

Affliction of God's Children

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If you will look with me in your Bibles to Isaiah chapter 38. And I want to speak with you in this message on the affliction of God's children exemplified here in the king Hezekiah and his sickness that seemingly was unto death and yet the Lord revealed to him that he would yet live another 15 years. And in that we have in verses nine down to the end of the chapter his prayer of response. There is quite a contrast in the two prayers that we have recorded here in God's inspired Word, the first when he learned of his illness, when he was sick unto death in verse two where he turned his face toward the wall.

Now we saw last time that the wall wasn't just turning toward your bedroom wall, but in reality he turned toward the temple. He turned toward that one place that God had purposed that his children should look and that would be the place of the sacrifices, the place of consolation for any sinner that knowing that we are dying men and women that our hope be in that one that the Old Testament temple, sacrifices, priesthood typified, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so his turning to the Lord and then here in verses nine to the end of the chapter his thoughts as the Lord revealed to him that he would recover and did recover from his sickness, more of a prayer of humility that God would be so merciful, but also of praise.

So let's read it, Isaiah 38 verse nine.

The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness: I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the LORD, even the LORD, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me. What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and

himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD. For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall recover. Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?¹

I truly believe that it is not so much in prosperity that we can truly know the state of one's heart. We live for the most part pretty prosperous lives and there are many people that will give praise to God in some fashion or manner when everything is going well. But it is often in times of affliction like we see here with Hezekiah, times of trouble that the true state of the heart is revealed. Trials and afflictions don't produce faith, but they reveal of what character or nature it is. And out of the heart the mouth speaks.

Now there are some who seem to live out their days with very little trouble. And they consider themselves to be blessed of God. We run into people like that all the time. When you ask them how they are doing, "Well, I am blessed." They put it on the front of their Lincoln, on the front of their Mercedes, you know, blessed.

To them that is a sign that they Lord is with them. But if we come over to Hebrews chapter 12 we find that those that are the Lord's, we are going to know affliction, we are going to know trouble. We are going to know tribulation in this world because that is what God has purposed for his children, lest we get our roots too deep and put any confidence in the flesh, rather than be entirely cast upon God's mercy and God's grace in what we have in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bob read it in 2 Corinthians four that these afflictions that we face in this world Paul called by light afflictions compared to the eternal glory that awaits those that Christ has redeemed.

And here in Hebrews 12 beginning with verse five we read, "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him."²

This sickness of Hezekiah was a chastening of the Lord. Even though the Lord has blessed him mightily, to tear down the high places, even to take and to grind up the brazen serpent that the children of Israel had kept and idolized and had been offering

¹ Isaiah 38:9-22

² Hebrews 12:5.

incense unto. He took and ground it up. He called it a thing of brass. It wasn't the brazen serpent that was important. It was what it typified, the Lord Jesus Christ. And I find that to be so even during this time of year and a lot of people say, "Well, let's remember the reason for the season."

You know, this is something that we do without season. You know, come next Sunday, coming the following Sunday we are going to continue to worship Christ and not change a thing with regard to the way we worship simply because there is a so-called ecclesiastical calendar. No, we gather in simplicity to worship Christ. We need him and the Lord has a way of chastening his own to keep their minds and affections upon him.

As he says here, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."³

Don't ever get despondent in questioning how the Lord deals in your own particular life with regard to chastening. If, just like with your own children, if you are loved he will chasten you. He will bring that rod of correction, not judgment, but correction in order that your heart and mind be stayed upon him and it says, "If ye endure chastening," verse seven, "God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"⁴

And when we think of chastening it is not necessarily a physical illness. For Hezekiah that was the case. That is what the Lord used, but he could even use your thoughts on the night bed. He can use those hours when you lay awake and wonder why it is you are not sleeping. Even the Lord purposes those times to cause you to look unto him and to cry unto him.

But it says if you be without chastisement, see, don't be jealous of those who seemingly are without chastisement.

Whereof all... that is all who are true sons, "are partakers, [because] then are ye bastards and not sons,"⁵ illegitimate children, false professors. For whom the Lord loves he chastens.

And so what seemed to be to Hezekiah an unbearable trial and trouble for his soul and he confesses it in the first part of his prayer. This is a good thing. True prayer is confessing before the Lord, laying before the Lord what he knows already. We don't try to hide our feelings. We don't try to hide our distresses, but we openly speak to him what we know he knows already because he knows our hearts. He sees what we are. HE knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust.

And so on our back he causes us to look to him. But out of this we find his rejoicing.

³ Hebrews 12:6.

⁴ Hebrews 12:7.

⁵ Hebrews 12:8.

