

# ISAIAH

## ISAIAH 39:1-8, FLIRTING WITH BABYLON

The events of this chapter, as with chapter 38, also occurred before the Assyrian invasion. The placement here is designed to show that Hezekiah is a man with faults who cannot be the Messiah. The true Messiah and His Kingdom will be the subject of much of the rest of Isaiah's book of prophecy.

Hezekiah was a well-known and important king in the area. Israel was the crossroads for international trade and marauding armies in the region. At this point in history, Babylon was a small nation emerging from under the shadow of Assyria. No one at that time had any idea that Assyria would soon fall from power and be replaced with Babylon.

After Hezekiah's illness, Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon, sent him a letter and a gift apparently wishing the Hebrew king well. It would have taken time for the word of Hezekiah's illness and healing to reach Babylon, and an equal amount of time to send letters and a gift to Jerusalem. While there may not have been a large time gap between chapter 38 and 39, there had to be some months at the least.

Isaiah 39:1 'At that time Merodach-baladan [מְרֹדַךְ בִּלְאָדָן] son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters [סְפָרִים] and a present [מִנְחָה] to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered [הִחַי].

Merodach-baladan, מְרֹדַךְ בִּלְאָדָן, means "Marduk has given a son (Merodach)," and "Bel is his lord" (Baladan). Merodach, מְרֹדַךְ, is the name of the Babylonian god we call Marduk which attaches some divine efficacy to the reign of the individual Babylonian king by adopting a royal name that incorporates the name of this Babylonian, pagan deity.

This king is thought to have been "a clever and ambitious ruler who bitterly opposed the influence of Assyria in Babylon" [L. Walker, s.v. "Merodach-baladan" *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Volume 4, M-P, 4:191-192*].

He was a Chaldean which was a people group comprised of several different tribes living in the area around the head of the Persian Gulf. The Chaldeans were envious of the wealth and power wielded by the Babylonian regimes, and they often tried, without success, to conquer Babylon and assume control of the Euphrates River valley. The Chaldean tribes were not united at the time which kept them in a weakened state in comparison to Babylon. Merodach-baladan became the head of one of the tribes. One of the other tribal leaders declared himself to be king of Babylon which made him the de facto ruler of the Chaldeans. Of course, the Assyrian king who held the throne at the time was not pleased with that development. Tiglath-pileser III reconquered Babylon and all the Chaldean states submitted to him right away without a fight. Merodach-baladan presented the Assyrian with a large gift of gold, precious stones, fine woods, embroidered robes, cattle, and sheep. That was the first time he had submitted to the Assyrians, but it was a way to buy time. When Shalmaneser V died, he was succeeded by Sargon II who had problems in the western areas of the empire which provided Merodach-baladan

the opportunity to conquer the southern territory of Babylon and then the city itself. Sargon mounted an unsuccessful attack to reclaim the city for Assyria, but he remained in control of northern Babylon.

His reign in Babylon was a bit tumultuous. His Chaldean tribal allies and his military allies wanted plunder from Babylon, and he had to appease them by taking the wealth of the Babylonian citizens he just conquered which then turned the wealthy and priestly Babylonians against him. They turned to Assyria for help and received it. He ruled Babylon for 11 years (721-710 BC) before being run out of the city by the Assyrians and returning to Chaldea. There he was wounded in battle and went into exile in Elam.

Then a rebellion in Babylon occurred and Merodach-baladan returned to the throne sometime from 703-702 BC for 9 months. This was most likely the time that he sent the emissaries to Hezekiah in Jerusalem. "This embassy was sent nominally to congratulate Hezekiah upon his recovery from illness but was probably an attempt to get Hezekiah to join in a rebellion in the west against the Assyrian king. Such a diversion as that would have greatly helped Merodach-baladan's position in Babylonia. The plan failed, for Sennacherib invaded Babylonia, and Merodach-baladan saved his life only by precipitate flight into his old homeland" [Merrill F. Unger, s.v. "Merodach-baladan," *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 836].

