

2 Kings 20 - Annals of Judah: Hezekiah's Life Extended; Babylonian Envoys; Hezekiah Dies

III. The Southern kingdom from the time of the Assyrian captivity to the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 18:1—25:30)

(1) Hezekiah's reign (18:1—20:21)

(D) Hezekiah's request for an extension of life (20:1-11)

(E) Hezekiah foolishly discloses the temple treasures to the Babylonians (20:12-21)

2 Kings 20

(D) Hezekiah's request for an extension of life (20:1-11) (Cf. 2 Chr 32:24-27; Is 38:1-8,21-22)

1 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Set your house in order, for you are going to die and not live.'"

1 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'"

1 During this time, Hezekiah became sick with a fatal illness, so Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, approached him and told him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Put your household in order, because you are dying. You will not survive.'"

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 those days" - the year that Sennacherib threatened Jerusalem (701 BC)

— Hezekiah died 15 years later (686 BC)

2 Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying,

2 Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying,

2 So Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD.

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

- Upon hearing this news, Hezekiah went directly into private prayer to the Lord

— In contrast, Ahaziah had sought help from Baal-zebub when he was ill (Cf. 1:1-2)

3 "Please, LORD, just remember how I have walked before You wholeheartedly and in truth, and have done what is good in Your sight!" And Hezekiah wept profusely.

3 "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

3 "Remember me, LORD," he said, "how I have walked in your presence with integrity, with an undivided heart, and I have accomplished what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept deeply.

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.

- The king reminded God of his faithfulness to Him, his wholehearted devotion, and his good behavior as God's vice-regent (compare Hezekiah's testimony in Is 38:10-20)

— God had promised long life to the godly under the Mosaic Covenant, and that promise was the basis for Hezekiah's appeal and God's answer

— Hezekiah wanted time to establish his moral reforms more firmly among the people

4 And even before Isaiah had left the middle courtyard, the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

4 Before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

4 Before Isaiah had left the middle court, this message from the LORD came to him.

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,

5 "Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David says: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I am going to heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

5 "Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

5 "Return to Hezekiah," he said, "and tell the Commander-in-Chief of my people: 'This is what the LORD, the God of your ancestor David, says: "I've heard your prayer and I've observed your tears. Look! I'm healing you. Three days from now, you'll go visit the LORD's Temple.

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.

- Hezekiah had behaved like a true son of David in the way he reacted to God's first message
- Hezekiah's prayer (what he said) and his tears (how he felt about what he said) moved God to heal him
- From Is 38:17-18 it appears that there was some reason why Hezekiah should be chastised, most probably because of shameful lack of faith under Sennacherib's first invasion, when Hezekiah made allies of the Arabs. [4]
- At this point he was not a notable example of one who trusted and obeyed God. Isaiah announced that in three days the king would be well enough to worship God in the temple.

6 And I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will save you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will protect this city for My own sake and for My servant David's sake."''

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; and I will defend this city for My own sake and for My servant David's sake."''

6 Furthermore, I'll add fifteen years to your life. I'll deliver you and this city from domination by the king of Assyria, and I'll defend this city for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David."''

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.

- God promised to add 15 years to Hezekiah's life (from 701-686 BC) in response to his petition for mercy
- Hezekiah's serious illness (with some kind of boil, v7) may or may not have been directly connected with the invasion by Sennacherib
- The Lord also promised to deliver Hezekiah and Jerusalem from Sennacherib's siege and to defend Jerusalem for His own sake and for David's sake (Cf. 19:34)

7 Then Isaiah said, "Take a cake of figs." And they took *it* and placed *it* on the inflamed spot, and he recovered.

7 Then Isaiah said, "Take a cake of figs." And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.

7 Isaiah said, "Take a fig cake." So some attendants took it, laid it on Hezekiah's boil, and he recovered.

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

- The cake of figs was well known in the ancient world as a means of helping to heal boils and ulcers, but Hezekiah's physicians had not prescribed it, but Isaiah did

8 Now Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What *will* be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I will go up to the house of the LORD on the third day?"

8 Now Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What will be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?"

8 Now Hezekiah had asked Isaiah, "What is to be the sign that the LORD is healing me and that I'll be going up to the LORD's Temple three days from now?"

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?

- For the natural sequence of events read the verses in this order—6,8,11,7

- Hezekiah desired an external or "second" witness to relieve his anxiety and strengthen his faith. God did not object to such a request if the sign were requested to strengthen the faith of the person seeking it.

