

# CHAPTER 39

## INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 39

This chapter gives an account of Hezekiah's fall into sin after his recovery, and the correction he had for it. The king of Babylon sent messengers to him to congratulate him upon his recovery, (<sup><230I></sup>Isaiah 39:1). Hezekiah received them with great joy, and in the pride of his heart showed them all his treasures, (<sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 39:2). Isaiah the prophet examined him about it, which he readily owned, (<sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 39:3,4) upon which the Babylonish captivity is foretold, when all his riches and his children too should be carried into that land, (<sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 39:5-7), to which sentence he quietly and patiently submitted, (<sup><230B></sup>Isaiah 39:8).

**Ver. 1.** *At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, &c.]* The same is called Berodach, (<sup><230I></sup>2 Kings 20:12) which, according to Hillerus<sup>f752</sup>, is the same with Barmerodach, the son of Merodach; though it is generally took to be a slip of the scribe's there, or a change of letter, as is common in names; he was either afterwards made a god of, or he had his name from an idol of the Babylonians so called, (<sup><230B></sup>Jeremiah 50:1), which signifies "a pure lord." Jerom observes it, as the opinion of the Jews, that he was the father of Nebuchadnezzar, which is not probable. Kimchi takes him to be the same with Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib; but he was king of Assyria, not of Babylon; it is most likely that he is the Assyrian king, whom Ptolemy in his canon calls Mardocempad; his other name Baladan, which is compounded of two words, "bal" and "adan", and both of them signify lord, he took from his father, for he is called the son of Baladan; by Josephus<sup>f753</sup> he is called Baladas, who says that Berosus the Chaldean makes mention of a king of Babylon by this name. Bishop Usher<sup>f754</sup> thinks he is the same that is called by profane writers Belesis, and Belessus, and Nabonasarus; his name consists of the names of three idols, Merodach, an idol of the Babylonians, as before observed, and Bal, the contraction of Baal, and Adon, the same with Adonis:

*he sent letters and a present to Hezekiah;* by his ambassadors, which was always usual in embassies and visits, and still is in the eastern countries; the

purport of which embassy was to congratulate him upon his recovery, and to inquire concerning the miracle that was wrought in his land; either the destruction of the Assyrian army in one night by an angel, or rather the sun's going back ten degrees, (~~4423~~ 2 Chronicles 32:31) and, as Josephus<sup>f755</sup> says, to enter into an alliance with him; and this seems to be the true reason of sending these ambassadors; or the king of Babylon had lately fallen off from the Assyrian monarch, and therefore was desirous of entering into a league with Hezekiah the king of Assyria's enemy, in order to strengthen himself against him, and secure his liberty he had just gained:

*for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered*; which both gives a reason of the embassy, and points at the time when it was; very probably the same year of his sickness and recovery.

**Ver. 2.** *And Hezekiah was glad of them, &c.*] Not of the presents, for he was very rich, and stood in no need of them, nor does it appear that he was covetous; but of the ambassadors, and of the honour that was done him in having such sent to him from such a prince; his sin was vain glory; and because he might hope that such a powerful ally would be a security to him against any after attempt of the king of Assyria, in which he was guilty of another sin, vain confidence, or trusting in an arm of flesh; and being lifted up with pride that his name was become so famous abroad, and that he had got so good an ally: and in order to ingratiate himself the more into his esteem and favour, he "showed" these his ambassadors

*the house of his precious things*; where his jewels and precious stones lay, and where were

*the silver and the gold*; large quantities of not only which he and his predecessors had laid up, which had been very lately greatly exhausted by the demand of three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, by the king of Assyria; to answer which Hezekiah had given all the silver in the temple, and in the treasures of the king's house, and was so drove by necessity, that he cut off the gold from the doors and pillars of the temple, (~~4284~~ 2 Kings 18:14-16), so that it might be reasonable to ask, how came he so soon by all this treasure? it is possible that some part of the royal treasure might be unalienable, and he might have since received presents from his own nobles, and from foreign princes; but this was chiefly from the spoils found in the Assyrian camp, after the angel had made such a slaughter of them, (~~4295~~ 2 Kings 19:35), as a learned<sup>f756</sup> man observes:

*and the spices, and precious ointment*; which, as Jarchi notes, some say were oil of olives; others the balsam which grew in Jericho; great quantities of this, with other spices, were laid up in store for use, as occasion should require:

*and all the house of his armour*; where were all his military stores, shields, swords, spears, arrows, &c.:

*and all that was found in his treasures*; in other places:

*there was nothing in his house*; in his royal palace:

*nor in all his dominion*; that was rare, curious, and valuable:

*that Hezekiah showed them not*; even the book of the law, as Jarchi says.

