

# King Hezekiah

## His Life and Lessons

“He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.”  
II Kings 18:5-7

**Suggested Reading:** II Kings 18-20; II Chronicles 29-32; Isaiah 36-39 about Hezekiah, and Isaiah 10 about Sennacherib.

### **Introduction:**

1. We take a one-week break from our verse-by-verse exposition of Romans to learn valuable lessons for life.
2. The Old Testament scriptures contain divinely selected history for our learning (Romans 15:4; I Cor 10:11).
3. The Holy Spirit chose eleven chapters (1% of the Bible) to record the spirit and actions of this man for us.
4. There is much more to be gleaned from Hezekiah than just historical facts and/or entertainment for children.
5. Of all the events in this great king’s life, God has carefully selected the good and bad for valuable learning.
6. Every believer should aspire to conforming their lives to his good deeds and avoiding his weaknesses.

### **EPITAPH** (II Kings 18:3-8; 20:20; II Chron 29:2; 31:20-21; 32:23,27-3,32-33)

- A. He was a great king, better than almost all, for he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.
- B. He is compared favorably to David, which puts him in the very elite company of God’s favorite.
- C. He aggressively corrected religious corruption, even destroying Moses’ brazen serpent. *Nehushtan!*
- D. He trusted in God more completely in the Holy Spirit’s judgment than any other king before or after.
- E. He clave to the LORD ... stuck to Him tightly ... keeping His precepts ... no matter circumstances.
- F. Because of the above, the LORD was with him and prospered him in everything he chose to pursue.
- G. His successes by the LORD’s blessing included his rebellion against Assyria and ruin of Philistia.
- H. God summarized his efforts as doing that which was good and right and truth before Him (31:20).
- I. When he sought his God by worship and His word, he did it with all his heart and prospered (31:21).
- J. His glory increased greatly after his sickness, as many nations brought gifts and presents to him.
- K. His wealth increased greatly, for God gave him substance very much, and he built storage for it all.
- L. He creatively improved Jerusalem’s water supply by a system of canals, passages, and pipes.
- M. God clearly identified the three places where Hezekiah’s acts and goodness were written (32:32).
- N. Far from Ahaz’s burial, he was buried with honor in a chief grave of David’s royal sons (32:33).
- O. The book of Proverbs states that Hezekiah was involved in the production of Solomon’s best (25:1).
- P. Lesson: We should easily recognize that Hezekiah is a man we want to learn more about and follow.

### **HIS ORIGIN** (II Kings 18:1-2; II Chron 29:1)

- A. His father was King Ahaz of Judah, a very wicked king denied a royal burial (II Kgs 16; II Chr 28).
- B. His grandfather was King Jotham of Judah, a good king and better than his father Uzziah (II Chr 27).
- C. His mother was Abijah the daughter of Zechariah, and we do not know any more about her than this.
- D. His name, in usual Jewish fashion, means Jehovah strengthens ... *Hezek* (strength) + *iah* (Jehovah).
- E. The prophets contemporary with Hezekiah are Isaiah (Is 1:1), Hosea (Hos 1:1), and Micah (Mic 1:1).
- F. Lesson: God is able for those who trust and obey Him to break generational cycles of sin (Ezek 18).

### **HIS REFORMATION** (II Chron 29)

- A. Immediately upon becoming king, at the young age of 25, he corrected all religious errors (3,17).
- B. He charged the priests and Levites to clean out the temple and sanctify it for right worship (4-19).
  1. It was his own father who had desecrated Jehovah’s temple and corrupted His worship in Judah.
  2. Look at the young king gathering the priests and Levites in the street and charging them (5-11).
  3. He identified the sins of their fathers, the consequences of judgment, and his goal for a covenant.
  4. By his bold direction and zeal for the LORD, the priests and Levites hurried the matter (12-19).

