

2 Kings Lesson 20

2 Kings Chapter 20

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Memory verses for this week: *Mat 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.*

Introduction: In chapter 19 last week, we studied about Hezekiah responding to the threats of Rabshakeh. Hezekiah was wise and sought help from the Lord, and God heard those prayers and the angel of the Lord slayed 185,000 of the Assyrian soldiers without the Jews raising a hand.

Chapter 20 presents the final years of the reign of Hezekiah in Judah, his sickness, and God's deliverance. The chapter concludes with his folly in revealing the treasures of the palace to Babylonian visitors.

I. Prophet Isaiah Sent to Hezekiah

2Ki 20:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

In the months after the miraculous defeat of the Assyrian army, Hezekiah was facing a critical illness. God sent word through the prophet Isaiah for him to prepare for death. As we have studied all of these kings, we see them come into power, and then after a few years, they died. Life is like a fleeting vapor that is here for a while and then passes away.

James 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

Jas 4:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Jas 4:15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Heb 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

2Ki 20:2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

2Ki 20:3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in

truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

Once again in facing a major crisis of life, Hezekiah turned to heaven for help. The wall may have been the wall of the Temple adjacent to Hezekiah's palace where he poured out his heart to God in a fervent prayer. Hezekiah reminded God how over the course of his life that he had walked uprightly before God with complete dedication. It should be noted that only a person who had actually so lived could make such a claim before God. It is clear that Hezekiah had so lived his life. He broke down and wept before God. All of us face trials every day. Do we just try to make it on our own, or do we seek God's face like Hezekiah.

Mat 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

*2Ki 20:4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,
2Ki 20:5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.*

Though God does not always act on our prayer on the spot, in this case, He chose to do so. Before Isaiah had reached the door of the palace, God told him to return.

Isaiah was to return to Hezekiah with the news that God had heard his prayer and seen his tears. Recorded herein is clear evidence how the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man moves God to act. Hezekiah was informed he would he would be healed and three days later would be able to go to the Temple to worship. Did Hezekiah have to tell God about what he had done in his life? Of course not. God knew it all. But this example is proof about the power of prayer and how it is an act of faith that God honors.

F. B. Meyer in his commentary said this about Hezekiah.

What a contrast between Hezekiah and the Apostle Paul! To the great Christian hero, death seemed infinitely desirable. He was ready to be offered; it would be gain to depart and be with Christ. But Hezekiah, who had walked before God in truth and with a perfect heart, turned his face to the wall and wept sore as the shadow of death fell upon him. Could anything prove more conclusively how much we owe to the Lord Jesus, who abolished death for those who trust Him?

Who does not know what it is to turn the face to the wall in unutterable anguish? There are moments when we are face to face with a blank wall, and only God can

open a door in it. But He did for Hezekiah and He will for you. Only have faith and reckon on God's faithfulness. Has the shadow gone down on your dial? Has the day of your earnest zeal for God begun to wane? Have the bright promises of the morning become overcast? Then turn to God with true repentance! Let Him see thy tears of heart-sorrow, and He will restore the years that the cankerworm has eaten. It shall be with thee as in the past. The shadow shall return on the dial and the days of thy youth shall be renewed. There is a sense in which our sun never goes down, but leads our days forward, when the Lord becomes our Everlasting Light.

II. God Adds 15 Years to Hezekiah's Life

2Ki 20:6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

2Ki 20:7 And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

God promised, "I will add unto thy days fifteen years." Not only would God add fifteen years to the life of Hezekiah, He further promised to defend Jerusalem from any other attacks from Assyria. Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered".

We are now given insight into the illness of Hezekiah. The word translated as boil (Nyxv shechiyn) can refer to a boil, an inflamed spot, an inflammation, or an eruption. It is apparent that whatever sort this was, it was life threatening. In any event, God directed Isaiah to take a lump of figs and lay it upon Hezekiah's boil.

The word translated as recovered (hyx chayah) most literally means to 'live' and in this context, 'alive.' God directly healed him. He still heals today, and he hears every prayer that goes up to the throne.

2Ki 20:8 And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?

2Ki 20:9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?

In II Kings 19:29, God had promised a sign to Hezekiah of His impending deliverance. Now, Hezekiah asked for a sign confirming God's promise. It may be that Hezekiah did not doubt God as he questioned the word of Isaiah. Shortly before, Isaiah had announced his death and now he announced his recovery.

