

# A TOUGH YEAR FOR HEZEKIAH

Isaiah 38:1–22

The year 701 B.C. was a tough year for King Hezekiah. Not only did he fall deathly ill, but his capital, Jerusalem, was attacked by the mighty Assyrian army.

## **HEZEKIAH'S HEALING FROM HIS ILLNESS (38:1–8, 21-22)**

### **(38:1) Isaiah confirmed that Hezekiah would die.**

Hezekiah's illness was related to a boil and perhaps an infection that set it in (v. 21). Whatever it was, Isaiah confirmed Hezekiah was going to die.

### **(38:2-3) Hezekiah prayed for a \_\_\_\_\_ life.**

Hezekiah's prayer does not explicitly state a request to live longer, but it is implied. Hezekiah appealed to God to heal him in light of the good things he had done as king (cf. 2 Kings 18:5–8).

### **(38:4-6, 21-22) God granted Hezekiah's request.**

God granted Hezekiah 15 more years. Since Hezekiah died in 686 B.C. we know this illness occurred in 701 B.C. It was in that same year, 701 B.C. that God miraculously delivered Jerusalem from the Assyrian army by killing 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (2 Kings 19:34-35). Here, before it happened, God assured Hezekiah He would deliver Jerusalem from the Assyrians.

Verses 21-22 tell us how God healed Hezekiah and the miraculous sign God gave Hezekiah assuring him that he would be healed. God used medicine to heal Hezekiah. Hezekiah's question about the sign was not an indication of doubt, but the anticipation God would indeed give a confirming sign.

### **(38:7-8) God gave Hezekiah a sign.**

After he was healed Hezekiah wrote a song to express his thanks to God. Hezekiah intended this song to be sung in the Temple along with fellow worshippers.

## **HEZEKIAH'S SONG OF \_\_\_\_\_ (38:9–20)**

### **(38:9-15) Hezekiah recounted his thoughts and feelings during his illness.**

What is striking is that Hezekiah realized this illness was from the Lord. It was the Lord bringing him to an end. It was the Lord breaking his bones like a lion. It seems God was disciplining Hezekiah by means of this illness.

Verse 15 is the pivot point of this song.

*What shall I say? For he has spoken to me, and he himself has done it. I walk slowly all my years because of the bitterness of my soul.*

Hezekiah was humbled. Though under discipline, God mercifully and graciously granted Hezekiah's request. God spoke to Hezekiah through Isaiah and then fulfilled His word by healing Hezekiah. "I walk slowly all my years because of the bitterness of my soul" means, "I now walk carefully in obedience and faith because of the near-death illness God brought upon me."

Having recounted his thoughts and feelings before he was healed, Hezekiah concluded with praise and thanksgiving for his healing.

### **(38:16-20) Hezekiah praised and thanked God for all He had done.**

Hezekiah was grateful God had restored him to health. He could see that it was for his benefit that God did this to him. He recognized God loved him and had forgiven him. Having been delivered by God, Hezekiah recognized it was his duty to give thanks to the Lord and to proclaim God's faithfulness. Hezekiah shared this song with others so that together they could praise and worship God in His Temple.

**THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:****God \_\_\_\_\_ those whom He loves.**

God brought this illness upon Hezekiah to bring about change in Hezekiah's spiritual life. Hezekiah realized he needed to pay more careful attention to obeying God's Word. Through his song of thanksgiving, Hezekiah engaged fellow believers in praising God.

The Bible teaches us that God disciplines those whom He loves as He did Hezekiah. At times, that discipline is chastisement for sin; at other times that discipline is in the form of trials (James 1:2-4). All discipline, whether chastisement or trial is meant by God for our good (Hebrews 12:3-11).

Is all illness divine chastisement? Absolutely not. But it is a legitimate question for us to ask the Lord particularly if we have been resisting the conviction of the Holy Spirit over specific sin in our lives. The right response is to repent (have a change of mind), to confess (agree with the Holy Spirit that it is sin) and to do the works of repentance (make the changes necessary to bring the sin to an end). In this way, the discipline will accomplish its purpose to make us holy and righteous.

**God responds dynamically to our \_\_\_\_\_.**

Hezekiah prayed and God changed His plan for Hezekiah. God responds dynamically to our prayers like a father responds to the requests of His children. James, the early leader of the Jerusalem Church, challenged his scattered, carnal flock of Jewish believers to pray in James 5:13-18.

Elijah prayed and God did what Elijah asked, not once, but twice. The point is that God is responsive to our prayers.

**When God delivers us, we should \_\_\_\_\_ it with the church family.**

When God delivers you or blesses you in an extraordinary way, you should share it with your church family. By sharing your testimony, God gets the glory and your brothers and sisters are strengthened in their faith. Private Christianity is an oxymoron; it is not found in the Scriptures. We are part of a family and as part of that family we contribute to our worship and discipleship by sharing testimonies of God's goodness and faithfulness in our personal lives (Hebrews 10:19-25)

*Grace News and Needs*

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**Women's Soup Social:** Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 3-5PM.

**VOM Needs for October:** Foam Nerf Balls, Chapstick

**Church Business Meeting:** Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 4PM, childcare provided.

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