

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Isaiah Chapter 38 — Hezekiah's Illness, Prayer, and Healing

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Isaiah Chapter 38 moves from:

National crisis.

To:

Personal crisis.

In Isaiah 36 and 37, Hezekiah faced:

Sennacherib.

Assyria.

Military invasion.

Threats against Jerusalem.

Now the enemy is not outside:

The city.

It is inside:

Hezekiah's own body.

He becomes:

Sick.

And not merely:

Ill.

He is told:

“You will die and not live.”

This is one of the most personal chapters in Isaiah.

The king who had prayed for:

Jerusalem.

Must now pray for:

Himself.

The man who saw God deliver a city must now seek God for:

His own life.

The chapter teaches us that even faithful people experience:

Sickness.

Fear.

Tears.

Questions.

Anguish.

The biblical picture of faith is not emotional numbness.

Hezekiah:

Turns to the wall.

Prays.

Weeps bitterly.

God does not rebuke him for:

Tears.

Instead God says:

“I have heard your prayer and seen your tears.”

That statement is deeply important.

God hears:

Words.

God sees:

Tears.

Then the Lord promises:

Fifteen additional years.

Deliverance from Assyria.

Protection for Jerusalem.

And a sign.

The shadow on the sundial of Ahaz moves:

Backward.

This miraculous sign confirms that the God who controls:

Time.

Light.

Shadow.

History.

Can also fulfill His promise concerning:

Hezekiah's life.

The middle of the chapter contains Hezekiah's personal writing after his recovery.

It is not merely:

A medical report.

It is:

A spiritual reflection.

Hezekiah looks back upon:

The nearness of death.

The fragility of life.

The anguish of illness.

The mercy of God.

The forgiveness of sin.

The responsibility of the living to:

Praise.

He says:

"Surely it was for my peace that I had such great bitterness."

That is one of the chapter's great paradoxes.

Bitterness became:

Peace.

Suffering became:

Instruction.

Illness became:

Humility.

Tears became:

Testimony.

Then Hezekiah declares:

“You have cast all my sins behind Your back.”

The chapter therefore moves beyond:

Physical healing.

It reaches toward:

Spiritual gratitude.

Forgiveness.

Renewed worship.

Hezekiah understands that added years are not merely:

More time.

They are:

More opportunity to praise God.

The chapter ends with:

A practical treatment.

A poultice of figs.

And:

A confirming sign.

Isaiah 38 therefore beautifully holds together:

Prayer.

Divine intervention.

Human means.

Sign.

Worship.

The central truth of Isaiah 38 is:

When Hezekiah faced death, he turned to the Lord in prayer and tears; God heard him, extended his life, confirmed His promise with a miraculous sign, and transformed a season of bitter suffering into deeper humility, gratitude, praise, and renewed awareness of divine forgiveness.

I. HEZEKIAH BECOMES MORTALLY ILL

Isaiah 38:1 — “Put Your House in Order”

“In those days King Hezekiah became sick to the point of death. Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him and said, ‘This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, for you will die and not live.’”

The message is:

Direct.

Serious.

Final-sounding.

Hezekiah is told to prepare:

His household.

His affairs.

His heart.

Death has entered:

The palace.

Cross References

2 Kings 20:1

The parallel account records Hezekiah becoming deathly ill and Isaiah telling him to put his house in order because death was near.

2 Chronicles 32:24

Hezekiah became seriously ill and prayed to the Lord, who answered him and gave him a sign.

Ecclesiastes 8:8

No human being has complete control over the day of death or power to hold back mortality by his own strength.

Spiritual Principle

Kings and common people share one unavoidable reality:

Mortality.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Power can organize a kingdom.

It cannot command death to wait.

II. HEZEKIAH TURNS TO THE WALL AND PRAYS

Isaiah 38:2 — Prayer in Private Anguish

“Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord.”

This is intimate.

Hezekiah turns:

Away from people.

Toward:

God.

Perhaps the wall gave him:

Privacy.

Focus.

Space for:

Prayer.

Cross References

2 Kings 20:2

Hezekiah turns his face to the wall and prays when he receives the message concerning his death.

1 Kings 8:22

Solomon stood before the Lord and prayed, showing the long biblical pattern of bringing urgent matters directly before God.

James 5:13

Those who suffer are instructed to pray, making prayer the proper response to distress.

Spiritual Principle

Prayer may begin when there is:

Nothing else to say to people.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When you reach the wall, turn it into a place of prayer.

III. HEZEKIAH WEEPS BITTERLY

Isaiah 38:3 — Faithfulness, Memory, and Tears

“He said, ‘Remember now, O Lord, I beg You, how I have walked before You faithfully and with a sincere heart, and how I have done what is good in Your sight.’ And Hezekiah wept bitterly.”

Hezekiah appeals to:

His covenant faithfulness.

His sincerity.

His past walk with God.

This should not be understood as:

Claiming sinless perfection.

Rather, Hezekiah is appealing honestly to the general direction of:

His life.

Then:

He weeps.

