

ISAIAH 38-39
Sunday, September 11, 2016

Ch. 38 – HEZEKIAH’S LIFE EXTENDED

Parallel Account – 2 Kings 20:1-11 • Summary – 2 Chron. 32:24

I. HEZEKIAH’S PRAYER AND DELIVERANCE (38:1-8)

- A. JACKSON, 61: “Hezekiah’s prayer reflected a general truth. Though he had not been perfect, his mistakes had been of the head (i.e., in judgment, such as looking to Egypt for help) and not of the heart, though there is some indication that perhaps pride was festering in his soul (2 Chron. 32:25), and discipline, therefore, was in order.”
- B. Jackson believes the miracle was a localized refraction of light since 2 Chron. 32:31 states that the Babylonian dignitaries came to inquire about the “wonder” (Hebrew, “sign”).

II. HEZEKIAH’S PSALM OF THANKSGIVING (38:9-20)

- A. The psalm can be broken down into to sections:
 - 1. Hezekiah’s reaction to his seemingly terminal sickness (38:10-14)
 - 2. Joyous gratitude upon his miraculous recovery (38:15-20)
- B. Hezekiah was 25 when he began to reign, and his administration lasted a total of 29 years (2 Kings 18:2). He was, therefore, 54 when he died.
- C. 38:17 – “You have cast all my sins behind Your back” – “Sensing a connection between sin and suffering, Hezekiah saw his physical healing as positive assurance that the Lord accepted him, totally forgiving and utterly forgetting his transgressions” (Woods, 166).
- D. 38:18 – “Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You” – Woods (166): “While this conception did not mark death as annihilation or even cessation of all consciousness, it did underline the fear and dread of the tomb felt by men of old before Christ ‘brought life and immortality to light through the gospel’ (2 Tim. 1:10). Appropriately, then, the scholar George Adam Smith entitled his treatment of this section ‘An Old Testament Believer’s Sick-bed, Or, The Difference Christ Has Made.’”
- E. Things to remember about this text (Jackson, 62):
 - 1. Hezekiah was uttering his personal perception regarding the state of the dead; there is no evidence that he was inspired in making these statements. These are not, therefore, proof texts for materialism.
 - 2. The Hebrew concept of the realm of death was limited; “life and immortality” were not completely revealed except by gospel revelation (2 Tim. 1:10).
 - 3. The king may have simply been suggesting that the dead can no longer praise God *on earth*. It is the responsibility of the living to praise God and to the pass such instruction along to their heirs (v. 19).

III. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (38:21-22)

- A. These are found, in chronological order, in 2 Kings 20:7-8

Ch. 39 – BABYLONIAN EXILE FORETOLD

Babylon's king sends gifts to Hezekiah to congratulate him on his recovery. This, though, was merely a superficial motive, the underlying issue likely being that he sought Hezekiah as an ally against Assyria.

2 Chronicles 32:31 records that the Babylonians, who were famous for their interest in astronomy, were also curious about the heavenly sign given to Hezekiah.

Concluding Observations:

1. ZZZZZ