And so the Lord used this to cause Hezekiah, out of this affliction, to cry unto the Lord but to also see God's grace and mercy toward him in Christ.

And so that is the first thing that I see and want to bring out here in this particular portion concerning God's affliction of his children. It is to produce a contrite heart and humble us before the Lord.

We see that humility manifest in Hezekiah's confession in verse 10.

"I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years."⁶

He is speaking plainly there. He didn't try to come out of this after the Lord had delivered him and said, "Well, I knew it all along. I had faith all along that God was going to deliver me." He just said, "Man, I was a goner. As far as I knew he was taking me out."

And he confessed it. You know, death is never timely, is it? A person can live to be 100 years old, but when they die we think, man, that is brutal. Here Hezekiah spoke of it as the cutting off and it is an interesting word because in the original language what he was saying when something is cut off it is like you are listening to a message and all of the sudden it cuts off. You weren't expecting it. What Hezekiah was saying here was that in the meridian, you know, when the sun stands at its zenith that is the word that is used here, and suddenly things go dark, that is the term that he uses. I could also be translated, "In the tranquility of my days." You know, we presume when the sun rises and we get up and stretch and go get our cup of coffee, we think that this day is ours. We are living another day. We don't know. We don't know what God has purposed.

And so Hezekiah confesses when he speaks here of the residue of his years. When he says, "I am deprived of the residue of my years,"⁷ he was thinking that he should live longer. He was always... I remember when I turned 20. I got thinking, well, maybe I will make it to 30. When I made 30, maybe I will make it to 40. When I made 40, maybe now I will make it to 50. And now I am looking 60.

And, you know, every time it is like going across the river on stepping stones. You just kind of stand there and think, "Ok, maybe I will live to be 70."

There is no time that is guaranteed to any of us on this earth regardless of what the average age is according to science.

And so when he speaks of the residue of his years it has to do with those that he had calculated on, not necessarily what God had purposed.

⁶ Isaiah 38:10.

⁷ Ibid.

So God sends these afflictions to remind us that really our lives are not our own. And if you look over in Psalm 90 beginning with verse 10 and it is amazing to me that even with all the so-called advancements in medicine and science, supposedly to prolong men's lives, here is psalm that was written many hundreds of years before Christ came and it looks like the calculator is pretty much still the same.

“The days of our years are threescore years and ten...”⁸ a score being 20 so that is 70 years old.

“...and if by reason of strength they be fourscore [or 80] years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon [there is the word] cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that [what?] we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”⁹

That every day the Lord gives us, you know, “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”¹⁰

But use every second, every minute today as the Lord grants us breath to honor and glorify him.

So coming back here to Isaiah 38 we see again this contrite heart. It is not natural. It is not in us by nature. It is the Lord by his grace and, again, his chastening that must humble us constantly before him.

And he says there in verse 11, “I said, I shall not see the LORD, even the LORD, in the land of the living.”¹¹

Now that is an interesting translation because what he is referring to by the land of the living is actually the place where dead spirits went is what he is talking about. He recognized that death was not an end in and of itself, but that there was life after death and in his despair he cried, “I shall not see the Lord even the Lord.” He despaired even of his hope that in dying he would see the Lord. And, you know, sometimes in the Old Testament particularly such a place was referred to as Hades or Sheol. It was just a place where the dead went and, you know, that was a place of separation from men on the earth. Death is a separation. You can see how it puts it in verse 11.

“I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.”¹²

I go to dwell in this place where the spirits dwell, the spirits of the dead.

⁸ Psalm 90:10.

⁹ Psalm 90:10-12.

¹⁰ Proverbs 27:1.

¹¹ Isaiah 38:11.

¹² Ibid.

It is interesting that as we study the Scriptures and will refer to this a little bit more. In the Old Testament there wasn't really that concept of dying and going to heaven and there is a reason for that because we know that the blood of bulls and goats could not put away sin. And so even these that die in the Lord in the Old Testament they did not have a view of heaven, although they did have a view of Christ coming and putting away their sin and that when he did, then they would be brought into the very presence of God. We will look at that in a little bit, but, again, Hezekiah here is simply expressing the thoughts of his heart as the Lord was humbling him.

In verse 12 we find this culminated with him saying, "Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent."¹³

The tent being a type of his habitation. So, again, he is not thinking that death ends it all, but he compares it to the folding up of a tent in which he was permitted to dwell for a while. When the shepherd comes and folds his tent, it doesn't mean that the shepherd ceases to exist. The shepherd always is, but the dwelling place is removed.

