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Isaiah 38

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Isaiah 38.

Topics.

- Isaiah tells Hezekiah to set his house in order, for he will die.
- God will add fifteen years to Hezekiah's life and deliver Jerusalem.
- The LORD will make the shadow cast by the sun turn back ten steps.
- Hezekiah writes a letter expressing how he felt while he was sick.
- The LORD has spoken to me and made me sick; restore me to health.
- Sheol and death do not thank and praise the LORD as I do this day.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth.

Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it:

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy-year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22).

The practical application: of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

THE LORD WILL DELIVER HEZEKIAH FROM SENNACHERIB

ISAIAH 38:1-3

Isaiah tells Hezekiah to Set His House in Order, for He will Die.

2

- **Isaiah 38:1-3:** In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: Set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not recover." ²Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, ³and said, "Please, O LORD, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

The chapter is a continuation of the previous two chapters. It is difficult to know, whether Hezekiah's sickness was before or after the angel had destroyed the 185,000 soldiers of Sennacherib's troops. (2 Kings 19:35-36). Some place it prior to the angel's visit; others place it after the angel destroyed the Assyrians and others in the same year, because of this we will consider all three scenarios.

1. Prior to the angel destroying Assyria.

In (Isaiah 38:6) the LORD says, "He will deliver Hezekiah and Jerusalem out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and will defend Jerusalem" and in (Isaiah 38:5-6) the LORD gives Hezekiah a promise that He would add fifteen years to his life and deliver him and Jerusalem out of the hand of the king of Assyria and will defend the city. Then the LORD says, He will cause the shadow of the sun to move backwards as a sign that these promises will come to pass (Isaiah 38:5-6) (the story is also told in 2 Kings 20:5-6).

Since Isaiah's words, "The LORD will deliver Jerusalem out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and will defend it," and the words, "the LORD will add fifteen years to Hezekiah's life and deliver and defend Jerusalem out of the hand of the king of Assyria (2 Kings 20:5-6) are both spoken of as a future events and the the shadow of the sun moving backward was to be a sign that these promises would come to pass it is supposed that Hezekiah's sickness was prior to the angel destroying the army of Assyria.

2. After the angel destroyed Assyria.

Some commentators say that the LORD'S statement, "I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and will defend this city (Isaiah 38:6) does not refer to the immediate time period, but means that should Sennacherib or any other Assyrian king return to Jerusalem to invade Jerusalem the LORD would again defend and deliver the city (at least during the remaining reign of Hezekiah). They say that they are words of comfort to give Hezekiah confidence that Jerusalem would be perpetually and finally delivered from any further invasions by the Assyrians and to secure him in the knowledge that Assyria would never again be able again to bring him and his people into subjection.

3. The same year the angel destroyed Assyria.

In (Isaiah 37:30-31) Isaiah tells Hezekiah, that the following promise of the LORD will be a sign for him, "This year you shall eat what grows of itself. Meaning they would be able to leave the city walls and eat from their own fields and vineyards. Then we are told that the angel of the LORD went out that night (2 Kings 19:29-37) and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians after which Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh. (Isaiah 37:36-37) showing us that this year applies to the year that the angel destroyed the Assyrian armies. Hezekiah reigned twenty-nine years and the LORD added fifteen years to his life which means his sickness was in the fourteenth year of his reign. In the book of Kings, we are told that Sennacherib invaded Judah in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign therefore his sickness was in the same year that Sennacherib invaded the land of Judah.

- Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. (2 Kings 18:2).
- In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. (2 Kings 18:13).

From these verses we discover that Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; he reigned twenty-nine years; Sennacherib came up against all the fortified cities of Judah in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign and took them. Now if we subtract the fifteen years the LORD added to Hezekiah's life from the twenty-nine years of his reign it brings us to the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign which means that his sickness and the invasion of Sennacherib was in the same year. This of course supposes that the words, "In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. (2 Kings 18:13) embraces Jerusalem and not just the fortified cities in the land of Judah which it more than likely does since Sennacherib never took the city of Jerusalem.

