

# Book of Isaiah



## Chapter 39

*Theme: Hezekiah and Babylon*

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## Chapter 39

Babylon at this time is a small town, a pawn of Assyrian politics.

The transfer of the enemy of Judah from Assyria to Babylon is one of the outstanding features of this section. At this time Babylon was a struggling city on the banks of the Euphrates, unable to overcome Assyria. However, Babylon was to become the great head of gold in the times of the Gentiles, and that makes this chapter significant.

This chapter reveals the great blunder of Hezekiah's life and also his human frailty and weakness. It is after the hour of great spiritual triumph that our worst defeats come.<sup>1</sup>

Here we have the conclusion of the historical section, relating Hezekiah's vanity in the display of his wealth to Merodach-Baladan's ambassadors, the Lord's rebuke through Isaiah, and the predictive prophecy that Babylon would be the power that would capture Jerusalem, loot the city, and deport the royal family to Babylon. The short chapter ends with the submissive resignation of Hezekiah to the fate of his beloved city and the personal rejoicing that he would not live to see the disastrous prophecy fulfilled. Also, he found great comfort in the assured time-lapse before the promised fulfillment of it.

The great thing in the chapter, of course, is the clear, graphic prediction of the Babylonian captivity, which in consideration of Isaiah's oft-repeated mention of "the remnant" that would return, conclusively shows that this prophecy of the Babylonian captivity had long been anticipated; but only here is it boldly and emphatically declared. To be sure, many critical writers refuse to admit that Isaiah wrote this; but as Rawlinson pointed out, this denial is caused, "Solely by their reluctance to admit that a prophet could predict the subjugation of Judah by Babylon more than a century before the event." [1] The judicial darkening of the human intelligence is clearly visible in such illogical unwillingness to see predictive prophecy here. The prophecy is wedged into the historical situation so skillfully, carries so many dramatic particulars, and so certainly belongs to the century preceding the events prophesied, that there cannot possibly be any reasons whatever for alleging that the prophecy is a "post eventum" prediction.

As Hailey suggested, the only difficult thing about this chapter is the problem of dating it. Rawlinson set it in the year 714 B.C. [2] Cheyne located it in the era of Sargon's invasion; [3] D. J. Wiseman placed it in the year 705 B.C. [4] We fully agree with Hailey who wrote that, "Determining dates for events in this chapter is beyond our ability." [5] Nevertheless, it is appropriate to ask, "What difference does it make"? We are certain of the approximate time, and the exact date makes no difference at all.

Despite the uncertainty regarding the exact dates involved here, there are a few facts which we believe shed light on exactly why this uncertainty persists. There is hardly any event in these historical chapters that can be nailed down chronologically with absolute certainty.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/isaiah-39.html>

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

Merodachbaladan - name/title of a god they worshiped. (The flatterers)<sup>3</sup>

At that time -- after the healing of Hezekiah -- Merodach-baladan, son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah. On the surface, the reason was that he had been sick and was now recovered; but in reality it was to spy out the land (Isa. 39:1-8).<sup>4</sup>

Merodach-baladan is a meaningless king to us, but his name is full of meaning. F. C. Jennings calls our attention to the fact that Merodach means "a rebel" and baladan means "not the Lord." Behind this king, of course, is Nimrod, the founder of Babylon, and Satan, who is the archrebel against God and is the "god of this world."

These ambassadors brought a letter which flattered Hezekiah. They said, "The king of Babylon has been concerned about you. He heard that you were sick and have recovered; so he sends a gift to rejoice with you."<sup>5</sup>

Merodach-baladan, a Babylonian prince, was planning a revolt against Assyria and was forming an alliance. He probably hoped to convince Hezekiah to join this alliance against Assyria. Hezekiah, feeling honored by this attention and perhaps feeling some sympathy for their proposal, showed the Babylonian envoys his treasures. But Isaiah warned the king not to trust Babylon. Someday they would turn on Judah and devour Jerusalem's wealth.<sup>6</sup>