Cross References

2 Kings 20:3

The parallel account records Hezekiah reminding God of his faithful walk and then weeping deeply.

Nehemiah 13:14

Nehemiah similarly asks God to remember his faithful service and acts done for God’s house.

Psalms 116:9

The psalmist celebrates walking before the Lord in the land of the living.

Spiritual Principle

Tears are not:

The opposite of faith.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Faith can weep and still pray.

IV. THE WORD OF THE LORD COMES AGAIN

Isaiah 38:4 — God Is Not Silent

“Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying,”

The previous word was:

Death.

Now another word comes.

God’s communication continues.

Cross References

2 Kings 20:4

Before Isaiah had gone far, God gave him another message for Hezekiah.

Isaiah 37:6

In the previous crisis, God had also spoken through Isaiah with a direct answer to Hezekiah’s fear.

Jeremiah 1:4

The prophetic pattern repeatedly begins with the Word of the Lord coming to His chosen messenger.

Spiritual Principle

The first word you hear in a crisis may not be:

The last word God speaks.

V. GOD HEARS PRAYER AND SEES TEARS

Isaiah 38:5 — Fifteen More Years

“Go and tell Hezekiah, This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life.”

What a tender response.

God says:

I heard.

I saw.

Prayer:

Heard.

Tears:

Seen.

Life:

Extended.

Cross References

2 Kings 20:5

God tells Hezekiah that He has heard his prayer, seen his tears, and will heal him.

2 Chronicles 32:24

Hezekiah prayed during his illness, and the Lord answered and gave him a confirming sign.

Psalms 6:9

The psalmist expresses confidence that the Lord has heard his cry for mercy and received his prayer.

Spiritual Principle

God is aware of both:

The prayer you speak.

The grief you cannot fully express.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Tears are silent words God knows how to read.

VI. HEALING AND NATIONAL DELIVERANCE ARE BOTH PROMISED

Isaiah 38:6 — God Defends the King and the City

“I will also deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city.”

God’s promise reaches:

Hezekiah.

Jerusalem.

The personal and national crisis are connected.

Cross References

2 Kings 20:6

God promises to extend Hezekiah's life and protect Jerusalem from Assyria.

Isaiah 37:35

God had already declared that He would defend and save Jerusalem for His own sake.

2 Kings 19:34

The parallel account records God's promise to defend Jerusalem according to His covenant purpose.

Spiritual Principle

God can address:

More than one crisis at once.

VII. GOD GIVES A SIGN

Isaiah 38:7 — Confirmation of the Promise

“This will be the sign to you from the Lord, that He will do what He has promised:”

The sign is not:

The promise itself.

It confirms:

The promise.

Cross References

2 Kings 20:8

Hezekiah asks what sign will confirm that the Lord will heal him.

2 Kings 20:9

Isaiah offers a sign involving movement of the shadow.

Judges 6:17

Gideon also asks for a sign to confirm that the Lord has truly spoken.

Spiritual Principle

God sometimes gives confirmation to strengthen:

Weak faith.

VIII. THE SHADOW MOVES BACKWARD

Isaiah 38:8 — God Demonstrates His Power

“I will cause the shadow on the sundial of Ahaz to go back ten steps.’ So the sun’s shadow went back ten steps on the dial it had already descended.”

The sign is:

Extraordinary.

The normal movement of the shadow is:

Reversed.

Whatever precise mechanism God used, the point of the text is:

The sign was miraculous.

And unmistakable to:

Hezekiah.

Cross References

2 Kings 20:9

Hezekiah is offered a sign involving the movement of the shadow.

2 Kings 20:11

Isaiah calls upon the Lord, and the shadow moves backward as confirmation of the divine promise.

Joshua 10:13

Earlier Scripture also records an extraordinary act involving the sun during God’s intervention for Israel.

Spiritual Principle

The God who governs time and creation can confirm:

His Word.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The shadow may move according to ordinary patterns, but the Lord remains Master over the pattern.

IX. HEZEKIAH WRITES AFTER RECOVERY

Isaiah 38:9 — Suffering Becomes Testimony

“This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after he had been sick and recovered from his illness:”

Hezekiah does not merely:

Recover.

He reflects.

He writes.

His suffering becomes:

Testimony.

Cross References

2 Chronicles 32:24

Hezekiah’s illness, prayer, and sign are recorded as major events in his reign.

Psalms 102:1

A sufferer pours out his complaint before the Lord, showing that suffering can become written prayer.

Habakkuk 3:1

Prophetic prayer was preserved in written form so later generations could learn from it.

Spiritual Principle

What God teaches you in suffering may become:

Help for others.

X. HEZEKIAH FEELS DEPRIVED OF HIS YEARS

Isaiah 38:10 — Death in the Prime of Life

“I said, In the prime of my life I must go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the rest of my years.”

Hezekiah feels:

Life cut short.

Years taken.

Future lost.

Cross References

Psalm 102:24

The psalmist asks God not to take him away in the middle of his days.

