

Studies in Isaiah - Part 7

by Harry Ironside

The sermon explores the faith and challenges of King Hezekiah during a time of crisis, highlighting God's faithfulness and the importance of prayer.

Duration: 37:25

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 22:22, Isaiah 35:1, Matthew 7:7, John 10:9, Revelation 19:16

Topics: "Expository"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his own life and how he was once disillusioned and lived for self-gratification. He then mentions a poem about the Assyrians attacking the people of God, but how the angel of the Lord intervened and destroyed their army. The speaker admits to overlooking a chapter in the Bible while preparing his message, but it turns out to be a chapter that describes the blessings of Messiah's kingdom. He explains that the four historical chapters in Isaiah focus on King Hezekiah, a godly king who faced near-death but was raised up by God to fulfill His purposes.

Transcript

...of Messiah's kingdom, the peace and the gladness that will come to earth, the joy that men will have. So actually, it doesn't require, perhaps, much further comment than that which was made in a general way regarding that kingdom as we consider this entire portion, for it's all one complete section, as we saw this morning. And now that leads us up to the next section, four chapters, 36, 37, 38, and 39.

And these, as you know, are of an altogether different character to all the rest of the book. In fact, you may find them duplicated almost exactly in both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. And that would lead us to believe that in all likelihood it was Isaiah who was the chosen scribe who kept the kingdom records during the reign of King Hezekiah.

That would give him, of course, perfect right, without what we call plagiarism, to lift a portion of his own writing out of the connection in which it had first been found and bring it over here. That's something that those of us who try to write books frequently do. We're writing on some subject and then perhaps we're picking up another and yet a reference comes to that and we feel perfectly free to pick up what we had written in the other book or in some special article and just bring it over and make it a part of the new one.

And so Isaiah, guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, no doubt did that. Now there was a very special reason, I take it, for giving us these four historical chapters. They all have to do with a son of David who

came down to the very verge of death but was raised up again in order that the purpose of God might be fulfilled.

And that, of course, points forward to our Lord Jesus Christ who went down into death, actually, and was raised up again to carry out God's counsels. The four chapters have to do with certain events in the life of King Hezekiah. Now King Hezekiah was one of the godliest men that ever sat upon the throne of Judah.

But he was just like other men in one respect. He was likely to give way at times to discouragement and to doubt and fear. But he had a very faithful mentor in Isaiah, the prophet himself, to whom he turned from time to time for help and encouragement.

In the first chapter of this section, we find the armies of Sennacherib, led by Rabshakeh, one of his generals, marching down upon the land of Palestine and surrounding the city of Jerusalem. Hezekiah, knowing of the coming of the enemy, had taken all proper precautions to cut off supplies. For instance, he had stopped certain pounds of water and had turned aside others in order that Jerusalem itself might be properly supplied with water, but that the Assyrian army, it's difficult sometimes to keep those two in mind, one the Syrian, the other the Assyrian.

The Syrian was from the north, the Assyrian from the northeast. And in order that they might not find water, he stopped certain of the water courses. And so he took other precautions, strengthening the walls of the city and so on.

But the armies of the Assyrians surrounded the city and prepared to assault it. And Rabshakeh, the general, called upon the leaders of Israel to surrender the city without undergoing the horrors of bombardment with battering rams and so on and promising them a certain measure of immunity from punishment if they did. The king of Syria, he said, would simply carry them away to other lands, but their lives would be spared.

Otherwise they would be completely destroyed. He warned them not to listen to any proclamation made by King Hezekiah that the god in whom they trusted would be able to deliver them. For he said, you know what Hezekiah has done.

He's gone all through the country destroying the shrines of the gods and instead of delivering them, the gods will be against him. Have the gods of any of the other lands delivered their people when they called upon him? Our king and his mighty armies have triumphed over all their gods. Rabshakeh, of course, didn't understand that the shrines and idols that had been destroyed were not representatives of the true god of Israel and Judah, but that these were idols that had been brought over and the symbols of idolatry that had been brought over from the nations.

Hezekiah had gone all through the land destroying these shrines, breaking down these idols and seeking to call the people back to the worship of the one true and living god. As Rabshakeh went on talking and blaspheming the god of Israel, the Jewish leaders begged him not to speak in the Jewish language which the ordinary people could understand, but to speak to them in the Assyrian which they were able to understand. But he angrily declared, no, he wanted the people to understand, he wanted them to know the terrible doom that was coming upon them if they followed king Hezekiah.

Well, Hezekiah, in his distress, laid the matter before the Lord, went into the sanctuary of Jehovah and prayed about it and sent word to Isaiah telling him all that had taken place and begging him to intercede

on their behalf. Then later there came to Hezekiah a letter of blasphemy from the leaders of the Assyrian army, a letter blaspheming the god of Judah and again demanding the surrender of the city. We're told that Hezekiah went up into the sanctuary of the Lord and he laid the letter of blasphemy before the Lord.

