

### Isaiah 39:1-8 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup> At that time Merodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered.

<sup>2</sup> And Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them the house of his treasures--the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory--all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

<sup>3</sup> Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?" So Hezekiah said, "They came to me from a far country, from Babylon."

<sup>4</sup> And 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."

<sup>5</sup> Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD of hosts:

<sup>6</sup> 'Behold, the days are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> 'And they shall take away *some* of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.' "

<sup>8</sup> So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken *is* good!" For he said, "At least there will be peace and truth in my days."

Mr Ortland has an insight that is too good to miss. He says this.

The book of Revelation portrays the evil arrayed against us in two forms: the great Beast to intimidate us and the great Whore to seduce us (Revelation [13:1](#); [17:1](#)). In some parts of the world today, persecution is the dominant strategy of the devil. In our part of the world, seduction is his usual method. But Satan doesn't care one way or the other, as long he wins. He may savage us, or he may flatter us. We see both here in Isaiah. In [chapters 36, 37](#) the army of Assyria surrounds Jerusalem like muggers on the street surrounding a defenseless girl. But Hezekiah's sense of God makes him brave, and the girl mocks her fleeing attackers ([Isaiah 37:22](#)). Now in [chapters 38, 39](#) the Babylonians appear in Jerusalem with

**congratulations and smiles, and Hezekiah melts. He's putty in their hands. He overcomes the Beast, only to fall into the arms of the Whore (cf. [James 4:4](#)).**

*Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word – Isaiah: God Saves Sinners.*

What we are going to see this morning is a sad situation. Hezekiah, who had done so well in standing up against idol worship and standing up against the Assyrian threat **now gives way** to an attack he did not expect. Let's look at this so we can learn to **succeed** where Hezekiah **failed**, to **stand** where Hezekiah **fell**.

**<sup>1</sup> At that time Merodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered.**

Now we need to revert back to history. Babylon was not the super power of the day. Assyria was. So Babylon appeared to present no immediate threat. It seemed to be harmless.

How many times have the harmless things been our undoing? All of us may have different sins that beset us. But how often do we fall to those things that are obvious, in your face threats? Isn't it far more likely that we give in to something **little** that leads to something **big**? The less obvious the threat, the more dangerous it is.

Here is Babylon, a minor political power. And the leaders in Babylon are aware of what is going on. They know that Jerusalem was delivered from Assyrian forces. They knew that Hezekiah had been healed from a terminal disease. So they sent letters and a present to Hezekiah.

Now if you were Hezekiah, how would you be likely to receive all this? He is a king of a very small land but had a great victory. He was just a normal person but was supernaturally delivered from death. Isn't it so nice when someone notices our virtues? Isn't it nice when they notice and emphasize the positive things about us. Isn't that seductive?

Those people who really know us live with the good and the bad about us.

There are none of us that don't require longsuffering on the part of those who really **know** us. But it is always dangerous when a flatterer enters the arena who knows what he or she is doing. They are free to focus only on the positive and make us feel that those around us don't really appreciate all our virtues. They really don't know just **how wonderful** we are. From what I have read, lots of infidelities have spun from these kinds of situations.

Flattery is often the most effective tool of the seducer **who really just wants something** from us to serve his or her own selfishness. That is what we see here. The king of Babylon flatters and give gifts. He makes Hezekiah think that he is really appreciated in all his wonderfulness. And what does that result in? It results in a willingness to be far more intimate than is appropriate. When a person feels that he or she is impressing someone, it is difficult to stop. The natural desire is to **impress the one who is impressed with you** more and more. It is difficult to stop gathering strokes when you are on a roll. It is difficult to go back to the ones who really know you, warts and all. That is what is happening here.

**<sup>2</sup> And Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them the house of his treasures--the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory--all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.**

Hezekiah was pleased with them. Here are heathens who do not know God or love God. They are idol worshippers. There is no fellowship here.

The word for pleased means, among other things, to gloat. And I think gloating was the issue here. To gloat means To feel or express great, often malicious, pleasure or self-satisfaction

Hezekiah had become full of himself. He looked back on all his blessings and started taking credit for them. Oh what a danger our pride is at every step of our lives. But it is probably greatest after we have been **most used by God** and **most blessed by God**. There is something in human beings that always wants to take credit for our successes, our blessings, the grace shown to us by God. That is as stupid as the day is long, but that is us. That is our tendency. So Hezekiah is gloating in his own wonderfulness when the Babylonian envoy arrives. They say a few positive things that feed his pride, and off to the races he goes. They have seduced him. He bought the bait. They are the big shots. They have given him a little bit of attention. They have given him a token of appreciation. Now he is out to prove just how wonderful he is. Now he going to win their approval. That is often the way of seduction.