Merodach-Baladan... sent envoys from Babylon to Hezekiah with letters and a gift. Seemingly they went to congratulate the king on his recovery. But there was probably more to it than that. Merodach-Baladan was Marduk-apal-iddina, the invader. Twice he had tried to break away from the Assyrian Empire, and once had succeeded in taking the city of Babylon. After his second reign (of nine months in 703-702 b.c.) he was deposed by Sennacherib and went to Elam. While there (and while still known as the king of Babylon) he actively tried to form an alliance with other nations to throw off the Assyrian yoke. Undoubtedly his friendly visit after Hezekiah's illness was intended to persuade the king of Judah to join the rebel alliance in the fight against Assyria. This made Hezekiah's indiscretion all the worse in view of Isaiah's words that God was using Assyria to punish the whole region (chap. 10). The visit was also God's test of Hezekiah's heart (2 Chron. 32:31). Merodach-Baladan's visit preceded Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem in 701 (since some of the wealth there had not yet been given to Sennacherib as tribute, 2 Kings 18:16). Therefore it seems as if all three events occurred in 701, in this order: Hezekiah's illness, Merodach-Baladan's visit, Sennacherib's attack.<sup>7</sup>

Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon ..." (Isaiah 39:1). Cheyne believed that there were two monarchs of this name, one ruling in the period of Sargon's invasions of Judah, and the other during the period of Sennacherib's invasions. "Merodach-baladan was not an

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<sup>3</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>4</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>5</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>6</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>7</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

uncommon name of Babylonian kings." [6] Thus, there is the problem of just "which" Merodach-baladan sent this embassy to Hezekiah. Furthermore, Merodach-baladan's kingship of Babylon was ended in 710 B.C., when Sargon removed him. [7] It should be noted in this connection that our text flatly declares that Merodach-baladan was "king of Babylon."

Now, take the reign of Hezekiah. Neither the beginning of it, nor the end of it, is actually dated in scripture. "It seems best to assume that Hezekiah was co-regent with Ahaz from circa 729 B.C., becoming sole king circa 716 B.C." [8]

The end of Hezekiah's reign is just as uncertain. "His son Manasseh was probably, "Co-regent with him from 696 to 686 B.C." [9]

Even the invasions of Judah are not at all certainly documented as to their dates. In fact, Sargon, in inscriptions claims to have conquered Judah, but the Bible makes no mention of such a conquest.

In view of all these facts, there is little wonder that scholars do not know exactly what date to assign to some given event in these chapters. For example, in the "sixth year of the reign" of some monarch means nothing at all unless the knowledge of just "when" that reign started is also available.

After all, the big thing here is not exactly when the events of this chapter occurred, but that they did occur; and that they precipitated the great prophecy of the Babylonian captivity of Israel. Here we turn our attention to the text itself.<sup>8</sup>

**1-2** The proper understanding of what happened here must be derived from what is recorded in 2 Chronicles 32:25,26. After his illness, "Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefits done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of Jehovah came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah."

Hailey's comment here is appropriate:

"Hezekiah's ancestor, David, had yielded to the lust of the flesh; and Solomon had yielded to vanity and pomp; and now Hezekiah, one of Judah's most admired kings, had yielded to flattery and pride. The flesh is terribly weak." [10]

Human beings are simply not structured to be rulers. The old proverb that "Power corrupts; and total power corrupts totally" has grown out of the distilled experience of mankind throughout the ages.

The flourishing state of Hezekiah's treasury cannot help us with the problem of the date, because, his treasury was full, not only before Sennacherib exacted that huge tribute, but again after the recovery of all that loot and more upon the death of the Assyrian army.

Before leaving these two verses, it should be noted that the occasion of this visit from Babylon was the recovery of Hezekiah, also an inquiry into that astronomical miracle which had accompanied it (2 Chronicles 32:31). This strongly indicates that the miracle was not a worldwide event, but one localized in Jerusalem. Behind this, however, the scheme of the Babylonian monarch to form an alliance with Hezekiah looms as the principal reason for the visit.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/isaiah-39.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/isaiah-39.html>

The phrase "At that time" (cf. 38:1) anticipates a specially significant event and ties it to what preceded in chapter 38. As this verse explains, the events that follow happened after Hezekiah had recovered from his illness (38:5). This was most likely during the year 701 B.C. before Sennacherib's invasion of Jerusalem (chs. 36—37; cf. 38:6; 2 Kings 18:16).

