

Hezekiah Should Have Shown the Temple of the Lord Instead Isaiah 39: 1-8

Facilitator: Min. Joseph Williams

(All Scripture quoted from the NIV Bible unless otherwise noted)

I. Historical Background and Biblical Context

Read Numbers 20:2-12

What are some of your favorite ways to bless or impress your houseguests?

Activity: Identify the objects in your home that are most precious to you—anything from jewelry to photographs to family heirlooms and more. What emotions do you experience as you handle each object?

II. Hezekiah Should Have Shown the Temple of the Lord

- 1. v. 1.** The news of Hezekiah's near death illness and now recovery had apparently spread throughout the lands and neighboring countries. The king of Babylon had somehow become aware of this and decides to send letters and a gift to Hezekiah because he has recovered. This was a neighborly act that we would all do well to duplicate. We should rejoice when the news of the Lord's blessings upon others reaches us. Moreover, we would do well to, in some way, acknowledge their good fortune. Romans 12:15 tells us to "Rejoice with those who rejoice". Common civility and humanity teach us this. Even non-Christians do this. Also important, the Babylonians worshipped the sun as their god. Imagine their amazement as they witness the sun move backwards 10 degrees and then to be informed (if they were) that such a miraculous occurrence was directly related to Hezekiah's recovery.
- 2. v. 2.** The text does not tell us what was written in the letters nor what the present was. It only reveals their delivery. However,

because the text does reveal to us that “Hezekiah was pleased with them”, we can safely assume that both were heavily seasoned with congratulatory comments aimed towards Hezekiah. It’s easy to understand why Hezekiah would be pleased with them.

Many theologians suggest that the Babylonian envoy was sent to secretly gather intelligence. Babylon and Judah have a common adversary in the form of the Assyrian empire. This alone might be reason enough to seek an alliance with Judah. Hezekiah sees a great world leader paying attention to little Judah. There is something immensely flattering when someone whom we consider more important than we pays attention to us. But there is also something dangerous as well, namely, that we will succumb to the temptation to convince the important person that the attention being given is justified. So, was Hezekiah naive or had he succumb to the temptation of the great enemy of mankind’s character, **“PRIDE”**?

Sadly, that is the temptation into which it appears Hezekiah has fallen. The fact that Hezekiah decided to show Judah’s amassed treasures and armory instead of acknowledging and glorifying the Lord for his healing in the presence of these visitors is indicative of a man whose trust might be summed up in his possessions, his own abilities and possible alliances with armies like Babylon instead of the Lord who has all power and owns everything. Although Hezekiah trusted the Lord to heal him and prolong his life, he failed when this Babylonian envoy visited him. Here was a wonderful opportunity to declare the glory of God to the nations. Hezekiah could have used the visit to tell the story of what the one true God of the universe did for him. But instead of making God look good, Hezekiah, like Moses long before him (Numbers 20:9-12), takes the opportunity to make himself look good. Instead of praising and glorifying God, he chose to parade his own glory, not the Lord’s.

This was a grave mistake on his part. **WHO GETS THE GLORY? GOD ALWAYS GETS THE GLORY!!**

How often have we missed out on opportunities to glorify the Lord for something he has done in our own lives? What better way is there to share the goodness, the love, and the available blessings of the Lord to the un-saved than by testifying of our own experiences with the Lord. Hezekiah missed a golden opportunity to share the goodness and greatness of God; to share how the Lord healed him, turned back the hands of time and declared that his life would now be extended an additional 15 years.

3. vv. 3-4. Note Hezekiah's answer to the blunt and direct two part question from Isaiah. Hezekiah does not reveal what was said but speaks as if there is no harm because Babylon is a great distance from Judah. Isaiah does not respond to this but moves on to ask what they saw "in your palace." This suggests that he knows perfectly well that Hezekiah has been showing off. To Hezekiah's credit, he does not lie. Instead, he brazenly goes through, saying that they have seen "everything."

4. vv. 5-7. Hezekiah's own possessions and resources may have seemed great to him, but the resources of the Lord are far beyond those of man, as Hezekiah learns here. And it is the Lord's resources that will be used to bring forth judgement on Judah in the form of the Babylonians. The reference to "his predecessors", is likely a rebuke to his lack of responsible stewardship. Because of his foolish action, not only what he had amassed but all that his predecessors gathered would be lost.

Furthermore, even his own unborn decedents would suffer in the judgement to come. This however, even in the midst of the Lord's declaration of judgement, Hezekiah might realize a reason to have hope. At the time of this proclamation, he has no sons. So, within the Lord's declaration of judgement Hezekiah can rejoice. He is informed that he will not only have "a son" but he will have "sons".

The phrase “some of your sons”, suggests Hezekiah will father multiple sons in his remaining years. This would absolutely be considered a blessing from the Lord to continue Hezekiah’s lineage. However, his rejoicing would be very brief.

5. v. 8. Hezekiah’s acknowledgement that the Lord’s word is good likely includes a recognition that this judgement is appropriate. It is likely that upon hearing of this judgement, Hezekiah now recognizes his fallacy and is declaring the judgement, deserved. In his final statement there a sense of God’s gift of grace towards Hezekiah. His final statement is not selfish or unfeeling, but it is a thankful recognition that the Lord has not chosen to deal/punish Hezekiah “personally” to the measure of what he feels he actually deserves.

III. Conclusion.

What responsibility do we have to take future generations into account when we make important decisions today?

Where are you in danger of showing off or behaving arrogantly about your possessions, positions or strengths?

On a scale of 1 (rarely) to 10 (regularly), how often do you consider the long-term consequences of your actions when you make decisions for today?

Matt: 6: 19-21. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.