2Ki 19:29 And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

Hezekiah wanted confirmation of the word of Isaiah. It may be that in Jerusalem there was some sort of sundial device which utilized the steps of a stairway against a wall. It also is possible that the degrees in question may have been on an actual sundial though the term sundial is not in the text. Isaiah offered him the option of having the shadow of the sun go forward or backward ten degrees.

2Ki 20:10 And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

2Ki 20:11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

Hezekiah rightly noted that it was no big deal for the shadow of the sun to go down ten degrees. It did that every day. However, he directed the prophet that the shadow should go backward ten degrees. Isaiah besought God to move the shadow of the sun backward ten degrees and that is exactly what happened.

Isa 38:7 And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken;

Isa 38:8 Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

A powerful miracle was accomplished as a sign for Hezekiah. I believe it was Brother Lloyd Huckaby that told us that this time difference has been noted by scientists without explanation, but we know how it all happened. God set up time, and he can certainly adjust it at his choosing.

2Ki 20:12 At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

2Ki 20:13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

Word of the illness of Hezekiah evidently reached the ears of the new king in Babylon. He sent letters of condolence and a gift to him. It should be noted that though Assyria had been the major 'super power' in the Middle East, a new power was rising in Babylon. Though not as yet a menace to Judah, it would eventually overthrow Assyria and become the dominant power in the Middle East. Also implicit is that the letters and gifts were delivered by emissaries of the king of Babylon. Hezekiah foolishly revealed all of his riches as well as in his kingdom to his Babylonian guests. In so doing, he put the nation of Judah on a future target list for Babylonian conquest.

Matthew Henry said this about the Babylonian Visit

This king of Babylon sent to compliment Hezekiah, and ingratiate himself with

him upon a double account. 1. Upon the account of religion. The Babylonians worshipped the sun, and, perceiving what honour their god had done to Hezekiah, in going back for his sake, they thought themselves obliged to do honour to him likewise. It is good having those our friends whom we perceive to be the favorites of heaven. 2. Upon the account of civil interest. If the king of Babylon was now mediating a revolt from the king of Assyria, it was policy to get Hezekiah into his interest, in answer to whose prayers, and for whose protection, heaven had given that fatal blow to the king of Assyria. He found himself obliged to Hezekiah, and his God, for the weakening of the Assyrian forces, and had reason to think he could not have a more powerful and valuable ally than one that had so good an interest in the upper world.

It was his duty to be civil to them, and receive them with the respect due to ambassadors; but he exceeded, and was courteous to a fault. 1. He was too fond of them. He *hearkened unto them*. Though they were idolaters, yet he became intimate with them, was forward to come into a confederacy with the king their master, and granted them all they came for. He was more open and free than he should have been, and stood not so much upon his guard. What reason had he that was in covenant with God so eagerly to catch at an alliance with a heathen prince, or to value himself at all upon his respectful notice? What honour could this embassy add to one whom God had so highly favored, that he should please himself so much with it?

III. Isaiah Questions King Hezekiah about the Visitors from Babylon

2Ki 20:14 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.

2Ki 20:15 And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

The following context will make it clear that Isaiah was sent by God to confront Hezekiah for his folly. The prophet came and brusquely interrogated Hezekiah as to who his guests were. The prophet asked, "What have they seen in thine house?" The king admitted that he had shown all that he had, perhaps thinking to impress his pagan guests.

2Ki 20:16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.

2Ki 20:17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

2Ki 20:18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Isaiah, the prophet, rebuked Hezekiah for his foolishness. Hezekiah was bluntly told that everything in his palace and the entire wealth of Judah would someday be carried to Babylon. In trying to impress his guests, he had placed himself on

their target list for conquest.

Furthermore, his male offspring would be taken captive as servants and eunuchs. Though more than one-hundred years would pass before this was accomplished, the descendants of Hezekiah and his royal dynasty would someday be servants and eunuchs in the court of Babylon.

The sense of the word translated eunuchs (oyro saw- reece) is unclear. It may refer to men who have been castrated. However, the word also has the sense of being an official in a government. The latter certainly was true in the case of Daniel and his comrades. Whether or not they were castrated is not clear.

2Ki 20:19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?

Hezekiah could only reply that God's Word was good. What else could he say? However, Isaiah replied to him, "Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?"

2Ki 20:20 And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2Ki 20:21 And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

Thus, the completion of the reign of Hezekiah is noted.

"And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead".

The book of II Chronicles, reference is made to the tunnel (conduit) which he made to bring water into Jerusalem for military purposes. That tunnel exists to this day. After the death of Hezekiah, his son Manasseh ascended the throne of Judah.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.