Psalm 88:3

A suffering soul feels close to death and overwhelmed by the grave.

Job 17:16

Job describes hope descending toward the dust and the grave.

Spiritual Principle

Mortality can make:

Future plans.

Feel suddenly fragile.

XI. HEZEKIAH GRIEVES LOSING LIFE AMONG THE LIVING

Isaiah 38:11 — Separation from the Living World

“I said, I will not see the Lord in the land of the living; I will look on mankind no more among the inhabitants of the world.”

Hezekiah’s Old Testament perspective emphasizes:

Life among God’s covenant people.

Public worship.

The visible world.

His concern should not be forced into a complete statement about:

The afterlife.

Rather, he grieves losing his place among:

The living.

Cross References

Psalm 27:13

The psalmist expects to see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living.

Psalm 116:9

The rescued worshiper rejoices in continuing to walk before the Lord among the living.

Psalm 142:5

God is confessed as refuge and portion in the land of the living.

Spiritual Principle

Life is a gift because it gives opportunity to:

Know.

Serve.

Worship.

XII. LIFE IS LIKE A TENT AND A WEAVER'S WORK

Isaiah 38:12 — Human Life Is Temporary

“My dwelling is pulled up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent. I have rolled up my life like a weaver; He cuts me off from the loom. Day and night You bring me to an end.”

Two images:

Tent.

Weaving.

A tent can be:

Taken down.

A woven piece can be:

Cut from the loom.

Human life feels:

Fragile.

Temporary.

Cross References

Job 7:6

Job says his days move quickly like a weaver's shuttle.

2 Corinthians 5:1

Paul later compares the mortal body to an earthly tent that will one day be taken down.

Psalms 90:5

Human life passes quickly like grass that appears and then fades.

Spiritual Principle

Life is not:

Permanent possession.

It is:

Entrusted time.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Live carefully because the tent is temporary.

XIII. HEZEKIAH DESCRIBES THE PAIN OF ILLNESS

Isaiah 38:13 — Bones Broken Like by a Lion

"I cried out until morning; like a lion He breaks all my bones. Day and night You bring me to an end."

The suffering feels:

Violent.

Relentless.

Overwhelming.

Hezekiah attributes even this painful season ultimately to:

God's sovereign hand.

Cross References

Psalms 22:14

Severe suffering is described as bones being out of joint and strength melting away.

Lamentations 3:4

The sufferer describes body and bones wasting under affliction.

Job 10:16

Job uses lion imagery to describe the overwhelming severity of suffering under God's providence.

Spiritual Principle

The Bible does not sanitize:

Pain.

XIV. HEZEKIAH MOANS AND LOOKS UPWARD

Isaiah 38:14 — “Be My Security”

“I chirped like a swallow, I moaned like a dove. My eyes grew weak from looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed—be my security!”

His prayer becomes:

Simple.

Almost exhausted.

“Be my security.”

Cross References

Psalms 69:3

The sufferer becomes exhausted from crying and waiting for God.

Isaiah 59:11

Mourning is compared to the sound of bears and doves in deep distress.

Psalms 102:7

The afflicted person experiences loneliness and weakness while remaining awake in sorrow.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes the strongest prayer is:

A short one.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When you cannot explain everything, you can still say:

“Lord, be my security.”

XV. SUFFERING TEACHES HEZEKIAH HUMILITY

Isaiah 38:15 — Walking Humbly After Anguish

“What shall I say? He has spoken to me, and He Himself has done this. I will walk humbly all my years because of this anguish of my soul.”

Hezekiah looks back and sees:

God’s sovereignty.

His response is:

Humility.

Not:

Bitterness.

Cross References

Psalm 39:9

The psalmist submits in silence because he recognizes God’s hand within his experience.

Psalm 119:75

The psalmist acknowledges that God’s judgments are right and that affliction can occur within divine faithfulness.

1 Samuel 3:18

Eli responds to a hard word by acknowledging the Lord’s authority to do what is right in His sight.

Spiritual Principle

Suffering can produce:

Humility.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A healed body is good.

A humbled heart may be an even deeper gift.

XVI. GOD RESTORES LIFE

Isaiah 38:16 — Health Restored

“Lord, by such things people live, and in all these is the life of my spirit. You restored me to health and let me live.”

Hezekiah recognizes:

Life comes from God.

His restored health is not merely:

Medical recovery.

It becomes:

Spiritual realization.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 8:3

Human beings do not live by bread alone but by everything proceeding from the Lord.

Psalms 30:2

The psalmist cries to the Lord and praises Him for healing.

Matthew 4:4

Jesus affirms that true life depends ultimately upon the Word of God, not merely material provision.

Spiritual Principle

Life is sustained by more than:

Physical means.

It rests ultimately in:

God.

XVII. BITTERNESS BECOMES PEACE

Isaiah 38:17 — Love Behind Deliverance

“Surely it was for my peace that I had such great bitterness; but in love You have delivered my soul from the pit of destruction; for You have cast all my sins behind Your back.”