Finally, another rebellion occurred in Babylon, and Merodach-baladan returned to participate in it, but King Sennacherib returned and put the Chaldean to flight. He fled to Elam where he died.

If the emissaries were sent to Jerusalem in 704-703 BC, then this incident and Hezekiah's illness occurred about 2-3 years before Sennacherib invaded Judah in 701 BC. It could have been during the Babylonian king's first reign when he was desperately trying to strengthen his position as king of Babylon by enlisting allies. Buksbazen represents that position. "The question is during which period of his reign did Merodach Baladan send his embassy to Hezekiah? The answer is not certain. However, the probability is that it was during the first period of his reign, when Merodach Baladan was most anxious to win allies against Babylon [Assyria?] among its enemies. Hezekiah seemed to be a good prospect, and his recovery from a dangerous illness was an excellent pretext for sending such an embassy" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 297]. The problem with this position is that Hezekiah died in 687-686 BC, and he lived for 15 years after he was healed. It seems more likely, then, that these things took place in the second, shorter reign of Merodach-baladan.

"At that time" begins verse 1 and clearly ties into the previous chapter detailing the illness and the healing of Hezekiah. These two incidents are linked; the Babylonian incident follows after the King Hezekiah's illness and healing episode.

The Babylonian envoys took letters to Hezekiah, but the contents are unknown. The context suggests that they were some sort of congratulatory message concerning the king's healing and return to strength. Additionally, "What must the letters have said if they provoked the response of displaying the resources and armed strength of the kingdom? From such a source as Merodach-Baladan, only one thing: 'Join me in rebellion'—and

Hezekiah fell for it. It was a clear choice: the promises of God (38:4-8) or the power of man (39:2), and Hezekiah forgot the promises" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 240]. This is a reminder of the power of the sin nature. The king who "did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done" (2 Chron. 29:2), who had just believed Yahweh for healing and received it, was the same king who is now toying with the idea of entering into yet another alliance, a mutual aid pact, with a pagan king. All the pagan king was doing was scouting out the military power and the treasury of Judah in the furtherance of his own agenda.

The fact is, Hezekiah did rebel against his Assyrian overlords which is what compelled Sennacherib to invade, destroy, and attempt to conquer all of Judah. There was a rebellious spirit operating in the western parts of the Assyrian Empire in western Asia along the Mediterranean Sea. Hezekiah decided to join in that rebellion.

2 Kings 18:7 <sup>7</sup>And the LORD was with him [Hezekiah]; wherever he went he prospered. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.

It wasn't until Sennacherib had devastated most of Judah and conquered Lachish that Hezekiah belatedly decided to try to buy off the Assyrian onslaught through the payment of tribute. That plan failed. The wealth of Judah went to Assyria, and the Assyrian Army's attack continued.

2 Kings 18:13–16 <sup>13</sup>Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them. <sup>14</sup>Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong. Withdraw from me; whatever you impose on me I will bear." So the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. <sup>15</sup>Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver which was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king's house. <sup>16</sup>At that time Hezekiah cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the doorposts which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

Letters, סְפָרִים, means a missive, a document, or a writing. It is plural, but some theologians believe the plural refers to a single letter. In fact, the plural word is translated in the singular in all but the most literal translations referring to the letter from Sennacherib that Hezekiah spread before the Lord in the Temple (2 Kings 19:14 ["letters": LEB, YLT, ISV]; Is. 37:14 ["letters": YLT, ISV]). The notes in the NET Bible on 2 Kings 19:14 explain why those translators think it is singular: "The MT [Masoretic Text] has the plural, 'letters,' but the final *mem* is probably dittographic [a mistaken repetition of a letter, word, or phrase by a copyist] (note the initial *mem* on the form that immediately follows). Some Greek and Aramaic witnesses have the singular" [NET Bible, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., s.v. "Isaiah 19:14," 631, n. "o"]. The same situation exists in Isaiah 37:14 and 39:1. The problem with this theory of a copyist error concerning one letter, the last one, is that it does not explain the three letters of the plural form "ים". It seems highly unlikely that this letter was from the first letter of the following word. My personal opinion is that the word should have been translated in the plural in all the uses in these verses, because the text is apparently plural.

