

# Lessons From the Life of Hezekiah

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Here we are on the first day of Unleavened Bread in 2023. By all accounts everyone had a wonderful Passover and Night To Be Much Observed. We want to talk today about a man who wanted so badly to keep the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread. He wanted to do that with all his heart and all his being. In fact, eleven chapters in the Bible are devoted to this one individual. 2 Kings 18-20, 2 Chronicles 29-32 and Isaiah 36-39. This man who wanted to keep the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread so badly is also mentioned in Hosea, Jeremiah and Micah. In addition, he is mentioned in two books of Josephus in chapter 10. So who is this man who wanted to keep the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread so badly, with so many words in the Bible devoted to his life and experience.

So on this first day of Unleavened Bread, it occurred to me that maybe there are some lessons from this man's life that our Father wants us to learn from his example. This man is the righteous king of Judah, Hezekiah. It's hard to believe he ruled about 2,700 years ago, almost exactly. Today we are going to do two things: The first part we are going to look at the life of Hezekiah and that will take up the majority of the time. Then after we learn about his life we are going to see what lessons we can learn from what we've read and seen from his life. This man who wanted to keep the Passover and these very days with all his being.

So the title of the sermon is:

## Lessons From the Life of Hezekiah

As I said we will have five lessons we can learn at the end. Before we get into those lessons, let's look at the story of Hezekiah because it is absolutely fascinating. Hezekiah's father was Ahaz, king of Judah. His father ruled from 735 to 726 B.C. He was a horrible, horrible ruler. He set an ungodly example for his family and for the nation of Judah. So let's go to 2 Chronicles 28 and if you have 2 markers, you'll want to put on here and then when we get to 2 Kings we'll put another marker in. We'll go back and forth to get a complete picture. 2 Chronicles 28:24 is the example that Ahaz has set for his son, Hezekiah.

**2 Chronicles 28:24** *And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, [think about this] and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. (KJV)*

Awful, and when you think about what Hezekiah became—the kind of man he became—it's all the more remarkable how he turned out, given his father's example. You can read all about Ahaz for yourself, we don't have time to do that. In 726 Hezekiah

ascended to the throne of Judah. Let's go to 2 Kings 18 and you can place your second marker there because we're going to be going back between Chronicles and Kings to get the complete picture.

**2 Kings 18:1** *Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.*

2) *Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign [this is 726, he is 25 years old; he is a young man]; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.*

3) *And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. (KJV)*

Notice what he did.

4) *He removed the high places, and broke the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen [the Hebrew means brass or copper] serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. (KJV)*

In the Hebrew it means "something made of copper". So he stopped all that and tore it all down. Let's notice what he did just in the first year of his reign—one year, a very young man. Let's go back to 2 Chronicles 29:3. We get part of the information from Isaiah and part from 2 Chronicles and part from Kings so we'll be bouncing around a little bit.

**2 Chronicles 29:3** *He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, [he didn't waste any time] opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them.*

4) *And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street ... (KJV)*

That is the court of the priests which fronted the eastern gate of the temple. So he gathered the priests and Levites together.

5) *And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. (KJV)*

That his father had put in there.

6) *For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him ... (KJV)*

This is a bold move from a 25-year-old king who has just ascended to the throne. It takes a lot of "hutzpah" (*from a Hebrew word meaning being confident, daring and brazen*) to move this fast, but he was convicted.

6 continued) ... and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs.

7) Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel.

8) Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. (KJV)

This will come out later but at this moment there is a serious threat looming on the horizon from Assyria who wanted to take over Judah.

9) For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this.

10) Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.

11) My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense. (KJV)

Verses 12-24 describe the cleansing of the temple. Let's look at verse 25.

25) And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. (KJV)

Verse 28.

28) And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished.

29) And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped. (KJV)

What a change of attitude and a change of heart.

30) Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped. (KJV)

This sadly had not been done in years. What a transformation.

31) Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD. (KJV)

Now let's go down to the latter part of verse 35. I'm skipping verses just for the sake of time.