This is one of the chapter's greatest verses.

Hezekiah interprets:

Bitterness.

Through:

Peace.

And:

Love.

Then he celebrates:

Forgiveness.

Cross References

Psalms 103:12

God removes transgressions from His people as far as east is from west.

Micah 7:19

God casts sins into the depths of the sea in a picture of complete forgiveness.

Psalms 30:3

The Lord brings His servant up from the grave and restores life from the brink of death.

Spiritual Principle

God can bring:

Peace.

Through:

Bitterness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Some of the bitterest chapters of life may eventually be read through the lens of God's love.

XVIII. “YOU HAVE CAST ALL MY SINS BEHIND YOUR BACK”

This is beautiful forgiveness imagery.

God places sin:

Behind.

Not:

Before His face.

The verse communicates:

Removal.

Forgiveness.

No longer held against the forgiven person.

Spiritual Principle

Forgiveness does not merely:

Reduce guilt.

It removes guilt before God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When God puts forgiven sin behind His back, do not keep dragging it back in front of your face.

XIX. THE GRAVE DOES NOT PRAISE AS THE LIVING DO

Isaiah 38:18 — Hezekiah's Old Testament Perspective

“For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.”

Hezekiah emphasizes:

Public praise among the living.

This should not be treated as a denial of all conscious existence beyond death.

The fuller revelation of Scripture develops:

Resurrection.

Presence with God.

Eternal life.

Here Hezekiah is expressing the Old Testament lament that death removes a person from:

Earthly worship.

Public testimony.

Family instruction.

Cross References

Psalms 6:5

The psalmist asks how he can publicly remember and praise God from the grave.

Psalms 115:17

Those who descend into silence no longer participate in earthly public praise.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

People are urged to work faithfully while alive because earthly opportunities end at death.

Spiritual Principle

Life contains opportunities that should not be:

Wasted.

XX. THE LIVING PRAISE GOD

Isaiah 38:19 — Tell the Next Generation

“The living, the living—they will praise You, as I do this day; fathers will make Your faithfulness known to their children.”

Healing creates:

Responsibility.

Hezekiah has more years.

What should he do with them?

Praise.

Teach.

Tell the next generation.

Cross References

Psalms 145:4

One generation is called to praise God's works to another and declare His mighty acts.

Deuteronomy 6:7

Parents are commanded to teach God's words diligently to their children throughout daily life.

Psalms 71:18

The psalmist asks for continued life so he can declare God's strength and power to the next generation.

Spiritual Principle

Extended life should become:

Extended testimony.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

If God gives you more days, give those days a purpose.

XXI. THE LORD WAS READY TO SAVE

Isaiah 38:20 — Healing Becomes Worship

“The Lord was ready to save me, so we will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our lives in the house of the Lord.”

Hezekiah’s response to healing is:

Worship.

His added years will include:

Songs.

Temple.

Praise.

Cross References

Psalms 27:4

David longs to dwell in the Lord’s house and gaze upon His beauty.

Psalms 150:4

God is praised with instruments and joyful music.

Psalms 116:19

The psalmist praises the Lord in the courts of His house.

Spiritual Principle

Deliverance should produce:

Worship.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A healed life should become a praising life.

XXII. THE FIG POULTICE IS APPLIED

Isaiah 38:21 — God Uses Means

“Now Isaiah had said, ‘Prepare a poultice of figs, and apply it to the boil, and he will recover.’”

This is important.

God had promised:

Healing.

Yet He also uses:

A practical treatment.

Prayer and means are not:

Enemies.

Cross References

2 Kings 20:7

Isaiah instructs that a fig poultice be applied, and Hezekiah recovers.

James 5:14

The sick are instructed to seek prayer from church elders with accompanying anointing in the Lord’s name.

2 Chronicles 32:24

Hezekiah’s illness and recovery remain ultimately connected to God’s answer.

Spiritual Principle

Trusting God does not require:

Rejecting ordinary means.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Pray to God and use the means He providentially supplies.

XXIII. HEZEKIAH ASKS FOR A SIGN

Isaiah 38:22 — Assurance Concerning Worship

“And Hezekiah had asked, ‘What is the sign that I will go up to the house of the Lord?’”

Hezekiah's desired destination after healing is:

The house of the Lord.

He wants:

Confirmation.

Cross References

2 Kings 20:8

Hezekiah asks for a sign that the Lord will heal him and allow him to return to worship.

Judges 6:39

Gideon asks God for additional confirmation during a moment of weakness and uncertainty.

John 20:25

Thomas seeks visible confirmation before believing the report of Christ's resurrection, illustrating the human struggle for assurance.

Spiritual Principle

The desired outcome of healing should include:

Renewed worship.

XXIV. TEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ISAIAH

38

1. Mortality Comes Even to the Faithful

Principle:

Faith does not make us immune to sickness or death.

2. Prayer Is the Right Response to Distress

Principle:

When life closes in, turn toward God.

3. God Sees Tears

Principle:

Human grief is visible to heaven.