Present, מְנִחָה, means a gift, tribute, or an offering. It refers to a gift, that is, something that is acquired or given without compensation in return.

There is nothing written about the method used to deliver the letters and the gift, but the Septuagint reads, "letters, and ambassadors, and gifts." The letters and the gift would seem to be diplomatic niceties, which would normally be presented by an ambassador or other high-ranking representative of the nation and its king. These things were probably not sent by means of some low-ranking messenger, but by a high-ranking official.

"The content and the size of the gift from Babylon is not defined, but the gift could be a small innocent present that was merely a token of friendship, or lurking behind the innocent sounding 'gift' could be a sizable bribe that would cement a political alliance between these two kings who were both facing strong Assyrian opposition. Isaiah's strong negative reaction to these events indicates that this visit from a Babylonian ambassador and the gifts that accompanied it had significant political implications" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 1-39*, 656]. I suspect the ruthless Babylonians were not in the habit of giving other kings innocent gifts!

It is interesting to note the contrast between the king's faith response to Yahweh's promise to heal him, with his happiness at the arrival of the Babylonian ambassadors when they came to Jerusalem after he was healed. One would think Hezekiah had learned his lesson about getting entangled in foreign alliances, and that he could depend on Yahweh to deliver the kingdom.

Recovered, *הִזָּק*, means to be strong. In this context, it has the sense of being sick and then, once over the illness, regaining strength and becoming strong again. "... he hath been sick, and is become strong" (YLT) is a more literal translation.

Hezekiah was delighted to see the Babylonians arrive in Jerusalem and he showed them everything they wanted to see.

Isaiah 39:2 <sup>2</sup>Hezekiah was pleased [*שָׂמַח*], and showed them *all* his treasure [*כָּל*] house [*בַּיִת*], the silver and the gold and the spices [*בְּשֵׂם*] and the precious [*טוֹב*] oil and his whole armory [*בַּיִת כְּלֵי*] and all that was found in his treasuries [*אוֹצָר*]. There was nothing in his house [*בַּיִת*] nor in all his dominion [*מִמְּשָׁלָה*] that Hezekiah did not show them.

Pleased, *שָׂמַח*, means to rejoice, to be joyful, or to be glad. The sense is that of feeling happiness or joy. The root of the word "denotes being glad or joyful with the whole disposition as indicated by its association with the heart (cf. Ex. 4:14; Ps. 19:8, 104:15, 105:3) the soul (Ps. 86:4), and with the lighting up of the eyes (Prov. 15:30)" [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. "*שָׂמַח*," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 879].

"Pleased" is an English translation of the Hebrew word *שָׂמַח* that is a bit mild. The real meaning of the word indicates that Hezekiah was really, really overjoyed to see these Babylonian ambassadors show up in Jerusalem. Better translations include: "... rejoiced over them" (LEB, YLT), and "... delighted with them" (ISV). The reason why he was happy about it is not stated, but it must have had to do with throwing off the Assyrian yoke under which the whole region was suffering. He must have viewed Babylon as a powerful, potential ally. Buksbazen thought the king's pride had something to do with it, and we

know that his pride was an issue with God. "The embassy from Merodach Baladan greatly flattered Hezekiah's vanity. As a mark of his pleasure, Hezekiah showed them all his treasures. This was an act of great vanity and also of political short-sightedness" [Victor Buksbazen, *The Prophet Isaiah: A Commentary*, 297].

