**“Insights into Isaiah”—Chapters 38-39**

**Chapter 38—A Sick King, a Faithful God**

**Hezekiah’s disease is apparently characterized with boils. In verse 21, a lump of figs is mentioned. The same story as this chapter is recorded in 2 Kings 20:1-11. The events in chapters 38-39 happened before the Assyrian invasion in 701 B.C., probably closer to 703 B.C.-712 B.C.** The first part of Isaiah (chapters 1 through 38) mainly dealt with the present threat from the Assyrian Empire. The rest of Isaiah (chapters 39 through 66) will prophetically speak to the threat of the coming Babylonian Empire. Therefore, this brief chapter is actually an introduction to the second half of Isaiah.

1. **Important Info: Some information about Hezekiah from other sources:**
   1. **He was very rich, 2 Chronicles 32:27-30**, “Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items; 28storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks.[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chronicles+32&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-11904f)] 29Moreover he provided cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much property. 30This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and brought the water by tunnel[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Chronicles+32&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-11906g)] to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works.”
   2. **Hezekiah was given the choice about which sign God would use. 2 Kings 10:7-11**. “7Then Isaiah said, “Take a lump of figs.” So they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.8And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What *is* the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the Lord the third day?”9Then Isaiah said, “This is the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing which He has spoken: *shall* the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?”10And Hezekiah answered, “It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees.”11So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the Lord, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.”
   3. **Short summation of Hezekiah. 2 Chronicles 32:24-26**,” In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the Lord; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. 25But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor *shown* him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. 26Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.”
   4. **His son was evil. 2 Kings 21:1-9, “**Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name *was* Hephzibah. 2And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. 3For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of heaven[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Kings+21&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-10123b)] and served them. 4He also built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, “In Jerusalem I will put My name.” 5And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. 6Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted separatists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke *Him* to anger. 7He even set a carved image of Asherahthat he had made, in the house of which the Lord had said to David and to Solomon his son, “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them.” 9But they paid no attention, **and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel.”**
2. **What does the first verse of Isaiah 38 state? What is the condition of Hezekiah’s health?** In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, Thus says the Lord: Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.
   1. **Define “sick and near death.**”
   2. **Why did God warn Isaiah that Hezekiah was going to die?**
      1. **Compare the passages in 2 Kings 18:2 and 2 Kings 20:6.** Hezekiah was 39 years old at this time.
3. **Verse 2 describes Hezekiah’s action. Discuss.** He turned his face toward the wall and prayed to the Lord. God tells Isaiah to put a fig poultice on the boil. **This is a common cure for those days. Does this indicate that God can use modern meds to heal?**
   1. **Examine Psalm 106:15.** “And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls.” Hezekiah gets 15 years, but they were not very good years.
   2. **Discuss James 5:14.** “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”
4. **Hezekiah’s prayer is short, verse 2.** **Compare it with his prayer in Isaiah 37:14-30.**
   1. **Why does the brevity of this entreaty seem so poignant?**
   2. **Talk about Hezekiah “reminding God.”**
      1. **In Leviticus 26:3-36 and Deuteronomy 28 (whole chapter) blessing and cursing was sent by God according to obedience and disobedience. Correlate Hezekiah’s prayer with this principle.**
         1. **See also Psalm 15:1-2, “***Lord, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart*.”
      2. **The new covenant of today allows us to pray for “grace.” See Galatians 3:12-13, 2 Timothy 1:10 and John 16:23-24.**
   3. **Why did Hezekiah weep bitterly?**
5. **What is God’s answer to Hezekiah’s prayer**? Verses 4-5…Go and tell Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. **I will add to your days fifteen years**: In response to Hezekiah’s prayer, God granted Hezekiah **fifteen years** more.
6. **Was God’s judgment delayed as an act of mercy and an invitation for repentance to Hezekiah**?  **Elaborate**.
   1. **In fact, God gave three gifts to Hezekiah. Name them and explain.** 
      1. **First, He gave the gift of an extended life.** Verse 5
      2. **Second, He gave the gift of knowing he only had fifteen years left.** If he were wise, this would still give King Hezekiah the motivation to walk right with God and to set his house in order.
      3. **Third, He promised to end the threat of Assyria.** Verse 6 …. **See Isaiah 37:36-37.**
7. **What was the sign of this deliverance?** Verse 8. the shadow on the sundial 10 degrees backward.
   1. **What is our “sign” of our deliverance from the enemy today?** **Refer to John 3:16 and Romans 5:8.** God shows the same mercy to us. It should be enough for God to simply say to us, I love you. But God did so much to *demonstrate* His love to us ([John 3:16](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=John+3:16&t1=en_nas), [Romans 5:8](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Romans+5:8&t1=en_nas)).
   2. **How does the sundial seem to mimic the restoration of Hezekiah’s health?** This was a wonderfully appropriate sign for Hezekiah. By bringing the shadow of the sundial move backward, it gave *more time* in a day - just as God gave Hezekiah *more time*.
   3. **Compare this incident with what happened to Joshua in Joshua 10:12-13.**
   4. **Verse 8b says, “So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.**” **This matter-of-fact statement seems to echo God’s diatribe to Job in Job 38:4; elaborate**. “Where were you when I made the stars?”
   5. **Read 2 Chronicles 32;** **compare this account of this same story.**
8. **Verses 9-20 are Hezekiah’s testimony. Review.**
   1. **Verse Nine-fourteen are often called, “Hezekiah’s lament.” Why?**
   2. **Where else do we see the use of the word, “Yah,” for Lord?** Verse 11…. **Refer to Exodus 15:2, 17:16, Isaiah 12:2, 26:4, Psalm 118:14, Songs 8:6, and several other Psalms.**
   3. **Does Hezekiah seem to fear death? Defend your answer.**
      1. **Contrast his lament to N. T. promises in Hebrews 2:14-15 and**