- 35) ... *So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order.*
- 36) *And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly. (KJV)*

He moved quickly and decisively. Now let's continue on in 2 Chronicles 30:1.

**2 Chronicles 30:1** *And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah ... (KJV)*

The kingdom was split—the Northern Ten Tribes and Judah and Benjamin.

- 1) *continued) ... and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh [they are the two southern most of the Ten Tribes, closer to Jerusalem], that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel.*
- 2) *For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month.*
- 3) *For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. (KJV)*

There just wasn't time by the time he ascended to the throne, to get everything done. So he had a great urgency to keep the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread. But did not have the time to sanctify the temple, to sanctify the priesthood and gather all the people together. What he could have done was said, "We'll just do this next year and postpone it a year". But because of his zeal and desire to please God, instead of postponing it a full year, he decided to keep the Passover in the second month, as we read in Numbers 9. We talked about that last time. Verse 4 I'll read out of the New King James.

- 4) *And the matter pleased the king and all the assembly.*
- 5) *So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner. (NKJV)*

This tells us how far Judah and Israel had fallen; it's been a long time since they kept the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread in the proper way. Verse 12 back to the King James.

- 12) *Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD.*
- 13) *And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. (KJV)*

The king and his staff were able to pull all this off and the priests and the Levites were able to get all of this ready to keep it in the second month.

*14) And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron. (KJV)*

These are pagan altars.

*15) Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD. (KJV)*

Verse 21.

*21) And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD. (KJV)*

Verse 26.

*26) So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem. (KJV)*

How sad that was, but here this young king who had an awful father, comes on the scene and does this in a very, very short order. Going on in 2 Chronicles 31:1.

**2 Chronicles 31:1** *Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and broke the images in pieces [pagan images], and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities. (KJV)*

All of this done in less than a year because of the zeal of this young king. Look what he did. Now let's pause here and see that prior to his reign, during his father's reign and his reign, Judah was threatened by Assyria. If you've read anything about the Assyrians, they were nasty people. They took no prisoners in the sense that they loved to fight and loved to conquer and they showed not a whole lot of mercy. Now let's look at the threat to Judah from Assyria. Go to 2 Kings 18:9.

**2 Kings 18:9** *And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, [this would be 722 to 721 B.C.] which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, [the northern*

Ten Tribes, the capital was Samaria and the Bible will talk about Samaria referring to the Northern Ten Tribes] *and besieged it.*

*10) And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, [this would be 719 B.C.] that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.*

*11) And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria ... (KJV)*

That was their mode of operation; they wouldn't leave people in the land; they would deport them because they were easier to control if they were in a foreign land. Verse 12.

*12) Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them. (KJV)*

Wouldn't hear Moses, wouldn't hear God Almighty or do them. Israel paid a horrible, horrible price for turning from Yehovah. Of course, Hezekiah witnessed, as king of Judah, the fall of Israel and he learned lessons from that. Verse 13 I'll read out of the New King James.

*13) And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, [this is 712 B.C.] Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. (NKJV)*

Assyria had already deported the Northern Ten Tribes, now they are turning their attention to Judah.

*14) Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish (NKJV)*

Lachish is only about 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem so the king of Assyria's army is very close—30 miles away. The Assyrian attack on Lachish is pictured on the palace walls of Nineveh. There are fragments of those to this very day.

*14 continued) ... saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. (NKJV)*

Today that's hard for us to put into a modern context. A talent of silver today is about \$28,000. 300 talents of silver are a little less than \$8.5 million. 30 talents of gold are into the millions of dollars. This is not a small amount of money. Remember, Hezekiah at this time is now 39 years old but he's still relatively inexperienced as a king; he's still a young man.

*15) So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house.*

*16) At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. (NKJV)*

If you read the account in Josephus, it states that in doing this, Hezekiah had the understanding that Jerusalem would be safe after he gave the king of Assyria these gifts. It was his understanding that the king of Assyria said he would leave him alone and do other things, "You're safe if you give me this treasure", which Hezekiah did. Hezekiah is a young king and made a mistake. He tried to appease the king of Assyria, Sennacherib.

