

Thoughts from the Death Bed

Text: Isaiah 38:9-20

Date: 5-15-22 10:30 AM

Truth: We are God's creation and we can trust His sovereign plan for our lives.

I. Hezekiah's lament (Isa. 38:10-14).

Hezekiah recognized that he wasn't going to live the full number of years promised by the psalmist in Psalm 90, and he felt like he was being robbed of years of life that he thought he deserved.

1) Hezekiah does not have a full understanding of the afterlife and the hope of the righteous who die and the promise of a future resurrection rooted in Christ's resurrection. 2) Hezekiah is admitting that he no longer will be able to commune with God at the Temple. He will no longer have the ability to worship Jehovah. He will no longer "see" God in His creation.

Now Hezekiah is preparing to go to Sheol, a place where he assumes God is not present. "Perhaps Hezekiah realizes that without Yah there can only be fear, and death can then claim him. If he could see Yah, he would not have to fear death" (Young 518). And while one cannot be dogmatic on this the king shows his feelings of fearing death because in his mind he will no longer be able to see Almighty God as he had done in times past. "The intimate fellowship of worship on this earth would no longer belong to Hezekiah" (Young 518-19).

Not only would the king lose fellowship with God, he would also lose earthly friendships. He believes he will be completely separated from both God and man.

First, he depicts his life as a tent that would be picked up and easily moved in contrast to his permanent palace. Life is temporary and is quickly coming to an end.

Secondly, he likens his life to a bolt of cloth that is removed from the loom when complete. The picture is that Hezekiah has completed all of his life's work and now all that is left is the last thread to be cut off from the loom. Death is imminent.

Yet, he also recognizes that his life is in God's hands and God will be the One who decides the number of his days on the earth.

The word *reckoned* means *to compose or calm one's disposition* and pictures Hezekiah soothing his soul. While the verse is difficult to understand, Hezekiah, when faced with the reality of death, quiets himself through the long night (Hailey 318).

The king then trusted Yahweh to intervene and was continually mindful of the Lord's presence.

Hezekiah hasn't given up all hope. Even though his eyes are weary from looking upward, he cries out to the Lord. In the midst of all that Hezekiah is facing, he has not forgotten the Lord. Though death seems imminent, the king places his faith in God and cries out in a plea that God would help him. When all hope seems gone, we must once again come to God with trust that He can do His work and undertake His plan. In weakness, God became the strength Hezekiah needed.

Hezekiah desires to thrust his situation into the hands of the Sovereign One who has all the power and who is truly the only One who can help him.

II. Hezekiah's gratitude (Isa. 38:15-18).

A. Hezekiah gives glory to God for what He has done (Isa. 38:15a).

God has now spoken and it is all His doing. Not only will he have 15 years of life extension, Judah will be delivered from Assyria. “. . . Not only did He speak a word of comfort, but He performed it” (Young 523).

B. Hezekiah commits to a new path (Isa. 38:15b).

Hezekiah will live humbly, slow down, and live a quiet and peaceable life and recognize that each day is a gift from God.

The king recognizes God's grace and work in his life, His power, and His blessing.

Every day is a gift from God, but a person becomes more aware of this truth in the midst of a trial or in recovery from a great sickness.

C. Hezekiah sees God with new eyes (Isa 38:17).

The king recognizes that death has been turned into life.

“After the experience he could see that **it was** really **for his benefit** that it happened (v. 17; cf. Rom. 8:28). He sensed for one thing that God's love was with him and that God did not punish him in accord with what his **sins** deserved”.¹

Often the Scripture connects our sins to our death (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Even the godly king recognized his sins were the cause of his death. But God demonstrates His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners – like Hezekiah – Christ died for our sins. When God casts our sins behind His back, we begin to see how much He loves us. The only way that we truly have life and eternal life is on the basis of this truth: God loves us immensely.

D. Hezekiah rejoices knowing that he can still praise God (Isa. 38:18).

If Hezekiah had died, it would have been impossible for him to praise Jehovah. Since he didn't, he is grateful for extra life because now he can continue to exalt God. Since God desires that man glorify and praise Him, and He would add years to the king's life, Hezekiah has a great reason to praise Him.

III. Hezekiah's psalm of rejoicing (Isa. 38:19-20).

Jehovah stands ready to save the king. God stands ready to save all those who call out in faith and obedience to His word. The contrast is great: Ahaz had shut the house of the Lord and made false worship prominent in Jerusalem. Hezekiah had restored the proper worship and sung songs of David (II Chron. 29:25-29). Hezekiah had witnessed God extend his life, the Assyrians defeated, and true worship restored. Truly Hezekiah's life was fulfilled because of the things of God.

¹ Martin, J. A. (1985). [Isaiah](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1090). Victor Books.