

What To Do When You've Blown It

Lesson 3

Isaiah 39

November 6, 2022

Leadership Stupidity

INTRODUCTION

Hezekiah is generally regarded as one of Israel's "good kings." A more accurate assessment is that Hezekiah was a God-centered king at the start of his reign but was a self-centered king by the end of his reign.

To set the scene: Hezekiah was worried about invasion from Assyria, which was the regional super-power of the time. Since Judah was a small country, Hezekiah welcomed envoys from Babylon, which was a minor super-power at the time, as a potential ally against Assyria, and he stupidly showed off Judah's riches to the envoys to stroke his own ego. Hezekiah's foolish pride eclipsed his thankfulness for God's blessings on Judah.

Isaiah told Hezekiah of God's displeasure and that Babylon would pillage Judah and exile Hezekiah's descendants. Instead of mourning this foreboding news, Hezekiah's response was again shockingly myopic and selfish. Isaiah 39 is a short chapter, but it's loaded with penetrating truths about how we foolishly confuse God's blessings with our own achievements.

Memory verse: "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."—Isaiah 53:6

Pray, and read Isaiah 39. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

OBSERVATION: What does the passage say?

1. Who visited Hezekiah and brought him gifts?
(Isaiah 39:1-2)
2. How did Hezekiah respond to the envoys? (Isaiah 39:2)
3. Did Hezekiah consult either the Lord or Isaiah before showing off his treasures to the envoys? (Isaiah 39:1-4)
4. What did Isaiah say would happen as a result of Hezekiah's actions? (Isaiah 39:6-7)
5. What did Hezekiah say in response to Isaiah's news? (Isaiah 39:8)

INTERPRETATION: What do the passages mean?

1. God had forbidden all of Israel from forming allegiances with idolatrous nations like Babylon. How did Hezekiah's acceptance of gifts from the Babylonian king and showing all of his wealth to the Babylonian envoys violate this law? (Isaiah 31:1-3)

2. Compare Isaiah 39 to 1 Chronicles 21, which describes David taking a census. How was David's motivation for taking a census like Hezekiah's motivation for showing his riches to the envoys? How were these actions examples of foolish leadership?

3. How could Hezekiah have responded to the envoys in a different, God-honoring way rather than boasting and showing them everything in his palace?
(Mark 10:17-26; John 3:1-20)

4. Describe Hezekiah's reaction to hearing about the ramifications of his actions. Was he bothered by or pleased with the news? Why? (Isaiah 39:8)

APPLICATION: How do the passages apply to your life?

1. Hezekiah's foolish pride ultimately led to Judah being ransacked and exiled to Babylon (2 Kings 24:10-16, 25:11-17). When have you acted in a prideful way that negatively affected your family, co-workers, or friends?