4. God Can Answer Beyond Expectation

Principle:

Hezekiah asked for mercy and received fifteen additional years.

5. Signs Confirm God's Word

Principle:

The backward-moving shadow strengthened confidence in the promise.

6. Suffering Can Produce Humility

Principle:

Hezekiah determined to walk humbly after his anguish.

7. Bitterness Can Become Peace

Principle:

God can use painful experiences for deeper spiritual good.

8. God Forgives Completely

Principle:

Forgiven sins are pictured as cast behind God's back.

9. Life Is for Praise

Principle:

Added years should become added worship.

10. Faith and Practical Means Can Work Together

Principle:

The Lord promised healing and also used a fig poultice.

XXV. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT SICKNESS

Sickness can reach:

Kings.

Faithful people.

Praying people.

Spiritual Principle

Illness is not automatic proof of:

Personal unfaithfulness.

XXVI. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT PRAYER

Hezekiah:

Turns.

Prays.

Weeps.

God:

Hears.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Prayer is not merely for national crises like Isaiah 37.

It belongs in personal pain too.

XXVII. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT TEARS

God says:

“I have seen your tears.”

Spiritual Principle

Tears do not need:

Translation.

Before God.

XXVIII. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT GOD'S COMPASSION

God responds to:

Hezekiah's distress.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who rules nations also notices one sick man's tears.

XXIX. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT TIME

Hezekiah receives:

Fifteen years.

Time becomes:

Gift.

Spiritual Principle

Every added day should be treated as:

Stewardship.

XXX. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT SIGNS

The sign serves:

God's promise.

It does not replace:

God's Word.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Signs are safest when they confirm revelation rather than become substitutes for revelation.

XXXI. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT SUFFERING

Hezekiah describes:

Anguish.

Pain.

Weakness.

But later sees:

Purpose.

Spiritual Principle

We often understand suffering more clearly:

After.

Than:

During.

XXXII. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT HUMILITY

Hezekiah says:

“I will walk humbly.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A crisis should leave us softer before God, not merely relieved.

XXXIII. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT FORGIVENESS

God casts:

Sins.

Behind His back.

Spiritual Principle

Healing of the body is temporary if the soul remains:

Unforgiven.

XXXIV. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT PRAISE

Hezekiah wants:

More life.

Then recognizes:

Life is for praise.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The right response to spared life is surrendered worship.

XXXV. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT GENERATIONS

Fathers should make:

God's faithfulness.

Known to:

Children.

Spiritual Principle

Testimony becomes inheritance when passed to the next generation.

XXXVI. WHAT ISAIAH 38 TEACHES ABOUT MEDICAL MEANS

The fig poultice is used.

Spiritual Principle

God's sovereignty and ordinary treatment are compatible.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God may heal miraculously, providentially, medically, or through combinations of means He chooses.

XXXVII. “PUT YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER”

This command deserves attention.

Death should produce:

Preparation.

Spiritual Principle

Wise people live prepared to:

Meet God.

Leave responsibilities in order.

Value relationships properly.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not wait for a death sentence before putting spiritual and practical matters in order.

XXXVIII. TURNING TO THE WALL

The wall removes:

Distractions.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes faith needs:

A private place.

XXXIX. THE BITTER WEEPING KING

Hezekiah is not too:

Powerful.

Masculine.

Important.

To:

Cry.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Strong faith does not require pretending pain does not hurt.

XL. “I HAVE HEARD”

Prayer reached:

Heaven.

Spiritual Principle

God’s silence should never automatically be interpreted as:

God not hearing.

XLI. “I HAVE SEEN”

The Lord saw:

Tears.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

There are prayers God sees before we can properly say them.

XLII. FIFTEEN YEARS

Specific grace.

Specific time.

Spiritual Principle

God knows the exact number of days:

He gives.

XLIII. THE SHADOW GOES BACK

God gives an unmistakable sign.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Time moves forward for us, but time itself remains under God’s authority.

XLIV. WRITING AFTER SUFFERING

Hezekiah records:

What happened.

Spiritual Principle

Do not waste the lessons of recovery by:

Forgetting them.

XLV. THE PRIME OF LIFE

Hezekiah feels death came:

Too early.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Our timetable and God's sovereignty do not always feel alike.

XLVI. THE SHEPHERD'S TENT

A tent is:

Useful.

Temporary.

Spiritual Principle

Human life is a dwelling:

For a season.

XLVII. THE WEAVER'S LOOM

Life is:

Woven.

Then:

Cut.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

We see threads.

God sees the whole pattern.

XLVIII. THE LION-LIKE PAIN

Hezekiah's suffering is:

Severe.

Spiritual Principle

Scripture gives believers permission to describe pain:

Honestly.

XLIX. “BE MY SECURITY”

A beautiful short prayer.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When everything else feels insecure, ask God not merely for security—but to be your security.

L. “HE HIMSELF HAS DONE THIS”

Hezekiah sees:

God's sovereignty.

Spiritual Principle

Recognizing God's sovereignty should lead toward:

Humility.