And this is how we find Paul and Peter referring to this life. You know, there are some that advocate today that when you die that is it. You die like a dog, you know? There is life hereafter. It will either be enjoyed in the presence of God based on the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ or it will be to dwell eternally in everlasting separation from God.

A lot of people don't want you preaching about hell, don't want you preaching about condemnation, but the Bible stands. And it is clear that every one of us will either upon death dwell in the presence of God because of the work of Christ alone or will be eternally separated from him. That is just the truth.

But our death, if you look over in 2 Corinthians chapter five and verse one, death is compared to the folding up of a tabernacle. So this is good for us to remember as well that our lives are but a vapor. When we talk about a tent, we are talking about something temporary. You know, when you go camping you set up a tent. If there is a storm they might put tents up for refugees. But no one ever thinks of that being a permanent dwelling place. And we dare not ever think of our lives that way. No matter how healthy you may be at this point, tomorrow may change all that and health knows no age or illness. You know, from young to old, it is all an evidence that we are fallen creatures.

But Paul says in verse one of 2 Corinthians five, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we [speaking here of God's children] have a building of God."¹⁴

Do you see how temporary is compared to permanent?

"A house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."¹⁵

¹³ Isaiah 53:12.

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:1.

Now you can take that whole phrase right there, building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens and substitute the word Christ. He is that building. He is that house of which those that he has redeemed are part and partaker of, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. That is Christ. See, to be found in him, to be clothed in his righteousness alone, if you are trusting in your righteousness or any work of your own to get you there, then it is sinking sand. It is a delusion and unless you are the Lord's and in time he does and is pleased to reveal himself in you, you will find nothing but condemnation.

2 Peter chapter one Peter uses similar language, the folding of a tent.

You know, when language is put this way, doesn't it comfort your soul if you are one of the Lord's? You know, everybody talking about heaven, but no one wants to go there, at least not today. You know? It is... you get talking about death around people and they say, "Oh, don't be... this is supposed to be a festive season. This is supposed to be a good time, you know. What are you talking about?"

But for those that are the Lord's, if you were a refugee living in a tent and spent months there and suddenly someone came to fold that tent and say, "Come on. We have got you a permanent dwelling already prepared for you," would you fight him? The table has been set. All the food you could imagine, clothes, come on." That is how we view our passing from this world. You know? Let's not hang on to the tent. And, you know, see that here in 2 Peter chapter one and verse 12.

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.¹⁶

He was anticipating his immanent death, you see, but described as a tabernacle.

So all these things were used to humble Hezekiah and to cause him to see that he would not and should not put any confidence in this life.

When you come back here to Isaiah 38 and verse 12 he says, "I have cut off like a weaver my life."¹⁷

This shows me that he had come to this resolution already, that if this was the Lord's time he was ready to go.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ 2 Peter 1:12-14.

¹⁷ Isaiah 38:12.

I don't know if you have ever watched a person weaving. I don't know if this is even something that men do with their hands. Machines typically are doing it, but in my lifetime and in some of the places where I have traveled in the world I have seen weavers that they get to a certain point and they are working on this yarn, this thread that is there, pulling it in tight and then when they get to a certain point they take the scissors and cut it. It is done.

And that is what he is referring to here, the cutting off of the threads as if his life was a tapestry that when it had been fulfilled, when every hour, every second that God had purposed had been accomplished, then he would be cut off.

And he thought it would be with this pining sickness, "From day even to night wilt thou make an end of me."¹⁸

It sounds a little bit like Job. You know, we get feeling that way, but we don't know. It may be that the Lord purposed to take us immediately. It may be that he give us a long life, but such is the Lord's to decide.

All right, so these afflictions that the Lord brings on his children are purposed to humble. But, secondly, it is... they are brought to remind us that it is God who will do what he will do. Our lives are not our own. And, you know, that is just... that is not just a slogan. You know, sometimes when people get upset they are really not in agreement with it, but you will hear them say that.

Well, God is going to do what he is going to do.

I don't believe that that is how Hezekiah was addressing the Lord here. In verse 13 he said, "I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will [what?] he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me."¹⁹

Now he said, "I reckoned."

The idea of reckoning is an acknowledgement and an acceptance. In other words, if this is what God has purposed to do, he is going to do what he will do and such is his right, such is his power to do so. To reckon means to put it together in your mind, to compose it. And to accept it.

He said here in verse 13 that, "As a lion so will he break all my bones."²⁰

I have heard the testimonies of some that thought their life would end when they encountered a bear, they encountered a lion. And even though they escaped to be able to tell about it, they would tell you that they thought that was it.

¹⁸ Isaiah 38:12,13.

¹⁹ Isaiah 38:13.

²⁰ Ibid.