I remember Winston Churchill prior to the start of World War II was condemning the British government at the time because they were appeasing Hitler. He said this:

*An appeaser is one who feeds a crocodile hoping it will eat him last.*

Hezekiah, out of inexperience and maybe not trusting God as much as he would later come to trust God Almighty, he made this appeasing offer but the fact is, it did not work. Sennacherib took the gold and then still came after Jerusalem and Judah. So in 712 B.C. Assyria came against Jerusalem. Notice what happened after Hezekiah gave Assyria all this gold and silver. Let's go to 2 Kings 18:17. I'll read this out of the New King James.

**2 Kings 18:17** *Then the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. (NKJV)*

As soon as he got the money he turned right around and commanded his army to go against Jerusalem. The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the Old Testament by Baker and Carpenter points out that these three are all titles, not the names of individuals. Tartan refers to an Assyrian general, Rabsaris is an Assyrian military official, and Rabshakeh is the field commander of the Assyrian army and is the one leading the troops that are coming against Jerusalem.

*17 continued) ... And they went up and came to Jerusalem. When they had come up, they went and stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, which was on the highway to the Fuller's Field.*

*18) And when they had called to the king, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to them. (NKJV)*

The king did not come out to them at this point.

*19) Then the Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust?" (NKJV)*

He is asking, "Who are you trusting Hezekiah?"

*20) You speak of having plans and power for war; but they are mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? (NKJV)*

He's calling into question who Hezekiah is aligning himself with.

*21) Now look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. (NKJV)*

So Hezekiah, a young king, a young man, aligned himself with Egypt in an attempt to go against and counter Assyria but he did so without trusting in Yehovah his God. He was looking at human alliances at this point to help him against Assyria. Now verse 26.

*26) Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it; and do not speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people who are on the wall." (NKJV)*

They didn't want the average person on the wall to hear and then tell everybody else.

*27) But the Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?" (NKJV)*

Once we start this siege, they are going to be eating and drinking their own waste.

*28) Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, [so this was an intelligent man who knew more than one language] and spoke, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria!*

*29) Thus says the king: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand;*

*30) nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." "*

*31) Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make peace with me by a present [they already tried that once and look what happened] and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; [then comes the great 'until']*

*32) until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive groves and honey, that you may live and not die. (NKJV)*

I will let you stay where you are until I'm ready to take you away. But either way you'll live if you send me this present and you don't oppose me and you surrender.



32 continued) ... *But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us."*

33) *Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? (NKJV)*

Up to that point, he is absolutely right. Assyria is undefeated; they are batting 1000. Nobody has opposed them and won.

36) *But the people held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him."*

37) *Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of the Rabshakeh. (NKJV)*

Hezekiah is in this situation as a young king, given an ultimatum, the nation has been given an ultimatum, what does he do? He tried to appease them in the beginning, it didn't work and he learned a powerful lesson in that. In 2 Kings 19:1, notice Hezekiah's reaction.

**2 Kings 19:1** *And so it was, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. (NKJV)*

He went straight to God Almighty. He didn't go make an alliance with another nation; he went right to God.

2) *Then he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.*

3) *And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: This day is a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is no strength to bring them forth.*

4) *It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left." '(NKJV)*

Appealing to Isaiah, to pray to God Almighty for help.

5) *So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah.*

6) *And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: [we could take heart in this when circumstances look this bad] "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me.*

7) *Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor [that will come up in a minute] and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.*” (NKJV)

Next comes Sennacherib’s threat and notice Hezekiah’s prayer.

8) *Then the Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish.* (NKJV)

Remember Lachish is 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem; Libnah is about 10 miles north of Lachish. Either way, Sennacherib’s army is very, very close to Jerusalem.

