

Survey of the Bible part 27 2Kings 20-25

The last time we were together we saw that Hezekiah was consulted by the prophet Isaiah as to what he should do regarding the king of Assyria as that nation was about to come against Judah.

Isaiah brought a word from the Lord that the king of Assyria would be destroyed by the Lord.

2 Kings 19:32-37 ³² "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, "He will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; and he will not come before it with a shield or throw up a siege ramp against it. ³³ "By the way that he came, by the same he will return, and he shall not come to this city," declares the LORD. ³⁴ "For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake." ³⁵ Then it happened that night that the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men rose early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead. ³⁶ So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned *home*, and lived at Nineveh. ³⁷ It came about as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son became king in his place.

It was shortly after this that the Lord sent word to Hezekiah by way of the prophet Isaiah.

2 Kings 20:1 ^{NAU} In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'"

As you can imagine Hezekiah was less than thrilled with the news and begged the Lord to remember his faithfulness to God and allow him to recover from this illness.

The Lord hears his prayer and heals him and gives him 15 additional years to live.

Interestingly enough we are actually told what kind of illness Hezekiah had and it might surprise you that it was not something like small pox or cancer or any other major illness like heart failure, but something as simple as a boil.

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

How is it that Isaiah could say that God would heal him and yet we're told here that it was a cake of figs that allowed Hezekiah to recover?

2 Kings 20:5 ⁵ "Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

God can use whatever means He desires and in this case it was the figs used by God, either literally or as a sign of obedience to God, that allowed Hezekiah to be healed.

But evidently, he wasn't healed immediately, but was rather allowed to simply recover. The word recover, according to verse 7 is the Hebrew word that simply means to live. And so, it would appear that through the implementation of the figs laid on the wound that Hezekiah did not die, but he didn't fully recover. Hezekiah was given further instructions that led to his full recovery.

2 Kings 20:8-10 ⁸ Now Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What will be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?" ⁹ Isaiah said, "This shall be the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten steps or go back ten steps?" ¹⁰ So Hezekiah answered, "It is easy for the shadow to decline ten steps; no, but let the shadow turn backward ten steps."

What is Hezekiah asking for when he insists that the Lord have the shadow turn backward ten steps?

He's asking the Lord to turn back time and have his shadow turn back the ten steps. My question at that point is, which is easier for the Lord, to turn back time or to advance time by having the shadow advance 10 steps?

By the way, what does this tell us about who is in control of time and how easy is it for God to control such things if He desires?

In what way was this a confirmation that Hezekiah would be healed?

If God can control time, by either slowing down the rotation of the earth or through some other means, how difficult would it be to heal a human being?

By the way, does anyone remember where else God took control of time in a similar way?

Joshua 10:12-14 ¹² Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon." ¹³ So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day. ¹⁴ There was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

If God is creator is there anything that He can't do with His own creation that would bring glory to His name?

Jeremiah 32:17-18 ¹⁷ 'Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You, ¹⁸ who shows lovingkindness to thousands, but repays the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God. The LORD of hosts is His name;

The rest of chapter 20 of 2Kings has to do with Hezekiah being tricked into showing the king of Babylon the treasures of Judah and as a result of his indiscretions Isaiah brings a word from the Lord.

2 Kings 20:16-21 ¹⁶ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD. ¹⁷ 'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. ¹⁸ 'Some of your sons who shall issue from you, whom you will beget, will be taken away; and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.'" ¹⁹ Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good." For he thought, "Is it not so, if there will be peace and truth in my days?" ²⁰ Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might, and how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the

Kings of Judah? ²¹ So Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and Manasseh his son became king in his place.

From here we see that the next king, who was the son of Hezekiah, would not carry on the work of his father in seeking the things of the Lord.

2 Kings 21:1-3 ^{NAU} Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hephzibah. ² He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel. ³ For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.

After his death his son Ammon became king. He also did evil in the sight of the Lord and was killed by his servants. His son, Josiah then became king.

2 Kings 22:1-2 ^{NAU} Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name *was* Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. ² He did right in the sight of the LORD and walked in all the way of his father David, nor did he turn aside to the right or to the left.

It was during the reign of Josiah that a very interesting thing happened in the land of God's people. It was during the 18th year of his reign that he decided to repair the house of the Lord. Evidently, it was in disrepair from not being used for God's purpose, and so it was neglected.

Josiah hires workers to rebuild the house of the Lord and in the process Hilkiah the high priest makes a discovery. Does anyone remember what the discovery was?

2 Kings 22:8-11 ⁸ Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan who read it. ⁹ Shaphan the scribe came to the king and brought back word to the king and said, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD." ¹⁰ Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it in the presence

of the king. ¹¹ When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes.

Keep in mind that it has been a number of years since there was a godly king in Judah and evidently the book of the law was not needed and it was simply put to the side not to be consulted. In fact, not even this godly king, Josiah, seemed to know of the book of the law.