2 Chronicles 32:25 <sup>25</sup>But Hezekiah gave no return for the benefit he received, because his heart was proud; therefore wrath came on him and on Judah and Jerusalem.

However, pride may not have been the only issue. This issue was a test from God to see what was in the king's heart, and the last verse we will look at today indicates that his own, and by extension, his nation's, personal peace and prosperity may have been foremost in his mind.

2 Chronicles 32:31 <sup>31</sup>Even *in the matter of* the envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who sent to him to inquire of the wonder that had happened in the land, God left him *alone only* to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.

One of the reasons the Babylonians went to Jerusalem was their curiosity concerning the sign God gave Hezekiah. It must have become a well-known event in the region, and pagan, sun worshiping societies would have taken notice of such a momentous event. Shadows simply do not move backwards on their own. However, political considerations were probably the over-riding concern of the Babylonians. We noted earlier in Merodach-baladan's biographical information, that he was a determined, intractable foe of Assyria.

The problem was that Hezekiah did not comprehend the implications of the Babylonian visit and the ultimate consequences of what he was doing by showing the Babylonians a lot of what might be termed "state secrets." Buksbazen called this "political short-sightedness," but that term does not begin to describe the incredible foolishness the king exhibited doing this. Some theologians believe that Hezekiah was simply extending diplomatic courtesies to his Babylonian visitors, but Hezekiah went far beyond what diplomacy requires in terms of hosting visiting ambassadors and dignitaries.

While it is clear that Hezekiah showed the Babylonians everything of value that was stored in the treasure house, the word "all" has been inserted into the text by the NASB translators; it is not in the text. Later in the verse, it is specifically stated that the King of Judah showed the Babylonians everything that was in his treasuries and in his kingdom.

Treasure, נֶזֶת, means treasure; therefore, treasure house, בַּיִת נֶזֶת, is a place where accumulated wealth in the form of money, jewels, or other valuables were kept. נֶזֶת may also mean aromatic gum or aromatic powder that has been pounded out by breaking in pieces and pounding into powder. It may be translated "... his house of aromatic gum" (LEB), or "... the house of his spices" (YLT). Calling it the house of spices does not necessarily preclude housing other valuables, but treasury house seems to be better since other valuables were stored in the building. Besides, spices were considered to be valuable items themselves.

Silver and gold were housed in this building. Spices, **בִּשְׂמִים**, may refer not only to spices or balsam, but also to perfume or fragrances. Precious, **טוֹב**, means good, but in this context, it refers to something of superior quality or relative worth, in this case, olive oil. Armory, **בַּיִת הַבְּלָי**, literally means house of armor, which is a reference to the armory, that is, the place where weaponry is stored.

Treasury, **אוֹצָר**, means treasure, treasury, or storehouse. It refers to what is laid up, a store or stock. It is especially used of gold, silver, and other precious things, and is therefore used of the treasury of the temple. This could be significant since we know that the Babylonian Army, after conquering Jerusalem, took all the utensils made from precious metal out of the Temple and removed them to Babylon.

2 Chronicles 36:18 <sup>18</sup>All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought *them* all to Babylon.

Where the Temple utensils were stored is not stated. Certainly, King Hezekiah could not have taken the Babylonian Gentiles into the Temple itself to view these things, if, in fact, they did see them. Even if they didn't see them on this visit to Jerusalem, once the Babylonian conquerors captured the Temple, there would have been no problem appropriating and removing them to Babylon. They may have been able to see some of the precious metals used in and around the Temple.

Dominion, **מְמִשְׁלָה**, means rule, dominion and the area of one's dominion, or realm referring to dominance, power, or sovereignty through legal authority. This word is also translated into English with the words realm and kingdom. We might think of it as jurisdiction. "Does this [in all his dominion] imply that Hezekiah took the Babylonian envoy on a tour of various other cities to show them the agricultural, industrial, and military strength of the whole nation or is this just a rhetorical way of emphasizing that nothing was kept back, that he went overboard in his attempt to impress the Babylonians, answering all their questions? [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 1-39*, 657]. It seems unlikely that Hezekiah took them to any place outside of Jerusalem, but there was plenty in that city for the Babylonians to see.