9) *And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, “Look, he has come out to make war with you.” [this is the rumor referred to in verse 7] So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,*

10) *Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: ‘Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, “Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.”*

11) *Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered?*

12) *Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed ...* (NKJV)

Then he goes on to list a bunch of conquered nations, all far to the north in the land of Assyria. Going on in verse 14.

14) *And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, [blaspheming God] and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.*

15) *Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: “O LORD God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.* (NKJV)

This is a good way to start a prayer because you are putting yourself in perspective to God Almighty. He says, “You’ve made everything, who am I?”

16) *Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.*

17) *Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands ...* (NKJV)

He’s admitting it—look, nobody has stopped him up to this point.

18) *and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of men’s hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them.* (NKJV)

He says I understand that because their gods were nothing.

*19) Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are the LORD God, You alone.”*  
(NKJV)

So he lays this before God Almighty and then Yehovah replies. It's kind of like—an analogy—if you were a young kid about 5-10 years old and the town bully began to threaten you and all of a sudden you called for your dad and he shows up and is 6 foot 6 and 280 pounds and this town bully is there threatening you. That's kind of how it is. Hezekiah is calling on Yehovah to come and take care of this pipsqueak king of Assyria.

*20) Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.’*

*21) This is the word which the LORD has spoken ... (NKJV)*

You have Sennacherib's word, now I want you to give Sennacherib My word and take it back to him.

*21 continued) ... The virgin, the daughter of Zion, Has despised you, laughed you to scorn; The daughter of Jerusalem Has shaken her head behind your back!*

*22) Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice, And lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel.*

*23) By your messengers you have reproached the Lord ... (NKJV)*

Verse 28.

*28) Because your rage against Me and your tumult Have come up to My ears, Therefore I will put My hook in your nose [the same terms we find in the book of Job regarding Satan] And My bridle in your lips, And I will turn you back By the way which you came. (NKJV)*

Verse 32.

*32) Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: (NKJV)*

What God Almighty is saying is, “Ok fella, now I'm going to tell you what's really going to happen” and He's saying this to the king of Assyria.

*32 continued) ... He shall not come into this city, Nor shoot an arrow there, Nor come before it with shield, Nor build a siege mound against it.*

*33) By the way that he came, By the same shall he return; And he shall not come into this city, ' says the LORD.*

34) *For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David's sake.* (NKJV)

Now let's see what happened.

35) *And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead.*

36) *So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh.*

37) *Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down ...* (NKJV)

Now let's look at 2 Chronicles 32:22.

**2 Chronicles 32:22** *Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all other, and guided them on every side.*

23) *And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.* (KJV)

I might add, because he trusted in Yehovah. That was the year 712 B.C. In that same year Hezekiah became very sick. We know the precise year because as we will see, God Almighty added 15 years to his life and we know the year of his death, so it was clearly 712 B.C. So let's see what happens here. Let's go to 2 Kings 20:1.

**2 Kings 20:1** *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.* (KJV)

He's 39 years old and this is obviously a shock.

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.* (KJV)

So because of this verse 6, where He says I will deliver you out of the hands of the king of Assyria and a similar verse in Isaiah 38:6, these two verses contradict the flow of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles and of Isaiah and of Josephus. As a result, there is great debate when Hezekiah's illness began. Either before the Assyrian siege or after the Assyrian siege. It really doesn't make any difference; it doesn't change anything of importance but there is some debate about that. To keep things simple, we'll just go with the flow of all three books. The three books place his sickness after the siege of Jerusalem by the king of Assyria.

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

I wonder if it was cancer or something—a boil on the surface of his skin—we don't know.

*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? (KJV)*

Meaning the shadow on the sun dial. King Ahaz had a sun dial that was still in place.

*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. (KJV)*

That's more difficult.

*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. (KJV)*

So he was healed, Judah was saved, after this miraculous healing and victory over Assyria, then something interesting happens. Yehovah brought an incident to test Hezekiah as he is getting older. He added 15 years to his life, he's not a young man anymore and has some experience. Let's go to 2 Kings 20:12.