Not:

Fatalism.

LI. “BY SUCH THINGS PEOPLE LIVE”

Suffering taught:

Life's dependence.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Some truths become more vivid when suffering moves them from doctrine into experience.

LII. BITTERNESS FOR PEACE

This is:

Paradox.

Spiritual Principle

God can use what felt against us to accomplish something:

For us.

LIII. “IN LOVE YOU DELIVERED ME”

Hezekiah interprets deliverance through:

Love.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not define God’s love only by whether hardship was prevented.

Sometimes love is revealed in what He brings us through.

LIV. SINS BEHIND GOD’S BACK

What a picture.

Spiritual Principle

Forgiveness means the forgiven person does not stand perpetually beneath:

The old charge.

LV. THE LIVING PRAISE

Hezekiah realizes:

Life equals opportunity.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Every morning you are alive is another day to make God’s faithfulness known.

LVI. FATHERS TEACH CHILDREN

Personal deliverance becomes:

Family testimony.

Spiritual Principle

Do not let the next generation hear only:

What happened.

Tell them:

What God did.

LVII. SONGS ALL OUR DAYS

Healing ends in:

Music.

Worship.

Temple.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Grace deserves more than relief.

It deserves praise.

LVIII. PRAYER AND POULTICE

Prayer:

Spiritual dependence.

Poultice:

Practical means.

Both appear in:

The same story.

Spiritual Principle

Faith does not need to choose between:

God.

And:

Proper means God may use.

LIX. THE SIGN AND THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Hezekiah asks:

Will I worship again?

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The best recovery plan includes returning to faithful worship, not merely returning to normal life.

LX. ISAIAH 37 AND ISAIAH 38 TOGETHER

In Isaiah 37:

Hezekiah spreads:

A threatening letter.

In Isaiah 38:

Hezekiah turns:

His face to the wall.

One crisis is:

National.

The other:

Personal.

In both:

He prays.

Key Truth

The God who hears prayer in national crisis also hears prayer in private sickness.

LXI. SEVEN GREAT CONTRASTS IN ISAIAH 38

- 1. Death Sentence → Extended Life**
- 2. Bitter Tears → Heard Prayer**
- 3. Illness → Healing**
- 4. Fear of the Grave → Praise Among the Living**
- 5. Bitterness → Peace**
- 6. Sin → Forgiveness**
- 7. Suffering → Worship**

Key Truth

God transforms Hezekiah's season of death, fear, anguish, and bitterness into life, humility, forgiveness, praise, and renewed testimony.

LXII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What happened to Hezekiah?

He became sick to the point of death.

Question 2

What did Isaiah tell him?

To put his house in order because he would die.

Question 3

What did Hezekiah do?

He turned his face to the wall and prayed.

Question 4

What else did Hezekiah do?

He wept bitterly.

Question 5

How did God respond?

He said He had heard Hezekiah's prayer and seen his tears.

Question 6

How many years were added to Hezekiah's life?

Fifteen years.

Question 7

What additional promise did God give?

He would defend Hezekiah and Jerusalem from Assyria.

Question 8

What sign did God provide?

The shadow moved backward ten steps on the sundial of Ahaz.

Question 9

What did Hezekiah do after recovering?

He wrote a reflection on his illness and healing.

Question 10

How did Hezekiah describe the nearness of death?

As being deprived of the rest of his years and approaching the gates of the grave.

Question 11

What images did he use for life?

A shepherd's tent and a weaver's work.

Question 12

What simple prayer did he make during distress?

“O Lord, I am oppressed—be my security!”

Question 13

What did suffering produce in him?

Humility.

Question 14

How did he interpret his bitterness afterward?

As something God used for his peace.

Question 15

How did he describe God's forgiveness?

As God casting his sins behind His back.

Question 16

What did Hezekiah say the living should do?

Praise God.

Question 17

What should fathers do?

Tell their children about God's faithfulness.

Question 18

What practical means was used in his healing?

A poultice of figs.

Question 19

What did Hezekiah ask for?

A sign confirming that he would return to the house of the Lord.

Question 20

What is one central message of the chapter?

Prayerful dependence upon God can transform sickness and suffering into deeper humility, testimony, praise, and awareness of His mercy.

LXIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Isaiah 38 asks several searching questions.

Is My House in Order?

Spiritually?

Relationally?

Practically?

Where Do I Turn When I Receive Bad News?

Toward:

Panic?

People?

Or:

Prayer?

Am I Willing to Weep Before God?

Or do I think faith requires hiding:

Grief?

Do I believe God sees:

My tears?

If God gave me fifteen more years, how would I use them?

What would change?

What would matter less?

What would matter more?

Has suffering made me:

Bitter?

Or:

Humble?

Can I look back at a bitter season and see anything God used for:

Peace?

Growth?

Wisdom?

Do I believe God has truly forgiven:

My sins?

Or do I keep placing before myself what He has placed:

Behind His back?

Am I using my life to:

Praise?

What am I teaching the next generation about:

God's faithfulness?