House, **בַּיִת**, is also a figurative way of referring to the king's jurisdiction. Later, the king responded to the prophet's questioning in such a way that linked his house with his treasures. In other words, the king showed him everything.

Whatever the extent of Hezekiah's disclosures to the Babylonian envoys, it was extensive, and it was way too much. Isaiah was very concerned about the king's behavior and questioned him about it.

Isaiah 39:3-4 <sup>3</sup>Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where have they come to you?" And Hezekiah said, "They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon." <sup>4</sup>He said, "What have they seen in your house?" So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

The text does not reveal whether or not Isaiah was sent by the Lord to the king as a result of direct, divine revelation, or whether the prophet discovered the particulars of this visit another way and took it upon himself to confront the king. The prophet asked the king where the men came from which suggests that the visit was not common knowledge around the city, although that may have been a rhetorical question because Jerusalem was not so large that a delegation of Babylonian dignitaries and their entourage could go unnoticed. However, the text does say in verse 5 that Isaiah had received a word from Yahweh for the king, which leads one to presume that Yahweh did reveal this information to the prophet who was then sent to the king with a word from God.

It is significant that Hezekiah had not sent for the prophet; he arrived, unsummoned, on a mission with a message for the king from Yahweh. "Whatever an Israelite king's pretensions might be, he always had to operate with the knowledge that, at any point, a prophet who belonged to neither the royal nor the priestly establishments might stand up to rebuke him in the name of the One who calls all human beings, king and commoner alike, to account. So Isaiah appears here. Whatever the Babylonians may have thought of Hezekiah's performance, the issue is, what did God think of it?" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 695].

The prophet asked two questions of Hezekiah, but the king answered only the second one. His answer suggests that a bit of pride was at work. He said, these men "have come to me from a far country." The King seems to feel blessed that these men came to see him from such a faraway place. "The king's reply to Isaiah's question begins *From a distant land* and ends *from Babylon*. These are the two points of emphasis: 'Imagine them coming all that way to see me! Imagine Merodach-Baladan wanting me as an ally!' Forgetfulness of the word of God is the prime enemy of faith; pride in one's own importance runs it a close second" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 240]. At this point in history, Babylon was not yet the powerful nation it would be in just a few short years, but Hezekiah seemed to be eager to enter into an alliance with them over their shared concern about, and opposition to, Assyria. The Israelites just never seemed to rely on the promise of God to not only bless them for obedience, but to protect them as well. Ignorance of the Scriptures had a profoundly negative impact on the nation throughout its history, and that continues to this day. Unfortunately, that situation will not change and improve until the Second Coming when Messiah rescues them from what is otherwise certain annihilation.

It seems that Hezekiah, fresh off an illness that was cured at the behest of Yahweh who commanded he be cured, and just after he had witnessed a miraculous sign from God, still wants to enter into a mutual aid pact with a pagan nation. Similar alliances with Assyria and Egypt were condemned by Yahweh; therefore, the king should have had no expectation that any dalliance with Babylon would be viewed any differently. As godly as this king was considered to be, he still had serious issues maintaining his focus on God and on doing the right thing. Clearly, in terms of application, the sin nature of man is a serious problem in our relationship with God even as believers. We have issues!

When Isaiah asked the king what the Babylonians had seen, the king truthfully answered the prophet. He said they had seen everything in his house which he linked to all the treasuries which were used as storehouses. This verse indicates that the Babylonian emissaries had seen everything in Judah that was worth seeing in terms of economic wealth and military power. The problem Hezekiah failed to discern was that they were not interested in how those things served Judah's interests; they were interested in conducting an intelligence gathering operation for their own nation's use in the future. To be fair to Hezekiah, at that point in history, there was no way to know that Assyria, as a threat to the region, was going to fall away only to soon be replaced by Babylon at some point in the near future.