**2 Kings 20:12** *At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. (KJV)*

Babylon was the enemy of Assyria. After Judah's victory over Assyria, the son of a Babylonian king here probably wanted to make an alliance with Judah since they had defeated Assyria, so this is a good political move. They wanted to bolster up their defenses against Assyria by making a relationship with Judah.

13) *And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, [the Hebrew means “to hear intelligently or attentively”] 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 armor, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. (KJV)*

He didn't hold anything back.

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. (KJV)*

He made a horrible mistake here showing the son of a pagan king the treasures that God Almighty had given him. Those are private things and not to be bragged about.

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, [he didn't earn this, they were given to him] shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.*

18) *And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, [at this point he had no sons but had been given the extra 15 years] 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? (KJV)*

He was thankful he didn't have to face it, but his descendants would. Now let's go to 2 Kings 18:5 and see a summary of Hezekiah's life.

**2 Kings 18:5** *He [Hezekiah] 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.*

6) *For he clave [the Hebrew means to follow close] to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. (KJV)*

Now we've seen the life of Hezekiah, from a young 25-year-old until he's had several trials now. We're told in summary that he followed God and was loyal to God and trusted in Him. So we have to ask the question, what can we learn from this? What are the lessons that we as God's people can learn from this? We're not going to take a long time with these because they are fairly obvious and we've read the instances already.

The first one that is most obvious.

### **1. We do not have to be a prisoner of our past.**

Look at the environment Hezekiah grew up in. His father cut in pieces, the vessels of the temple. He shut the doors of the temple. He made altars on every corner in Jerusalem. Yet Hezekiah determined not to follow in the footsteps of his father. He was not going to be a *prisoner of the past* and my suspicion is—his mother is mentioned here—it was because of her positive influence on him. Where else would he have had a positive influence from? It was probably her, but that is just a supposition.

Today, as we've seen particularly in our society, people make excuses for all kinds of behaviors. They don't take responsibility for their own action. As one comedian said years ago, "The devil made me do it, it's not my fault". I knew a minister years ago who had a problem with because he didn't treat somebody right in church. He did something ungodly, in the way he treated someone. This was the days of Worldwide and you didn't go and criticize your minister but I felt like I had to say something. I tried to politely lay out the situation and said that this is not the way to treat God's people. He came back to me and said that this was just the way he was raised. So that excuses the problematic behavior. I tried to mention gently that we are called to change; we're not supposed to remain the way we were raised. We are supposed to change to be in the image of Jesus Christ. There is plenty in Colossians 3 and 4 that talk about that—the old man to the new man. We can't do that. If anybody had the rationale to say, "This is the way I was brought up." it's Hezekiah. The point is, we, like Hezekiah, do not have to be a prisoner of our past. He didn't get stuck in the past.

There are so many of God's people who get stuck in the past. They just dwell in the past, they think about the past, they can't let go of the past and Hezekiah is an example for all of us to not get stuck in the past. He saw the evil that his father did and he learned from it. If he can learn from it, so can we and not repeat it. We can change to be like the Son of God. So that's an obvious lesson we can learn. The second one is:

## **2. We must be careful for what we pray for.**

Hezekiah was 39 years old when he became sick and he made an appeal to Yehovah and He gave him 15 more years. Josephus says that the reason Hezekiah asked for more time, was that he didn't have any heirs at that moment and he wanted to have heirs so that they could ascend the throne after him and his line could be continued. This is what he prayed for—to have more life, more time. God granted it but look at the result. Let's go to 2 Kings 21:1.

**2 Kings 21:1** *Manasseh [Hezekiah's son] was twelve years old when he began to reign ... (KJV)*

That means he was born after Hezekiah was healed. Hezekiah was given 15 more years and this young man began reigning when he was 12, but notice verse 2.

*2) And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.*

3) *For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.*

4) *And he built altars in the house of the LORD, [can you imagine?] of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.*

5) *And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.*

6) *And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. (KJV)*

So we see, he prayed for it and look what he got. This was not what he was asking for. God said, "You want 15 years? Ok but you better be able to accept it." and this is what happened. After his healing came the incident of the son of the king of Babylon. When Isaiah condemned Hezekiah for showing him all the treasures that Yehovah had given him. Look at 2 Chronicles 32:24.

