

### Hezekiah's Recovery from Illness and Foolish Decision

#### 2 Kings 20

**2 Kings 20** – *“In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.’” Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, “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.*

*And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, “Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David.”’” Then Isaiah said, “Take a lump of figs.” So they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered. And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What is the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?”*

*Then Isaiah said, “This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing which He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?” And Hezekiah answered, “It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees.” So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.”*

*At that time Berodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah was attentive to them, and showed them all the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.*

*Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?” So Hezekiah said, “They came from a far country, from Babylon.” And he said, “What have they seen in your house?” So Hezekiah answered, “They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.”*

*Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the Lord: ‘Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,’ says the Lord. ‘And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’” So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the Lord which you have spoken is good!” For he said, “Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?”*

*Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—all his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Hezekiah rested with his fathers. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.”*

## Background Notes

When we put together all the chronological data in the books of 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah, it appears that the events of this chapter took place before Jerusalem's miraculous deliverance from the Assyrians in 2 Kings 19. King Hezekiah died in 686BC, so his illness in 2 Kings 20 would have taken place in 701BC, since fifteen years were added to his life.

So these events took place in the very year that Sennacherib of Assyria threatened Jerusalem. In fact, the visit of the Babylonian delegation after Hezekiah's recovery was probably for the purpose of getting Judah to join in an alliance against Assyria. God's answer to his request for longer life, Hezekiah was assured that not only would he recover, but that the city of Jerusalem would not be taken. *"And I will add to your days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David"* (v6). At the end of chapter 19 we saw how God miraculously fulfilled this promise.

What about the "sign" that Hezekiah requested and received (v8-11)? The "steps" could have been a round sundial, or they could have been a normal set of steps that were used like a sundial to measure time. For the shadow to go back ten steps was certainly more dramatic than the shadow going forward ten steps. Moving forward would have been the natural movement of the shadow.

How did God perform this miracle? Did the Lord use some natural means and the miracle was in the timing of some natural event that caused the movement of the shadow? Or was this a supernatural event in every aspect? We don't know how God did it, but it's hard to conceive of a natural event that would have caused this unusual sign for Hezekiah. In any case, it was, and is, another great miracle of God that's recorded in Scripture!

Hezekiah's water project (v20) can still be seen and experienced in Jerusalem today. You can actually walk through the water in the tunnel that King Hezekiah's engineers constructed through solid rock to bring water into the ancient city of Jerusalem.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. **Set your house in order, for you shall die.**

This doctrinal or teaching point comes right from verse 1, when the Lord told Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah, *"Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live."* Although God chose to add fifteen years to Hezekiah's life in answer to his prayer, the doctrinal point is still a biblical teaching point - and it is appropriate for all of us: *"Set your house in order, for you shall die."*

Ecclesiastes 3:2 says that there is a “*time to die*,” and Hebrews 9:27 says that “*it is appointed to man once to die, and then comes judgment*.” Unless the Rapture takes place in our lifetime, all of us will die. It is just a matter of time, and we don’t know when that time will be. We don’t know what any day will bring forth. So set your house in order, for you shall die.

How do you set your house in order?

**a. Make sure you’re saved.** Have you trusted in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? There is no other way of salvation. Acts 4:12 says, “*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*”

**b. Make your transition as easy as possible for others.** Don’t think just of yourself. Think of your family, and friends, and fellowship. Whether it be financial matters such as wills and debts, or “stuff” in your home or your files, or unresolved conflicts, or some needed communication - don’t leave others stranded, not knowing what to do.

**c. Use your remaining time for the glory of God.** Since you’re still here, you can always do something! For example, you can pray for others.

So God’s message to King Hezekiah is good for all of us. Set your house in order, for you will die.

## 2. Don’t cast your pearls before swine.

“Don’t cast your pearls before swine” comes from Matthew 7:6. In His Sermon on the Mount the Lord Jesus said, “*Do not give what is holy to the dogs, or cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces.*” What did our Lord mean by that statement? He meant that you don’t share the holy and precious things of the Lord with unbelievers who have no time for God and have rejected His offer of salvation. Sharing your spiritual insights from the Word of God with your average unbelieving neighbor or colleague will (at best) only result in a blank stare. And sometimes their reaction will be a scornful response. They may even rip your testimony apart, and trample on God and His Word. Don’t cast your pearls before swine.

This doctrinal point was demonstrated in 2 Kings 20 when King Hezekiah proudly showed off all the Temple treasures to the pagan Babylonian officials. Temple treasures were the sanctified vessels that were used to worship the Lord, so this action was like throwing pearls before swine. The Lord denounced this foolish action by informing King Hezekiah, through the prophet Isaiah, that the Babylonians would return and take away the Temple treasures, the royal descendants, and most of the people to Babylon.

All of this, of course, took place when the Babylonians conquered Judah in stages. First they took the royal offspring away as captives, and then other people as well. Ultimately, in 586BC, they conquered Jerusalem and robbed and destroyed the beautiful Temple.

Hezekiah learned this important lesson the hard way. What about us? Let's be careful that we don't treat the things of God lightly, and end up casting pearls before swine.

Verse 19 can be taken in two ways. *"So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good!" For he said, "Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?"*" Either Hezekiah was not sorry for his foolish mistake and was selfishly glad that the captivity would not affect him personally by coming during his lifetime, or he was thankful for God's grace and the measure of peace and truth that he was given as he humbly submitted to God's authority.

It seems that Hezekiah chose to humble himself before the Lord. *2 Chronicles 32:26 - "Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah."*

It's so sad that good King Hezekiah made this terrible mistake of showing the Temple treasures to the Babylonians near the end of his days. Let's not make the same mistake! Don't cast your pearls before swine.

## Practical Application

### Live as though you had only fifteen more years!

What if the Lord told you, "I'll give you fifteen more years of life"? Would you live your life any differently than you're living right now? Would you change your lifestyle in any way? Would you spend more time studying God's Word? Would you witness more? Would you use your spiritual gifts more and serve the Lord more? Would you share more? Would you govern your temper more? Would you try to be more self-disciplined?

Listen! You may actually have fewer than fifteen more years to live! We don't know how long we'll live. Why do we live as though we're never going to die? Why do we live as though we have all kinds of time to waste? **Live as though you had only fifteen more years!**