

THE SIGN THAT THE LORD WILL HEAL ME

2 KINGS 20:1 – 21

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~ King Hezekiah was weeping bitterly with his face to the palace wall as Isaiah pronounced his death sentence in our previous report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. The Word of God informs us that there was no other king who could compare to Hezekiah; neither before nor after him. Hezekiah did all things right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. That's a remarkable testimony the Spirit of God reveals about this man in His Word. In this report, the time has come for Hezekiah to set his affairs in order because God tells him his years have been fulfilled....

1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

7 And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

8 And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?

9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?

10 And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

12 At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

14 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto King Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.

15 And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.

17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

19 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?

20 And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

21 And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

~ This entire account is recorded three times in the Bible. We have it here, and in second Chronicles chapter thirty-two, and again in Isaiah chapter thirty-eight. Each record adds a compounding detail adding up to one of the most remarkable accounts of any man found in the entire Word of God. Our safari will undertake our most thorough examination in Isaiah's record, and it will be exhaustive, but there are several noteworthy details in this passage we can pick up.

Isaiah was given an extremely difficult task when God instructed him to give the king a death sentence! Candidly, it makes no difference who we are – we all have death hanging over our heads. We may not know the day nor the hour, but it is appointed unto man once to die; and, after that, the judgment. This is a divine date for us; however, since we do not know the date, it doesn't affect most people's way of living. Most Christian's view their deaths as being some surreal event way out in the future; and they just don't think about it. Well, we should always live with this ultimate appointment in mind. The moment will arrive before you know it.

There was a fine pastor many years ago who was told he had terminal cancer and his days were limited. He sent out a letter to some of his friends and congregation. The following quotation is from that letter, and it should shake you to the core: *"... one thing I have discovered in the last few days is that when the Christian is suddenly confronted with the diagnosis of certain and soon death he begins to properly evaluate the material things in this world. My fishing gear, golf clubs, my books and my orchard are not nearly as valuable as they were a week ago!"*

So, with those facts as our premise, let's take a proper look at this Biblical account. When Hezekiah made this realization, he turned his face to the wall, and he cried out to the Lord. I believe many of us can understand Hezekiah's feelings a little too well. If you don't understand them today – you will tomorrow. This magnitude of life event brings a whole new and different sense of values. Amazingly, when a man or woman reaches this point, other people will question their motives. Ambitions and the things that were once very meaningful to them suddenly grow completely meaningless.

Our entire lives should reveal a self-recognition of the importance of furthering the Lord's work in a professional, educated manner. If we're not doing anything for God, why wouldn't He just go ahead and call us back home? That's why, in my days of perfect health and youth, I wrote this safari. Now, I'm going to re-edit it and publish it again – if that's what the Lord has in mind for me. See, when my day of death draws near, I don't want to have that frightening reality and change of life-outlook; I want to just keep on keeping on as I have always done – teaching the Bible.

Now, don't assume this is some pious high statement about me trusting the Lord, friends – because I simply don't know what else I could do. Frankly, it's not easy placing ourselves in the position where we trust the Lord completely from day-to-day and moment-to-moment. Overall, it's wonderful – but – it's not easy. If you say it is easy – you aren't trusting God! Honestly, in my life's circumstances – I have nowhere else to go now except to God! That wasn't forced on me by illness – I brought it on myself; through a defiant and sinful lifestyle - but don't bother asking me about

that, because I don't intend to make the details public. It's not that I don't have a testimony – it's because it is none of *YOUR* business!

See, Hezekiah asked the Lord to remember him because he had walked before Him with a perfect heart - well, I can't say that. Can you? Hezekiah did that which was right in God's sight – but me, not so much! You? Hezekiah had some good works, but he still wept sore when Isaiah brought him the bad news. I can only make every attempt to mitigate what I deserve. I won't be calling any attention to my good works when it comes time to give the account of my life to Jesus, though. In fact, my life account to God is only going to be a simple confession: *".... Lord, I failed You."* All I have to cling to today is the grace and mercy that is in Christ Jesus; and, I don't know about you, but I need a *WHOLE* lot of mercy!

