

Weekly Devotional – Gleanings From The Life of King Hezekiah 1-30-19

The name Hezekiah is a Hebrew name meaning GOD is my strength; GOD has strengthened.

Hezekiah, a king of Judah, was one who did “what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his GOD” [2 Chron. 31:20]. The story of Hezekiah is recorded in 2 Kings 16:20-20:21; 2 Chron. 28:27-32:33 and Isaiah 36:1-39:8.

Hezekiah was the son of the wicked King Ahaz. He reigned over the southern kingdom of Judah for twenty-nine years, from c. 715 to 686 BC. He began his reign at age 25 [2 Kings 18:2]. Hezekiah was more zealous for the LORD than any of his predecessors [2 Kings 18:5]. During his reign, both Isaiah and Micah, prophets of GOD, prophesied in Judah.

After Ahaz’s wicked reign, Hezekiah cleaned house. Pagan altars, idols, and temples were destroyed. The bronze serpent that Moses had made in the desert [Num. 21:9] was also destroyed, because the people had made it an idol [2 Kings 18:4]. The Temple in Jerusalem, whose doors had been nailed shut by Hezekiah’s own father, was cleaned out and reopened. The Levitical priesthood was reinstated [2 Chron. 29:5], and the Passover was reinstated as a national holiday [2 Chron. 30:1]. Under Hezekiah’s reforms, revival came to Judah. Hezekiah “held fast to the LORD and did not stop following HIM. The LORD was with Hezekiah and he was successful in whatever he undertook” [2 Kings 18:6-7].

In 701 BC, the Assyrians invaded Judah and marched against Jerusalem. The Assyrians had already conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and many other nations, and now they threatened Judah. The Assyrians openly defied the GOD of Judah, likening HIM to the powerless gods of the nations they had conquered. Faced with the Assyrian threat, Hezekiah sent word to the prophet Isaiah. The LORD, through Isaiah, reassured the king that Assyria would never enter Jerusalem. “That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning there were all the

dead bodies!" [2 Kings 19:35]. The remaining Assyrians quickly broke camp and withdrew in abject defeat. "So, the LORD saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem.

King Hezekiah became very sick. Isaiah told him to set things in order and prepare to die [2 Kings 20:1]. But Hezekiah prayed and asked GOD to remember all the good he had done. Before Isaiah had even left the king's house, GOD told Isaiah to tell Hezekiah that his prayer had been heard and that his life would be extended fifteen years. Isaiah applied a poultice, and Hezekiah was healed [2 Kings 20:5-7].

There are a couple of observations, about Hezekiah's healing, for us to consider. First, be careful what you pray for; because what may seem like a blessing, for you, could be detrimental for others. And GOD knows what is best for all of us all of the time! HE is very aware of what we have done, are doing and will do. Our prayers should be LORD, "THY kingdom come. THY will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" [Matt. 6:10].

Soon after his healing, Hezekiah made a serious mistake. The Babylonians sent a gift to Hezekiah, for they had heard Hezekiah had been sick. In foolish pride, Hezekiah showed the Babylonians all of his treasures, all the silver and gold, and everything in his arsenal. There was nothing Hezekiah did not parade in front of them. Isaiah rebuked Hezekiah for this act and prophesied that all the king had shown the Babylonians would one day be taken to Babylon, along with Hezekiah's own descendants.

Also, during the years following his illness, Hezekiah fathered the heir to Judah's throne, Manasseh, who would turn out to be the evilest king ever to reign in Judah [2 Kings 18-20; 2 Chron. 29-32; Isaiah 36-39]. Tradition has it that Manasseh is the one who murdered Hezekiah's friend, Isaiah.

"... We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And HE who searches our hearts knows the mind of the SPIRIT, because the SPIRIT

**intercedes for GOD'S people in accordance with the will of GOD.
[Romans 8:26-27 NIV]**

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to HIM, and HE will make your paths straight. [Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV]

May we always have a mind through which CHRIST thinks; a heart through which CHRIST loves; a voice through which CHRIST speaks; a hand through which CHRIST helps; and be a vessel through which CHRIST lives!

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