Do I understand that prayer and proper medical means can coexist?

If God restores me, will I return to:

Worship?

Or merely return to:

Routine?

LXIV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“God Hears the Prayer and Sees the Tears”

Hezekiah:

Prayed.

Wept.

God:

Heard.

Saw.

Principle:

Nothing about sincere suffering is invisible to God—not the words, not the tears, not the fear, and not the faith that turns toward Him.

LXV. THE KING WHO COULD NOT COMMAND HIS OWN LIFE

Hezekiah had:

Authority.

But not over:

Death.

Spiritual Principle

Mortality humbles every title.

LXVI. THE WALL BECOMES AN ALTAR

Hezekiah turns:

To the wall.

And prays.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Any place can become a place of prayer when the heart turns fully toward God.

LXVII. TEARS IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

God does not say:

Stop crying.

He says:

I have seen.

Spiritual Principle

Heaven is not embarrassed by human grief.

LXVIII. THE ANSWER COMES QUICKLY

God sends:

Another word.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who can say “prepare” can also say “I have heard.”

LXIX. MORE YEARS, MORE RESPONSIBILITY

Fifteen years are:

Gift.

But also:

Stewardship.

Spiritual Principle

Longer life should mean deeper faithfulness.

LXX. THE GOD OF DAVID

God identifies Himself with:

Covenant faithfulness.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Personal mercy often rests within God’s larger covenant purposes.

LXXI. SHADOW AND PROMISE

The shadow confirms:

The word.

Spiritual Principle

God never needs a sign to make His promise true.

The sign helps:

Hezekiah trust what is already true because God said it.

LXXII. SUFFERING WORTH WRITING ABOUT

Hezekiah writes:

Afterward.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not rush past recovery so quickly that you fail to learn what suffering taught you.

LXXIII. LIFE IN THE PRIME YEARS

Hezekiah expected:

More time.

Spiritual Principle

We often discover how precious ordinary days are only when they seem:

Numbered.

LXXIV. THE TEMPORARY TENT

Our physical life is:

Real.

Valuable.

Temporary.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Temporary does not mean meaningless.

It means:

Use it wisely.

LXXV. THE WEAVER AND THE THREAD

A life can feel:

Cut short.

Spiritual Principle

God remains Lord over beginnings, middles, and endings.

LXXVI. MOANING LIKE A DOVE

Hezekiah's prayer is not polished.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God does not require eloquence from suffering people.

LXXVII. LOOKING UPWARD UNTIL THE EYES GROW WEAK

Hezekiah continues:

Looking.

Spiritual Principle

Weak eyes can still look toward:

A strong God.

LXXVIII. “BE MY SECURITY”

Not:

Give me security.

But:

Be.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The deepest answer to insecurity is not merely changed circumstances but God Himself.

LXXIX. HUMILITY FOR THE REST OF HIS YEARS

Hezekiah wants the experience to change:

His future walk.

Spiritual Principle

A crisis has been spiritually fruitful when it changes how we walk afterward.

LXXX. PEACE THROUGH BITTERNESS

The bitterness was not:

Pleasant.

Yet Hezekiah sees:

Purpose.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can grow peace in soil watered by tears.

LXXXI. LOVE IN DELIVERANCE

Hezekiah says:

“In love You have delivered my soul.”

Spiritual Principle

The final interpretation of God’s rescue is:

Love.

LXXXII. THE FORGIVEN PAST

God casts sins:

Behind.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Forgiveness changes where the past stands in relation to God.

LXXXIII. THE LIVING TELL THE STORY

Hezekiah now has:

A testimony.

Spiritual Principle

Survival becomes meaningful when it turns into:

Witness.

LXXXIV. THE NEXT GENERATION

Faithfulness must be:

Told.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not assume your children know why you trust God.

Tell them.

LXXXV. MUSIC AFTER MOURNING

The chapter moves from:

Weeping.

To:

Songs.

Spiritual Principle

God can put music back into a life that once heard only mourning.

LXXXVI. MEDICINE AND MIRACLE

The shadow:

Miraculous sign.

The figs:

Practical treatment.

Both belong:

Together.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not make unnecessary enemies of prayer, providence, medicine, and miracle.

LXXXVII. THE HOUSE OF THE LORD AS DESTINATION

Hezekiah wants:

To go up to worship.

Spiritual Principle

Restoration finds its proper purpose in renewed fellowship with:

God.

LXXXVIII. EIGHT GREAT MOVEMENTS IN ISAIAH 38

1. Hezekiah Receives a Death Sentence

Mortality confronts the king.

2. Hezekiah Prays and Weeps

Distress becomes prayer.

3. God Hears and Sees

Prayer and tears receive divine attention.

4. Fifteen Years Are Added

Life is extended.

5. The Shadow Goes Backward

God confirms His promise.

6. Hezekiah Reflects on Suffering

Illness becomes theology and testimony.

7. Bitterness Becomes Peace

He recognizes love, humility, and forgiveness.