**I Corinthians 15:53-55.**

1. **The Bible uses three main words to describe where people go when they die. Review.**
   1. **Sheol or Hades or Abraham’s Bosom…**is a Hebrew word with the idea of the place of the dead. It has no direct reference to either torment or eternal happiness. The idea of *Sheol* is often accurately expressed as the grave. *Hades* is a Greek word used to describe the world beyond. In the Bible, it has generally the same idea as *Sheol*. The place known as *Sheol* and *Hades* is not what we normally think of as Hell. It was, before the finished work of Jesus, the place where the dead awaited judgment or final justification
      1. **See Luke 16:19-31.** As illustrated by Jesus in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in [Luke 16:19-31](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Luke+16:19-31&t1=en_nas).
      2. **According to Acts 2:25-32, Jesus was in Hades after His death on the cross, but did not (and *could* not) remain there.**
      3. **Jesus preached in Hades in** [**1 Peter 3:18-19**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=1%20Peter+3:18-19&t1=en_nas)**.**
      4. **Jesus set the captives in Hades free in** [**Ephesians 4:8-9**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Ephesians+4:8-9&t1=en_nas) **and** [**Isaiah 61:1**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Isaiah+61:1&t1=en_nas)**.**
      5. **Jesus *made no atonement* in Hades; the price was already paid on the cross in** [**John 19:30**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=John+19:30&t1=en_nas) **when Jesus suffered in His *physical body*,** [**Colossians 1:19-22**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Colossians+1:19-22&t1=en_nas)**.**
      6. **Jesus went to Hades as a *victor* not as a *victim*. Jesus’ work and preaching offered salvation for the O.T. believing dead who in faith waited in Hades,** [**Hebrews 11:39-40**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Hebrews+11:39-40&t1=en_nas)**, and His work sealed the condemnation of the wicked and unbelieving.**
      7. **Since Jesus work on the cross is finished, there is no waiting for believers who die, who go straight to heaven,** [**2 Corinthians 5:6-8**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Corinthians+5:6-8&t1=en_nas)**,** [**Philippians 1:21-23**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Philippians+1:21-23&t1=en_nas)**. In that sense, Jesus shut down the part of Hades known as Abrahams Bosom.**
      8. **The portion of Hades reserved for torment is occupied until the final judgment, when those who are there will be sent to what we normally think of as Hell.**
   2. **The bottomless pit/abyssos in Revelation 9:1**.
      1. **The *abyssos* is a prison for certain demons,** [**Luke 8:31**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Luke+8:31&t1=en_nas)**;** [**2 Peter 2:4**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Peter+2:4&t1=en_nas)**; Jude 6.**
      2. **It is considered part of the realm of the dead** [**Romans 10:7**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Romans+10:7&t1=en_nas) **uses it in the sense of *Hades*.**
   3. **Jesus speaks of *hell* (*Gehenna*); Lake of Fire.** 
      1. **Hell is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Valley of Hinnom, a place outside Jerusalem’s walls desecrated by Molech worship and human sacrifice,** [**2 Chronicles 28:1-3**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Chronicles+28:1-3&t1=en_nas)**;** [**Jeremiah 32:35**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Jeremiah+32:35&t1=en_nas)**.**
      2. **It was also a garbage dump where rubbish and refuse were burned. The smoldering fires and festering worms of the Valley of Hinnom made it a graphic and effective picture of the fate of the damned. This place is also called the lake of fire in** [**Revelation 20:13-15**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+20:13-15&t1=en_nas)**.**