"Merodach-baladan" (Cuneiform "Marduk-apal-iddina," lit. "the god Marduk has given a son") raised Babylon to a position from which it threatened and eventually overthrew Assyrian dominance in the ancient Near East (cf. 21:1-10). He was the first king of Babylon, and he led that nation during two periods: 721-710 B.C. and 703-702 B.C.

The historians vary in their dating of the ancient Near Eastern kings' reigns by a few years, but I believe the dates above are fairly accurate. In 710 B.C. Sargon, another Babylonian leader, ousted him, but in 702 B.C. the Assyrians defeated Merodach-baladan. After this defeat, he continued to foment revolt against Assyria in the Fertile Crescent. This seems to have been his motivation for cultivating Hezekiah's friendship by sending letters and a present when he heard of Hezekiah's recovery.

The miracle of the sundial (38:8) would have held special interest for the astronomy-minded Babylonians (2 Chr. 32:31).<sup>10</sup>

M'rodakh-Bal'adan...king of Bavel, heard that Hizkiyahu had been ill and had recovered. After Hizkiyahu's sickness, M'rodakh-Bal'adan (Marduk-Baladan) seeks an alliance with him against Assyria. According to 2 Chron. 32:31, God was testing Hizkiyahu, who unwisely demonstrated the wealth of his kingdom rather than faith in his God. Yesha'yahu uses this occasion to predict the coming Babylonian invasion in which all this wealth would be taken captive, along with the people of Y'hudah (vv. 5-7). Thus the first thirty-nine chapters of the book of Yesha'yahu conclude with the revelation that Y'hudah, which had avoided Assyrian captivity, would not be able to avoid Babylonian invasion and captivity.<sup>11</sup>

**<sup>2</sup>And Hezekiah was glad of them, and showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not.**

Amazing what we'll do on an ego trip!

Hezekiah was glad and openly showed the spies all the riches of Judah. God took a different attitude toward the spies and sent Isaiah to ask the king what they had seen, and to make a bold prediction of Babylon conquering Judah (Isa. 39:3-8).<sup>12</sup>

At this time Hezekiah had not lost very many of the riches that David and Solomon had gathered. He made the mistake of showing his silver and gold, for he was immensely wealthy. We are told in 2Chronicles 32:27-28, "And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields,

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<sup>10</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Complete Jewish Bible Study Notes

<sup>12</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

and for all manner of pleasant jewels; storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks."

It is interesting how Hezekiah received the embassy from Babylon. They gave him a gift and a get-well card from the king. Instead of taking the letter and opening it before the Lord like he did the letter from the Assyrians, he just put it aside. They had flattered him, and so he gave the visitors the VIP treatment. He took them on a tour of the grounds of Jerusalem. Solomon had cornered the world's gold market, and he had also cornered the market on quite a few other things. All of it was stored away in Jerusalem. Hezekiah foolishly showed this great wealth to his visitors, who went back to their king and told him that when he was strong enough, they knew where he could get all of the gold, silver, and jewels that he would need to carry on warfare. Hezekiah made a big mistake, and Isaiah heard about what he had done.<sup>13</sup>

In pride Hezekiah... showed the Babylonian envoys everything of value in his storehouses.... palace, and kingdom. Apparently Hezekiah was acting as if those riches all belonged to him and not to God. Undoubtedly Hezekiah thought he could impress the Babylonian emissaries, but they probably were thinking more of his ability to pay great sums of money to aid in the fight against Assyria.<sup>14</sup>

Hezekiah received Merodach-baladan warmly since he had expressed sympathy toward him and because the Babylonians shared Judah's antagonism toward Assyria. But showing the Babylonians all of his wealth and military resources went beyond what Hezekiah needed to do for such a friendly visitor. The Lord Jesus' responses to the flattery of Nicodemus (John 3) and the rich young ruler (Mark 10) provide examples of how Hezekiah should have responded. Hezekiah's response expressed a desire to share these resources with an ally who might help Judah oppose Assyria. Thus Hezekiah's act demonstrated trust in Babylon and reliance on her for safety.

