

ISAIAH

Chapter 39

Envoys from Babylon

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. 2 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. 3 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.” 4 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.” 5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: 6 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. 7 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.” 8 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.”

39:1 *Merodach-Baladan.* Reigned 721–710 B.C. and again later (see note on 2Ki 20:12). (CSB)

sent ... letters and a gift. Merodach-Baladan probably wanted Hezekiah’s support in a campaign against Assyria. During his career, he organized several revolts against his hated neighbors. (CSB)

39:2 *welcomed them gladly* – See how this sin, namely arrogance, now struts around! The king does not rejoice in the Lord, but, as Cicero says, “the memory of a good life is most delightful.” In this he rejoices and arrogantly relies on his own strength. Oh, this is a serious sin. Here this sin, which is described in more detail in the Books of Kings, is simply called joy. But this is the joy found in creatures when God has been forgotten. May God protect us! (Luther)

silver ... gold ... treasures. See 2Ch 32:27–29, 31. Probably Hezekiah was seeking help from the Babylonians against the Assyrian threat (see note on 2Ki 20:13). But the information gained during this ill-advised tour escorted by Hezekiah would be valuable to Merodach-Baladan’s powerful successors (vv. 5–7). (CSB)

39:3 *Isaiah the prophet.* Earlier God had sent Isaiah to confront Ahaz (7:3); cf. also Nathan’s rebuke of David (2Sa 12:1, 7). (CSB)

where did they come from – “They came from your enemies, in whom you now trust as you forget God.” (Luther)

39:4 *what have they seen* – “Did you have to grant them this favor?” The prophet’s words are most impassioned. Read about it in the Books of Kings.

Nothing...not show – This is the king’s confession. The prophet extends his anger even to the king’s children, The anger is threatened, because of this sin and the sin of all the vaunting citizens. (Luther)

39:5 *word of the LORD.* Contrast the word of hope in 38:4–6. (CSB)

39:6 *carried off to Babylon.* The first mention of Babylon as Jerusalem’s conqueror, though 14:3–4 implied the Babylonian captivity. The wickedness of Hezekiah’s son Manasseh was a major cause of the captivity (see 2Ki 21:11–15). (CSB)

nothing shall be left – That is, of those things of which you boasted. You will be deprived of them. Thus because of this sin of pride, the prophet foretells God’s supreme wrath for the king, so that the whole city of Jerusalem will be destroyed by the Babylonians. (Luther)

39:7 Judah lasted for c 125 more years. Hezekiah’s son Manasseh was esp noted for brutality and became the cause of the Babylonian captivity (2Ki 21:10–16). (TLSB)

your own sons. Such as King Jehoiachin (2Ki 24:15). (CSB)

eunuchs. Cf. Da 1:3–6, where the Hebrew for “court officials” (Da 1:3) can also be translated “eunuchs.” (CSB)

Threat that Hezekiah’s dynasty would be cut off. In mercy, the Lord preserved the heritage of Judah’s kings, as promised to David and realized in the Messiah (Is 9:6–7). (TLSB)

king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar. (CSB)

39:8 *word ... is good.* This confession and this humbling brought it about that this wrath did not descend on the king in his own time, as may be read in 2 Chron. 32:8 ff. (Luther)

peace ... in my days. See 2Ki 22:20. “Peace” recurs in a refrain in 48:22; 57:21, dividing the last 27 chapters into 3 sections of 9 chapters each (40–48; 49–57; 58–66). (CSB)

That is, for the rest of his reign, at least, Judah would not be harassed by the enemies, and all the allies would keep their word and not precipitate a crisis, for all of which the king was duly thankful to the Giver of all good gifts. That is a sign of true repentance, if a sinner bows to the will of the Lord, finding cause for thanksgiving in every show of mercy which may be revealed to him. (Kretzmann)

Ch 39 The Lord rebukes Hezekiah for expressing hope in Babylon as his ally against Assyria. Prayer is our ever-ready strength, and the Lord is our ever-present ally. When worries assault you, call on the Lord. His Son will rule for your benefit and deliver you peace. • Turn all my doubts, O Lord, into prayers, that I may see a secure future for Your servants. Amen. (TLSB)