But here the point I want you to see is that it wasn't just a lion that happened to be in the way, but a lion that God purposed.

If we could but see God's hand in everything that he brings we would rest and we would be at peace no matter how difficult the circumstance to know that it is the Lord. Let him do what he will.

We can't naturally say that. But given the Spirit, at the same time Hezekiah acknowledges his weakness. You know, this as you acknowledge that God will do what he will do, it doesn't mean that there is not unsettledness. He describes himself in verse 14, "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter."²¹

If you have ever walked around a lake and you hear this chatter going on, you know, by an egret or something like that and you look around, typically there is a snake, there is a danger. There is something that has got them aflutter. And Hezekiah, even though he is a king, acknowledges that, you know, he was crying like a baby, that such was the, such was the sorrow that he felt in his heart. He describes it hear as the mourn of a dove.

But you notice again his acknowledgement of God doing what he will do because in verse 14 it says, "Mine eyes fail with looking upward."²²

The whole idea here even though this is in italic, but in the original the whole idea is his strength was so far gone that even to be able to continue to cry unto the Lord, looking upward for help failed him. And he says, "I am oppressed."

And here it is again, casting himself upon God's lot, he says, "Undertake for me."²³

You know, there is a time where we resist, we fight because we have our idea of how we think things will go, but if we are the Lord's, he is going to bring us to that point in time and acknowledgment and reckoning in our own hearts and minds that, Lord, if this is your will, then undertake for me. Give me the grace to go through it.

And that word "undertake" is a special word. In the original it actually means be surety for me. I can't do it, but you be surety. You carry me through. You be my representative.

And such was his hope.

And that really leads me to the third and final point that I want to bring out in this particular message. And that is out of these cries of distress the Lord used this affliction with Hezekiah to give him a heart of thanksgiving and hope.

²¹ Isaiah 53:14.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

You know, whether it be in death or whether it be extending my life, ultimately this is what God purposes for his children. This is why he brings these chastenings and chastisements is that their hearts be filled with thanksgiving and hope.

He says in verse 15, “What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it.”²⁴

It is the Lord bringing his Word home to our heart, that when he does brings comfort and brings peace and brings acceptance of his will. He himself hath done it. It is the Lord’s to do with me what he will whether he keep me alive or whether he cause me to pass from this world, but either way what he has said he will do.

And in this from here forward I see a true prayer of thanksgiving which is how we ought to pray, which is how we ought to bring our supplications before the Lord.

If you look over in Philippians chapter four, Philippians chapter four in verse four Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”²⁵

If we know that all things are from his hand, then why would we not rejoice? Why should we fret? Here in verse five it says, “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”²⁶

We don’t mourn as those who are without hope, that if the Lord truly is our life and he has given his life for sinners such as we are and we are in him, then that is going to effect how we view things. You know, regardless of whatever problems there may be that we face in this temporal life, our greatest problem has already been resolved if the Lord Jesus Christ has paid our debt. We have no reason then to fear. We have no reason then to hold on to anything in this life. In all things, it says, the Lord is at hand. Moderation means to be gentle. Moderation means to not to go over the edge when the Lord brings things our way, but to rest. Again, it is seeing his hand in all things.

And verse six gives us very good instruction

“Be careful for nothing.”²⁷

That word “careful” means trying to work out the details yourself. You know, I will be the first to raise my hand say I have got a problem with that because I am always trying to figure it out. And yet the Lord will put you in a corner with your back to the wall and your feet to the fire and show you that it is not you, it is him. And he will do what he will do. So be careful for nothing. Be fretful for nothing.

²⁴ Isaiah 38:15.

²⁵ Philippians 4:4.

²⁶ Philippians 4:5.

²⁷ Philippians 4:6.

“But in every thing by prayer and supplication,”²⁸ that is what he causes us to do, to cry unto him, but now don’t read to fast. What does it say at the end there? With thanksgiving. “With thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”²⁹

You know, some we don’t come in a fretful spirit, but in a thanksgiving, a spirit of thanksgiving. You know, what God promises, this is what Hezekiah is stating here in Isaiah 38.

What shall it say? You know, this is somewhat his conclusion. He hath both spoken unto me The Word of the Lord will stand and himself [?]. And in that he says, “I will rest.”

Now here is a part where I want you to give some consideration because he says there in verse 15, “I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.”³⁰

A way of reading that and understanding it may be a little better, he said, “I will go softly all my years on account of this bitterness of my soul.” In other words, the remaining years, such an impact that this had upon him and how God was pleased to teach him through it, that he said it will affect how I live the rest of my years. That is what he is saying here. That how the Lord dealt with him in mercy at this time would affect how he lived out the rest of his life.