Hezekiah is showing off. Oh what a danger we find ourselves in when we seek to impress someone. Think about it. How many foolish, stupid and evil things have we done in our efforts to impress someone, in order to get their acceptance or approval?

We have a tendency to look at our attempts to gain approval as innocuous things. We just think of them as normal. **Of course** we are trying to impress those we respect or admire. **Of course** we are going to try to win their approval. But God's word addresses it from a different angle. **We see it** as the desire to gain approval. **God sees it** often as the fear of gaining their **disapproval**.

**Proverbs 29:25-27 (NKJV)**

**25 The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.**

**26 Many seek the ruler's favor, But justice for man *comes* from the LORD.**

**27 An unjust man *is* an abomination to the righteous, And *he who is upright in the way is* an abomination to the wicked.**

Do we see what this is saying? When what we are fishing for is man's approval, we are in a trap. And as long as approval is what we seek, men have power over us that only God should have. And that power will never result in our good. A trap is something that leads to our demise, to our destruction. This is really important. It is fundamental to a life of faith. Justice for man comes from the Lord. That is it. You cannot depend upon men to receive justice. It doesn't often come from their hands when they have the power to do whatever they want.

And Solomon goes on. I need to get this. We all need to get this. Many of the people we are trying to gain approval from in the world are revealed in this verse. If we are righteous, **we are an abomination to them** and if we really mean what we say, **they are an abomination to us**.

That is the problem in our text, and it is often a problem in our lives. What unbeliever in your past have you tried to please? Have you tried to win their approval and acceptance? How did that work out? Would we not have been a million times better off if we had seen them as a severe risk? Would it not been better if we had realized that if they really knew us they would likely hate us for what we stood for? That is why it is so important that we lay out who we stand for at the start. If it draws them, fine. If it repels them, fine. Oh there is so much truth here. The world is not our friend. And we are fools to expect that they are. We might be their friend, but they cannot be ours. At the end of the day, if we are true to God, the unrighteous will hate the one we stand for. And if we are true to God, we will hate what the unrighteous stand for. Ultimately those who are not Christ's around us should be opportunities

for us to **show** and **tell** them the grace of God. But they are not soul mates and bosom buddies.

We are so very slow to get this truth. But it is true none the less.

So Hezekiah was seduced into showing far too much to his enemies. He let them see all his treasures. It is difficult not to make the relational application of what so many men and women do in relationships with non believers. In our efforts to win their approval, we give to them what should never be given to anyone but the one God gives us.

All of this resulted in a very bad thing. The enemies of God were very familiar with all the treasures that the people of God had accumulated.

It is interesting to see what that consisted of. Silver and Gold we would expect. Spices and precious ointments we may not have guessed. This was very likely medicine. We might not think of that as being a big deal, but when countries were dealing with epidemics, this would have been incredibly valuable.

And then the armory, the weapons. Of course we can see how they would have great value. Maybe they had slightly better technology than their opponents. Technology is a huge strategic advantage in warfare.

And we see that Hezekiah was fully intimate with these nonbelievers. He had no good reason to be. But they appealed to his pride. And isn't that so often our downfall? He showed them everything he had. Isn't that so often the result when a believer wants the approval of the world?

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**<sup>4</sup> And 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."**

Don't you wonder how this transaction went down? Did Hezekiah answer these questions completely unaware of any wrong doing? Or did Hezekiah begin to get nervous about the answers he was giving.

There is one thing I am very impressed with. Hezekiah told the truth. He told the absolute truth. Most people who have been intimate with the enemy are prone to lie about it. Most people who have sought the approval from nonbelievers at a great price will tend to understate that fact. But not

Hezekiah. He told Isaiah exactly what had happened, no matter how he may have felt about it.

Again there is a wonderful application here. God knows anyway. He knows exactly what happened. He knows exactly why. So there is no reason at all to hide it. We can never hide **what happened** and **why it happened** from God. We can make up a different history to tell ourselves, but God won't be fooled.

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

**6 'Behold, the days are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD.**

Hear the word of the Lord of hosts.

God's verdict is coming down on what Hezekiah had done. It doesn't matter what our excuses are. It doesn't matter how much we think everything we have done should be excused. The Lord of Hosts has a word. And sometimes the disciplines for those things we have done are not things we really want to hear. But God has every right to do whatever He deems as just and right.

And this is what God has to say.

Now keep in mind this is based upon what Hezekiah has done. We might think that forgiveness frees us from all the consequences of what we have done. But that is not always the case. In this case the consequences of his sin are very severe. They are long lasting. And they affect others, not just Hezekiah. That is what we so often forget. The consequences to our sins are rarely limited to just us. Usually it affects others as well.

Look at this.

