

June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
"Look to God, not to Man"  
Isaiah 38:1-7, Ch. 39

**BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN**

June 17 Psalms 21-25	June 21 Psalms 40-45
June 18 Psalms 26-31	June 22 Psalms 46-50
June 19 Psalms 32-35	June 23 Psalms 51-57
June 20 Psalms 36-39	June 24 Psalms 58-65

**Lesson Introduction:** Over the last two weeks we have discussed the Lord's work in delivering the Judeans out of the hand of the Assyrians. In our passage this week, we will look at how the Lord continued to be faithful to King Hezekiah, by granting him deliverance from an illness, as well as promising continued deliverance from Assyrian forces. Yet, even in the midst of God's incredible continued grace in his life, King Hezekiah becomes puffed up with pride, and the result is God's judgment by means of a different world power: The Babylonians. Our lesson this week reminds us of **God's faithfulness and compassion, man's forgetfulness and pride, and God's faithfulness to His own glory.**

**FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH OF THE PASSAGE:**

- **The Lord graciously brings healing to undeserving sinners (V. 1-7).**
- **All men fail (Ch. 39).**
- **The Lord will not be mocked, but will judge sinful rebellion (Ch. 39:5-7).**

**Isaiah 38:1-7**

*In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said to him, "Thus says the Lord: Set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not recover." 2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, 3 and said, "Please, O Lord, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.*

*4 Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah: 5 "Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. 6 I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and will defend this city.*

*7 "This shall be the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that he has promised: 8 Behold, I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps." So the sun turned back on the dial the ten steps by which it had declined.*

**Ch. 39**

*At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. 2 And Hezekiah welcomed them gladly. And he showed them his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his whole armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them. 3 Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say? And from where did they come to you?" Hezekiah said, "They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon." 4 He said, "What have they seen in your house?" Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house. There is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them."*

*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 that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord. 7 And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." 8 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good." For he thought, "There will be peace and security in my days."*

**God's faithfulness and compassion (V. 1-7)**

-What is right about Hezekiah's response to the news of his impending death?

-What is wrong with his reaction?

-Why do you think God answered Hezekiah's prayer for healing?

-What else does God generously promise to do for Hezekiah and the Judeans in **V. 6**?

-What does **V. 7** tell us about God's generosity towards Hezekiah?

**Note:** The fact that Hezekiah responds first with prayer is a good indication that he did understand that the Lord was his only hope to bring about healing. Rather than turn to worldly wisdom or powers, he first turned to God, the proper response in all circumstances of life (1 **Thessalonians 5:17, James 5:13-18**). However, Hezekiah's prayer reveals some misunderstanding on his part as well. Consider what Hezekiah stated in his prayer as the basis of the Lord granting healing: "**O Lord, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight.**" It seems here that the king, while placing trust in the Lord to heal him, also has a misunderstanding about the basis of the healing. God owes us absolutely nothing in regards to our perceived righteousness or faithfulness. Indeed, the best we have to offer him are as filthy rags in light of our sinful nature (**Isaiah 64:6**). Rather than approach our problems with an attitude of entitlement before God, we should instead come to Him humbly, asking Him to be gracious to us for the sake of His name (as Hezekiah did in **Ch. 37:14-20**). Even still, God did have compassion on Hezekiah, heard his prayer, and graciously provided healing out of His incredible kindness and mercy. The Lord hears the heartbroken cries of His people, and often even when we do not know how to pray correctly, or when we perhaps do not even know what to pray at all, the Lord brings healing, comfort, joy, and peace (**Romans 8:26-28**).

### **Discussion Section 2: Man's forgetfulness and pride (Ch. 39)**

**Note:** In chapter 39, after Hezekiah has been miraculously and graciously healed, we see Merdoach-baladan, the son of the king of Babylon, pay Hezekiah a visit, and bring him a present after hearing that he had been sick. However, the real purpose of this visit was to seek out an alliance between Babylon and Judah against the Assyrians. While the Lord had delivered Judah from Assyria in chapter 37, and again promised to protect them from Assyria in chapter 38, they were apparently still a threat to Judah in Hezekiah's eyes, and they were certainly a threat to the up and coming nation of Babylon. Last week we saw the humility and faithfulness of Hezekiah on display as he called out to the Lord for help against the Assyrians. In this chapter, however, we will see an important reality of Scripture revealed... **All men fail (Romans 3:10-12, 23, Jeremiah 17:9)**.

-In what ways does Hezekiah sin in these verses?

-What does Hezekiah's response to the news of coming judgment say about his character? (**V. 8**)

**Note:** On the heels of God's deliverance from the Assyrians, and physical illness, Hezekiah almost instantly forgets what God has done for him and the nation of Judah, and begins to show off all the treasures of the kingdom to the wicked Babylonians (potentially some of the plunder from God's slaying of the 185,000 Assyrian troops in Ch. 37), as if the riches of their nation is something for him to take pride in. It is easy for us, as we read stories in the Bible, such as Hezekiah's faithful prayer in the face of Assyrian siege, to begin to think of him and others as "heroes" of the faith. While it is true that there are many good examples of faithful commitment to the Lord throughout Scripture, almost always we see ways in which those same examples fail miserably. As we study our Bibles, it is vital for us to understand that Jesus is **THE** hero of the story. The Bible is not a book full of morally good examples for us to try and mimic, it the story of God's redemptive plan to save men and women who are completely inadequate to save themselves, "**to the praise of His glorious grace**" (**Ephesians 1:3-14**).

-Name some examples of people who are often considered heroes of the faith, who had some major moral failures.

### **Discussion Section 3: God's faithfulness to His own glory (V. 5-7)**

-Why does God pronounce judgment on Judah once again?

-In what ways is God still faithful to His promises with Hezekiah even the midst of pronouncing judgment?

**Note:** As we close out this lesson, consider this: God will not be mocked. It was Him who delivered Judah from the Assyrians, and His name that should have been praised in the midst of the Babylonian visitors. He will be glorified above all else. Because of Hezekiah's pride, God promises severe judgment at the hands of the Babylonians, however He still remains faithful to defend His people against the Assyrians.

-In what ways have you tried to upstage God in your life?

-Do you need to repent of your pride and throw yourself at the mercy of God today?