- C. As soon as the temple was sanctified for worship, he led a great worship service to God (20-36).
  - 1. Notice that we are specifically told that he rose up early to get to church for this service (20)!
  - 2. This whole revival service including a great number of sacrifices was done very suddenly (36)!
  - 3. He made sure sin offerings were made for the kingdom, sanctuary, Judah, and Israel (21,24).
  - 4. He ordered plenty of music and singing according to David's ordinances for gladness (25-30).
  - 5. Note the reverence, starting with the king and including all, of bowing and worshipping (29-30).
  - 6. Hezekiah told the people to sacrifice, and there were more than could be rightly offered (31-35).
  - 7. So Hezekiah quickly repaired and sanctified the temple for worship according to Moses (35).
  - 8. Hezekiah and the people rejoiced that God had spread a revival in the nation's citizens (36).
- D. Lesson: Boldness and zeal, at any age, in the things of the Lord is good, and God will bless it.

### **HIS PASSOVER** (II Chron 30)

- A. After repairing and sanctifying the temple, he held the greatest Passover since Solomon (26).
- B. Hezekiah with those at the dedication service planned to restore the Passover immediately (1-5).
  - 1. Passover was to be kept the first month ... but they could not do so for the lack of sanctified priests and for insufficient time to gather the whole church ... and they could not wait a year!
  - 2. Note very carefully that he took counsel regarding this matter; it was not like David's ox cart!
  - 3. Isaiah had been a prophet in Judah for his three predecessors and was well known to Hezekiah.
  - 4. Lesson: Zeal must be guided in good things (Gal 4:18), and counsel must be sought (Pr 15:22).
  - 5. Lesson: God is merciful when there is good reason (Matt 12:3-4) and good hearts (II Chr 15:17).
  - 6. The zeal of this man was so great that he extended the invitation to all twelve tribes of Israel!
  - 7. The Passover had been long neglected, but Hezekiah rejoiced to restore ancient landmarks!
- C. The zeal and courage of this man was so great that He invited all of Israel to the Passover (6-11).
  - 1. Look at the young man's bold proclamation about the Passover to the enemy tribes of Israel!
  - 2. He was rejected by the carnal Christians throughout pagan Israel, which led to their ruin (10).
  - 3. But there were many of the tribes of Israel that repented and followed this zealot's lead (11).
  - 4. Lesson: Who cares if carnal Christians mock the ancient landmarks and old paths of Jehovah!
  - 5. Lesson: When a good example of godliness and truth exists, it brings the 7000 out of hiding!
- D. When men obey the commandments of God, He will do a work in their hearts, in that order (12).
  - 1. This was not some new religious innovation to draw crowds, but according to scripture alone.
  - 2. Revival is God's work, for he must awaken sleeping saints, but it follows zealous reformation.
- E. A very great congregation gathered in Jerusalem for the greatest of Passover celebrations (13-20).
  - 1. This crowd, feeding on Hezekiah's zeal, added reformation by destroying false worship (14).
  - 2. Due to the backslidden state of Israel and shortness of time, many were not sanctified (17-18).
  - 3. Hezekiah prayed for all of them that had properly prepared their hearts for worship (18-19).
  - 4. God accepted Hezekiah's prayer and forgave the people for altering the due order (20; Ps 41:4).
  - 5. Given the Spirit's note about Hezekiah seeking counsel (2), we may assume he did here as well.
- F. They kept this unusual Passover for fourteen days instead of just seven, showing great zeal (21-26).
  - 1. Note the great gladness of revival and acceptable worship, though lasting fourteen days (21,23).
  - 2. Note the encouragement by Hezekiah for the preachers of God's word to the people (22; 31:4).
  - 3. Hezekiah and the princes provided means for the people to eat and worship fourteen days (24).
  - 4. When people are sincere about serving God, they will rejoice with great joy to worship (25-26).
  - 5. When people are sincere about serving God, their prayers will ascend to God's throne (27).

