

A MAN NAMED

Hezekiah

~ Facing The Challenges of Life ~

EARLY CHOICES

(II Kings 18:1-6; II Chronicles 29:1-6)

The fourteenth king of Judah in the line of David was a man named Hezekiah.

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| 1. David* | 8. Ahaziah |
| 2. Solomon* | 9. Joash |
| 3. Rehoboam | 10. Amaziah |
| 4. Abijah | 11. Azariah* |
| 5. Asa* | 12. Jotham |
| 6. Jehoshaphat* | 13. Ahaz |
| 7. Jehoram | 14. Hezekiah* |

Hezekiah came to the throne about 716 B.C. When Rehoboam son of Solomon began to reign back in 931 B.C., the kingdom of Israel was divided, with the House of David reigning over the southern kingdom (called “Judah”), while kings from several families ruled over the northern kingdom (called “Israel”). None of the northern kings were “good,” in the sense of loyal to the Lord. They all worshiped idols. The kings of Judah were good, bad, and “in between,” as we see when we read I and II Kings and II Chronicles. The starred (*) kings above were the best of the kings in David’s line through Hezekiah.

Hezekiah’s name meant “the might of Jehovah.” As he rose to power, the northern kingdom was coming to an end. The sin of Israel finally brought divine judgment through conquest. The Assyrian empire took over the northern kingdom, and carried away its population (Read II Kings 17). Judah was not much better in those days. Under “*Ahaz King of Judah*,” Hezekiah’s father, the nation had dabbled in idolatry. Ahaz “*walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel*” (II Kings 16:3). At twenty-five years of age, the son of this bad king took the throne to face dark and difficult times. But Hezekiah was a *very good* king! What the Bible says about his reign helps us see how to face evil and trouble successfully, and this is why we will study him this summer.

You could say that Hezekiah had a bad upbringing. Look at it in II Kings 16 and II Chronicles 28. The crown prince was a

survivor. Several of his siblings died violent deaths as sacrifices to an idol or as victims of war. Of course, his father was a wicked man. But the young king made his life good. His influence for good and for God was far reaching and powerful! How was he able to do it? II Kings 18 shows us that the foundation of his wonderful life was a few important choices he made in the beginning, choices we all ought to make.

1. He chose a good example.

II Kings 18:1 says that Hezekiah was “*the son of Ahaz*,” but verse 3 says that

“... he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did.”

Ahaz was his father and David was his forefather. Ahaz “*... did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father*” (2 Kings 16:2). David “*did that which was right in the sight of the Lord*” (II Kings 18:3). Hezekiah chose to follow the way of David his forefather rather than the way of his immediate father.

People have a choice about following the ways of their parents. We tend to do things their way, but we can choose to do something else. If our family background is bad, we can still choose to do right.

Hezekiah’s example was David, but his standard was the Bible. Both did what was right in God’s sight. The only way we know what is right in His eyes is by God’s revelation, the inspired Scripture. Choose to follow the Bible and those who follow the Bible.

2. He chose to do the negatives that were required by the positives he had chosen.

II Kings 18:3 says that he “*did that which was right*.” Then verse 4 tells us about things he “*removed*,” “*brake*,” and “*cut*

down.” Choosing right means rejecting wrong. Some fail to develop good character because they shrink from acting negatively. Loyalty to God requires hatred for idols. Faithfulness in marriage requires rejection of immorality. Honesty calls for opposition to lying. Integrity requires opposing evil. Be willing to be negative in order to be truly positive!

3. He chose to trust the Lord.

II Kings 18:5 shows the important role *faith* had in the successes of Hezekiah.

“He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.”

Proverbs 3:5-6 is the secret to a successful life.

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Hebrews 11:6 says that faith pleases God. We must learn to live by faith. We must trust God with our souls, for direction in our lives, about the supply of our needs, for everything! We’ll see how many times and ways Hezekiah exercised faith in God, but he began by choosing early to trust the Lord.

4. He chose to follow the Lord.

II Kings 18:6 says he *“clave to the Lord.”* This means he held on to Him. He did this by being determined to keep His commandments. He made a firm decision to follow God and His Word, no matter what happens! When the challenges of life come, this commitment will be very important.