

### **Isaiah 38 and 39**

Chapter 38 describes Hezekiah's sickness and his wonderful recovery. That experience must have greatly strengthened his faith and prepared him for the trying days ahead.

How often faith leads to presumption! After God raised Hezekiah up, he fell into two great errors. One was to place his confidence in ungodly men whom he considered to be united with himself because they also were opposed to Assyria. The other was to glory in his possessions instead of giving all the credit to God. His rebuke for these errors may also have had a part in preparing him for the crisis ahead.

In chapter 39 we learn about these two serious mistakes of Hezekiah, which occurred in connection with the embassy of Merodach-baladan to congratulate him on recovery from his sickness. Undoubtedly the real purpose of the king of Babylon was to solicit Hezekiah's help in an uprising against the king of Assyria. Hezekiah was happy to show these envoys all his treasures, since he looked upon them as his allies in opposition to Sennacherib. Babylon was at this time a weak power, usually under the control of the Assyrian king, although sometimes in revolt during short periods of independence. God enabled Isaiah to predict to Hezekiah that this seemingly insignificant state of Babylon would be the place to which the descendants of Hezekiah would be taken as prisoners. He declared that it was not the great Assyria but the seemingly unimportant Babylon which would finally destroy the kingdom of Judah.

This prediction was probably given before the great invasion of Sennacherib. There are two reasons for the order of the sections here. One is a logical reason: chapters 36 and 37 deal with the great political events of the invasion by Sennacherib, and chapters 38 and 39 give the more personal touches. The second reason is that the passage thus ends with the prediction about the going of the people into captivity to Babylon, thus making an excellent end to the first thirty-nine chapters of the Book of Isaiah in which the attacks of Assyria occupy so outstanding a position, as well as an excellent introduction to chapters 40-66, in which deliverance from the Babylonian exile has so prominent a place.