### **HIS CONTINUATION** (II Chron 31)

- A. The effect of this Passover was to provoke great zeal in the people for the elimination of idolatry (1).
- B. He gave himself and ordered the people in Jerusalem to give to encourage God's preachers (2-4).
- C. The people gave so much from their revived zeal that the abundance piled up without storage (5-10).
- D. Hezekiah commanded storage to be built and ordered portions to be distributed to the priests (11-19).

## **HIS TEMPTATION BY ASSYRIA** (II Kings 18-19; II Chron 32; Isaiah 36-37; also Isaiah 10)

- A. Lesson: Obedience does not guarantee a lack of trials. Consider Job, David, Jesus, Paul, and others.
- B. In Hezekiah's fourteenth year, King Sennacherib of Assyria came into Judah (18:13; 32:1; 36:1).
- C. Consider the possible fear, perplexity, and turmoil caused by his early successes against Judah.
1. His empire did rule the known world, and he came with a great force under the king's direction.
  2. His predecessor, Shalmaneser, had besieged Samaria and taken it eight years earlier (18:9-12).
  3. Note the incriminating evidence against Israel that was confirmed to Hezekiah (18:12; 30:10).
  4. Lesson: No matter what happens to others, even if close, God's power still stands for saints.
- D. We choose to understand Hezekiah's submission and gift as a weakness before trusting the LORD.
1. Since we find no criticism from the Lord, we look to put it in the best possible light (18:13-16).
  2. In the account of Chronicles, we read of Hezekiah's defensive measures and great faith (32:1-8).
  3. While there could be two different approaches of Sennacherib, the context indicates otherwise.
  4. Hezekiah chose weakly (and costly) ... *at that time* (18:16) ... before repenting and trusting God.
  5. Rabshakeh's first questions to Judah were about Hezekiah's intent to fight (18:19-20; 32:10).
  6. Initial refusal and then repentance is superior to initial agreement and refusal (Matt 21:28-31).
  7. We could also suggest the possibility of buying Sennacherib off for time to prepare his defenses.
  8. Lesson: The Lord is able and will actually bring severe tests to try our faith in great difficulties.
- E. Rabshakeh, the spokesman for Sennacherib, ridiculed the Jews and blasphemed their God (18:1-37).
1. Sennacherib remained in a siege of Lachish, a city about 20 miles south of Jerusalem (32:9).
  2. The visible evidence confirmed Rabshakeh ... other nations, Israel, and Judah's fenced cities.
  3. He mocked Judah in the Jews' language in blasphemous and derogatory speech to intimidate.
  4. The Jewish rulers, including Hezekiah, rent their clothes and covered themselves with sackcloth.
  5. Did Rabshakeh have a vision from God telling Sennacherib or him to take Jerusalem (18:25)?
    - a. God could easily have given him such a vision, but he was a liar and a trained propagandist.
    - b. God gave Isaiah such a vision (Is 10:5-19), but it also mocked Assyria and prophesied ruin.
    - c. The words could also be his typical approach to a city or nation to undermine religious faith.
    - d. Tradition from Josephus indicates Alexander had such a vision before leaving Macedonia.
- F. Hezekiah seeks God's deliverance by requesting Isaiah the prophet to pray for them (19:1-5).
1. Though prepared to defend Jerusalem, they lost heart at the sign and words of power (19:3).
  2. It is good to have great men of God pray for you ... think Noah, Job, Moses, Samuel, and Daniel.
  3. God's short answer from Isaiah to Hezekiah was very comforting and very prophetic (19:6-7).
- G. Rabshakeh returned to Sennacherib, who had moved to Libnah and received the rumor (19:8-9).
1. The Ethiopians coming posed a greater threat than the Jews in Jerusalem, so he sent a letter.
  2. The letter had the same blasphemous ridicule of Jehovah and the Jews as before (19:10-13).
- H. Now Hezekiah himself prayed in the temple of the LORD about this latest threat (19:14-19).
1. He spread the letter before the Lord in that signal gesture that has been recalled countless times.
  2. While having great men of God pray for you may help, you may also go to God yourself.
  3. Lesson: Never forget the power of fervent and righteous praying ... it can avail much (Jas 5:16).
  4. Lesson: Never forget the power of reasoning in prayer about the LORD's jealousy and glory.
- I. Hezekiah gets a glorious answer from the LORD through Isaiah mocking the Assyrians (19:20-34)!
1. That night the angel of the LORD killed 185,000 of the Assyrians while sleeping (19:35)!
  2. These were the mighty men and leaders of the Assyrian army, likely including Rabshakeh!
  3. God sent Sennacherib to a worse fate by his sons killing him in the temple of his god (16:36-37)!
  4. Before he got to die by patricide praying to his god, he returned to the capital in shame (32:21).
  5. For further mockery of Sennacherib and God's use of him like a puppet, read Isaiah 10:5-19!
- J. Lesson: God laughs last and laughs best at those who reject Him and disobey Him (Ps 9:16-17).
- K. Lesson: God can deliver in ways you cannot imagine ... without you lifting a finger (Ps 3:6; 27:3)!