- Signs were miracles that signified that what God had said He would indeed do. Perhaps the imminent danger that Hezekiah faced from Sennacherib led him to ask for this sign.

9 Isaiah said, "This shall be the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will perform the word that He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten steps or go back ten steps?"

9 Isaiah said, "This shall be the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten steps or go back ten steps?"

9 So Isaiah replied, "This will be your sign from the LORD that the LORD will do what he has promised. Shall the shadow go forward ten steps or go back ten steps?"

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?

- God let the king choose whether the shadow would go forward, as it normally would, or backward

— Ahaz's stairway (v11) was evidently a stairway King Ahaz had built. It may have been constructed as a sundial to measure the time of day or it may have simply been a regular staircase used by God on this occasion to provide the sign Hezekiah had requested.

10 So Hezekiah said, "It is easy for the shadow to decline ten steps; no, but have the shadow turn backward ten steps."

10 So Hezekiah answered, "It is easy for the shadow to decline ten steps; no, but let the shadow turn backward ten steps."

10 Hezekiah answered, "It's an easy thing for a shadow to lengthen ten steps. So let the shadow go backward ten steps."

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.

11 Then Isaiah the prophet called out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow on the stairway back ten steps by which it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.

11 Isaiah the prophet cried to the LORD, and He brought the shadow on the stairway back ten steps by which it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.

11 So Isaiah cried out to the LORD, who brought the shadow back ten steps after it had gone down the stairway of Ahaz.

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.

- God caused the shadow to go back, so He would cause Hezekiah's health to go back to what it had been, so he could live longer

- It is not necessary to insist that God reversed the rotation of the earth to effect this miracle. Some similar miracles were evidently limited in their scope, being local rather than universal (Cf. Ex 10:21-23; Joshua 10:12-13).

The following incident evidently took place shortly after Hezekiah recovered from his illness (Cf. Is 39:1-2).

(E) Hezekiah foolishly discloses the temple treasures to the Babylonians (20:12-21) (Cf. 2 Chr 32:31; Is 39:1-8)

12 At that time **Berodach-baladan**, a son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah, because he heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

12 At that time Berodach-baladan a son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

12 Some time later, Berodach-baladan, the son of King Baladan of Babylon, sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah, because he had heard that Hezekiah had been ill.

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.

- "...Berodach-baladan" - also spelled Merodach-baladan; was twice king of Babylon (722-710, 703-702 BC); the events recorded here took place in 702 BC

— He was dethroned the first time by Sargon about 710 BC, but later regained the throne. The second time he was defeated and dethroned by Sennacherib, along with his ally Elam in his first campaign, 703 BC.

— Merodach sought to make an ally of Hezekiah. He courted Hezekiah's favor by sending a gift when he heard that Hezekiah had become sick. Merodach-Baladan also wanted to ask about the miracle that had occurred in the land (2 Chr 32:31).

— Hezekiah had not yet forsaken his practice of making alliances

13 And Hezekiah listened to them, and showed them all his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the balsam oil, the scented oil, the house of his armor, and everything that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house nor in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.

13 Hezekiah listened to them, and showed them all his treasure house, the silver and the gold and the spices and the precious oil and the house of his armor and all that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

13 Hezekiah listened to the entourage⁶ and showed them his entire treasury, including the silver, gold, and spices, the precious oil, his armory, and everything that was inventoried in his treasuries. There was nothing in his household or in his holdings that Hezekiah did not show them.

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.

- Hezekiah showed his Babylonian visitors the full extent of his wealth and armaments, partly because he concluded his ally should know how much Judah would be able to contribute to their joint anti-Assyrian effort.

— Hezekiah favored Berodach-baladan's and the Chaldeans rather than the more powerful Assyrians

14 Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where have they come to you?" And Hezekiah said, "They have come from a far country, from Babylon."

14 Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where have they come to you?" And Hezekiah said, "They have come from a far country, from Babylon."

14 Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and asked him, "What did these men have to say, and where did they come from?"

Hezekiah replied, "They came from a country far away—from Babylon."

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.

- Hezekiah made no attempt to hide what he had done from Isaiah who had been sent by God to inquire about the visitors

— The king of Judah likely did not think that his desire to form an alliance with Babylon was either an expression of lack of confidence in God or a foolish move politically

15 *Isaiah* said, "What have they seen in your house?" So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen everything that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasuries that I have not shown them."

