

2 KINGS 20:2-3 -- Prayer is Good! Pride is Bad!

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The Biblical Setting:

- In chapter 19, Jerusalem was being threatened by Assyria's King Sennacherib, who had been most successful in capturing all of the northern ten tribes of Israel.
- Sennacherib boasted against the Lord. He sent the Rabshakeh, with a great army, to go to Jerusalem. To taunt them and to boast against them.
- In response, King Hezekiah, went into the house of the Lord. Eliakim and Shebna were sent to Isaiah. Isaiah responded by saying that maybe be that the Lord your God will hear all the words of the Rabshakeh and will rebuke the words of blasphemy and boasting, by delivering Jerusalem.
- Hezekiah prayed and the Lord assured deliverance. Soon thereafter, the angel of the Lord went out and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand.
- Then in chapter 20 we read, In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. The Lord told him that he was going to die and to get his house in order.

Hezekiah's Prayer - 2Ki 20:2 *Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, - He turned his face toward the wall:* This shows how earnest Hezekiah was in his prayer. He directed his prayer in privacy to God, and not to any man. "Turning his face to the wall, thereby both dismissing Isaiah and entering into solitary confinement with God, Hezekiah poured out his heart to the Lord."

2Ki 20:3 *"Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. - Remember now, O LORD:* To our ears, Hezekiah's prayer might almost sound undignified. In it, his focus is on self-justification and his own merits. It is pretty much as if Hezekiah prayed, "LORD, I've been such a good boy and You aren't being fair to me. Remember what a good boy I've been and rescue me."

- But under the Old Covenant, this was a valid principle on which to approach God. Passages like Leviticus 26/Deuteronomy 28 (promise of blessing and retribution) show that under the Old Covenant, blessing and cursing was sent by God on the basis of obedience or disobedience. "If, then" On that principle, David could write in Psalms 15 : *LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart.* ([Psalms 15:1-2](#))
- But under the New Covenant, we are blessed on the principle of faith in Jesus ([Galatians 3:13-14](#)). "*..Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law...that the blessings of Abraham...*Hezekiah's principle of prayer isn't fitting for a Christian today. We pray in the name of Jesus ([John 16:23-24](#)), "*..ask the Father in My name..!*" Not in the name of who we are or what we have done. . The Church bases its pleas on Christ's righteousness."
- ***And Hezekiah wept bitterly:*** Hezekiah lived under the Old Covenant, and at that time there was not a confident assurance of the glory in the life beyond. Instead, *Jesus ...brought life and immortality came to light through the gospel* ([2 Timothy 1:10](#)). Also, under the Old Covenant Hezekiah would have regarded this as evidence that God was very displeased with him.
- ([2 Kings 20:4-7](#)) Isaiah brings God's answer to Hezekiah's prayer. ***I will add to your days fifteen years:*** In response to Hezekiah's prayer, God granted Hezekiah **fifteen years** more. "Hezekiah was granted an added *fifteen years*; since he died c. 686 B.C. This promise can be dated from about the time of the siege of Jerusalem. His recovery was also symbolic of the recovery of Jerusalem."
- Because Hezekiah recovered, was God's word (*You shall die and not live*, [2 Kings 20:1](#)) proved false? No; first, Hezekiah did in fact die - just not as soon as God first announced. Second, when God announces judgment it is almost always an invitation to repent and to receive mercy.
- "Hezekiah, though but a little prince, suddenly found himself a wealthy man, having moreover one thing in his treasury which could not have been discovered among the riches of any other living man, namely, a writ from the Court of Heaven, that he should live fifteen years. . . . **This great prosperity was a great temptation, far more difficult to endure than Rabshakeh's letter, and all the ills which invasion brought upon the land.**"
- ***I have heard your prayer:*** Hezekiah's prayer was important. By all indications, if Hezekiah had not made his passionate prayer, then his life would not have been extended. This is another demonstration of the principle that prayer matters. God gave two gifts to Hezekiah. First, He gave the gift of an extended life. Second, He

gave the gift of knowing he only had fifteen years left. If he were wise, this would still give King Hezekiah the motivation to walk right with God and to set his house in order.

- ***I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David:*** This promise was in accord with the LORD's previous prophecies of deliverance, and dates this chapter as being before God destroyed the Assyrian army ([Isaiah 37:36-37](#)). The connection of the two promises indicates that one would confirm the other. When Hezekiah recovered his health, he could know that God would also deliver him from the Assyrians.
- ***Take a lump of figs:*** Apparently, God used this medical treatment to bring Hezekiah's healing. 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.
- ([2 Kings 20:8-11](#)) God's sign to Hezekiah: the retreating shadow. ***What is the sign that the LORD will heal me:*** Hezekiah wanted a sign, and a sign that would allow him to ***go up to the house of the LORD***. This was because he could not, and would not ***go up to the house of the LORD*** until he was healed, so the two were connected.
- ***This is the sign . . . that the LORD will do this thing which He has spoken:*** God showed even more mercy to Hezekiah. God was under no obligation to give this sign. In fact, God would have been justified in saying, "I said it and you believe it. How dare you not take My word for true?" **But in real love, God gave Hezekiah more than he needed or deserved. God shows the same mercy to us.** It should be enough for God to simply say to us, "I love you." But God did so much to *demonstrate* His love to us ([John 3:16](#), [Romans 5:8](#)).
- ***Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?*** God promised to do something completely miraculous for the confirming sign. He promised to make the shadow on the sundial move *backward* instead of *forward*. This was a wonderfully appropriate sign for Hezekiah. By bringing the shadow of the sundial move backward, it gave *more time* in a day - just as God gave Hezekiah *more time*.

SUMMARY:

- **Set your house in order! - Is your house, my house, in order? Panic or peace?**
- Hezekiah turned toward the wall and prayed! **Would you, would I, have gone to prayer 1st?**
- Remember me! - I have done good! Now, **"in the name of the righteousness of Jesus!!"**
- **I have heard your prayer!** I have seen your tears! The Lord gave him a sign!
- **His heart was lifted up! 2 Chr. 32:24-26 Temptation in success greater than the danger from the letter! Moved by the praise of ungodly men! Oh, may we be more aware of the sin of pride!**
- ·Hezekiah was **godly**; ·He was **victorious**; ·He was **healed**; ·He had **experienced a miracle**; ·He had been **promised a long life**; ·He had **connection to a great prophet**; ·He had **seen a remarkable sign**; ·He was **wealthy**; ·He was **famous**; He was **praised and honored**; ·He was **honored by God**, but, **he sinned greatly after this gift of fifteen more years, and the deliverance of Jerusalem.**
- ***Pride; Ingratitude; Abusing the gifts given to him; He took the gifts and favors to his own honor and gratification of his lusts, his heart was lifted up; Missing opportunity to testify to the Babylonian envoys about the greatness of God and the LORD's blessing on Judah. Instead, he glorified himself.***

PSALM 5!

Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God:

for unto Thee will I pray. My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning,

O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up. (2x)