

A WALK THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT
TIME FRAME #6– THE DIVIDED KINGDOM TO THE FALL OF JUDAH
722 BC TO 586 BC
SELECTED CHAPTERS IN 2 KINGS

CLASS NOTE

SUMMARY

With the 10 Tribes of Israel deported, the rest of 2 Kings turns its attention to the nation of Judah. While there are revivals under kings like Hezekiah and Josiah, most of the remaining 150 years are spent under evil idolatrous kings like Manasseh. Reaching His breaking point, God brings judgement on Judah through the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon. However, because of His promise to David, the descendants of this generation will return to the Land, and the line of David will produce Jesus the Messiah.

MAJOR EVENTS

EVENT # 59 – RULE OF HEZEKIAH (2 KINGS 18-20)

Hezekiah was one of the godliest kings in the history of Judah. This stands in stark contrast to his father Ahaz, who was one of the wickedest. Ahaz went so far as to offer one of his sons as a burnt sacrifice to pagan gods. Hezekiah on the other hand is compared to King David, with a walk with God from the heart that led to a life of obedience. This obedience included doing much to end the idol worship in Judah. When facing the threat of Assyria, Hezekiah first gives in to his fear, offering tribute in exchange for peace. When that does not end the threat, he responds with faith, trusting God to deliver them. This was a lifelong commitment that didn't waver even as he got older.

EVENT # 60 – RULE OF JOSIAH (2 KINGS 22-23)

Between the godly Hezekiah and the godly Josiah is the wicked rule of Manasseh, perhaps the most evil king in Jewish history. Josiah leads a revival that includes repairing the neglected Temple, ridding Judah of the places of idol worship, removing pagan elements that had been brought into the Temple and ridding Judah of the pagan priests that had been brought in. This is the most complete revival in the history of Judah. However, God had determined that his hand of judgement was going to come down, deporting the people of Judah out of the Land. But because of Josiah's godly life and humble heart, the LORD waits until after Josiah's death to bring the Babylonians on to the scene.

EVENT # 61 – THE FALL OF JUDAH (2 KINGS 23:31-25:30)

After the death of Josiah, Judah comes under the control of first Egypt and then Babylon. After a first rebellion by Judah Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem and then takes away the treasures and most gifted people to Babylon. When Judah rebels a second time the Babylonians return to Jerusalem and level the walls, destroy the Temple and the Palace, kill the key leaders and deport all but a few poor Jews back to Babylon.

KEY CHARACTER – HEZEKIAH

SPIRITUAL LIFE LESSON – MOVING THREE STEPS FORWARD AND TWO STEPS BACK

HEZEKIAH'S FIRST STEP FORWARD – A LIFELONG COMMITMENT TO KNOW AND OBEY GOD

2 KINGS 18:1-8

1. When giving an overall statement summarizing the life of Hezekiah, the Bible says he had the same heart for God as David had. **18:1.**

2. Then the writer uses several phrases to give detail to his relationship with God.
 - He trusted in the LORD more than any other king of Judah before or after him. **18:5**
 - He held fast to the LORD. This speaks to a closeness with God, holding on with all his heart. **18:6**
 - He did not allow disobedience to break his fellowship with God, but was committed to following the Law given by Moses. **18:6**
3. His zeal for God led him to remove the items used in idolatry. He went further in this than any other godly king of Judah before him. **18:4**
4. He experienced God's hand on his life as he stood up to Assyria and secured Judah's borders with Philistine. **18:7**

NOTE: *We are called to make a commitment to follow Christ with our whole being, denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Him. When this is the pattern of our lives we will experience the Grace of God to follow and serve Him. We will experience the mercy of God when we struggle with life's most difficult moments. We will experience the forgiveness of God when we fail and fall into sin.*

HEZEKIAH'S FIRST STEP BACK – GIVING INTO TO FEAR (2 KINGS 18:13-16)

1. Hezekiah joined a larger rebellion against Assyria involving several other nations. As Assyria marches through these countries smashing this rebellion, they take the Judean city of Lachish. Knowing Jerusalem will be next, Hezekiah gives in to fear.
2. Hezekiah takes the initiative and asks Sennacherib for terms of peace. There is no mention of Hezekiah seeking God at this time. **18:13-14a**
3. Assyria's demands for gold and silver require Hezekiah to empty the treasury and strip the gold and silver from the Temple. However, even this will not be enough to appease the king, for he is determined to defeat Judah and deport them from their land. He does not trust them to not rebel again. **18:14b-18**