15 He said, "What have they seen in your house?" So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasuries that I have not shown them."

15 He asked, "What did they see in your household?"

Hezekiah answered, "They have seen everything. In my household there is nothing in my treasuries that I haven't shown them."

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.

- Hezekiah became proud as a result of his healing and wished to impress his Babylonian visitors with his wealth and power (Cf. 2 Chr 32:25,31)

16 Then *Isaiah* said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD:

16 Then *Isaiah* said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD.

16 Then *Isaiah* replied to Hezekiah, "Listen to this message from the LORD:

16 And *Isaiah* said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.

17 'Behold, the days are coming when everything that is in your house, and what your fathers have stored up to this day, will be carried to Babylon; nothing will be left,' says the LORD.

17 'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD.

17 'Watch out! The days are coming when everything that's in your house—everything that your ancestors have saved up right to this day—will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left,' declares the LORD.

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.

18 'And some of your sons who will come from you, whom you will father, will be taken away; and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.'

18 'Some of your sons who shall issue from you, whom you will beget, will be taken away; and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.'

18 'Some of your descendants—your very own seed, whom you will father—will be carried away to become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.'

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 prophesied that Babylon would one day take Judah into captivity, along with all the riches

- Some of the royal family (Hezekiah's children) who had not yet been born would also be taken captive and be made eunuchs in the palace in Babylon. Eunuchs were often high-ranking officials.

19 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good." For he thought, "Is it not good, if there will be peace and security in my days?"

19 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good." For he thought, "Is it not so, if there will be peace and truth in my days?"

19 At this, Hezekiah replied to Isaiah, "What you've spoken from the LORD is good," because he had been thinking, "Why not, as long as there's peace and security in my lifetime...?"

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 ultimately repented of his pride (2 Chr 32:26) and humbly accepted the fact that God's judgment would come on the nation. He was also grateful for the peace and security Judah would enjoy by God's mercy in his lifetime.

20 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might, and how he constructed the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

20 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might, and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

20 Now the rest of Hezekiah's actions, as well as his glorious deeds, including how he constructed the pool and the conduit to bring water into the city, are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, are they not?

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?

- The building of the tunnel from the Gihon spring to the Pool of Siloam was singled out by the writer as one of Hezekiah's more important achievements (Cf. 2 Chr 32:30)
- Hezekiah had this 1,777ft tunnel dug from the oldest source of water, just outside the wall of Jerusalem, under the wall to a reservoir inside the city
- He then covered up the spring so the Assyrian invaders would not discover it and cut off Jerusalem's water supply
- This tunnel, dug from both ends to the middle, was a remarkable engineering feat which still can be seen today

21 So Hezekiah lay down with his fathers, and his son Manasseh became king in his place.

21 So Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and Manasseh his son became king in his place.

21 Hezekiah died, as did his ancestors, and his son Manasseh became king in his place.

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

- Years before Hezekiah died, he made his son Manasseh vice-regent in 697 BC

— The father and son ruled together until Hezekiah died in 686 BC, then Manasseh succeeded Hezekiah and ruled as sole king, the worst in the line of Judah.

— Though Manasseh reigned longer than any other king of Judah or Israel, the record of his reign is brief. Maybe Hezekiah should have died when the time came for him to die.

Three things took place after God extended his life that were foolish acts:

(1) He showed his treasures to Babylon, which will cause great trouble in the future

(2) He begat a son, Manasseh, who was the most wicked of any king

(3) He revealed an arrogance, almost an impudence, in his later years. His heart became filled with pride.

Hezekiah's reign was one of the best in Judah's history because of the king's humility and dependence on God, evidences of which the writer of Kings provided in abundance. Judah declined after his death, however, because most of the subsequent kings were wicked. Judah fell to the Babylonians exactly 100 years after Hezekiah died. The prophet Isaiah ministered during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Is 1:1). Micah ministered during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Micah 1:1). Both 8th century prophets ministered in the Southern Kingdom.

Between the death of Hezekiah and the final fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians there lay precisely a century (687-587 BC). Seldom has a nation experienced so many dramatically sudden reversals of fortune in so relatively short a time. Through the first half of the period a vassal of Assyria, Judah then knew in rapid succession periods of independence and of subjection, first to Egypt then to Babylon, before finally destroying herself in futile rebellion

against the latter. So quickly did these phases follow one another that it was possible for one man, as Jeremiah did, to have witnessed them all.