      3. **It was prepared for the devil and his angels in** [**Matthew 25:41**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Matthew+25:41&t1=en_nas)**.**
      4. **Gehenna is what we normally think of as Hell, the Lake of Fire,** [**Revelation 19:20**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+19:20&t1=en_nas)**,** [**20**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+19:20&t1=en_nas)**:10-15, and 21:6-8.**
      5. **Gehenna or hell has many names or titles in the Bible, including lake of fire,** [**Revelation 19:20**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Revelation+19:20&t1=en_nas)**, everlasting fire,** [**Matthew 25:41**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Matthew+25:41&t1=en_nas)**, everlasting punishment,** [**Matthew 25:46**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Matthew+25:46&t1=en_nas)**, and outer darkness,** [**Matthew 8:12**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Matthew+8:12&t1=en_nas)**).**
      6. **Gehenna is a Greek word borrowed from the Hebrew language. See** [**Mark 9:43-44**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Mark+9:43-44&t1=en_nas)**.**
      7. **Also see** [**2 Timothy 1:10**](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Timothy+1:10&t1=en_nas)**.**
2. **In verses 19-20, Hezekiah praises God for sparing his life. Re-cap.**
   1. **What does Hezekiah promise to God for his healing?** I shall walk carefully all my years.
3. **Cite what happened with the fifteen years God gave Hezekiah?**
   1. **Hezekiah had a son, the next king of Judah, Manasseh. See 2 Kings 21:1-2, 10-15.** Of the next king of Judah, Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, it is written that he was 12 years old when he became king ([2 Kings 21:1](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Kings+21:1&t1=en_nas)). This means he must have been born in the last 15 years of Hezekiah’s life. Sadly, fathering Manasseh was not a worthy achievement. It was written of him, *and he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel* ([2 Kings 21:2](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Kings+21:2&t1=en_nas)).
      1. **Refer to 2 Kings 21**:10-15. In fact, God specifically targeted Judah for judgment because of the terrible sins of Manasseh ([2 Kings 21:10-15](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Kings+21:10-15&t1=en_nas)). HE PROBABLY MARTYRED ISAIAH**….**
      2. **Manasseh killed Isaiah.** ALLUDED TO IN HEBREWS 11.
   2. **Hezekiah praised God for his healing.**  Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our life, in the house of the Lord: Hezekiah shows the logical response to Gods great deliverance - praise.
4. **The specifics of Hezekiah’s healing, verses 21-22, are often parallel with Jesus healing with mud in John 9:6. Explain.** Let them take a lump of figs, and apply it as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover: Apparently, God used this medical treatment - at the very least, He used it as a **sign** - to bring Hezekiah’s healing.
5. **Hezekiah wanted a sign. So, did Gideon in Judges 6:17, 37-39.** All calendars change in 701 B.C.
   1. **What does Jesus say about asking for signs? Review Matthew 12:39, 16:4 and Mark 8:11-12.**
6. **Some theologians believe that Hezekiah had a form of leprosy which would have kept him from entering the house of the Lord? Using verse 22, defend or decline that theory.**
   1. **Look at Exodus 9:8-12, where a similar plague is mentioned.**
   2. **Read in Leviticus 13:18 about leprous ulcers.**
   3. **Check the reference in Deuteronomy 28:27**.—botch of Egypt
   4. **Compare Job 2:8’s description of boils.**
7. **What is the overall theme of Isaiah 38?**
8. **How do you see Hezekiah in this chapter? Use at least three descriptors to paint a portrait of this “good king,” according to Isaiah 38.**