Here was a ready-made opportunity for Hezekiah to glorify God before the pagan Babylonians, to tell of his greatness and of his grace. Instead, he succumbed to the temptation to glorify himself and to prove to the Chaldeans that he was a worthy partner for any sort of coalition they might have in mind. There is no indication that they were interested in such an alliance, however. Much more likely they simply wished to encourage someone whom they viewed as a petty kinglet without making any commitment on their part.

This visit constituted a divine test of Hezekiah's heart. Second Chronicles 32:31 reads, "And 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 [namely, Hezekiah's recovery], God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>14</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

<sup>15</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

**<sup>3</sup>Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, *even* from Babylon.**

Isaiah unsent for, just went to ask a few questions. Pride.<sup>16</sup>

Hezekiah thought it was wonderful, but Isaiah recognized the danger.<sup>17</sup>

**3-7** When Isaiah heard of the foreigners' visit, he asked Hezekiah... what they said and where they came from. The king answered the second question but not the first one. When the prophet learned that Hezekiah had shown him all his treasures.... Isaiah gave him a two-part prophecy of judgment. First, the king's wealth would be carried off to Babylon. That was an astounding statement at that time because the great threat then was Assyria, not Babylon. The Babylonian envoys had come from a rebel force that was on the run and that had been defeated repeatedly. Second, some of the king's descendants would be forced to serve in the royal court of Babylon. The beginning of this was fulfilled in 605 b.c. when Daniel and a number of other royal sons were taken into the king's service in Babylon (Dan. 1:1-7). (On eunuchs, *sārîs*, see comments on "officials," Dan. 1:3.)<sup>18</sup>

It seems nearly incredible that Hezekiah should have been so naive as to have turned his palace wrong-side out to display it to any foreign power, much less to one such as Babylon. There seems to be a very pleased vanity exhibited by Hezekiah here as he tells Isaiah that "This embassy has come all the way from Babylon to see me!" "Thus the faith of Hezekiah, proof against the heaviest blows, melts at the touch of flattery; and the world claims another victim by its friendship."<sup>19</sup>

**3-4** God's Spirit and Hezekiah's failure to trust the Lord undoubtedly moved Isaiah to confront Hezekiah. First, the prophet asked about the visit of the Babylonian ambassadors and what Hezekiah had done with them. Hezekiah told the truth and put his actions in the best light, but he did not relate what the envoys had said or explain his motive. He put the best possible light on his actions. Nevertheless he put his own neck in the noose by answering Isaiah's simple questions as he did (cf. Gal. 6:7).<sup>20</sup>

Remember that Hezekiah had become quite the prominent politician since the defeat of Sennacherib at Jerusalem (2Chron. 32:23). When news spread that he had been very sick, the son of the king of Babylon, Mer-o-DAK Bal-aw-DAWN, sent him glad-you-got-well-soon cards and a gift.

Hezekiah was pretty impressed with himself, having made connections with such an important world-wide figure. After all, Babylon was becoming quite a powerful empire itself. It could one day even overshadow the Assyrians in greatness.

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<sup>16</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

<sup>17</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>18</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.studydrive.com/commentaries/bcc/isaiah-39.html>

<sup>20</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

He wanted to show that he was on the same level as this prince of Babylon - to make sure that the messengers came back with stories about how rich and powerful this king of Judah was. So he took them on a tour of the treasure house. He showed them everything in his dominion that he thought would impress them.<sup>21</sup>

**4Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them.**

Isaiah asks: Who were they? Where are they from? What did you show them?