## **HIS TEMPTATION BY TERMINAL ILLNESS** (II Kgs 20:1-11; II Chron 32:24; Isaiah 38)

- A. Observe carefully that Hezekiah's second temptation came the same year as the Assyrian temptation.
  - 1. Job was hit by successive bad reports, and Jesus our Lord was successively tempted three ways.
  - 2. While you might maintain faith with one serious threat ... what about two very different ones!
  - 3. He reigned twenty-nine (18:2), which included fifteen (20:6), which brings us to Assyria (18:13).
  - 4. Right after Sennacherib's judgment from God, we read Hezekiah was sick *in those days* (20:1).
  - 5. God's answer to Hezekiah about his illness included promise of deliverance from Assyria (20:6).
- B. Hezekiah's illness was such that he was sick unto death before Isaiah the prophet visited him (20:1).
  - 1. A terminal illness can be quite discouraging! Even without your city and nation being at risk.
  - 2. Isaiah the prophet came with the news from heaven that he would most surely die and not live.
  - 3. When a doctor says you have only days to live it is one thing, but what about God saying so!
  - 4. Lesson: Discouraging news will come in your lifetime, but how you respond means everything!
- C. Hezekiah's faith, which God commended, is not discouraged to despair or anything close (20:2).
  - 1. Even though he was sick unto death and God had declared he would die, he prayed. He prayed!
  - 2. He did not seek to physicians like his ancestor King Asa had done without profit (II Chr 16:12).
  - 3. He went straight to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and help in his time of need (Heb 4:16).
  - 4. Lesson: When things seem hopeless, there is yet hope at the throne of grace of Almighty God.
- D. His short prayer recorded here shows holy reasoning by appeals and fervency by his tears (20:3).
  - 1. It is not sin or pride, when a truly righteous man appeals to his righteousness (Psalm 18:20-26).
  - 2. Nehemiah would follow this holy example many years later with prayers (Neh 5:19; 13:14,22).
  - 3. If you cannot muster honest and sincere tears that prove fervency, then try fasting (Matt 17:21).
  - 4. Lesson: Use the rules for effectual prayer that the Lord declares to us in His precious word.
- E. Hezekiah's written description of his thoughts in his illness and recovery are in Isaiah 38:9-22.
  - 1. During his depressing thoughts, he said, "O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me" (14).
  - 2. Men live by two things ... God's words (and promises) and His power to perform them (16).
  - 3. Holy reasoning in prayer includes reminding God that dead men cannot praise Him (18; Ps 30:9).
  - 4. Holy reasoning in prayer includes telling God what you will do with more years (19; Ps 34:11).
- F. The blessed God of heaven heard his prayer and sent an answer within minutes to Isaiah (20:4-7).
  - 1. God whom you cannot hear or see is easily able to hear your prayers and see your tears (Ps 56:8).
  - 2. God guaranteed Hezekiah another 15 years of life, which took him from 39 to 54 years of age.
  - 3. Lesson: Believe in prayer, from this example, for it is believers that are heard (Matt 21:22).
- G. When Hezekiah requested a sign to confirm such an incredible promise, God gave one (20:8-11).
  - 1. Hezekiah knew that guaranteed years was a very unusual gift and promise from God.
  - 2. He wanted to see the shadow go backward 10 degrees, because going forward was too easy!
  - 3. This wonder would cause the Babylonians to visit Hezekiah to inquire about it (II Chron 32:31).
  - 4. Lesson: Expect and request great things from God, remembering your place (Jas 4:2).

## **HIS TEMPTATION BY PROSPERITY** (II Chron 32:23-31).

- A. One of the greatest temptations is prosperity and praise (Deut 32:15; Prov 27:21; Dan 4:30), and in Hezekiah's case this would have been even more difficult with fifteen additional guaranteed years.
- B. Hezekiah became very great in reputation and very rich in wealth by God and men honoring him, for the combined result of God's three great blessings brought gifts, presents, and great honor (23).
- C. The Holy Spirit described Hezekiah's pride as *not returning the benefit* of God's grace to him (25), which we should do to our parents (I Tim 5:4), but especially to God our Father (II Cor 5:14-15).
- D. This was the same sin of his great-grandfather, King Uzziah, under God's blessings (II Chr 26:16).
- E. By comparing 32:26 with Is 39:3-8 and II Kgs 20:16-19, we see the ambassadors' event as his pride.
  - 1. Isaiah used Hezekiah showing the ambassadors his riches and wealth to illustrate his pride.
  - 2. He could have given God great glory for the three wonders done, instead of showing off riches.
  - 3. Isaiah prophesied to him that his sons would be eunuchs for the king of Babylon in days to come.

- F. The Holy Spirit tells us that God left Hezekiah to expose and reveal the pride in his heart (31).
  - 1. Your heart is more deceitful than you know, and you must pray against it (Jer 17:9; Ps 19:12).
  - 2. It is your spiritual to never think you are capable of standing, when you are not (I Cor 10:12).
- G. Hezekiah humbled himself at Isaiah's rebuke, so God preserved him from the coming evil (20:19).
  - 1. A first reading of Hezekiah's response seems quite cruel and hard toward the generation coming.
  - 2. It rather shows submission to God's will for Judah and his thanksgiving for personal deliverance.
- H. Why did Hezekiah only live to 54 (had only 15 years added to a man 39 years old)? We choose to apply Isaiah 57:1-2 as God removing him to punish Judah (II Chr 33:11; II Kgs 21:10-16).
- I. Lesson: Anything you are and everything you have is a gift from God – stop glorying (I Cor 4:7).
- J. Lesson: If God leaves you to yourself, you are capable of doing anything to reveal your depravity.
- K. Lesson: Pray for God to deliver you from temptation, for you cannot stand (I Cor 10:12; Matt 6:13).
- L. Lesson: Pray like Agur against riches (Prov 30:7-9), and hate the love of money (I Tim 6:6-10).

**Conclusion:**

- 1. Do you understand most everything about Hezekiah and 1% of the Bible? If not, keep reading and studying.
- 2. Who will live a life to earn an epitaph like Hezekiah? The statements about pleasing God are all possible!
- 3. Though Hezekiah broke a family sin tradition (King Ahaz), his son was Judah's worst (King Manasseh).
- 4. Hezekiah was instrumental in gathering some of Solomon's proverbs for inclusion in scripture (Prov 25:1).

**For Further Study:**

- 1. The sermon outline, "Nehushtan!" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/nehushtan.pdf>.
- 2. The sermon outline, "When Things Seem Hopeless," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/when-things-seem-hopeless.pdf>.
- 3. The sermon outline, "Why Bad Things Happen?" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/why-bad-things-happen.pdf>.
- 4. The sermon, "Rules for Effectual Prayer," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/bible-guidelines-for-effectual-prayer.pdf>.
- 5. The sermon, "He Deserves Better than That," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/pdf/he-deserves-better-than-that.pdf>.