Conclusion: knowing the exact time of Hezekiah's sickness is not critical to the story or to the principals taught in it or the wonders and miracles that took place, most are content to accept that Hezekiah's sickness commenced sometime around the time Sennacherib's army was destroyed. However, should a reader desire to know the time frame more exactly what has been said in these notes should provide a good base to build from.

Botch and Boils: the following verses show that the words botch and boil come from the same Hebrew word (*sh^echiyn*), and that it can refer to a sickness that can be healed or to a sickness that is terminal.

- It shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils (*sh^echiyn*), breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." ¹⁰So they took soot from the kiln and stood before Pharaoh. And Moses threw it in the air, and it became boils (*sh^echiyn*), breaking out in sores on man and beast. (Exodus 9:9-11)
- The LORD will strike you with the boils (botch in KJV) (*sh^echiyn*), of Egypt, and with tumours and scabs and itch, of which you cannot be healed. (Deut. 28:27).

- The LORD will strike you on the knees and on the legs with grievous boils (botch in KJV) (*sh^echiyn*), of which you cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head. (Deut. 28:35).
- Isaiah said, "Bring a cake of figs. And let them take and lay it on the boil (*sh^echiyn*), that he may recover." (2 Kings 20:7).
- So, Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores (boils in KJV) (*sh^echiyn*), from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. (Job 2:7) (Job did recover from these boils).
- Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a cake of figs and apply it to the boil, (*sh^echiyn*), that he may recover." (Isaiah 38:21).

The Hebrew word (*sh^echiyn*) literally means to burn (i.e., as a result of inflammation) and can refer to an ulcer, a boil or a botch. What the exact nature of Hezekiah's sickness was cannot be known for certain, however it is likely that it was some type of pestilential boil (i.e., an infectious, plague-causing disease-bearing a sickness that upon eruption brings about an incurable and rapid infection that terminates the life within three or four days of those who are infected by it). Many sicknesses that we easily cure today would have been major infections to those living during the Old Testament era. They did not have the medicines or medical knowledge that we have today. Sicknesses that we take in our stride because of modern medicine would have been major illnesses and caused many early deaths amongst those who lived in these ancient days.

Set your house in order: (V1) Hezekiah was yet in middle life. He came to the throne when he was twenty-five years old (2 Kings 18:2), and he had now reigned about fourteen years. At this present moment Isaiah does not know that the LORD will add fifteen years to Hezekiah's life and therefore believes that he is about to die. Being a king and having no sons it is important that Hezekiah leaves a written will stating who he appoints to succeed him on the throne and of course to the manner in which he wishes to be buried and the many other concerns. The expression, "Set your house in order," means prepare for death, give instruction to his counsellors, rulers and leaders what they should do after his death and how his personal estate should be disposed of and who should take his place on the throne especially since he had no son.

ISAIAH 38:4-6

The LORD will add Fifteen Years to Hezekiah's Life.

- **Isaiah 38:4-6:** Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: ⁵"Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. ⁶I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of (Sennacherib) the king of Assyria, and will defend this city.

These verses show that when Isaiah first went to Hezekiah to tell him he would die he was not aware that God would by a miracle extend his life. Though God today may not send to us such an answer as He sent to Hezekiah when we pray in our sickness, yet, if by His Spirit He grants to us contentment and assures us that our sins are forgiven and that, whether we live or die, we shall be His, we do not pray in vain.

I will deliver you and this city: (v6) the intention of this promise is, that Hezekiah and the city would be finally and entirely delivered from all danger of invasion from the Assyrians. Based upon this verse it would appear that Hezekiah's sickness was while Sennacherib the king of Assyria was near the city of Jerusalem, and about to besiege it, and before the angel slayed the 185,000 troops of the Assyrian army, unless it was said to secure Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from all fears that Sennacherib would collect a large army and return; or that his successor would continue the war which the Assyrian kings had begun. Regardless of what might be supposed the assurance here is given to Hezekiah that from this moment onward he had nothing more to fear from the Assyrians.

