

2Kings 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.

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

2Kings 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.

As one reads through this chapter, it appears that this Hezekiah's illness occurred in the time between Rabshakeh's first message from the Assyrian king and his letter to Hezekiah as related in the last two chapters.

In my journal on Isaiah, I noted that we could determine that Hezekiah was 39 years old when this happened based on the following verses. (25 + 29 – 15 = 39)

2 Kings 18:1–2 “Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem.”

2 Kings 20:6 “And I will add unto thy days fifteen years....”

In those days Hezekiah developed a terminal illness. The prophet Isaiah came to him and told him that the LORD said to get his house in order because he was going to die.

When Isaiah left, Hezekiah immediately turned his face toward the wall to pray to the LORD. My paraphrase: Please LORD, remember how I have lived before You in truth with a sincere heart and have remained faithful and obedient to You. Then he was overcome with tears.

JFB notes that the phrase “how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart” is probably a reference to the LORD's covenant with David.

*1 Kings 2:1–4 “Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying...And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways...That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, **to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee** (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.”*

This makes sense considering the fact that Hezekiah had no heir.

2Kings 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,

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

Before Isaiah ever even got to the middle court of the palace, the LORD told him to turn around and go back to Hezekiah with another message. The message Isaiah delivered basically said: This is what the LORD, the God of David your father, says. I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I am going to heal you, and on the third day you can present yourself at the temple. I am going to add 15 years to your life, and I am going to deliver this city from the king of Assyria. I am going to defend this city for My own sake and for my servant David's sake.

I think this answer came so quickly because it was in the LORD's plan all along for Hezekiah to have children. Just think—if he had died, it would have ended the line of David. Hezekiah's prayer was rooted in his declaration before God of his righteous standing before the LORD. Subsequent events will show Hezekiah that he needs a dose of humility and a clearer understanding that he is a sinner before the LORD in need of His deliverance and that he is only blessed because of His grace and mercy.

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

2Kings 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?

2Kings 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?

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

Isaiah then instructed that his servants put a lump of figs on the boil (inflammation or ulcer). They did as he instructed, and the king recovered.

Guzik makes a good application: "God can, and often does, bring healing through medical treatments, and apart from an unusual direction from God, medical treatment should never be rejected in the name of faith."

I will add personally that scripture is also clear that we should always seek the LORD first, just as Hezekiah did. We learned that principle when studying the life of king Asa.

2 Chronicles 16:12 "And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians."

Back to the narrative—It seems that Hezekiah questioned Isaiah at the outset and

asked for a sign that the LORD would heal him. Isaiah was ready with an answer. He asked Hezekiah if he wanted the LORD to make the shadow on the sundial go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees. Hezekiah thought about it and decided that it would be more miraculous for the shadow to go backward ten degrees. So Isaiah asked the LORD to take the shadow backward, and He did.

However the LORD chose to do this miracle, the king of Babylon knew about it.

2 Chronicles 32:31 "Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart."

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

As stated above, Hezekiah's sickness and recovery became known in the surrounding nations, at least in Babylon.

Isaiah 39:1 "At that time Merodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for he had heard that he had been sick, and was recovered."

Berodachbaladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah evidently expressing his goodwill toward him. Several commentators note that the king of Babylon's real purpose was to gain an ally in his fight against Assyria.

Hezekiah showed his appreciation by showing the Babylonian delegation all the treasures of his house—precious things, silver, gold, spices, precious ointment and his armory. He showed them everything he had of value. The Chronicler notes that the LORD had blessed him abundantly.

2 Chronicles 32:27–29 "And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels; Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks. Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for God had given him substance very much."

The Chronicler also notes that the king had received gifts from many nations after the LORD delivered them from Assyria.

2 Chronicles 32:23 "And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents

to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth."

This would also support the theory that the king of Babylon considered him a worthy ally.

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.*

Isaiah was evidently in a position to know what happened in the palace. After the visitors left, he came to Hezekiah and questioned him about who these visitors were and where they came from. So Hezekiah told him that they were from a country far away called Babylon. Then Isaiah wanted to know what Hezekiah had shown them. Hezekiah unhesitatingly declared that he showed them everything in "mine" house, all of "my" treasures.

The Chronicler notes that it was in pride that Hezekiah had displayed all his treasures.

2 Chronicles 32:25-26 "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah."

This is a trap we can all fall into so easily. God blesses us with talents and abilities, and when we are successful in endeavors using those God-given gifts, we think we are deserving of any resulting honor and reward.

There is another interesting fact that the Chronicler adds; the LORD used this visit from the Babylonians to prove what was in Hezekiah's heart—not to Him, but to Hezekiah himself.

2 Chronicles 32:31 "Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart."

Hezekiah had experienced so much blessing from the Lord that he needed to be reminded of who he really was without the LORD's blessing upon his life. So God "left him," took His Spirit from him.

We that are true believers today are blessed to know that God's Spirit will never be taken away from us. He is the earnest seal of our salvation, the guarantee of our future in the presence of God in heaven.

Ephesians 1:12–14 “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

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

2Kings 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.

2Kings 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.

The LORD then gave Isaiah another message for Hezekiah. My paraphrase: Listen to My words. The day is coming when all your treasures will be carried off to Babylon; nothing will be left. Your sons, born of your seed, will be taken away and made eunuchs in the palace of Babylon’s king. In other words, your pride will end up causing great sorrow.

This would happen over 100 years later as recorded in Daniel.

*Daniel 1:1–4 “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand.... And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and **of the king’s seed**, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them **to stand in the king’s palace**, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.”*

2Kings 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?**

When I first read this, I thought Hezekiah sounded pretty self-centered. As I thought about it some more (during my study of Isaiah), I changed my mind. God allowed him to be tested, but he didn’t turn into a totally wicked man after living such a righteous life. He just messed up—just like we do sometimes. We need God’s guidance step by step, day by day. Hezekiah acknowledges that God’s judgment is “good.” In that acknowledgement, he admitted that he had sinned before the Lord and that it deserved to be punished. It also included an acknowledgement of God’s grace in promising that he would have sons and the hope that some would escape judgment. It also acknowledged God’s mercy in allowing him to finish his days in peace and stability (from the Hebrew for the word *truth*).

We too should respond to God’s chastisement in our lives with repentance and acknowledgement of God’s justice, grace, and mercy, and love. God reminds us

in His word that He only chastens those He loves.

Deuteronomy 8:5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Hebrews 12:6-7 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

2Kings 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?

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

The historian closes his account of Hezekiah, making special note that he was a mighty king and had made a pool and a conduit (today known as Hezekiah's tunnel) to bring water into Jerusalem. He also notes that more is recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Judah.

Guzik adds this note about Hezekiah's tunnel: "This was an amazing engineering feat. He built an aqueduct to insure fresh water inside the city walls even during sieges. It was more than 650 yards long through solid rock, begun on each end and meeting in the middle. It can still be seen today and it empties into the pool of Siloam."

When Hezekiah died, his son Manasseh became king.

The Chronicler adds a bit more.

2 Chronicles 32:33 "And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death."