Hezekiah was foolish for showing the spies from Babylon all the treasures of Judah.<sup>22</sup>

**4-7** What was so wrong about showing these Babylonians around? Hezekiah failed to see that the Babylonians would become his next threat and that they, not the Assyrians, would conquer his city. When Isaiah told him that Babylon would someday carry it all away, this was an amazing prophecy because Babylon was struggling for independence under Assyria. Hezekiah's prideful display of his earthly treasures brought its own consequences (2 Kings 25; Daniel 1:1, 2). His response (39:8) may seem a bit shortsighted, but he simply was expressing gratitude for the blessing from God that peace would reign during his lifetime and that God's judgment would not be more severe.<sup>23</sup>

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

Lord of hosts: This is the same title as used in 1:9. It describes the Lord as Commander in Chief of the angelic armies.

As Rawlinson observed that, "Concerning the exact times and seasons, the prophets generally knew nothing. They were mouth-pieces to deliver the Divine will. They were not keen-witted politicians, forecasting results by the exercise of sharp-sightedness and sagacity." [12]

No human wisdom could have supplied such information as this to Isaiah. Babylon, at the time of this prophecy, was a rebellious portion of the Assyrian Empire; and it would be only a few years until Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib, would be on the throne of Babylon. What an unlikely prophecy this must have appeared to be! Nevertheless, in about 120 years, all of this prophecy was completely fulfilled in Babylon's rape of Jerusalem and the deportation of the royal family first, and later, the whole population to Babylon.

As Jamieson pointed out this is "the very first place in the Bible where the place of Israel's punishment is announced." It is particularly important, however, that this is by no means the first prophecy of Israel's being plucked off of 'their land.' Moses prophesied, "Ye shall be plucked off the land; and Jehovah will scatter thee among all peoples" (Deuteronomy 28:63,64). Ahijah prophesied against Jeroboam: "Jehovah will root up Israel out of this good land which he gave to

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<sup>21</sup> <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah3801.php>

<sup>22</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>23</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their Asherim, provoking Jehovah to anger" (1 Kings 14:15). "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith Jehovah, whose name is the god of hosts" (Amos 5:27). Here, at last in the prophecy of Isaiah, God finally revealed the very city into which Israel would be carried captive. Although it had been known from the beginning by the Father that Babylon would be the place of Israel's captivity, it was only in this chapter that God at last revealed it through Isaiah. Yet, it is clear enough that "Babylon" was actually intended in those other prophecies.<sup>24</sup>

**5-6** Isaiah informed the king that the Babylonians would end up taking everything that Hezekiah had shown the ambassadors back to Babylon— not as resources for opposition to Assyria but as the spoils of war. This is the first explicit reference to the Babylonian captivity in Isaiah. Many critics of the Bible who do not believe in predictive prophecy have used this reference as evidence of a much later date of writing than Isaiah's day. The ambassadors had come "from Babylon" (v. 3), and they would carry everything off "to Babylon" (v. 6). Hezekiah had shown them "all" (v. 4), and they would take "all" (v. 6, twice) to Babylon. This happened finally in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kings 24:13; 25:13-15; 2 Chron. 36:18; Jer. 20:5). Isaiah's mention of Babylon as the enemy undoubtedly shocked Hezekiah because at this time Assyria was the great threat to Judah. Furthermore, Isaiah had previously predicted the demise of Babylon (ch. 14).

Isaiah's message to Hezekiah is the same as it was to Ahaz, whose trust was in Assyria. "That which we trust in place of God will one day turn and destroy us. This one sin of Hezekiah's did not doom Judah to Babylonian captivity. However, it illustrates the pride that the whole nation and its leaders manifested that ultimately resulted in the captivity.

**5-7** Hezekiah played the fool. He should never have shown his treasures to strangers. Isaiah's prophecy was literally fulfilled (see 2Kings 24 -- 2Kings 25; Dan. 1).<sup>25</sup>

**6Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and *that* which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.**

**Two predictions -- fulfilled:**

1. All the treasures of Judah will be carried to Babylon (Isa. 39:5-6; 2Ki. 25; 2Chr. 36; Dan. 5:2-3)
2. Your sons will be taken away and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (Isa. 39:7; Dan. 1)<sup>26</sup>

**7And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.**

Happens 100 years later! (2 Chr 36:18).