Well, the Lord told Hezekiah He was going to heal him and extend his life by fifteen years. God hasn't made any such promises to me. I, personally, don't think the Lord operates this way today because I don't think anyone can make the claim of perfection God made about Hezekiah! Honestly, I've always had very little faith God would permit me to complete this Spiritual Safari in its entirety. Seriously, how could I know? Those who know me do not understand this work. All I can do is go on day by day – even as it becomes increasingly difficult to continue. Every time I think to pray about it, I ask Him to allow me to continue writing because it's what I really want to do with my life. I hope this all means something to someone who reads these reports; but again, I have to be honest, I really am not sure how it could.

So, Isaiah took a lump of figs and laid them on the boil; which indicates God used natural means to heal him. At the same time, God used supernatural means. This is exactly what James meant when he said that we are to *"anoint the sick with oil and call for the elders to pray!"* See, there are two ways in which a person can be anointed with oil. One way is ceremonial and the other is medicinal. I think many people miss the fact that in the Book of James, he means medicinal application – *NOT* ceremonial. James is very practical, and he literally says, *".... call the doctor as quickly as you can."* Once the doctor is on the scene, then the men and women of God should get busy praying. It is prayer that raises the sick up, but God uses other men

in our lives to accomplish His purposes; and God has given man certain tools and substances to assist.

The idea that we are not to go to a doctor is about as foolish as one can get, friends. If you get sick, your best bet is to pray the Lord will locate the best human physician available on your behalf. Of course, it is the Lord Who will heal you, but an earthly doctor still has to send you a bill. And that may seem facetious because it is – let's stay on track. Let's not be fanatical when there is an illness; let's be practical and sensible. Being sensible and reasonable is why God allowed Hezekiah to live.

Hezekiah asked Isaiah for a sign from God that he would live. Hezekiah was given that sign, too. You and I haven't been given a sign; but we have every right to ask God in prayer to show us one. It may not be the plan and purpose of the Lord to allow us to live; and all we can do is accept whatever His will may be. Remember, James was made a martyr and Peter was delivered from prison. Steven was stoned and died; but Paul was stoned and lived to tell the tale. You and I will never know down here why God did it that way. We simply have to accept the providence of God, friends. We should bend and reconcile ourselves to His will, but I always let Him know what I think about the things going on in my life. I want God to know what *MY* will is; although, ultimately, I defer to His will – and He already knows mine. Let's move on.

Well, it seems like a lovely thing when the king of Babylon sends Hezekiah a get-well card. The problem was it made Hezekiah show this other king all of his treasures. Basically, all the wealth Solomon had gathered that was remaining – and the wealth of the world – was with Hezekiah at this time. The ambassadors from Babylon made a quick inventory, you may be sure. It was a foolish thing Hezekiah did by showing them the gold and silver. Now, the king of Babylon knows where to go to get gold to carry on all of his warfare campaigns. Isaiah lets Hezekiah know it was a foolish thing he had done and that bad things were going to happen as a result. Hezekiah's answer was a little shameful; he says he's not too concerned, and he shrugs it off, because those bad things wouldn't happen in his lifetime.

Alright, Manasseh takes the throne at this time; and here's a very difficult lesson to understand: Hezekiah should have died when the Lord first appointed him to die! Yes, I mean that. If he had died at the appointed time, and had not had his life extended, three very bad things would not have happened. One, he would not have shown the king of Babylon the riches. Two, this terrible, awful and perverted king, Manasseh, who was the most wicked of all the kings of Judah, would never have come to the throne. Third, his heart was filled with pride and arrogance after the Lord healed him and extended his life; that should not have happened. It's very difficult to understand how this turn of events could occur with such a good king. It certainly raises many thoughtful ideas concerning healing and our length of days.

2 Chronicles 32:25 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 ~

If we ask the Lord to spare our lives, friends, we better make sure we do a little good in this world living for Christ; not because of anything good within us, but because we desire never to disgrace God, nor to give the enemy an occasion to blaspheme Him. We obey Jesus and esteem others better than ourselves because we love Him. No other reason. So, our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God ends this report being introduced to King Manasseh and his idolatries. We'll get well-acquainted with this bad king. He will not be a good person to know ~