

A MAN NAMED

Hezekiah

~ Facing The Challenges of Life ~

UNHAPPY ENDING

(II Kings 20:12-21, II Chronicles 32:24-33, Isaiah 39:1-8)

It is a sad, sad fact that King Hezekiah's life had a very unhappy ending. Actually, the fifteen years of extra time God gave him in answer to prayer were bad for both Hezekiah and for the future of his country. During this period, his son Manasseh was born and reared, a man destined to be the worst king of Judah, and the reason for her downfall (Read II Kings 21). Without question, good King Hezekiah's character deteriorated in the final years of his life. There is another warning for us in the story of Hezekiah concerning the perils of old age. Be careful to finish your life believing and serving God more than ever before! Look at what happened to this good man.

1. He Got Proud.

We see this in II Chronicles 32:24-25

"In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign. But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem."

Now *"his heart was lifted up"* for understandable reasons. God had done miracles for him. Hezekiah had *"exceeding much riches and honor"* (vs. 27-30). He had achieved great things. He was rich, *"for God had given him substance very much."* So during the fifteen years of peace and stress-free living God had granted him, the king had bouts with self-glorification and pride. He was not constantly proud, as we see in II Chronicles 32:26,

"Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah."

But his seasons of taking credit for God's blessing had hurt him spiritually and damaged his effectiveness in rearing godly children. Beware of being lifted up in pride for how God has blessed you. Always give Him the glory, even in your own mind.

2. He Failed a Test.

The main story told in the Bible about Hezekiah's moral and spiritual decline involves the visit of ambassadors from Babylon. II Chronicles 32:31 makes this comment about the incident:

"Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart."

The situation was set up by God to try Hezekiah's heart. Did you know that God gives us tests? Find the whole story in II Kings 20:12-18 and Isaiah 39:1-7. Babylon was not the capital of a great empire at that time. The "world powers" of Hezekiah's day were Egypt and Assyria. The king of Babylon, as we see, sends messengers and gifts to the king of Judah because of the miracle of his healing. *"Hezekiah was glad of them,"* we are told, and he decided to show them around. Eventually he showed them *everything*: his wealth, his defensive arms, his kingdom! When the Babylonian delegation went home, Isaiah rebuked Hezekiah for showing them so much. The prophet gave him *"the word of the LORD"* that Babylon would use the information he gave them to inspire and carry out the conquest of Judah some day. Hezekiah's pride had made him foolish. He had made a very destructive mistake because he wanted to show off. God tested his heart, and he failed the test. Things happen in our lives based on tests God gives us. We must stay close enough to Him to be ready

for testing.

3. He Got Careless.

He was careless in the sense that he took too little care in what he did in his final years, but he was further careless in his attitude toward future generations. See what Hezekiah said when Isaiah told him about the coming conquest of Judah:

“Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.” (Isaiah 39:8)

“Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?” (2 Kings 20:19)

He only cared about what happened to *him*. The future of his sons and his country mattered little to this self-centered old man. How much better Hezekiah used to be! How unfit he now was to train the next king! Oh how concerned we all should be that the good our life has accomplished by the blessing of God not be negated by our later deeds.

“Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.” (2 John 1:8)

We must always look to the future.

QUESTIONS:

Let us ask ourselves pointed questions about how we are facing the challenges of life. These questions arise from studying King Hezekiah's life:

1. Have I made a choice to do right and serve God in my life?
2. Am I resisting the evil influences of our day?
3. What am I doing to bring spiritual revival to those around me?
4. Am I taking a stand against the Devil or compromising with him?
5. Am I listening to the Devil?
6. Do I have a good relationship with godly people?
7. Do I pray with faith?
8. Am I staying humble and giving God all the glory?