NOTE: *We will face situations in our lives when we will have fear, doubts and disappointments. It is important not to give into to them, but to call out to God for His mercy and grace for the moment.*

HEZEKIAH'S SECOND STEP FORWARD – SEEKING GOD WITH A SPIRIT OF HUMILITY AND TRUST (2 KINGS 19:1; 14-19)

1. The Assyrians demand that Jerusalem and the nation of Judah surrender to them and be allowed to be deported to other areas of the Assyrian empire. They appeal to the citizens to rebel against Hezekiah in doing this. If the people agreed to this demand, Hezekiah and the upper most officials would have been put to death. **18:28-35**
2. Seeing that his attempt to appease Assyria has failed, Hezekiah now does turn to God. Putting on sackcloth before going to the Temple to pray is a sign of humility. Hezekiah knows he has no ability to save himself. He has to depend on God, and approaches the LORD with humility. **19:1**
3. When a second ultimatum comes from Assyria, Hezekiah shows his trust of God. He takes the written demand and spreads it before God, entrusting this need to Him with trust. **19:14-19**
 - His prayer starts with worship, which enables Hezekiah to see the situation through the God's eyes and power. **19:15**
 - Then Hezekiah asks God to rise up and defend Judah and His honor. **19:16**
 - Finally, Hezekiah fully trusts God's ability as the one true and living God to give them a victory over Assyria. **19:16-19**

NOTE: *God wants us to have hearts that are humble before Him. This means seeing ourselves as needing Him, but not demanding from Him. Then we are to have hearts that fully trust Him. That starts with worship as we see the Lord in all His greatness, and then seeking His hand in our lives and situations.*

HEZEKIAH'S THIRD STEP FORWARD – ENTRUSTING HIMSELF TO GOD'S MERCY (2 KINGS 20:1-11)

1. It is important to note that there is no mention of sin as a cause for Hezekiah's illness. That means confession and repentance are not needed responses. It is also important to note that Hezekiah is only around 40 years old at this time. **20:1**
2. Since that is the case, Hezekiah responds to the news of his coming death by appealing to God's mercy. While he does state 'his case' by reminding God of his faithful walk with Him, this is not used as a bargaining chip or said with an attitude of 'you owe me'. In fact it might well be said as a promise to continue to follow God if his life is extended. Hezekiah is appealing to God's mercy that the Lord might decide to give him more years of life. **20:2-3**
3. In this case, God chooses to give Hezekiah 15 more years. It is important to note that sometimes God chooses to give grace for the challenge He chooses not to remove or change. **20:4-7**

NOTE: *When we are facing difficult situations that are overwhelming to us, we are free to appeal to God's mercy. Like many of the Psalms, this includes openly sharing our feelings and desires to the Lord, and then asking Him to act, trusting that He will show love, mercy and faithfulness in is response, regardless of what that response is.*

HEZEKIAH'S SECOND STEP BACKWARDS – GIVING IN TO PRIDE AND SELF INTEREST (2 KINGS 20:12-19)

1. As Hezekiah is recovering from his illness, the king of the up and coming power Babylon sends envoys to wish him well. This is an indication of Judah's place as a recognized power in the region. **20:12**
2. Hezekiah is flattered with this attention and show of honor. That leads to a flash of pride and the desire to show off his wealth and military power. Note there is no mention that Hezekiah mentions God and His work on behalf of Judah. Hezekiah wants the attention to be on him. **20:13**
3. Isaiah the prophet confronts Hezekiah, and it is clear God sees what Hezekiah has done as foolish. The Babylonians will not forget what they see, and will return with a military force within two decades. In time, Hezekiah's descendants will be servants in the court of Babylon. **20:14-18**
4. This would have been a good place to repent of his pride. Instead, Hezekiah's self-focus continues, as he says 'at least this will not happen to me'. The fact that this will mean the destruction of the country he leads and the city he loves does not strike him as important as his own comfort and avoiding this coming catastrophe. **20:19**

NOTE: *Pride rears its head in our lives when we are focused on ourselves instead of God and others. When we give in to this self-focus, we can become callous towards both God and other people.*