotten for me!"

2 Chronicles 32: 25: But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit *done* unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem...

Hezekiah rendered not again that glory to God which he said he would render. He rendered not again that glory due to God for doing it all unto him. We are told the reason, "*For his heart was lifted up.*" Why was Hezekiah's heart lifted up in pride?

2 Chronicles 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.

God left him. God took his hand off Hezekiah to try him so that Hezekiah might know all that was in his heart. God knew what was in Hezekiah's sinful flesh. But the Lord left Hezekiah to himself, so that Hezekiah might know that all that was in his sinful heart was pride.

**Isaiah 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. 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.**

None of Hezekiah's treasures were Hezekiah's treasures—all was the gift of God to Hezekiah. And Hezekiah did not show them his greatest treasure of all—he did not declare the truth of God to them, he did not show them how the Lord had delivered him from the pit of corruption and cast all Hezekiah's sins behind his back. He did not declare to these princes that all that he had was of God's hand by God's grace due to Christ his Righteousness. Being lifted up in pride over his new prosperity, Hezekiah did not give God the glory for it all.

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

Hezekiah is not saying, "Well that's good so long as I have peace and truth in my days." He is saying that word of the Lord is good though this was heart-wrenching, heartbreaking chastening. The Lord's word was good because God had yet remembered mercy to Hezekiah for the sake of Christ. Though God would let Babylon take all Hezekiah's treasures, though God would turn Judah over to captivity in Babylon, though Hezekiah's sons would be taken and made eunuchs in the king of Babylon's palace, still, God had withheld the judgment Hezekiah deserved for his sins. For the sake of Christ his Righteousness, God gave Hezekiah what he did not deserve by giving him peace and truth in his days. That is what Hezekiah is saying.

Let's learn three things from Hezekiah's trial of prosperity.

### **GOOD WORKS ARE TO GOD'S GLORY NOT OURS**

Any good work done by us is not of us but of God.

Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, was the most evil king Judah ever had. Yet, God chose Hezekiah, regenerated him and gave him faith in Christ. God had worked all these good works in Hezekiah by the grace of God alone. Concerning the defeat of the Assyrians and concerning Hezekiah's walk scripture says,

2 Chronicles 32: 21: ...the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria...22: Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *other*, and guided them on every side.

Concerning all the good works Hezekiah did and all the riches he possessed, they are called "*the benefit done unto him.*"... "*for God had given him substance very much.*" Like Hezekiah, every sinner who believes on Christ and does works of faith, have nothing to boast in. We are God's children by God's grace. Child of God, always remember, God's purpose in election.

Romans 9:11: (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)...15: For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16: So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

We are God's children by grace. We are given the gift of faith by God's grace. We work good works by God's grace. So we have no room to boast that we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ nor room to boast in any work of faith we perform. All is the gift of God by grace.

Ephesians 2: 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

### **EVERY SAINT IS YET A SINNER**

Though we are born-again of the Holy Spirit of God, though sanctified by Christ our Sanctification, pride and sin is all that we are in our sin nature.

Hezekiah was faithful by the grace of God. He did many good works by the grace of God. God said of Hezekiah.

2 Kings 18: 5: He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him. 6: For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. 7: And the LORD was with him; *and* he prospered whithersoever he went forth:

After listing all the works Hezekiah did, all the riches he wisely stored, and the cities he built, God declares an engineering marvel Hezekiah worked in his day.

2 Chronicles 32: 30: This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works...31: Howbeit in *the business* of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon,...God left him, to try him, that [Hezekiah] might know all *that was* in his heart.

Though Hezekiah had a new heart by God's grace, the Lord taught Hezekiah that all that was in his sinful heart, his sin-nature, was pride! Throughout scripture, we find God teach his saints this painful lesson.

Adam was created upright in a perfect world—he had no sin nature as we do, there was no sin in the world as it is with us. But God left him and Adam sinned and plunged the entire human race into sin and death.

