

Doctrine of Bitterness

1. Bitterness is a reaction factor in the early stages of reversionism. It tends to intensify other reversionary factors such as jealousy, boredom, self pity, loneliness, etc.

Isa 38:9 A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after his illness and recovery ...

Isa 38:17 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.

Isa 38:18 For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

2. The Hebrew word for bitterness in verse seventeen is **Marar** and means bitterness but is translated "such anguish" in the NIV.

Isa 38:17 Surely it was for my benefit that I suffered **such anguish**. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.

3. Bitterness is simple anger, vis-a-vis God's perfect plan. I think a case study of Hezekiah will help us better understand the terrible sin of bitterness.

3.1 Hezekiah reigned king of Judah (c. 715 to c. 685 B.C.) a reign of some 30 years. His father, Ahaz, was king before him.

3.2 The Assyrian domination of the fertile crescent valley posed a major international problem for both the northern kingdom, Israel and the southern kingdom, Judah.

3.3 Israel was divided into two kingdoms at the death of Solomon. His son Rehoboam took Judah and Jeroboam took the northern kingdom.

2Ch 10:16 And when all Israel saw that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? and we have none inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: and now, David, see to thine own house. So all Israel went to their tents.

2Ch 10:17 But as for the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

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3.6 Hezekiah began his reign with a series of religious reforms. These reforms might best be described as a "back to the Bible time."

3.6.1 Hezekiah was keenly aware that the captivity of the northern kingdom was caused by idolatry and an overt disobedience to the Word of God.

2Ki 18:9 In King Hezekiah's fourth year, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against Samaria and laid siege to it.

2Ki 18:10 At the end of three years the Assyrians took it. So Samaria was captured in Hezekiah's sixth year, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel.

2Ki 18:11 The king of Assyria deported Israel to Assyria and settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in towns of the Medes.

2Ki 18:12 This happened because they had not obeyed the LORD their God, but had violated his covenant-- all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened to the commands nor carried them out.



3.6.2 Hezekiah accordingly removed idolatry, repaired and cleansed the temple, restored worship and extended Passover invitations to the citizens of Judah and Israel.

3.6.3 Hezekiah was successful in attracting many to Jerusalem. The celebration exceeded all Passover festivals since the time of Solomon.

3.7 Hezekiah also was an outstanding military leader. Anticipating an Assyrian attack on Judah, he fortified Jerusalem.

3.8 By constructing 1,777 foot tunnel from the Siloam pool to a point inside the city's walls he provided a water supply helping to make Jerusalem an impregnable fortification.

3.8.1 With religious and military preparations at its best, Hezekiah assembled his people in the city square and boldly expressed his confidence in God for protection.

Sennacherib Threatens Judah

2Ch 32:3 Hezekiah consulted with his officials and military staff about blocking off the water from the springs outside the city, and they helped him.

2Ch 32:4 A large force of men assembled, and they blocked all the springs and the stream that flowed through the land. "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find plenty of water?" they said.

2Ch 32:5 Then he worked hard repairing all the broken sections of the wall and building towers on it. He built another wall outside that one and reinforced the supporting terraces of the City of David. He also made large numbers of weapons and shields.

2Ch 32:6 He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate and encouraged them with these words:

2Ch 32:7 "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him.

2Ch 32:8 With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.

3.9 King Sennacherib of Assyria, in c. 701 B.C. advanced into the maritime plain west of Jerusalem, conquering numerous cities. He also exacted tribute from Jerusalem and besieged the important city of Lachish.

2Ki 18:13 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.

2Ki 18:14 So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me."

The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

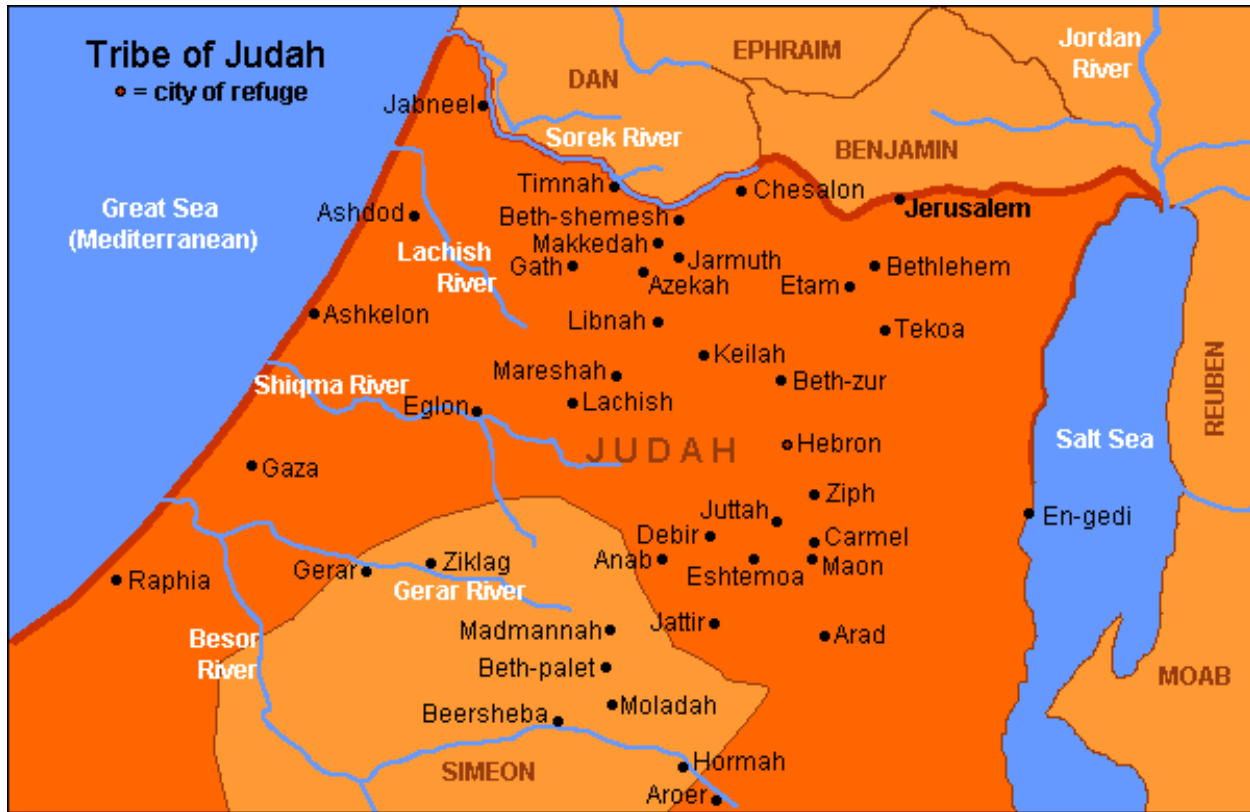
2Ki 18:15 So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace.