They poured out his heart to God about it and God answered through Isaiah telling him that the Assyrian army would be completely defeated, in fact that the great bulk of them would never leave the land of Judah but would die there. And you remember what happened, you remember how that army was gathered all about the city and one evening as the people of Judah looked over the walls they could see the campfires burning and the hopes of the Assyrians all about them so confident that within a very short time they would be able to subdue the city of Jerusalem as they had subdued so many other capitals of the nations against which they had fought. But that night we're told that the angel of the Lord went out to the camp of the Assyrians and he smoked them so that, and here's a rather peculiar grammatical form in the scripture if you'll notice it, it says when they awoke in the morning behold they were all dead men.

Of course it's the awkward way in which the translators have rendered it. And the people of Judah awoke in the morning. Young nobleman who had such a miserably unhappy life.

His youth on the battlefields of Greece. Many of his poems indicate the utter hope. My days are in the yellows.

Not one with a mutterly disillusioned young man. Everything had turned to live to grasp the Greeks in their half year. And see how clearly heathen hold the people of God.

Well that was the effect. That was the result. When King Hezekiah receiving a letter of blood.

You know as we go on in this story. And he brought grave trouble. Now then the third.

Something of very great. Something the importance of which we may not see at first sight. A manifest effort of Satan.

Sick unto death. The trouble seems to have been. Well the king's very life was draining away with this.

Now that was a very serious thing. You see God had declared that the Messiah. But at this time.

If he had died. The promise made to David. Would seem to be defeated.

Now God of course. Might have had other resources. Just as the blessed virgin Mary.

Came through the line of Nathan. And not through Solomon. And still was of the house of David.

So. God might have had someone else in reserve. But there's no record of that.

Hezekiah was the true son of David. In the direct messianic line. And here he was at the point of death.

It looks as though. God's plan was going to fail. And then the amazing thing was that God.

For the moment seemed to acquiesce in it. For when Hezekiah sent messengers to Isaiah. Begging him to pray for his deliverance.

That answer came back. Set thy house in order. And not live.

Now we get. An instance of how little Old Testament saints. The best of them.

Appreciated the true meaning. Of the grace and goodness of God. When Hezekiah got that message.

Instead of being able to rejoice in view of death. As Christians can do today. If they're in fellowship with God.

He turned his face to the wall. And said while the child lived. I prayed that if it pleased God.

He might still heal the child. But now he's gone. He cannot return to me.

But I shall go to him. Showing clear belief and faith in immortality. I shall go to him.

And there are other intimations from the Old Testament. Showing He did have a measure of light. In regard to life beyond the grave.

And eventually. But when he learned that he was to die. And we thought we might go to heaven before morning.

We'd want to try to keep us out of it. Just as long as that. The other Montrose.

Just about to leave the platform. And one of the Oakland was all scattered through the catsup. And several of the folk putting the catsup on their hamburger.

And when George found that. He said my I wish I could get a dog. Maybe.

And after he's going to die. He seems to be in utter despair. It wasn't that he thought his soul was lost.

To give up his work here. For him everything was over. You see.

There was something important there. And he said the word. By Isaiah say.

And then he said now. Now he said shall the shadow on the dial of a certain number of degrees. And Hezekiah said well.

It wouldn't mean so much if it went forward. So clouded. You know that perhaps the shadow would go forward.

But if it goes backward. Then I would know it was a direct act of God. And God answered him.

I can't explain that. Don't come to me after a meeting and say. What do you know about the dial of a. Go to Harry Rimmer.

He knows. In the universe. That was known.

Yet now. Within the wheels. In the divine government.

Ezekiel pictures. There must be. That Manasseh.

Was born. And now see the other side of it. Manasseh.

Became the wickedest king. That ever sat upon the throne of Judah. So looking at it from one standpoint.

One could say. It would have been well for the kingdom of Judah. If Hezekiah had died.

At the time that he was so ill. Because of this boil or carbuncle. It would have been well for the kingdom of Judah.

If he had gone home to heaven at that. And God. May I put it this way.

Of allowing. Hezekiah's life to be prolonged. And a son to be born.

Knowing full well. That that son. Is.

And he went to spiritist mediums. Yet. From 50 years of age.

And almost. Manasseh broke down. Confessed the sin.

Undertook again. To try. He did his part.

So far. For the people. His son Ammon.

Went right on. But in the next generation. God came in.

In wondrous grace. That is after the raising up. Of King Hezekiah from.

We're told by certain people. That God is the healer. And we must never use.

Any kind of remedy. And I. I'm not ashamed to say. And I tell people.

Definitely. That they'll go through an operation. For it.

Here five days ago. About the only people. Whom I could see.

Well. You remember the story. The old.

The man who got up in a meeting once. And he's sleeping. Noticingly.

Now. I. It's one of the very. And the day was to come.

So. These ambassadors. And they came bringing a letter.

And a press. When he got a letter of. Blasphemy.

He spread it out. Before the Lord. When he got a letter.

And a press. And said this is wonderful. And so then.

He called the ambassadors. And in their hearts. There's.

And one. Reminded of the type. To see the Pope.

Of the paintings. And he showed him the treasures. And the magnificent.

And gems of all. God. We can't stay.

Exposing your own weakness. Everything. In order to get them to fall.

And men. Who can't. Trust.

Pursue a church. As it is. To rip.

To the clothes. Of the first.

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