**Ver. 3.** *Then came Isaiah the prophet unto King Hezekiah, &c.*] Quickly after the ambassadors had been with the king, and he had shown them all his treasures; the prophet did not come of himself, but was sent by the Lord, though he was not sent for by the king; in the time of his distress and illness he could send for him, but now being well, and in prosperity, he forgot the prophet, to send for him, and have his advice, how he should behave towards these men, as not to offend the Lord:

*and said unto him, what said these men?* what was their errand to thee, and their business to thee? what did they communicate to thee, or request of thee?

*and from whence came they unto thee?* from what country? these questions the prophet put to the king, not as ignorant of the men, and their business, and country, but in order to have everything from the king himself, and to lead on to further conversation with him on these things:

*and Hezekiah said, they are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon*; he makes no answer to the first question, but at once replies to the second, as being what his heart was lifted up with; that ambassadors should come to him from a very distant country, and from so famous and renowned a place as Babylon; which showed that his name was great in foreign parts, and was in high esteem in distant countries, and even so great a prince as the king of Babylon courted his friendship.

**Ver. 4.** *Then said he, what have they seen in thine house? &c.*] Coming nearer to the point he had in view, and which was the thing that was

displeasing to the Lord; not that he had received the ambassadors, and used them in such a manner as persons in such a quality ought to be used; but that he had shown them what he ought not to have done, and especially from such a principle of pride and vanity as he did:

*and Hezekiah answered* without any reserve, very openly, not suspecting that the prophet was come with a reproof to him, or to blame him, or would blame him for what he had done:

*all that is in my house have they seen*; the several royal apartments, and the furniture of them:

*there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them*: which were more secret, laid up in cabinets, under lock and key; his gold, silver, jewels, and precious stones, spices, and ointments. Jerom thinks he showed them the furniture and vessels of the temple, though he does not mention them.

**Ver. 5.** *Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, &c.*] Now he begins to let him know that he came not of himself, and that he did not ask these questions to gratify his own curiosity, but that he came from the Lord, and with a word of rebuke from him:

*hear the word of the Lord of hosts*; a greater King than thou art, who art so elated with thy riches, and grandeur, and fame; or than the king of Babylon, whose ambassadors these are; even the King of kings, and Lord of armies above and below, and who is able to make good every word that is spoken by him, and therefore should be solemnly attended to.

**Ver. 6.** *Behold, the days come, &c.*] Or, “are coming<sup>1757</sup>”; and which quickly came; after a few reigns more, even in Jehoiakim’s time:

*that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon*; as it was, when Jehoiakim king of Judah, his mother, servants, princes, and officers, were taken by the king of Babylon, and carried captive, and along with them the treasures of the king’s house, and also all the treasures of the house of the Lord, (<sup>12412</sup>2 Kings 24:12,13):

*nothing shall be left, saith the Lord*; this was, as Jarchi says, measure for measure; as there was nothing that was not shown to the ambassadors, so nothing should be left untaken away by the Babylonians.

**Ver. 7.** *And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away, &c.*] Manasseh his immediate son was taken and carried to Babylon, though afterwards released; nor does it appear that he was made a eunuch or an officer there; this had its fulfilment in Jeconiah and his children, and in others that were of the seed royal, as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, to whom the Jewish commentators apply this; this is expressed in different words, signifying much the same, to affect the mind of Hezekiah the more:

*and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon;* or “chamberlains”; and who very often were castrated for that purpose, though it does not necessarily signify such, being used of officers in general. The Targum renders it “princes”<sup>f758</sup>; and such an one was Daniel in the court of the king of Babylon; and his three companions were also promoted, (~~208~~ Daniel 2:48,49 3:30).

**Ver. 8.** *Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken, &c.*] Hezekiah was at once convinced of his sin, acknowledged it and repented of it, and owned that the sentence pronounced was but just and right; and that there was a mixture of mercy and goodness in it, in that time was given, and it was not immediately executed:

*he said moreover, for there shall be peace and truth in my days;* or a confirmed peace, lasting prosperity, peace in the state, and truth in the church, plenty of temporal mercies, and the truth of doctrine and worship, which he understood by the prophet would continue in his days, and for which he was thankful; not that he was unconcerned about posterity, but inasmuch as it must be, what was foretold, and which he could not object to as unjust, he looked upon it as a mercy to him that there was a delay of it to future times; or it may be considered as a wish, “O that there were peace”<sup>f759</sup>, &c.