Every valuable possession that all of the predecessors of Hezekiah have worked so hard to accumulate are going to be plundered by the enemy. Now think about this. Consider how you might feel if you were the one, like Hezekiah, who have failed in such a manner that this would be the outcome. You have some godly kings before you that have worked very hard to accumulate these assets. Many were gained at cost of people's lives. You represent all that goes before you. And what is **your addition** to this history? You blew it all. You wanted to impress these people who were flattering you. You wanted their approval. You wanted them to think you were wonderful. So you showed them everything you had. And what is the result? You surrendered everything you had of value to your enemy. Congratulations. What a great job you have done.

This is so very very sad. And yet it happens to believer after believer. We give that **which we have of value** to win the approval of someone who does not **love us or God** and at a great loss to the kingdom and those who have been faithful to Him.

You see, nothing ever changes. It is all the same.

**<sup>7</sup> 'And they shall take away *some* of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'** "

Wow. This is awful. We may not see it in the same way as they would likely see it. God is saying that Hezekiah's offspring are going to be castrated servants. They will never have the chance to further the family line. They will be a distortion of what they were created to be. And this will be done by the king of Babylon.

How would you feel if you knew this is what was going to happen to **your children**? I don't know about you, but I would feel that I had done something horrible to have things result in such a fashion. I would feel that I had seriously failed God to have Him punish me and my children in such a fashion. Wouldn't you? But look at what Hezekiah says.

**<sup>8</sup> So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!" For he said, "At least there will be peace and truth in my days."**

Doesn't this statement make you cringe? How selfish could a man become? Without a doubt **the word of the Lord is good**. But it is not good in the way that Hezekiah calculates.

Look at how he figures this. There will peace and truth in my days. Now I do not regard myself as a good person or a good father. But I cannot imagine a **cursed situation** placed on my children, or even **your children**, in which I would say, well **this is good**. At least **I** won't have to see it.

Hezekiah had a wonderful start. But he had a terrible end. What a horrible thing. I had made a sarcastic statement about Hezekiah's love for his children last week. This is what I was speaking about. What kind of father would show this kind of lack of concern for his children? How would you feel if you knew that your children were going to face severe suffering due to your decisions? How would you feel if you knew they were going to be robbed of the chance to have families or normal lives due to your decision? Would you not mourn that fact. Would you not lament your decision making? I don't really think it

would take a very good person to do so. But that is not Hezekiah. Hezekiah was all about Hezekiah. All he cared about was how his life was **today**. He saw his kids as something that **added** to his life. He saw his days as being all about what **served him best**. He was not willing to lay down his life for their welfare. They were supposed to benefit him. And if he didn't really benefit them, oh well. You can't have everything.

This is one of the most hideous ends of the life of a person of God we could ever imagine. I hope it makes us all cringe. Really. What is your life for? Is it not for serving your brothers and sisters? Is it not for **adding to their spiritual progress**? Is it not for taking them further along than you have gone.

When our lives become the ultimate point of service, when we begin evaluating everything based on how those around us treat us, when we begin to think that **our end** is more important than **the end of those we are called to serve**, what a horrible place we have come to. When what **we want**, when what **we strive for**, when what we **reinforce with our behavior** is peace and truth **in my** days, what good are we really serving? If we have become so selfish that how **we** are treated is the most important thing **to** us, what representation do we really have of Christ? That is awful. That is nothing like Christ.

### **Philippians 2:1-11 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup> Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,**

**<sup>2</sup> fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.**

**<sup>3</sup> *Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.**

**<sup>4</sup> Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.**

**<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,**

**<sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,**

**<sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men.**

**<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.**

**<sup>9</sup> Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,**  
**<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,**  
**<sup>11</sup> and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

That is how we are to live. We should evaluate everything in terms of what **we can give**, not in what others are **giving/ or not giving** to us. Our reactions should be determined by how we can be most effective for the kingdom, not in how we can manipulate others into giving us those things we most want.

We have got to learn from Hezekiah. And we cannot afford to make the same horrific mistakes. At this point it is easy for us to think, but I am not important like Hezekiah. I am not a king. My life isn't all that important. So what I do doesn't really matter all that much.

That is a lie the devil wants us to believe so we can excuse our sin. Every part that every believer plays in the body of Christ is important. And when we allow the seductions of the enemy to seduce us to sin or the threats of the enemy to drive us to sin, we are failing the Lord just like Hezekiah did. And it will affect others just like Hezekiah's sin did. If you are a believer you are a representation of Christ to those around you. We need to take that seriously. We have a job to do that needs done. We cannot believe our own excuses. What we need is to deal truthfully in our own lives. Where are **we** being seduced? What can **we** do to glorify Christ in that situation? What does Christ want? What would Jesus do? That is what we must do. After all, isn't He worthy?

I hope you are continuing to pray with me for God to grant more of Himself to us.