Some theologians believe that Hezekiah was immediately chagrined by the prophet's direct approach concerning his actions involving Babylon, and that he was immediately contrite and apologetic in his answer to Isaiah. "Isaiah's question is in preparation for the prophecy that he is about to utter in verse 6. Some commentators think that there is still manifest a certain amount of pride in the reply, for the king speaks of all that is in his house. Rather, it would seem, Hezekiah, convicted of his folly by the approach of Isaiah, simply speaks the full truth, hiding nothing. It was necessary that he should tell what had occurred" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 2, 2:535-536].

Others think that Hezekiah was being defiant. When asked, "'What did they see?' Now Hezekiah's answer seems to have something of a defiant ring. 'Everything,' he says, 'I held *nothing* back!' It is as though he knows he cannot win and has decided therefore to brazen it out" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 696].

My opinion is that Hezekiah realized Isaiah had caught him in a serious indiscretion; therefore, he sheepishly and truthfully admitted to what he was doing. If he didn't realize it then, he must have realized it by the time Isaiah finished revealing the Word of the Lord to him.

Oswalt also wrote that this failure on the part of Hezekiah was placed at this point in the book—after the Assyrian invasion is recorded, yet, actually occurring before the invasion began—in order to show that Hezekiah was not the Messiah. This position seems to be correct. "None of this is to deny the other biblical statements that Hezekiah was a generally good and godly king, but it is to point out that he was, in fact, not infallible. He was not the Messiah, and like the nation he represented, he needed to discover that trust is a way of life, not a magic talisman to be used only in crises" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 696].

Next, Isaiah commands the king to listen to the Word of the LORD of Hosts.

Isaiah 39:5 <sup>5</sup>Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear [שמע] the word of the LORD of hosts, Hear, שמע, means to hear or to listen, to pay close attention to, and to understand the things heard. The sense is to not only listen, hear, or pay close attention to, but to respond in conformity with what is heard and understood. The word here is in the form of an imperative verb, which is a command. In no uncertain terms, Hezekiah is ordered to hear the Word of God which implies not only hearing it, but understanding and obeying it.



The king knew he should not have been making an alliance with a pagan king and his nation. This Word from the LORD was not simply the prophet's pronouncement about entering such an alliance. This Word was a promise of judgment against Judah for rebellion and disobedience. The same king who trusted God to heal him and who trusted God to grant him 15 more years of life, and who promised him that Assyria would not capture Jerusalem, was about to hear a promise of the nation's destruction which was a promise he had to know was going to be fulfilled exactly as the prophet related it. Given all the background in the book of Isaiah to this point, there was absolutely no reason for Hezekiah to be entertaining any ideas about joining with pagan kings and nations in an alliance against Assyria.

Isaiah 39:6–7 <sup>6</sup>'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing will be left,' says the LORD. <sup>7</sup>'And some of your sons who will issue from you, whom you will beget, will be taken away, and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.'"

Isaiah predicts the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem and Judah. The text does not specifically say that, but it is implied in the fact that everything that Judah has will be taken to Babylon, including some of the sons of the royal court. History records that is exactly what happened. Just as Hezekiah showed the Babylonian envoys everything, so would everything be taken from his nation by Babylon at some point in the future. Even the Temple would not be spared.

This prophecy was fulfilled in three stages. First, Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar which resulted in the loss of some of the Temple artifacts and the deportation of some of the officials and the royal family (2 Chron. 36:6-7; Dan. 1:1-3, 6-7). A second round of confiscating some Temple artifacts and deporting some Jews to Babylon occurred in the reign of Jehoiachin (Eliakim) (2 Chron. 36:10). The third round occurred when Jerusalem and the Temple were completely destroyed during the reign of Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:6-17; 2 Chron. 36:18-20). All of these kings were descendants of Hezekiah and Manasseh.