8. Healing Ends in Worship

The restored king determines to praise God with his remaining days.

Key Truth

Isaiah 38 moves from a sentence of death to answered prayer, from tears to healing, from bitterness to peace, from fear to testimony, and from extended life to renewed worship.

LXXXIX. FINAL APPLICATION

Isaiah Chapter 38 begins with:

A sentence no one wants to hear.

“You will die and not live.”

Hezekiah had survived:

Assyria.

Now he faces:

Sickness.

That teaches us something important.

One answered prayer does not mean:

No more trials.

One victory does not mean:

No more tears.

Faith does not give:

Immunity.

It gives:

A place to turn.

Hezekiah turns:

Toward the wall.

And:

Prays.

Sometimes life brings us to a place where:

The room feels small.

The options feel gone.

The future feels closed.

Hezekiah teaches:

Turn the wall into:

An altar.

Then:

Cry if you need to cry.

Hezekiah:

Wept bitterly.

God did not say:

A king should not cry.

God said:

“I have heard your prayer and seen your tears.”

That means:

The tears mattered.

Not as currency buying a miracle.

But as the honest expression of a heart:

Before God.

Then God gives:

Fifteen years.

That raises a question:

What would you do if God handed you:

Fifteen more years?

Would you:

Love differently?

Pray differently?

Serve differently?

Forgive faster?

Waste less time?

Worship more?

Hezekiah eventually understood:

Added years are not merely:

More life.

They are:

More opportunity.

Then God gives the shadow sign.

The Lord who controls:

The shadow.

Controls:

The clock.

The Lord who controls:

Time.

Controls:

The days of our lives.

Then Hezekiah writes about:

What happened.

His song is brutally honest.

He felt:

Cut off.

Broken.

Oppressed.

Exhausted.

Yet afterward he says:

“Surely it was for my peace that I had such great bitterness.”

He does not call bitterness:

Sweet.

He calls it:

Bitter.

But he sees that God used it:

For peace.

That is mature faith.

Then perhaps the most comforting line:

“You have cast all my sins behind Your back.”

Maybe sickness made Hezekiah think about:

Death.

Death made him think about:

God.

Thinking about God made him think about:

Sin.

And grace answered:

Forgiveness.

Then he realizes:

Life has purpose.

“The living, the living—they will praise You.”

If you woke up today:

Alive.

There is still something to do.

Praise.

Serve.

Love.

Teach.

Tell.

Worship.

Pass the story:

To the next generation.

And notice the chapter ends with:

Figs.

A treatment.

God gives:

A miraculous sign.

And:

A practical means.

The lesson is:

Pray.

Trust.

Seek proper help.

Use appropriate means.

Give God glory through it all.

Then when the crisis has passed:

Do not simply return to:

Normal.

Return to:

Worship.

Hezekiah wanted to go again to:

The house of the Lord.

That is a good ending.

The goal of healing is not merely:

More time.

It is:

More life with God.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that You are Lord over:

Life.

Death.

Time.

Health.

Every day we are given.

Teach us to remember that our lives are:

Gifts.

Help us keep our houses:

In order.

Spiritually.

Relationally.

Practically.

Father, when sickness comes:

Teach us to pray.

When fear comes:

Teach us to turn toward You.

When tears come:

Remind us that You:

See.

Hear.

Know.

Thank You that no tear is hidden from:

Your sight.

Father, if You give us:

More days.

More years.

More opportunities.

Help us use them:

Wisely.

Faithfully.

Humbly.

For Your glory.

When we pass through bitterness:

Do not let bitterness have the final word.

Bring us into:

Peace.

Teach us what suffering can teach.

Soften our hearts.

Deepen our faith.

Make us humble.

Father, thank You for:

Forgiveness.

Thank You that You cast forgiven sin:

Behind Your back.

Help us stop living under guilt You have already removed.

Teach us to walk in:

Grace.

Thank You for every day of life.

Help us use our lives to:

Praise You.

Tell others.

Teach the next generation.

Make Your faithfulness known.

Father, give wisdom concerning:

Medical care.

Practical means.

Prayer.

Trust.

Help us honor You in all of them.

And when You restore us:

Bring us back not merely to:

Routine.

But to:

Worship.

May every added day become:

A song.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Key Verse

**“I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life.” —
Isaiah 38:5**

Central Truth

When Hezekiah faced death, he turned to the Lord with prayer and tears, and God heard him, extended his life, defended Jerusalem, confirmed His promise with a miraculous sign, and used the bitter experience of illness to produce humility, deeper awareness of forgiveness, renewed praise, and a stronger determination to spend the remainder of his life making God's faithfulness known.

Isaiah 38 in One Sentence

Isaiah records Hezekiah's life-threatening illness, tearful prayer, miraculous extension of fifteen years, and confirming sign of the reversed shadow, followed by the king's personal testimony that his bitterness produced humility and peace, God's love rescued him from destruction, his sins were cast behind God's back, and the life restored to him should now be spent praising the Lord and teaching the next generation His faithfulness.