The LORD will make the Suns Shadow turn back Ten Steps.

- **Isaiah 38:7-8:** "This shall be the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he has promised: ⁸Behold, I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps." So, the sun turned back on the dial the ten steps by which it had declined.

The sun-dial: (or sun clock) of Ahaz was probably in the form of an obelisk standing on steps that were designed to indicate the time in such a manner that each step would represent an hour or half-hour as the shadow of the obelisk moved over them. It is most likely that the shadow moving backward was limited to the step-dial and not the entire planet. This story is also recorded in two Kings Chapters nineteen and twenty. When these stories are combined, we discover that the LORD gave Hezekiah the following seven promises:

1. The LORD will heal Hezekiah and on the third day he will go up to the house of the LORD. (2 Kings 20:4-5).
2. The LORD will add fifteen years to Hezekiah's life (2 Kings 20:6) (Isaiah 38:5-7).
3. The LORD will deliver Hezekiah and Jerusalem out of the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and will defend Jerusalem. (2 Kings 20:6) (Isaiah 38:6-7).
4. The LORD will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps. (2 Kings 20:9-11) (Isaiah 38:8).
5. In the same year that the Rabshakeh on behalf of Sennacherib mocked the living God the inhabitants of Jerusalem will eat what grows of itself. (Isaiah 37:30)
6. Out of Jerusalem will go a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. (Isaiah 37:30-32).
7. The LORD will put His hook in Sennacherib nose and turn him back by the way which he came because he raged against the LORD. (2 Kings 19:28) (Isaiah 37:29).

As a sign that these promises would come to pass the LORD says He will cause the shadow of the sun to move backwards. This story is more fully told in (2 Kings 20:8-11) here Hezekiah asks for a sign, and is offered the following two choices, "Does he want the shadow to go forward or backward?" He reasons that it is easy for the shadow to go forward so he chooses the more difficult of the two and asks for it to go backward.

NOTE: sceptics deny this story since they cannot comprehend that the shadow could move backward. They feel that for this to happen the sun would have to move backward and such a thing would cause chaos on earth, but when it is considered the moving of the shadow was most likely limited to a fragment of light covering the steps it is no so difficult to comprehend. Added to this, God created the sun, the shadows and the laws that govern them, so it is no problem for Him to move the shadow backwards, especially when it is considered that God created all things and is going to raise thousands from the grave to eternal glory and everlasting happiness moving a fragment of light and the shadow of a sun dial by comparison is a very little thing indeed.

- **Isaiah 38:9-14:** A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, after he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness. ¹⁰I said, In the middle of my days I must depart; I am consigned to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my years. ¹¹I said, I shall not see the LORD, the LORD in the land of the living; I shall look on man no more among the inhabitants of the world. ¹²My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent; like a weaver I have rolled up my life; he cuts me off from the loom; from day to night you bring me to an end; ¹³I calmed myself until morning; like a lion he breaks all my bones; from day to night you bring me to an end. ¹⁴Like a swallow or a crane I chirp; I moan like a dove. My eyes are weary with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; be my pledge of safety! (I am oppressed; undertake for me in KJV).

Grave and Sheol: come from the Hebrew word (*sh'e'owl*) it literally means hades or a pit as the place of the dead, sometimes personified as the world of the dead or as a subterranean retreat for the dead.

These verses are a letter Hezekiah wrote after he had been healed that expresses his despair during his sickness. He felt he was going to go to the grave long before he should. His statement, "I shall not see the LORD, in the land of the living," (v11) implies that he clearly understood that at a future time he was going to be raised from the grave.

Like a lion the LORD breaks all my bones and brings me to an end, (v13) shows that he viewed all things that came into his life good or bad as coming from the hand of God. This was the common faith that the Old Testament faithful had before God. For those who remained faithful there was never a moment in their lives that they considered that God had forsaken them or was not in control of their lives. Their faith was not dependent upon their circumstances, but upon the fact that God is God and as such is worthy of praise regardless of circumstances good or bad. Sadly, some today do not perceive the love of God and because of this lack of perception of God's love and grace tend to determine whether God loves them by their good or bad circumstances. They feel if life is charmed and blessed God loves them, but if it suddenly takes a turn for the worse and trouble comes, they feel God has withdrawn His love, but this is superstition and judging God according to the fickle circumstances of this world.