2 Chronicles 36:7 <sup>7</sup>Nebuchadnezzar also brought some of the articles of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his temple at Babylon (first round).

Daniel 1:1–3, 6-7 <sup>1</sup>In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. <sup>2</sup>The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the vessels of the house of God; and he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and he brought the vessels into the treasury of his god. <sup>3</sup>Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his officials, to bring in some of the sons of Israel, including some of the royal family and of the nobles ... <sup>6</sup>Now among them from the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. <sup>7</sup>Then the commander of the officials assigned new names to them; and to Daniel he assigned *the name* Belteshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-nego (first round).

2 Chronicles 36:10 <sup>10</sup>At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him [Jehoiachin] to Babylon with the valuable articles of the house of the LORD, and he made his kinsman Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem (second round).

2 Kings 24:12-13 <sup>12</sup>Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother and his servants and his captains and his officials. So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign. <sup>13</sup>He carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, just as the LORD had said (second round).

2 Chronicles 36:18 <sup>18</sup>All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought *them* all to Babylon (third round).

2 Kings 25:6-7 <sup>6</sup>Then they captured the king [Zedekiah] and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and he passed sentence on him. <sup>7</sup>They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon (third round).

2 Kings 25:13-17 <sup>13</sup>Now the bronze pillars which were in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea which were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces and carried the bronze to Babylon. <sup>14</sup>They took away the pots, the shovels, the snuffers, the spoons, and all the bronze vessels which were used in *temple* service. <sup>15</sup>The captain of the guard also took away the firepans and the basins, what was fine gold and what was fine silver. <sup>16</sup>The two pillars, the one sea, and the stands which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD—the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weight. <sup>17</sup>The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and a bronze capital was on it; the height of the capital was three cubits, with a network and pomegranates on the capital all around, all of bronze. And the second pillar was like these with network (third round).

Hezekiah's reaction to this news was interesting, perhaps not good, but interesting.

Isaiah 39:8 <sup>8</sup>Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good." For he thought, "For there will be peace and truth in my days."

There are two ways to view the king's reaction. One way to interpret it is to suggest that Hezekiah was simply grateful for God's provision of peace in his lifetime. "'... in my days there will be peace and truth.' There is no egoism in this thought ... for the king is not attributing these blessings to his own merit. In reality the words constitute a childlike acknowledgement of the truth of the prophecy and also of the mercy with which it is intermingled. Surely he would be thankful that in his own days the punishment was not to be visited. At the same time his very language shows that he considered the mitigation of the punishment a blessing for himself, and yet regarded the woes pronounced upon his descendants as a misfortune of his own" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 2, 2:539].

The other interpretation of the king's reaction is to view it as a selfishly motivated exclamation. "While it may be that Hezekiah is humbly thankful for God's grace in not bringing the deserved punishment upon him immediately, it is hard to avoid the implication that the real reason for his saying that God's word is good is merely the very human relief that he is not going to be destroyed. Whether his descendants are to be consumed does not seem to affect him. Furthermore, his reaction was quite different when his own demise was imminent" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 697].

Unger represents a view of Hezekiah's mindset that is between the two. "Hezekiah piously and with outward resignation proclaimed that the word of the LORD the prophet had spoken was good. But inwardly it is difficult not to detect a note of selfish self-interest and a carry-over from his vanity and folly, so recently exposed...." [Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1247].

This is also another indication that Hezekiah is not Messiah material. "All this leads me to believe that the picture here is essentially negative. Hezekiah is not the promised 'child', he is not infallible. Judah's hope rests in One who is yet to come. To be sure, Hezekiah was the demonstration that God can be trusted. But he is also the demonstration that our trust can no more be in good human beings than in bad ones. Our trust is in God alone" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 697].