



# ISAIAH 39

## HEZEKIAH'S FAILURE

“Failure” is a word that comes with a lot of baggage. There’s really no such thing a little it bit of failure. It’s either “pass or fail,” no in between. Pre-failure is still passing and not passing still means that you’ve failed!

So, what is it that Hezekiah fails at or failed to do? What was the “assignment” that he just didn’t get, or what was it that he was wrestling with when the events in Isaiah 39 begin to unfold?

Hezekiah was at the top of his game. Assyria was threatening to attack, yet he had the promise of God’s protection to lean into and trust. From the size of his nation’s assets, Judah had grown and prospered. Unfortunately, Hezekiah had gotten to the placed where he look at all this wealth as his own and not belonging to Yahweh. So, when these emissaries came with an obvious political assignment, the king’s response revealed his heart, his character and that’s exactly where the failure manifested itself. You can see the danger in Hezekiah’s poor choice, not just for himself, but for generations to come.

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 39:1 At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. <sup>2</sup> And Hezekiah welcomed them gladly. And he showed them his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his whole armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them. <sup>3</sup> Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say? And from where did they come to you?” Hezekiah said, “They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon.” <sup>4</sup> He said, “What have they seen in your house?” Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that is in my house. There is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them.”</p>	<p><b>a</b> 39:1 Merodach-Baladan means “god of blood and slaughter, mars, war, murder.”</p> <p><b>b</b> 39:1 Baladan means “Baal is his lord.”</p>	<p><b>Hezekiah’s Failure</b></p> <p>Isaiah 39:1 Shortly after Hezekiah was healed of his illness, the king of Babylon, Merodach-Baladan, <b>a</b> son of Baladan, <b>b</b> heard that King Hezekiah had been deathly ill and had recovered. So he sent envoys carrying letters and a lavish gift. <sup>2</sup> Delighted by the king’s gesture, and having a desire to impress them, Hezekiah welcomed the envoys from Babylon and opened the doors of the king’s storehouses of treasures and showed them to the envoys. He let them see all of his gold, silver, spices, and costly fragrant oils, as well as his entire armory. All of the king’s royal treasures, all that was in the king’s palace, and all the wealth of his whole kingdom was shown to them.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Then Isaiah the prophet visited the king and said to him, “What have you done? What did these men say and where did they come from?” Hezekiah replied, “They are envoys from distant Babylon.”</p> <p><sup>4</sup> Then Isaiah asked, “What did they see in your palace?”</p> <p>“They have seen everything in my palace,” responded Hezekiah. “I showed them everything in my royal treasuries.”</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p><sup>5</sup> Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: <sup>6</sup> Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the LORD. <sup>7</sup> And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” <sup>8</sup> Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD that you have spoken is good.” For he thought, “There will be peace and security in my days.”</p>	<p><b>c</b> 39:8 Hezekiah, the reformer, went from being a man who was favored by God and divinely healed to one who thought only of himself. See 2 Chron. 32:25.</p>	<p><sup>5</sup> Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Here is what Yahweh, Commander of Angel Armies, has to say to you: <sup>6</sup> ‘The days are coming when all the treasures in your palace and all the wealth that your ancestors have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon; absolutely nothing will be left,’ says the Lord. <sup>7</sup> ‘Some of your own sons who come after you will be deported, be castrated, and become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’” <sup>8</sup> Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word Yahweh has spoken through you is good and right.” For he thought, “At least for me, there will be peace and security in my lifetime.” <b>c</b></p>

## Bible Knowledge Commentary

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### - JUDAH’S CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON (CHAPS. 38-39)

These chapters (Chaps. 38-39) concern an interesting event in Hezekiah's life. Though God miraculously healed the king, his pride led to national calamity. In chapters 36-37, Hezekiah was a man of faith, but here he was a man of pride. This account is also recorded in 2 Kings 20.

#### • Isaiah’s prophecy of captivity (chap. 39)

- **39:1.** 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 (see comments on 21:1-10). 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.
- **39:2.** 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.

- **39:3-7.** 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).
- **39:8.** Hezekiah felt glad that there would be peace and security during his days.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Under King Hezekiah's leadership, the nation of Judah seemed to be thriving. What effect does "success" tend to have on the character of followers of Jesus? How have you seen your own personal success effect your heart? (This doesn't have to be a negative thing.)
2. One of the side effects of Hezekiah's choice to open up his treasury to his visitors was that they were able to see ALL his nation's wealth. How ridiculous is this scenario! He showed them ALL the wealth of the nation of Judah. How long would this even take? Can you imagine being this transparent with your life? What are some of the dangers in revealing ALL of your "wealth" to someone?
3. Let's look at personal pride for a bit. Where is pride typically birthed in our lives? Where does it come from and why do you think God is so opposed to it?
4. How can you help someone who is walking in pride see the danger of tolerating this evil in their life? How would you paint a picture of how pride disrupts our relationship with God and each other? What would you say to them to encourage or motivate them to abandon their relationship with pride?
5. One of the disastrous outcomes that came from God's prophetic word to Hezekiah was that some his leaders would "be deported, be castrated, and become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." Yikes! What a legacy the King was leaving for his "sons." What legacy are you leaving for "your children?" What legacy would you like to leave for those who are coming behind you?