When anyone today who believes in Christ doubts God's love all we have to do is look back to the bloodstained cross of Calvary and see what it cost the heart of the Father to save us and how much his Son suffered to redeem us and spiritually crown and cloth us with his royal robe of righteous so that we could be justified and granted eternal life in everlasting glory apart from self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions. This truth should comfort every faithful brother and sister in Christ since it is certain if God was prepared to sacrifice his Son for us, while we were indifferent and apathetic toward Him and uninterested and unconcerned about what honoured Him and what didn't He will with great joy do everything to keep us for eternal life now we love His Son. (He does this by daily lavishing us with grace)

Like a swallow and crane: (v14) three birds each with their own unique character and their own special cry of lamentation and pain are here used to signify Hezekiah's acute grief, his low suppressed cry and moaning and the feebleness of his body.

The dove: (v14) the dove is lonely or solitary bird that is called by the Arabs the daughter of mourning, from its plaintive note as expressed in the following verses:

- We all growl like bears; we moan and moan like doves; (Isaiah 59:11).
- If any survivors escape, they will be on the mountains, like doves of the valleys, all of them moaning, each one over his iniquity. (Ezekiel 7:16).

The dove here is used to signify Hezekiah's sense of loneliness during his sickness and his mournful lamenting.

The twittering and chattering: of these birds signifies interrupted groans of broken speech and prayers prayed with cries to God that are so lacking of articulate words that they are scarcely intelligible. It carries the idea of a broken, unmeaning unintelligible sighing; or of quick breathing and moaning.

My eyes are weary with looking upward: (v14) carries the idea that Hezekiah has lifted up his eyes and heart to God seeking relief, but instead is left feeling oppressed, languid, feeble and weak.

I am oppressed; be my pledge of safety: (v14) (I am oppressed; undertake for me in KJV) here Hezekiah's sickness is represented as a bailiff that had arrested him and was carrying him to the prison of the grave; or as a chief officer that has seized him and is taking him bound to the darkness of the grave. The sickness was so heavy upon him that it bore him down with such despair he could not stand up under it; it had seized him mentally and emotionally and crushed him physically and therefore out of his great pain and suffering he earnestly prays to the LORD to rescue him from his sickness that he might not go down to the grave.

ISAIAH 38:15-17

The LORD has Made Me Sick; Restore Me to Health.

- **Isaiah 38:15-17:** What shall I say? For he has spoken to me, and he himself has done it. I walk slowly all my years (I shall go softly all my years in KJV) because of the bitterness of my soul. ¹⁶O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these is the life of my spirit. Oh restore me to health and make me live! (So wilt thou recover me, and make me to live in KJV). ¹⁷Behold, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness; (for peace I had great bitterness in KJV) but in love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction, (corruption in KJV) for you have cast all my sins behind your back.

7

What shall I say? (v15) here Hezekiah speaks with such an overwhelming sense of gratitude that he is lost for words to express how thankful he feels and with the same sense of force as David and the author of Hebrews expressed in the following verses:

- What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord GOD! ²¹Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. (2 Sam. 7:20).
- What more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets ³³who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. (Hebrews 11:32).

