

HEZEKIAH: A STUDY IN REVIVAL

If you were to ask me who were the greatest kings of Israel/Judah, I would answer, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Josiah and Jehoshaphat. Today I would like for us to examine the life of one of God's greatest kings, Hezekiah. It is a study of a very human man with human needs. It is a study of victory and defeat. In observation of his life, I would like for us to personalize his winning and losing and make application where we can. Revival means, "to live again" (viva=to live; re=again). In Hezekiah's journey we shall see this perfectly illustrated.

I. Hezekiah Pleases the Lord

Hardly a day goes by when these words of Jesus don't resound in my ears and my heart: *"And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him"* (John 8:29). There is a revealing phrase from Isaiah 2:6, when the prophet of God tells the house of Jacob they are *"...like the Philistines, and they please themselves..."* Paul said that we ought *"...to please God..."* (I Thessalonians 4:1). *"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"* (II Timothy 2:4). If I may tweak Shakespeare, "Oh what a tangled web we weave," when our Lord we do not please!

A. He does right.

II Kings 18: 3: *"And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD according to all that David his father did."* It all starts here; the simple act of doing right brings profound differences in life. In the post-modern era, it has become the "road less traveled by." How much harm can be avoided, how much good can be done if we all would just do the right thing!

B. He does what he can to encourage others to do right.

II Kings 18:4: *"He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan."* God's chosen people had taken a good thing and made an idol of

it. In Numbers 21, Moses was instructed to make a serpent of brass, place it upon a pole and then told the people who were dying from snake bite to look at the serpent and live. It was a visual aid of what God was going to do through Jesus on the cross. Our Lord confirmed it in John 3:14, *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent (of brass) in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."* The people were worshipping the symbol. They went so far as to naming it "Nehushtan" as though it were real. So Hezekiah removed the opportunities to commit idolatry and destroyed the brass serpent that had become an object of worship.

C. He experiences transformation.

We see in II Kings 18:6-7 that there was no king like Hezekiah before or since; he clave unto the Lord and the Lord prospered him in all areas of life. The word "clave" is from the Hebrew word, "dabaq" which means to adhere; abide fast, cleave (fast together), be joined (together), keep (fast), stick. A modern parallel is "superglued." Whenever we get this close to the lord, transformation always takes place. *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord"* (II Corinthians 3:18).

II. Hezekiah Backslides

A. He exchanges the fear of God for the fear of man.

In II Kings 18:14-16 we see the courage of Hezekiah melts under the reports and boasts of the King of Syria. He capitulates by saying, *"...that which thou putteth on me will I bear..."* (II Kings 18:14b). In other words, he would do anything to make peace with this tyrant. How much better it would have been for Hezekiah to return to his early days: that which brought the blessings of God in his life. *"When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him"* (Proverbs 16: 7). Solomon was right when he said, *"...yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him"* (Ecclesiastes 8:12). The Lord Jesus said, *"...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"* (Hebrews 13:5b). Our response should be, *"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me"* (Hebrews 13:6).

B. He listens to the enemy.

Beginning in I Kings 18:18 through the end of the chapter Rabshakeh the representative of King Sennacherib strikes terror in the heart of Judah and King Hezekiah. The sarcastic premise of these words are summarized in this statement, *"...What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?"* (II Kings 18:19b). Words are powerful! In the book of Joshua, Caleb said, *"Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God"* (Joshua 14:8). He was referring to the evil report that the 10 cowardly spies gave of the Promised Land. Those words struck such fear in the hearts of Israel that they failed to enter the land of promise and had to wander as a consequence of caving in to their fears. Let us follow Isaiah's admonition, *"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation"* (Isaiah 12:2).

III. Hezekiah Revives

II Kings 19:15

A. He is transparent.

In II Kings 19:16-19a, Hezekiah pours out his heart to the Lord. This is the best way to get along with the Lord. God knows our state of mind, but He wants us to confess where we are and acknowledge our need of Him.

B. He desires that God would receive the glory.

In II Kings 19:19b Hezekiah requests, *"...that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only."* There is no limit to the blessings of God on one who dedicates himself or herself to giving God the glory, *"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord"* (II Corinthians 10:17).

C. He listens to God.

In II Kings 19:20 -34 we see that Hezekiah listens to the voice of God through His servant Isaiah and bolsters the courage to once again trust in the Lord with all his might. How much better is the Word of the Lord than man's words and opinions! No less than 185,000 of the mightiest warriors on earth had laid siege to Jerusalem, but God said, *"...I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake"* (II Kings 19:34).

Conclusion

Hezekiah and his people see the glory of God. No doubt he followed that admonition, in Psalm 4:8, *"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety."* When Hezekiah and the populace of Jerusalem awoke the next morning they discovered that God sent His angel and killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Revival and salvation had come to Jerusalem. What is bothering you today? Get right with God and watch the Lord give deliverance!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.