Righteous Lot was made righteous by God. God saved Lot. He gave Lot his faithful uncle Abraham to be his pastor. But God left him to show him what was in his sinful heart. Rather than put aside the division and continue with Abraham under the gospel, Lot chose to leave the gospel and lead his family to the fertile plains of Sodom simply because they were fertile.

David was the man after God's own heart. But God left him to show him what was in his sinful heart. David committed adultery with his best friend's wife then murdered his best friend to cover it up.

Child of God, God has created in you a new heart in the righteousness and holiness of Christ Jesus. In that new heart, you believe on Christ and you want to serve God perfectly. But there is a sin-nature in us that is sin and only wants to sin. Due to our sin-nature, we cannot serve God perfectly as we would. But due to the Spirit of God abiding in us, we cannot sin to the degree we would. When God has enabled you to put off the old man—to put down your sins—remember, it was God who did it in you. Give him all the glory.

But due to our sin-nature, if God should take his hand off, there is no evil we will not do. Remember that when you or your brethren sin. Flee to Christ to save! Declare the good news of Christ to brethren who fall. Only Christ makes his child stand. He only does so through the gospel that glorifies him. All else is us trying to save ourselves by our own works. It is us putting our hand to the ark like Uzzah. Christ does not need our help. Believe on him. Trust Christ to make you and your brethren stand.

### **LEFT BUT NEVER FORSAKEN**

God may leave us for a season. Our sins will cost us. But God will never forsake us because God forsook his Son on the cross in the place of his people.

God left Hezekiah to teach Hezekiah that his sinful nature was still with him. The Lord did this to humble Hezekiah and keep him trusting Christ alone. The sin was all of Hezekiah. Being a faithful Father, God always chastens his children for our sins. Therefore, our sins always cost us. Due to Hezekiah's sin, God declared Judah would be carried away into Babylonian captivity. Due to Hezekiah's sin, God declared his sons who had not yet been born would be carried away and be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Brethren do not play around with sin.

1 John 2:1: My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.

But though God left Hezekiah for a season, God will never leave his elect forever because he forsook his Son on the cross. Christ bore Hezekiah's sin. He bore all the sins of all his people. Therefore, God forsook him in judgment in the place of all his elect. In the darkness of the cross, Christ cried out,

Psalm 22:1: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

It is because God is holy! God will by no means clear the guilty. But our Lord Jesus cried, "It is finished!" The Lord Jesus manifest the righteousness of God. God is just. In Christ our Substitute, his justice was poured out on each of his people in full. "We are crucified with Christ!" We died in Christ. And God is our Justifier. In Christ our Substitute, it is God who justifieth! It is Christ who died! He put away all the sin of all his people. God cast our sins behind his back. Therefore, God said to Hezekiah, and he says to you and me when we sin.

Isaiah 54: 4: Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: ...5: For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called...7: For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. 8: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. 9: For this *is as* the waters of Noah unto me: for *as* I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. 10: For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

1 John 2: 1: And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: [the mercy-seat]

When God makes us behold Christ in the face of our sins, we always say what Hezekiah said,

**Isaiah 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.**

Hezekiah was humbled by this fresh sight of Christ who put away his sins.

2 Chronicles 32: 26: Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, *both* he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah...

The trial was not only for Hezekiah, but it was also for God's elect in Judah, too. That is the case with us. It was not only Hezekiah that was lifted up in pride, but it was also the inhabitants of Jerusalem, too. So it was not only Hezekiah that received God's grace to humble himself, but it was also the inhabitants of Jerusalem, too. So it is the family of God.

Hezekiah declared, "Good is the word of the Lord." Hezekiah declared that God had chastened him far less than he deserved and given him far more than he deserved. God did it all for the sake of Christ who was Hezekiah's Righteousness. Hezekiah declared, "*For there shall be peace and truth in my days.*" In Christ, *peace and truth* are met together. The word of the Lord is good for God is *just* to give his child *mercy* due to Christ.

Brethren, sin not! But when we sin, God is *righteous* to give us *peace* with God due to Christ his Son.

Isaiah 40: 1: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. 2: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

Let us remember our Substitute at his table!

**Amen!**