Words fail to express the wonder and the gratitude of the sufferer who has been rescued from death and saved from the punishment of sin. Words seem to lack the power and sufficiency to express the heartfelt sense of thankfulness. These verses express Hezekiah's heart of overflowing gratitude and the lack of words to express his deep emotions and his surprise and joy at his unexpected healing and deliverance from the Assyrians. In the previous verses he described his pain, anguish, and despair and now in these verses he records the sudden and surprising deliverance which God had granted that was so great that no words could express his emotions concerning it. Nothing could be more natural than this language or more appropriately express the feelings of an individual who had been suddenly restored to health from a life-threatening sickness and lifted up from the borders of the grave. Verse fifteen begins the account of Hezekiah's recovery and his thankfulness for it:

The LORD has spoken to me: (v15) does not mean that the LORD spoke directly to Hezekiah, but that he spoke through the prophet Isaiah giving him the promise that he would recover from his sickness and be delivered from the hands of the Assyrians (v5-6). For the Old Testament faithful to

have God's chosen prophet speak directly to them was considered the same as having God speak directly to them. The sense is that God had sent a gracious message to Hezekiah by his prophet concerning the length of his life and has Himself made good on His word. The LORD had given Hezekiah a promise, and He has performed it.

I walk slowly all my years: (v15) (I shall go softly all my years in KJV) prior to Hezekiah's healing he walked in bitterness believing he was destined for an early death, but now having fifteen years added he speaks of going softly meaning:

- He will walk with a humble heart and with thankfulness to God for blessing him with such great favour as long as he lives.
- He will never forget his unworthiness and God's mercy and loving kindness shown toward him while his heart was in great bitterness.
- He will not allow himself to be puffed up in royal pride or pompous ceremony, but walk with integrity of heart before God and man.

He will frequently call to remembrance his bitter affliction and his miraculous recovery and acknowledge the goodness and kindness of God toward him. These are the proper responses of being healed from sickness or delivered from certain disaster or death on a godly mind. When it is considered that all who have been saved and delivered from death to eternal life by the suffering Saviour who died on the bloodstained cross of Calvary they should also be the natural responses of all who belong to the global body of Christ.

The LORD Himself has done it: (v15) the LORD had sent Hezekiah a message by the prophet Isaiah and assured him that he would recover and on the third day go up to the temple (2 Kings 20:5, 8). Now God has performed what He had promised. Hezekiah was healed and is now coming to the House of God with his offering of thanks. The language carries the sense that God himself restored Hezekiah according to His promise, when no one else could have done such a marvellous thing.

O Lord, by these things men live: (v16) can refer to the following two things:

1. To all the things listed at (v15) such as humbleness and integrity of heart, God's mercy, goodness and loving kindness and promises especially since in all these things is the life of the spirit. The intention of this verse and the following verses is to highlight the goodness of God and celebrate with praise what He had done.
2. To all the things written in Hezekiah's letter (v9-14) since everyone lives with aching and sore joints (bones) tiredness, weakness, oppression, bitterness, sickness and near-death experiences (v10-14). The Old Testament prophets and those who belonged to God saw everything even death as from the hand of the LORD. They credited God for everything that affected their lives whether it was positive or negative.

In many circles today's Christianity: so badly wants God to be the nice guy that bad things don't fit in with the modern Christian Gospel, because a nice guy does not do harmful things, so today's Christian faith is reduced to believing in a God that only controls good. But the faith of the of the Old Testament faithful was not like this, they did not judge God by niceness or badness, good circumstances or bad ones, there was no division for them God controlled everything good or bad. To those that were faithful and totally yielded to the LORD God was not a nice guy or a bad guy to them He was the majestic and awesome God who controlled nations, creation and the sovereign power controlling their lives in both the good and the bad circumstances. It appears if they were in conscious rebellion to God, they accepted it as discipline, but if it was circumstances beyond their control, they simply believed God had a higher or eternal purpose that was beyond their limited human understanding.

David and Psalms: when I completed Psalms on my website David's amazing faith really stood out far beyond what I had already known. He credited God for his depression, despair, anxiety sickness as all being from God. David often asked the LORD, "why is your hand heavy on me." David in Psalm's did not try to flatter God or make Him appear the nice guy, but rather like all the others who wrote Psalms spoke from the honesty of his heart. The faithful of old did not fear God was going to withdraw His love or be disappointed with them just because they were having a down moment, in fact God delighted in David so much he calls him a man after his own heart.

Oh, restore me to health and make me live: (v16) (so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live in KJV) since Hezekiah is healed this is better read, "Oh thou has restored me to health and made me live." The LORD had not only promised it, but He had done it, in verse fifteen Hezekiah wrote, "What shall I say? For the LORD has spoken to me, and He Himself has done it," and in verse seventeen Hezekiah says, "In love God has delivered my life from the pit of destruction."

It was for my welfare that I had great bitterness: (v17) (for peace I had great bitterness in KJV), bitterness in this context expresses intense sorrowful emotion and pain, in contrast to this peace embraces happiness and contentment. Hezekiah is saying that the health he once had and enjoyed was exchanged for sickness and affliction, his peace was exchanged for anxiety and stress and his wealth and prosperity was exchanged for famine and lack. His life went from royal wealth and happiness to affliction and terminal sickness. His afflictions and sickness drove him to pray and his prayers prevailed with God for a merciful answer and the prolonging of his life. It is in this sense that his afflictions resulted in his welfare and that all things worked together for his good, especially since he now determined to walk before the LORD in humbleness and integrity of heart.

In love you have delivered my life from the pit of destruction: (v17) (corruption in KJV), the pit in this context refers to the grave. The picture is of a loving father seeing his child sinking in a pit and running toward them with open arms to rescue them out of it and embracing them into his loving arms in the same way that the Lord Jesus Christ in love rescues and delivers his people from their incurable sickness and corruption called sin.

You have cast all my sins behind your back: (v17) meaning the LORD has consigned his sins to oblivion so as not to be seen by him, it carries the idea that the LORD has forgiven his sins that brought affliction upon him and removed the punishment due to them. These verses shine a spotlight upon the fact that Hezekiah was fully aware that before God he was a sinner which of course is in accordance with the sentiment everywhere expressed in the Bible. Though God with His eyes of omniscience sees all the sins of His people He chooses to put the sins of those who walk faithfully before Him and who are washed clean by the blood of Christ and trust in God's grace and Christ's righteousness to save them to eternal life behind Him.

Christ has taken the punishment due to all sinners upon himself and made satisfaction and an end of them for all whose heart desires to honour God and bring a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ.

ISAIAH 38:18-22

Sheol and Death do Not Praise the LORD as I do this Day.

- **Isaiah 38:18-22:** For Sheol does not thank you, death does not praise you, those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness. ¹⁹The living, the living, he thanks you, as I do this day; the father makes known to the children your faithfulness. ²⁰The LORD will save me, and we will play my music on stringed instruments all the days of our lives,

at the house of the LORD. ²¹Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a cake of figs and apply it to the boil, that he may recover." ²²Hezekiah also had said, "What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?"

Hezekiah's statement, "Sheol, death and the pit does not thank you: (v18) means whoever dies and goes down to the grave no longer has hope and cannot praise the LORD or tell their children of Him. In contrast to this the living (referring to Hezekiah himself) will praise the LORD and play music in the House of the LORD all the remaining days of their life.

Isaiah had said: (v21) let them take a cake of figs and apply it to the boil that he may recover (this is also in 2 Kings 20:7).

What is the sign that I shall go up to the House of the LORD? (v22) (this is also in 2 Kings 20:8). The miracle on the sun-dial confirmed the LORD'S promise that Hezekiah would go up to the House of the LORD on the third day. (Isaiah 38:7). Those who are faithful wish to live to serve God and have intimate closeness and spiritual union with Him. Living in our present world compared to the world to come is like that of a poor man living in a rusty tin shed. When an individual is lying upon their death bed they tend to dwell upon the shortness of their time, but their focus should be more upon how they will get safe to another world, because the more they taste of the loving-kindness of God, the more will their hearts love him. It was in love that Christ died to deliver us from our incurable sickness dwelling within our flesh. The pardon and forgiveness does not make the sin, not to have been sin, but not to be punished as it deserves. Being pardoned and recovered Hezekiah sets his mind to abound in praising God in the House of the LORD and in faithfully serving Him.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.