2Ki 18:16 At this time Hezekiah king of Judah stripped off the gold with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple of the LORD, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

3.9.1 Emboldened by this and other successes, Sennacherib sent a large army to encircle Jerusalem and demand its complete surrender. Jerusalem, however, refused to capitulate.

3.10 About this time Hezekiah became critically ill.

3.10.1 The prophet Isaiah not only assured the king of Judah that his life would be extended 15 years, but also promised relief for the kingdom from Assyrian pressure.



Hezekiah's Illness

2Ki 20:1 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."

2Ki 20:2 Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD,

2Ki 20:3 "Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

2Ki 20:4 Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him:

2Ki 20:5 "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, "This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the LORD.

2Ki 20:6 I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David."

2Ki 20:7 Then Isaiah said, "Prepare a poultice of figs." They did so and applied it to the boil, and he recovered.

3.11 By letter the Assyrian king sent an ultimatum to Hezekiah. He went to the temple to pray for help. Once more Isaiah sent word assuring Hezekiah that the Assyrians would return the way they came.

2Ki 19:14 And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

3.11.1 The Lord answered Hezekiah through Isaiah the prophet.

2Ki 19:32 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.

2Ki 19:33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

2Ki 19:34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

3.11.2 Subsequently by miraculous intervention the Assyrian army was depleted by 185,000 troops. Sennacherib returned to Nineveh never to threaten Hezekiah again. In c. 681 B.C. Sennacherib was assassinated by two of his sons.

2Ki 19:35 And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

2Ki 19:36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

3.12 After the first crisis in 701 B.C. Hezekiah enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity during his last fifteen years.

3.13 Acclaimed as the leader who had successfully withstood Assyrian aggression, Hezekiah was supported politically and commercially by the surrounding nations. Judah enjoyed a rapid economic recovery.

3.14 Hezekiah was later rebuked for accepting a delegation of Babylonians. Isaiah warned that ultimately the Babylonians would conquer Jerusalem because of his indiscretion. Hezekiah was assured the destruction of Jerusalem would not occur during his lifetime (Isaiah chapter 39).

3.15 Hezekiah died in c. 686. He was succeeded by his son Manasseh a very wicked king.

4. Paul lists bitterness as one of many evil characteristics extant in unbeliever reversionist.

Rom 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Rom 3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

Rom 3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Rom 3:13 Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

Rom 3:14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and "**bitterness**":

Rom 3:15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

Rom 3:16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

Rom 3:17 And the way of peace have they not known:

Rom 3:18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Rom 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

5. We are urged to put away bitterness. Avoiding bitterness can only be accomplished by consistently using the two power options.

Eph 4:31 Let all **bitterness**, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

6. Bitterness is called a sin which will greatly trouble you as well as those in your periphery.

Heb 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of **bitterness** springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

7. Ezekiel in c. 597 B.C. predicted Israel would become bitter toward God when the 5th cycle of discipline fell in c. 586 B.C.

Eze 27:30 And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry **bitterly**, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes:

8. Bitterness motivates frustration and complaining.

Job 7:11 Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the **bitterness** of my soul.

Job 10:1 My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the **bitterness** of my soul.

9. Frustration motivates in turn more bitterness and the person who is frustrated is bitter and thus a "catch 22." Frustration feeds on bitterness and bitterness feeds on frustration.

1Sa 1:9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

1Sa 1:10 And she was in **bitterness** of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

10. Husbands are commanded not to be bitter toward their wives.

Col 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not **bitter** against them.

11. Children who don't turn out proper are a grief to their father and bitterness to their mother.

Pro 17:25 A foolish son is a grief to his father, and **bitterness** to her that bare him.

12. Job was filled with bitterness, yet, clearly Job played a major roll as a witness in the appeal phase of the angelic conflict.

Job 9:18 He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with **bitterness**.