Dan 1:3 (Hint of royal blood? Captives did include royal seed.)<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/isaiah-39.html>

<sup>25</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>26</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>27</sup> Chuck Missler, Notes on Isaiah, khouse.org

[thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away] At the time of this prophecy Hezekiah had no sons; therefore, David's line and God's prophecy concerning his house were in danger of failing (2Sam. 7). Manasseh was not born until the third year of the fifteen which were added to the king's life (2Ki. 20:20 -- 2Ki. 21:1); hence, a prophecy regarding sons before he even had one further guaranteed his extension of life.<sup>28</sup>

[eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon] This was fulfilled in Dan. 1:3-21.

Eunuchs were royal officials or servants. In ancient times, these servants were often castrated to keep them from being a threat to the king's harem. For further references to eunuchs, see 56:4; Dan. 1:3-6.<sup>29</sup>

This is good news and bad news combined. The good news is that Hezekiah would not die childless as he had feared; but the bad news was the prophetic fate of his sons. The prospect of their being eunuchs in the place of the king of Babylon was indeed a terrible destination. Furthermore, Manasseh who would succeed him in the throne was indeed an evil son of the devil until near the very end of his life.

In the Book of Daniel, we read that, "Among the princes of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; and the prince of the eunuchs gave names unto them (Daniel 1:6,7). It was usually true in that era that "eunuchs" were men who had been emasculated; and although it was also true that sometimes "eunuchs" were "officers of the king." This was by no means true of the princes of Judah in Babylon. They were not officers of the king, but captives; and here, they even endured the humiliation of having their names changed. We not only agree with Culver that, "There is a great possibility that Daniel and his friends were emasculated," but we, through the influence of Isaiah's prophecy here, believe that that is the only proper understanding of the fate of those princes of the royal household of Judah. Many agree with this interpretation. "The descendants of Hezekiah, rather than his actual sons, seem to be intended here; and the fulfillment of this prophecy is to be found in Daniel 1:3, where certain of 'the king's seed' are mentioned among the Israelites who served as eunuchs in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar."<sup>30</sup>

Some of Hezekiah's descendants would also be taken (captive) to Babylon. It is very probable that at the time of the events in chapters 36—39 Hezekiah had no children. His son, Manasseh, began reigning when he was 12 years old, and Hezekiah died a year later, in 686 B.C. Thus, Isaiah's announcement here may have sparked a hope—in Hezekiah's mind—for some descendants. As usual, God's promise of judgment contained some hope. This prediction of Hezekiah's descendants became true of the king's physical seed: his son Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:11), King Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:12), and King Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:7). It also became true of many of Hezekiah's people, his children in that sense, when Nebuchadnezzar carried three deportations of Judahites off to Babylon (cf. 2 Kings 24:12-16; 2 Chron. 33:11; Dan. 1:3-4, 6).<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>29</sup> Nelson Study Bible Notes

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/isaiah-39.html>

<sup>31</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

**<sup>8</sup>Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.**

[Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken] See 2Ki. 20:19; cp. 1Sam. 3:18; 1Ki. 21:29.

Hezekiah's reply to Isaiah is very strange. He said in effect, "I am glad this prophecy won't take place in my day." He was grateful that these things would not come to pass in his days, but what about his children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren? It did take place in their day. Hezekiah's life was extended for fifteen years. Was it good? It was not good. He lived to play the fool. Three terrible things took place during those years.<sup>32</sup>

Hezekiah, one of Judah's most faithful kings, worked hard throughout his reign to stamp out idol worship and to purify the worship of the true God at the Jerusalem Temple. Nevertheless he knew his kingdom was not pure. Powerful undercurrents of evil invited destruction, and only God's miraculous interventions preserved Judah from its enemies. Here Hezekiah was grateful that God would preserve peace during his reign. As soon as Hezekiah died, the nation rushed back to its sinful ways under the leadership of Manasseh, Hezekiah's son. He actually rebuilt the centers of idolatry his father had destroyed.<sup>33</sup>

In 2 Chronicles 32:26, we learn that, "Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of Jehovah came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah." This information was also, in all probability, imparted to Hezekiah at the same time with the message here; and it was for this that Hezekiah was especially glad.