**Chapter 39—a Visit from Babylon**

1. **Who sent letters and a present to Hezekiah in verse 1?** **Why?** 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. The presence of **Merodach-Baladan** shows this was more than a courtesy call. This was an attempt to bring the kingdom of Judah on to the side of the Babylonians against the Assyrians. WATCH OUT FOR THE FLATTERERS! EGO TRIP!
2. **Who was Merodach-Baladan?** To the Assyrians Merodach-Baladan was a terrorist; to himself he was a freedom-fighter with his life devoted to the liberation of his beloved Babylon from Assyrian tyranny.
3. **What fatal flaw did Hezekiah succumb to when he showed off the treasures to the Babylonian guests?** Pride…..
   1. **See 2 Chronicles 32:27-29.** Hezekiah was deeply worried about Assyria. Feeling honored by the embassy, he gladly welcomed the envoys of this archenemy of Assyria. Without consulting either the Lord or Isaiah, he showed them his vast treasures, his abundant supplies of food, and his military armaments.
   2. **Why did he not consult Isaiah or God in this matter?**
   3. **Verse 2 says, “There was nothing in his house or in ALL his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.” Expound on that. Why would he do that?**
   4. **Check out James 4:16, Jeremiah 9:23-24, Psalm 75:5, and 10:3.**
4. **Was Hezekiah trying to be a “people pleaser” with the emissaries of Babylon? Why not a “God pleaser**?”
   1. **Refer to Galatians 1:10.** In this place of wanting to please man, Hezekiah is no longer a true servant of God. Paul wrote in [Galatians 1:10](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Galatians+1:10&t1=en_nas), *For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.*
   2. **Compare Samson’s actions with Delilah where he revealed “all” to a pagan in Judges 16:15-17.** Just as Samson revealed his strength to the whore, so Hezekiah revealed God’s glory to the devils as though he were their companions.
   3. **How could Hezekiah have handled the envoys better? What should Hezekiah have said to the envoys?** The answer is plain: Thank you for coming and thank Merodach from his gift and invitation, but the fact is I have a divine promise to lean on Almighty God!
5. **From verses 3-8, Isaiah and Hezekiah have a conversation about Hezekiah divulging all the secrets of Judah. Re-cite the major principle topics.**
   1. **How does Isaiah question Hezekiah?** regarding the visit of the Babylonian envoys.
   2. **Is there a flavor of pride in Hezekiah showing all of his wealth?**
      1. **Verses 5-7 are an ominous warning from Isaiah. Discuss.** Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: 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. 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. **.**  **All that is in your father’s house . . . shall be carried to Babylon**: Hezekiah thought that this display of wealth would impress the Babylonians. All it did was show them what the kings of Judah had, and what they could get from them.
         1. **Review 2 Kings 24:10-13, 25:11-17.** One day the kings of Babylon would come and take it all away. This was fulfilled in [2 Kings 24:10-13](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Kings+24:10-13&t1=en_nas) and [2 Kings 25:11-17](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Kings+25:11-17&t1=en_nas), under the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar.
      2. **What does God say about pride? See Leviticus 26:19, Obadiah 1:3, Psalm 10:4, 59:12, and Proverbs 13:10.**
      3. **In verse 7, we see Daniel’s story foretold. Elaborate**. It would be more than a hundred years before Babylon carried away the royal treasures of Judah, but they did come, just as Isaiah prophesied... One fulfillment of this was the taking of Daniel and his companions into captivity. Daniel was one *of the king’s descendants* taken into the **palace of the king of Babylon** ([Daniel 1:1-4](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Daniel+1:1-4&t1=en_nas)). Because of this promise of God through Isaiah, many think that Daniel and his companions were made **eunuchs** when they were taken to serve in the palace.
         1. **Review Daniel 1:1-4.**
6. **Hezekiah’s last response in verse 8 is disheartening, to say the least. Discuss.** 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. This is a sad state of heart in the king of Judah. God announces coming judgment, and all he can respond with is relief that it will not happen in his lifetime. In this, Hezekiah shows himself to be almost the exact opposite of an others-centered person. He is almost totally self-centered. All he cares about is his own personal comfort and success.
7. **Did King Hezekiah finish his reign well?** 
   1. **Refer to 2 Kings 18:3-7 to compare his beginning with his ending**. There is no doubt that Hezekiah started out as a godly king, and overall his reign was one of outstanding godliness ([2 Kings 18:3-7](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=2%20Kings+18:3-7&t1=en_nas)). Yet his beginning was much better than his end; Hezekiah did not finish well. God gave Hezekiah the gift of 15 more years of life, but the added years did not make him a better or godlier man.
8. **If you could give King Hezekiah a word of “friendly advice,” what would it be?**
9. **Sum-up the lesson centered in Isaiah 39. What life-truth is there for you today?**

**And, here are “The Promises”……**

***Isaiah 33:22,*** *“*For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.”

***Isaiah 38:4-6,*** *“*And the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, 5“Go and tell Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. 6I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.”’

***Lamentations 3: 22-24****, “Through* the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed,   
Because His compassions fail not. *They are* new every morning;   
Great *is* Your faithfulness.“The Lord *is* my portion,” says my soul,   
“Therefore I hope in Him!”