**2 Chronicles 32:24** *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.*

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.*

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. (KJV)*

So the point is, we always need to seek our Father's will because it is perfect; not seek our own will. God Almighty sees the beginning and He sees the end. He has always lived. He knows what our actions today will lead to and he deals with us accordingly. So we have to pray that "Your will be done, not what seems best to me." What seemed best to Hezekiah was, "I want more life, I want to have sons and daughters." As we see, it didn't turn out very well, did it? His son was a mess and then he went on to show all his treasures and was condemned for it. We have to remember what Jesus said—we won't turn there, in John 5—we're all familiar with it, He said,

*I came not to seek my own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.*

That should be our approach. Whatever our Father causes or allows to happen to us is always for our ultimate good. All things work together for good to those who love God and who are called according to His purpose, Romans 8:28. So this second lesson that we have to learn is that we need to be very careful what we ask for. Especially if we are asking for something that seems good to us. The third lesson:

### **3. We must always be close to our Father.**



This is one thing, despite his errors, sins and mistakes, that Hezekiah did. Let's go to 2 Kings 18:6 and reread a scripture that we read earlier. I'll read this out of the New King James.

**2 Kings 18:6** *For he [Hezekiah] held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses. (NKJV)*

He made mistakes but he always tried to follow God and to come back to Him. When he was corrected, he took that correction and changed. It's been my experience that when a trial comes, sometimes it might be too late for us to draw near to our Father and His Son, if we've allowed ourselves to slip or separate from God Almighty and we've let down on prayer and study. We've gotten involved in other things and our mind isn't where it should be. Look at Isaiah 55:6 and see something that is very important about staying close to God Almighty. I know we're familiar with this and probably know it by heart.

**Isaiah 55:6** *Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. (KJV)*

The implication is very clear—there may be a time where He may not be found. Call upon Him while He is near, implying that there might be a time where we have drawn so far away from God that He is not near. In my experience, if one is not close to the Father when a trial arrives, you can't all of a sudden manufacture getting close to the Father. It doesn't work that way. You can't turn up the juice or put the "pedal to the metal" so to speak to get close with God within a very short period of time when a crisis is going on. On the other hand, if we're already close to our Father, if we remain close to our Father, when a trial comes then we will be right there with Him and know what His will is and He will strengthen us when we ask. So the lesson here, closing out this third point, is that we have to remain close to God Almighty because we don't know when a trial is coming or what is going to happen next. We don't want to have a trial come when there is a great distance between us and our Father. We want to always stay close to our Father so that when a trial comes, we are right there with Him.

The fourth point and one Hezekiah had to learn directly.

#### **4. Where do we put our trust?**

We remember that we read in 2 Kings 18, Hezekiah was "hedging his bets". We say today, "hedging our bets". Because he was relying on Egypt as an ally against Assyria the king of Assyria called him out on that. He said "The king of Egypt is like a broken reed; you put your hand on a reed and it's going to pierce your palm if you do that." Hezekiah was "hedging his bets" and relying on Egypt. He was protecting himself against possible loss by looking to Egypt to be an ally against Assyria rather than just trusting in God Almighty in the beginning. As our Father does with us, He gave Hezekiah "a do over". He gave Hezekiah a chance to show where he's going to put his

trust this time. Let's go to 2 Kings 19:14. We read this earlier. When Hezekiah got the letter from the Rabshakeh, he got the message from the king of Assyria, notice what he did.

**2 Kings 19:14** *And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. (KJV)*

He took the problem to God Almighty. He learned not to trust in Egypt. He didn't go and send messengers to Egypt to say come and help me, he went to God Almighty. Now look at 2 Kings 18:5, we read this earlier. This is what he learned.

