

## **HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS**

Wednesday, October 4

Reading: 2 Kings 20:1-11

**2 Kings 20:2** *Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, 3 "Remember, LORD, how I have walked before You faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in Your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.*

The events of chapter 20 are out of chronological order. They take place before Sennacherib's invasion recorded in the previous two chapters. The reason for this is most likely thematic. The destruction of the Assyrian army effectively ends that nation's influence. Assyria is never mentioned again in 2 Kings. Babylon now becomes the focus of the author's world outlook. Thus chapter 20 introduces Babylon into Judah's history.

About the time the Assyrian army begins its assault on the borders of Judah, Hezekiah suddenly gets sick and is told he will die. The king knows of the threat to his nation and pleads that he has been wholly devoted to the Lord. In response, God sends Isaiah back with a message that he will be granted 15 more years of life. God also promises to defend Jerusalem from the coming Assyrian invasion. To confirm this promise, God moves time backward on the palace "sundial" stairs." Isaiah orders the medical treatment of the day (a poultice of figs) be applied to the king's boil and he recovers, as God promised. The book of Isaiah also records these events and records Hezekiah's prayer which goes from the king grieving over being "robbed of the rest of my years" to praise for God's love and forgiveness (Isaiah 38:9-20).

### **POINTS TO PONDER:**

1. "Hezekiah Became Ill." We are not told why this illness occurred. Was it a test of Hezekiah's faith? Was it an attack by Satan? Or was it simply the natural result of living in a fallen world? The Bible doesn't tell us. What we can be sure of is that God was not surprised or caught off guard by it. Whatever comes into our lives God is in control and knows all about it. We can trust Him no matter the outcome. Do you trust in God in the bad times? Do you have the same trust in God when everything is going well?
2. "I Will Add Fifteen Years to Your Life." Though we are not told Hezekiah's chief concern about his impending death, we can be fairly certain the welfare of the nation was a large part of it. With the looming Assyrian threat, Hezekiah wanted to keep the nation on the right path so God would deliver them. Adding fifteen years to his life would thus be a good thing. But sometimes I wonder if it would not have been better for Judah if God had not lengthened Hezekiah's life. If he had died, the incident that put Judah on Babylon's radar would not have happened (More on this tomorrow). Also, Hezekiah's son Manasseh was born during these 15 years. His evil 55-year reign led Judah so deep into sin they could not recover (see 2 Kings 21:1-2; 9). Sometimes God gives us what we ask for even when that answer may not be what is best for us. How do we balance what we want and God's will for us? How can your prayers have a positive or negative outcome for future generations?