But what happens after its discovery? The king tears his clothes, which was an expression of humbleness and grief.

What is it about the word of the Lord that would cause this man to do this?

It's an acknowledgement that God is creator and has spoken to his creatures. Josiah realizes this and can only do one thing.

2 Kings 22:12-13 ¹² Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant saying, ¹³ "Go, inquire of the LORD for me and the people and all Judah concerning the words of this book that has been found, for great is the wrath of the LORD that burns against us, because our fathers have not listened to the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

What has the word of God done to the heart of this man?

It has spoken to him in such a way as to humble him.

What should the word of God do for us?

We're dealing with the same God with the same plan to redeem a people for Himself and He demands nothing less than our loyalty and obedience because He first loved us. Josiah takes seriously the word of the Lord and takes action.

2 Kings 23:1-3 ^{NAU} Then the king sent, and they gathered to him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. ² The king went up to the house of the LORD and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. ³ The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep His

commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all *his* heart and all *his* soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people entered into the covenant.

The king, on behalf of all the people, becomes their protector in that he has made them all come under the covenant that God had entered into with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Josiah then goes on to not only acknowledge the word of the Lord but to act on that knowledge. Anything and everything that was associated with the paganism that was brought into Judah by the previous kings, he destroyed, even to burning the bones in the graves of those men who defiled the things of God.

And then he did something that had not been done in all of Judah and Israel for many years. He celebrated the Passover.

2 Kings 23:21-23 ²¹ Then the king commanded all the people saying, "Celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God as it is written in this book of the covenant." ²² Surely such a Passover had not been celebrated from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah. ²³ But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, this Passover was observed to the LORD in Jerusalem.

And then we're told this of King Josiah.

2 Kings 23:25 ²⁵ Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.

What a sad state of affairs that such few men of authority and power were willing to follow after the Lord.

And yet, because of all that Israel and Judah had done against the Lord, not even the righteousness of Josiah could eliminate the promises of God's wrath to be delivered against the nation.

2 Kings 23:26-27 ²⁶ However, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. ²⁷ The LORD said, "I will remove Judah also from My sight, as I have removed Israel. And I will cast off Jerusalem,

this city which I have chosen, and the temple of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'"

God's judgment is sure and nothing will stay His hand.

And yet, despite the righteousness of Josiah, his son, Jehoahaz, who would ascend to the throne, would not follow in his father's steps. He only reigned in Judah for 3 months before he was taken out of the way, only to be replaced by Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah who also did evil in the sight of the Lord.

It is during his reign that the Lord begins His campaign to systematically come against Judah.

2 Kings 24:1-6 ^{NAU} In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant *for* three years; then he turned and rebelled against him. ² The LORD sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites. So He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken through His servants the prophets. ³ Surely at the command of the LORD it came upon Judah, to remove *them* from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, ⁴ and also for the innocent blood which he shed, for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; and the LORD would not forgive. ⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ⁶ So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, and Jehoiachin his son became king in his place.

Are you beginning to see a pattern here? The evilness in these people's hearts cannot be quenched. They are bent on their own destruction as they come against the Lord and the Lord will be the One to orchestrate their demise.

God will bring the King of Babylon against Judah and will carry the people away into exile.

2 Kings 24:12-14 ¹² Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother and his servants and his captains and his officials. So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign. ¹³ He carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, just as the LORD had said. ¹⁴ Then he led away into exile all Jerusalem and

all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land.

Of the remaining people left in Judah the king of Babylon made the uncle of Jehoiachin, Mattaniah, to be the ruler in Judah. Nebuchadnezzar then changed his name to Zedekiah. But he also did evil in the sight of the Lord and ended up rebelling against the king of Babylon, which probably was not the wisest decision of his short reign.

2 Kings 25:1-2 ^{NAU} Now in the ninth year of his reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, camped against it and built a siege wall all around it. ² So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

Over the next few years the king of Babylon laid waste to Judah and to the house of the Lord. Again, the poorest of the land of Judah were left to take care of the fields.

2 Kings 25:22 ²² Now *as for* the people who were left in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, he appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan over them.

But he was killed shortly after he was appointed.

But remember Jehoiachin king of Judah who was taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar? Well, evidently he was living under house arrest in Babylon until a new king of Babylon came to power.

2 Kings 25:27-30 ²⁷ Now it came about in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh *day* of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he became king, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison; ²⁸ and he spoke kindly to him and set his throne above the throne of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon. ²⁹ Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes and had his meals in the king's presence regularly all the days of his life; ³⁰ and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

For whatever reason the new king of Babylon liked Jehoiachin and put him in a place of honor. God certainly didn't honor him but a pagan king did. And so ends 2Kings.