Isn’t that really how we live? As the Lord brings us through trials and tribulations and we see how he mercifully dealt with us not according to our sins, but dealt with us for Christ’s sake, it tenders us, that every other affliction that we can expect to face, he said, “I go softly.”

When you tread softly it is not so much now with presumption. It is not with cockiness. It is not with pride. But as different other afflictions the Lord brings our way, it causes you to bow in tenderness, remembering his mercies and looking to Christ. It guides and affects everything that we do.

Down in verse 16 we see, again, this heart of thanksgiving and hope where he says, “O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.”³¹

When he is talking about these things he is talking about remembering the benefits of the Lord, causing us to remember Christ.

If the Lord should take every thing away from us in this life, whether it be wealth, whether it be health, whether it be acquaintances and just shuts us up to Christ what a blessing. What a blessing. And that is what he sees here.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Isaiah 38:15.

³¹ Isaiah 53:16.

“So wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.”³²

Rather than confide in the flesh, to live upon the blessings of God.

If you look over in Psalm 104 and verses 27 though 30. Let’s start up in verse 24.

O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein [some sort of whale]. These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.³³

He is talking about nature. This is God’s way with his creatures. But if so with his creatures, the point is how much more so with those that are his children that he has chosen, that he has redeemed and that he holds up with the power of his hand?

Verse 31.

The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.³⁴

See, everything that happens, a volcano or earthquake, you know, people call these tragedies, but it is just God dealing with his earth how he has pleased to deal with it. Hurricanes.

I have heard preachers say, “Well, God wouldn’t have anything to do with that.”

Oh, really? You know, you think he is... you think they are something out of his control and his earth? Go ahead... man says he has his way in the wind and the storm.

I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.³⁵

All of this is what Hezekiah is saying.

³² Ibid.

³³ Psalm 104:24-30.

³⁴ Psalm 104:31-32.

³⁵ Psalm 104:33-34.

In verse 18 he thanks the Lord, in essence, that the Lord gave him this to, you know, while he was yet alive to know the Lord.

You know, verse 17 he says, “Behold, for peace I had great bitterness.”³⁶

In other words, it was for his peace that he might be cast upon the mercies of the Lord, that the Lord brought this great bitterness and affliction.

Again, whom the Lord loves he chastens.

But look where his hope was.

“But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption.”³⁷

Whom the Lord loves he chastens.

“For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.”³⁸

You know, he is looking to Christ here and it reminds me of Job 33 and I will close with this because there is a lot more here and we will come back to it.

Look with me in Job 33 because I want this to be our final thought. God has different ways of dealing with his own. Here Job acknowledged in Job 33 and verse 14, “For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.”³⁹

You know, left to themselves in their blindness, men, natural men don’t see God’s hand in everything, but he says:

In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.⁴⁰

And, again, just like Hezekiah said, “Behold for peace I had great bitterness.”⁴¹

Why does God bring these things to bear in the lives of his children? Well, verse 18 says, “He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword,”⁴² from dying the way that natural men would die in ignorance and in false hope.

Verse 19.

³⁶ Isaiah 38:17.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Job 33:14.

⁴⁰ Job 33:15-17.

⁴¹ Isaiah 38:17.

⁴² Job 33:18.

He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.⁴³

It takes you off of the so-called dainty things that you would die, like the children of Israel died with that meat still in their mouths because they loathed the manna.

His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter...⁴⁴

That word means a mediator. Imagine two people can't speak the same language and someone comes that understands both. Here he is speaking of Christ who was God and yet became a man and stood in the breach.

"...one among a thousand, to shew⁴⁵ unto man his,"⁴⁶ that is God's uprightness, not man. Man doesn't have any.

Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.⁴⁷

He is not rendering to man for man's righteousness, but he will render unto that man his righteousness. In other words, a righteousness not his own, one of the interpreter, one of the representative, one of the substitute put to the account of that sinner.

And that is our only hope. That is our only hope. That was Hezekiah's hope in the end that God would be merciful to him for Christ's sake even though Christ had not yet come, that is where his eye was turned.

And I like the way verse 20 in Isaiah 38 reads, "The LORD was ready to save me."⁴⁸ He was already. he had already purposed to save me. I just had to find out about it. And that is what we do. By his Spirit we find out that God purposed to be merciful and gracious for Christ's sake. May that be our hope.

All right, brother Mike.

⁴³ Job 33:19-20.

⁴⁴ Job 33:21-23.

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⁴⁶ Job 33:23.

⁴⁷ Job 33:24-26.

⁴⁸ Isaiah 38:20.