We deeply appreciate the discernment of Kidner who saw in this little chapter the explanation of the rest of the great Prophecy of Isaiah:

"To Hezekiah there was comfort in the postponement of the disaster awaiting Israel, but not to Isaiah. Evidently, he took this burden home with him, and so lived under its weight that when God spoke to him again it was to one who in spirit had already lived long years in Babylon (Isaiah 40:2), and who could speak "to the heart" of a generation of exiles yet to be born."

Here then, is the explanation of Isaiah's focus upon the problems of later generations featured in the next division of his prophecy.

Some have read a certain trait of selfishness into Hezekiah's words of thankfulness here; but we believe Dummelow was correct in the statement that, "On the contrary, his spirit at this time seemed rather to have been one of humble contrition."<sup>34</sup>

"Peace and truth." This reply by Hezekiah sounds a little unfeeling for others in translation. The original does not carry that note of cynicism but rather a resignation to accept what is good from the will of God. The companion passage where the event is retold in 2 Ki. 20:19 contains a question and a subjunctive "if" which indicates quite a different sense of feeling in Hezekiah's heart. That passage says "Good is the word of the Lord that you have spoken. Is the word not good if there is peace and truth in my days." In this verse in Isaiah 39:8 "moreover" is an added

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<sup>32</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>33</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/isaiah-39.html>

word and the text gives the sense: "The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good because there will be peace and truth in my days."<sup>35</sup>

Hezekiah's response to Isaiah's announcement of God's punishment for his lack of faith was deeply disappointing. Formerly, when Isaiah had announced coming divine judgment, the king had mourned and fasted (38:1-2), and God had relented (38:5-6). This time, Hezekiah simply rejoiced that it would not come in his lifetime. Another less probable view is that Hezekiah was simply thankful that God was being merciful to him personally.<sup>415</sup> The king acknowledged that Judah deserved divine judgment, but his lack of concern for his people's welfare shows that he did not really have the heart for them that the predicted Davidic ruler would need in order to rule in righteousness. Hezekiah could not be the promised child of 7:14.

The chronological relationship of the events in chapters 36—39 is difficult to understand, but clearly all these events happened at about the same time, probably within a year or two.<sup>416</sup> During this period Hezekiah trusted God twice and failed to trust God once. This should teach us that it is possible for a person to trust God in very difficult circumstances and turn right around and trust in people and things with the next temptation. We need to demonstrate consistent trust in the Lord, by His grace. We can do this by maintaining a daily intimate relationship with Him, marked by humility and prayer. We also need to learn not to trust in human leaders, because their faith wavers, but in the Lord Himself, whose faithfulness never varies.<sup>36</sup>

This chapter concludes the historic section.

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/36-39.htm>

<sup>36</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

## **Appendix A** (From Chuck Missler's notes on Isaiah)

### **How Many Isaiahs?**

With its 66 chapters, Isaiah is the largest and most eloquent prophetic book of the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> Most scholars agree that the book falls naturally into two major sections, Chapters 1-39 and Chapters 40-66. The first section has a distinctive style which changes noticeably in the final section. It is easy to remember since it parallels the Bible itself, with 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. (But don't make too much of this; the chapter divisions as we know them were added in the 13th century.)

### **The Deutero-Isaiah Theory**

The "textual critics" have insisted that the Book of Isaiah is a compilation of two different writers, each calling himself Isaiah but writing at different times. This "Deutero-Isaiah" theory is surprisingly prevalent in many modern ("liberal") commentaries. (There are some that even advocate a three-Isaiah theory.)

(Tradition suggests that Isaiah was sawn in two. The critics certainly have done that to his writings!)

The first section of the book deals with God's approaching judgment on the nation of Judah. In some of the most striking passages in all the Bible, the prophet announces that God will punish His people because of their sin, rebellion, and worship of false gods.

While this section includes many references to the coming Messiah, including His virgin birth and his rule on the throne of David, the style of this section is distinctive and certainly fits the subject matter.