**2 Kings 18:5** *He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; [he trusted in Him and God Almighty answered and killed all of those soldiers] so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. (KJV)*

He learned a lesson by this "do over" to totally trust God Almighty and that is the lesson that we have to learn. When his nation's life, when his life was on the line, he trusted in Yehovah similarly. We must learn to totally trust our Father because our life is not on the line. We're being judged right now and we don't know when Christ will come around the corner, but we are being judged right now and therefore our lives are on the line. We have to show God Almighty who we trust. Do we trust Him or do we trust men or words of men?

The fifth and the last lesson—there are many others of course but we just don't have the time.

## **5. Our Father tests us throughout our life. We cannot coast into the Kingdom of God.**

We are tested throughout our lives. There doesn't come a time—say we've been in the church for 10 or 20 years—that we can say, I've passed all the tests, I'm on a kid's playground slide and I can just jump on the slide. When we were kids, we used to steal from our mom's wax paper stash and go up to the top of the slide and put it on our fanny and slide down the slide and you went much faster. It was like a greased slide and you went right down to the bottom of the slide. God's people can make the mistake of saying,

*I've been studying 20, 30, 40 years, whatever it is, I know all the basic doctrines, I know right from wrong so I just have to tread water, put it in neutral and coast into the Kingdom of God.*

That didn't happen with Hezekiah, God tested him later in his life. Hezekiah and Judah were rescued from the Assyrians, Hezekiah was healed and given 15 more years but he did not have an easy slide after that, Yehovah tested him. Look at 2 Chronicles 32:31. I'll read this out of the New Living Translation.

**2 Chronicles 32:31** *However, when ambassadors arrived from Babylon to ask about the remarkable events that had taken place in the land, God withdrew from Hezekiah in order to test him and to see what was really in his heart. (NLT)*

He had a test and he wasn't a young kid anymore; he wasn't 25 anymore. It was toward the end of his reign and God didn't just let him coast into the kingdom. He wanted to know what was in his heart. We can't say we will just coast into the Kingdom because God is going to test us over and over; He tests us daily with various things that come our way to see what we're going to do about it. Remember Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born—Genesis 21:5. He lived to be 175 years old. When Yehovah told him to sacrifice Isaac, Josephus tells us in book 1, chapter 13, that Isaac was 25 years old. That's not in the Bible but we can take Josephus' account of that. If that's the case, that would be Abraham being 125 years old when he was asked to go sacrifice his son. We obviously know that he lived to be 175 so if we do the math and apply it to today's lifespan of 80 years, that would make the test, if it had happened in our life, at age 56 which isn't a young man anymore. There was no coasting into the Kingdom of God for Abraham. He didn't get a chance to coast at all. He had a very severe test towards the end of his life. Closing out this last point, our Father, as He did with Abraham and Hezekiah, tests us throughout our lives. Therefore, we must always be close to Him and to His Son.

Let's conclude now and summarize. Hezekiah, under very difficult circumstances growing up in the house of this evil, evil man, and in a nation that was used to disobeying God—that hadn't worshipped God properly since Solomon—in the first year, look what he did. He did the right thing under very difficult circumstances. Let's go to 2 Chronicles 31:20. I'll read this out of the New King James. This is a summary of Hezekiah's life.

**2 Chronicles 31:20** *Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and true before the LORD his God.*

*21) And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered. (NKJV)*

What a legacy to have left. Was he perfect? No, he tried to appease the king of Assyrian, he made a mistake there. His pride led him to show off all of his treasure to the son of the king of Babylon, but we're told that he repented of that. He repented of that because his heart was right and because he was close to his Father. He was blessed in all his doings. So Hezekiah is a terrific example for us because he grew up in an evil, evil world that his father had created really. We today are in an evil, evil, world. The fact that he did what he did should encourage us to do the right thing. Even though he sinned and made mistakes, it all worked out well for him and well for Judah because he put Yehovah first. He was close to His Father, he obeyed Him, his heart was right. Let's learn as we now start the remaining week of the days of Unleavened Bread, the lessons from this righteous king who wanted so badly to keep the Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread.