

Isaiah: The Two Servants – Israel and Messiah

Hezekiah's Testimony to Assyria and Babylon

When studying Isaiah keep in mind the important part that Babylon and Assyria play in this book. In the earlier chapters of Isaiah Babylon is spoken of and its doom is predicted. The same is true of Assyria.

Assyria made a great incursion into Judah and came right up to the gates of Jerusalem. According to 2 Kings 18:11, the Assyrians invaded Judah shortly after they had taken Israel into captivity. Israel consisted of the 10 tribes of the northern kingdom. Hoshea was the last king of that kingdom. He was taken captive by the king of Assyria and all of his people were taken into captivity and placed in the cities of the Assyrians and of the Medes. It is obvious from reading the Old Testament Scriptures that Assyria was a very powerful and very important nation.

After they had taken Israel into captivity and captured several cities of Judah they approached Jerusalem. It must have been a very frightening experience. Hezekiah had no way of protecting himself from the Assyrian army. But Hezekiah presented the problem to the Lord in prayer and God heard him. God destroyed the army of the Assyrians and saved Jerusalem. God sent his angel at night and destroyed 185,000 of their troops.

Later Hezekiah fell sick of a disease and it would mean his death. Again God rescued him and gave him 15 more years of life. After Hezekiah was healed of his disease and infirmity the Babylonians sent him envoys with a present. Hezekiah received them and showed them all of his palaces and treasures. The Lord was testing Hezekiah through this. Hezekiah was proud of all that he possessed. Did he forget that the Lord gave him all these things? The LORD was not pleased and told Hezekiah that one day the Babylonians would carry off all the treasures of Judah. Hezekiah should have known better.

Isaiah had written about the Babylonians and what they would be like and what they would do early in his prophecy. Hezekiah should have been forewarned about what would happen and what they would be like. In chapter 11 of Isaiah there is a play on words back and forth between the king of Babylon and a very powerful being, probably Satan himself. Instead of showing off his treasures Hezekiah should have spoken to the Babylonians about God's power to heal him. He should have declared to them the glory and wisdom and power and love of God. He should have spoken to them about how God saved the city from the attack of the Assyrians. But rather than exalt God and speak about God, he boasted of his treasures and his possessions.

We also must be careful not to concentrate on the blessings, but on the one who blesses. We should exalt and worship and love and speak about the one who gives the blessings. Hezekiah had two wonderful things to share with the Babylonians about God. He could have spoken to them about God's protection from the attack of the Assyrians. He could have spoken to the Babylonians about how God had healed him from his deadly disease.

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As far as we know he didn't do either of those two things. Rather he showed off his wealth and his power.