The last section, in contrast to the first, is noticeably different. It emphasizes the Messianic expectation and an ultimate comfort for God's people. The heart of his stunning prophecy occurs in Chapter 53, as Isaiah presents the role of the coming Messiah in its highest point. Some call this passage the "Holy of Holies" of the Old Testament. The Servant's suffering and death and the redemptive nature of His mission are clearly foretold. Although mankind deserved God's judgment because "we have turned, every one, to his own way," (53:6) God sent His Servant to take away our sins. According to Isaiah, it is through His suffering that we are reconciled with God, since "the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

It is principally on the basis of the stylistic changes between the two sections that critics have developed the Deutero-Isaiah theory. Those who assign Chapters 40-66 to a "Second Isaiah" point out that the two major sections of the book seem to be set in different times. Chapters 1-39 clearly belong to the eighth century B.C., a turbulent period in the history of Judah.

But Isaiah 40-66, according to these scholars, seems to be addressed to the citizens of Judah who were being held as captives in Babylon about two centuries after Isaiah lived and prophesied.

These scholars also point to the differences in tone, language, and style between the two major sections as proof that the book was written by two different authors.

### **The Traditional View**

There are, however, conservative scholars who insist the entire book was written by the famous prophet Isaiah who ministered in the southern kingdom of Judah for 40 years, from about 740 - 700 B.C. They point out that the two sections of the book have many similarities, although they are dramatically different in tone and theme. Many phrases and ideas that are peculiar to Isaiah appear in both sections of the book. The appearance of these words and phrases can be used to

argue just as convincingly that the book was written by a single author. There are over 300 words and expressions common to “Isaiah I” and “Isaiah II” which are not found in Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. In the second section of his book, Isaiah looked into the future and predicted the years of the Captivity and the return of the Covenant People to their homeland after the Captivity ended. If the prophet could predict the coming of the Messiah over 700 years before that happened, he could certainly foresee this major event in the future of the nation of Judah.

The style of each section deliberately matches its subject matter.

### **The Valley of Doubt**

Doubts about the authorship and authenticity of any book in the Bible can have tragic consequences for those who are attempting to take the Bible seriously. As I look back on my own spiritual journey, I recall the many years that these views introduced a subtle doubt in my mind and hampered my real growth in the Word.

Is there a way to resolve this without getting drawn into the distressing ebates and arrogant displays among erudite scholars and “textual critics”? Indeed, there is. I only wish I had discovered it earlier in my own travels through God’s wondrous Word.

### **The Discovery in John 12**

What a precious chapter! It has many marvelous insights, but among the dearest to me personally are verses 37-41:

- 37] But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:
- 38] That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, so hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?
- 39] Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again,
- 40] He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.
- 41] These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

In this passage we first encounter a quote, in verse 38, familiar to many of you, that begins the famous chapter of Isaiah 53. This would be in the section attributed to the “Second Isaiah.” In verse 40 we have a quote from Isaiah Chapter 6,8 as verse 41 also highlights what occurs when Isaiah beholds the throne of God. This is, of course, in the first section of Isaiah.

Oh, how I am grateful for verse 39! Notice that John tells us that “that Isaiah said again” when he links the two passages, and thus, the two sections and attributes them both to “that” (same) Isaiah!

If you take John seriously, and recognize the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, then you need not doubt the authorship of Isaiah - both “sections.” But there is even more for the diligent student. In the New Testament, Isaiah is mentioned 21 times, in six different books, as the author. This occurs 10 times regarding “Isaiah I,”<sup>9</sup> and 11 times for “Isaiah II.” In fact, 61 separate passages are quoted or referred to 85 times in the New Testament: 23 passages from “Isaiah I” and 28 passages from “Isaiah II.” It is fascinating to me to notice that there is no heresy—or controversy—that hasn’t been anticipated by the Holy Spirit within the Scripture itself. If we recognize the reality that we have 66 books penned by 40 authors over thousands of years that are an integrated whole, and that every detail has been the result of careful and skillful engineering, then there is no need to stumble over the erudite skepticism and arrogance by scholarship falsely so called.