

Message Eleven

The Example of Hezekiah's Person and Failure

Scripture Reading: Isa. 36—39

- I. The first thirty-five chapters of Isaiah concern God's loving chastisement on His beloved Israel and His righteous judgment on the nations, in order that His elect might turn to Him so that the created things might be restored and the all-inclusive Christ might be brought in; at this point, everyone and everything have been discharged by God, and Christ, the only One who is qualified, has come:**
 - A. In chapters 36 through 39 Isaiah provides an example in the person of Hezekiah, the king of Judah; Isaiah shows how a person such as Hezekiah, who was appointed a king in God's kingdom, who was godly, and who prayed and received miraculous answers from God, eventually became not a success but a failure because of his self-glory and self-interest; hence, he too was eventually discharged by God.
 - B. We can learn valuable lessons from the example of Hezekiah; whereas we can learn certain positive things, we can also learn from his failure as a warning to us for our future as members of the Body of Christ; his example can help us to remain pure in our living and service to God for our entire life—cf. 1 Sam. 1:25; 2:11b-26; 3:9.
 - C. King Hezekiah was a godly person with God-like behavior but not a man of God intrinsically and constitutionally (cf. 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:17); he began his life with the Lord well but ended poorly (cf. Gal. 3:3-4; 5:7; Prov. 4:18).
- II. Hezekiah, one of the best kings, did what was right in the sight of Jehovah, trusting in Him, clinging to Him, and keeping His commandments—2 Kings 18:1-8:**
 - A. Hezekiah removed the high places, broke down the pillars, cut down the Asherah, and broke in pieces the bronze serpent, to which the children of Israel had burned incense—v. 4.
 - B. Hezekiah restored the house of Jehovah and removed the things related to idol worship—2 Chron. 29:3-36.
 - C. Hezekiah recovered the Passover, which the people no longer kept—30:1—31:1.
 - D. Hezekiah set the services of the priests and the Levites in order—31:2-21.

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- E. Hezekiah built a defense against the invasion of the Assyrians—32:1-5.
- F. Hezekiah trusted in God and encouraged his people to do so—vv. 6-8.
- G. Jehovah was with Hezekiah, and everywhere he went, he prospered—2 Kings 18:7.

III. Hezekiah sought after Jehovah concerning the enemy's attack—Isa. 36:1—37:38:

- A. When Hezekiah heard about the situation, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of Jehovah; this indicates that he was a godly person—37:1.
- B. Hezekiah went up to the house of Jehovah, spread before Jehovah the letter he had received, and prayed to Him concerning the enemy's further attack—vv. 14-20.
- C. Hezekiah trusted in Jehovah according to His answer to him and won the victory in Jehovah's fulfillment of His answer—vv. 21-38.
- D. Jehovah said that He would save Jerusalem not for Hezekiah's sake but for His own sake and for the sake of David; this word unveils that Hezekiah was not a weighty, valuable, or precious person in the sight of God—vv. 33-35.

IV. Hezekiah sought after Jehovah for his health—38:1-22:

- A. In answering Hezekiah's prayer, the Lord referred to Himself as the "God of David your father" (v. 5); this indicates that Hezekiah had very little credit before Him.
- B. In his prayer Hezekiah said that he would walk "deliberately [slowly, softly, and humbly, with much consideration] all my years" (v. 15); however, instead of walking in a deliberate way, he walked in a hasty way (39:1-8).
- C. The fact that God extended Hezekiah's life by only fifteen years meant that he would live until the age of only fifty-four (2 Kings 18:2); this reveals that, in the sight of God, he was not a person who could be trusted to carry out God's purpose (Isa. 38:5); during his last fifteen years Hezekiah made a mistake that was so serious that it caused God's kingdom on earth to be lost (ch. 39).

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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- D. Hezekiah prayed a good prayer, but his prayer had the taste of selfishness (38:2-20); he asked Jehovah in a selfish way to put him among the living so that he could praise Him; this indicates that he was for God, but he was for God in a selfish way; this is what we taste in his prayer (vv. 18-19).
 - E. Hezekiah was a godly man, but he was not a man of God, a God-man.
- V. Isaiah 39 shows Hezekiah's failure in the enjoyment of the peaceful situation and sound health:**
- A. Hezekiah's showing the visitors from Babylon his treasury, his whole armory, and everything in his dominion was a foolish act and a great mistake; the showing of these riches became a temptation to Babylon; a little over one hundred years later, the king of Babylon came and took away those riches (2 Kings 24—25):
 1. Hezekiah did not consider his action carefully, nor did he pray about it; he did not take thought concerning what the king of Babylon might do.
 2. This shows that Hezekiah was hasty and not considerate or careful—Isa. 39:1-2.
 3. His making a show offended God, who hates man's pride—1 Pet. 5:5:
 - a. We all need a secret, hidden life with the Lord, a life in which we experience the Lord secretly in the depths of our being—Psa. 42:7a; Matt. 6:3-4, 6.
 - b. The Christian who parades all his spiritual life and virtues before men and who does not have anything in the depths of his being has no root; he will not be able to stand in the day of trial and temptation—13:6, 21; Isa. 37:31.
 - c. Because Hezekiah exposed all that he had to the Babylonians, all his riches were carried away; this shows that the measure in which we display things to others will be the measure of our own loss; the measure in our life that we exhibit before others will be the measure we give up in ourselves.
 4. Hezekiah failed concerning receiving gifts and concerning

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self-glorification; he was full of self and was not able to restrict the self.

5. Although Hezekiah was a godly person who prayed and received miraculous answers from God, he eventually became a failure because of his self-glory and self-interest.
- B. Hezekiah's selfishness is demonstrated by the way he responded to Isaiah's word to him in 39:5-8:
1. The kingdom of Judah was actually the kingdom of God on earth, and Hezekiah should not have regarded it as his own kingdom; for Hezekiah to lose his kingdom was a small thing, but for God to lose His kingdom was a great thing.
 2. Hezekiah had no thought for God and for God's kingdom, and he did not even care for his own children; he was altogether for himself.
- C. The factors of Hezekiah's failure include:
1. Making a show of what he had, according to his flesh.
 2. Not being watchful.
 3. Not seeking after the Lord.
 4. Not praying.
 5. Not considering the issue, the result of his actions.
 6. Caring only for himself and not for God's kingdom on the earth.

VI. "In light of this pattern, we need to spend some time with the Lord and ask ourselves what kind of person we would be. Would we be like Hezekiah, who was hasty and was so much for himself? As we consider this matter, we must learn to say, 'Lord, I would not be any kind of person; I would just be nothing. I would have You as my person and my life, as the One who lives in me that I may live You. If I want to be anything, I want to be a person like this.' If we would all pray such a prayer, the Lord's recovery would have a great revival" (*Life-study of Isaiah*, p. 128).