

A MAN NAMED

Hezekiah

~ Facing The Challenges of Life ~

HEALING

(Isaiah 38:1-22)

God's Word through the prophet Isaiah was fulfilled *perfectly*. He had told King Hezekiah, speaking of the Assyrian king,

"Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." (2 Kings 19:7)

Soon he did "*hear a rumor*" that distracted him from his campaign to conquer Judah (vs. 8-13), and he reacted by further threatening Hezekiah with the hope that he would surrender quickly. Of course, King Hezekiah did not surrender, but instead brought his case before God with Isaiah's help (vs. 14-34). Then God, through Isaiah, said to Sennacherib,

"I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest." (2 Kings 19:28)

As we saw last week, the LORD then smote the great Assyrian army and destroyed it (v. 35). After this,

"Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead." (2 Kings 19:36-37)

It all worked out just as Isaiah had prophesied. But as soon as this crisis had passed, a new calamity hit the life of Hezekiah. He became "*sick unto death*." Putting the accounts in II Kings, II Chronicles, and the Book of Isaiah together, we get a good picture of Hezekiah's sickness and miraculous healing:

- A. He is told by the prophet, "*Thou shalt die and not live*" (II Kings 20:1, Isaiah 38:1).
- B. The king then prays to God for mercy and

healing (II Kings 20:2-3, Isaiah 38:2-3).

- C. Isaiah returns with good news that the Lord is going to heal the king (II Kings 20:4-6, Isaiah 38:4-6).
- D. Isaiah treats the boil with "*a lump of figs*" (II Kings 20:7, Isaiah 38:21).
- E. Isaiah asks for a sign from God that he will recover, and the Lord grants him an amazing miracle at the sun dial of Ahaz (II Kings 20:8-11, Isaiah 38:8, 22).
- F. Hezekiah writes a beautiful song of praise to God for this healing (Isaiah 38:9-20).
- G. II Chronicles 32:24 sums up the whole story this way:

"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."

There are several lessons and warnings in the story of Hezekiah's healing.

1. God can "change His mind!"

The word "repent" in the Bible generally means something like "change your mind." In the Old Testament of the King James Bible, this word is used many times to describe something *God does*! Yes, God repents sometimes (Look up Genesis 6:6-7, Exodus 32:12-14, Psalm 90:13, Psalm 106: 34-45, Amos 7:1-6, and Jonah 3:5-10). Yet other places in the Old Testament say He does *not* repent (Look up Numbers 23:19 and Jeremiah 4:28). In I Samuel 15 (Read the chapter) the Bible says *both* things!

"Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night." (vs. 10-11)

"And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of

Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.” (vs. 28-29)

The chapter is about God’s decision to remove King Saul and his family from the throne of Israel (Note also verses 34 and 35). God *repented* over making him king in the first place, but would not repent of His decision to remove him because “*the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.*” Yet He has repented! The paradox here is in the very definition of God. He cannot lie and does not change, and therefore the things He has determined from eternity past must occur. However, as far as His dealing with man is concerned, God *seems* to repent, and offers to repent! In response to human repentance, He repents of the evil He said He would do to them. Of course, He always knew what men would do and therefore it was settled all along on what He would finally do and did do. But when He calls for man to repent, God offers to repent of the promise to punish, if men will repent of the sin. God does change His mind, from the human standpoint. He does so in response to repentance, and as we see in Hezekiah’s case, in response to prayer (II Kings 20:1-5). There is *great power* in beseeching, believing prayer, and we ought to appeal to a merciful God for a change in His verdict in our case. He has a right to say “No,” but He just might say “Yes”!

2. Deliverance is not always totally good for us!

See in verses 5-6 the fantastic promises God made Hezekiah:

- A. He would be healed of his terminal disease.
- B. The king would live another 15 years.
- C. Jerusalem would be protected from the Assyrians from that day on.

Think about it! Hezekiah was told how long he would live. What a relief it would be to know from God just how long it would be before we die. He’d not have to worry about dying or being killed for 15 years! When death came, it would be no surprise.

Hezekiah’s immediate problem was

solved! Many people are burdened down by their current situation, but the king’s big problem was eliminated. Furthermore, the biggest problem he faced for the future was taken out of the way. In his lifetime, the Assyrians would never capture Jerusalem! Hezekiah had to be the happiest man in the world. What more could you ask from God?

However, the rest of his record shows (as we will see next Sunday) that the king’s deliverance from trouble *ruined* him. Did you know that the tension of the troubles of life can keep us close to God? We do better with a cloud over our heads, in some sense. It’s true. Don’t envy Hezekiah. Fear for him. And keep on leaning upon the LORD for strength and wisdom to meet life’s challenges.

3. God can do anything!

The record of II Kings 20:7-11 certainly proves this! Not only did God heal Hezekiah of a deadly disease (using earthly medicine, incidentally), but He also made the astronomical changes necessary for the shadow of a sun dial to go backward ten degrees! Other demonstrations of God’s limitless power to do miracles are found in the plagues on Egypt (Exodus 7-13) and the miracles of Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha (Exodus 14-15, Joshua 6 and 10, I Kings 17 through II Kings 7). Truly God

“. . . is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us . . .” (Ephesians 3:20)

We must never fail to believe when we pray to Him!

4. God should be praised for His love!

Isaiah the prophet recorded Hezekiah’s song of praise after his healing in Isaiah 38:9-20, and we should read it! Notice that God healed in answer to prayer because of His great love for His people (vs. 16-17). The love of God caused Him to provide a way for our sins to be forgiven. Those who have been forgiven and delivered from death should be praising God “*all the days of our life*” (vs. 18-20).