



June 14, 2015

2 Kings 18

*“Don’t Be So Full of Yourself”*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

At this point in time, the northern kingdom of Israel was gone, having been absorbed into the Assyrian Empire, after they were victorious over Israel in 723 BC. The southern kingdom of Judah still remained, but only for the time being. The king of Judah was Hezekiah, who is counted among the eight “good” kings of Judah. In this study, we’ll learn that he was a man of principle, projects, and prayer. And unfortunately, he was also a man of pride.

### Historical Background

1. The Bible records a long list of good things Hezekiah did, including:
  - a. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.
  - b. He removed the high places where idols were worshiped.
  - c. He smashed the sacred stones (idols).
  - d. He cut down the Asherah poles (idols).
  - e. He broke into pieces the bronze snake that Israel worshiped.
  - f. He cleansed and reopened the Temple.
  - g. He sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord.
  - h. He reinstated the celebration of Passover.
  - i. He trusted the Lord.
  - j. He worshiped the Lord.
  - k. He held fast to the Lord.
  - l. He did not cease to follow the Lord.
  - m. He kept the commands of the Lord.
  
2. It was for these reasons that the Bible tells us:
  - a. God was with him - [2 Kings 18:7](#)

- b. God gave him success in all he did - [2 Kings 18:7](#) and [2 Chronicles 32:30](#)
- c. God gave him great riches and honor - [2 Chronicles 32:27-29](#)
- d. God healed him of a deadly illness - [2 Kings 20:5](#)
- e. God extended his life 15 years - [2 Kings 20:6](#)
- f. God defended him and Judah from Assyrian aggression - [2 Chronicles 32:22](#)

### Hezekiah Was A Man Of Principle

- 3. Hezekiah knew that his father, King Ahaz, was a wicked and unprincipled man, so he had his work cut out for him in undoing a lot of the damage that his father had brought upon the nation.
- 4. Hezekiah Brought Reform - [2 Kings 18:4](#)
  - a. He engaged in sweeping reform and he aggressively set out to destroy objects and relics that competed with God for the hearts of men.
  - b. [Psalm 115:4-8](#) - *“But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.”*
  - c. Pastor Gary said the translation to [Psalm 115:4-8](#) in plain language would be: “You’ll become as dumb as the dumb things you worship!”
  - d. Idolatry was a problem that plagued Israel throughout their entire history.
  - e. When you look back at the history of their idolatry, you have ask yourself, “Why would they worship a stone or a carved image; were they that dumb that they thought those things could help them?”
    - i. What this illustrates is the fact that God has “wired” mankind to worship, by placing a deep need in each of us to connect with him.
    - ii. Pastor Gary said, “Idolatry is just misplaced worship.”
  - f. He broke the bronze snake that Moses made!
    - i. [Numbers 21](#) tells the story of the Israelites, who at that point in time were in the desert between Egypt and the Promised Land, and how they grumbled and complained against God, Moses, the food and water, and everything else!
    - ii. God’s punishment upon them came in the form of venomous snakes.
    - iii. Moses interceded on behalf of the people and God told him to fashion a bronze snake and put it on a pole, and tell the people that anyone who was bitten could look at the snake and live.

- iv. In the Bible, bronze is a metal that symbolizes judgment.
- v. God was saying, "Put a symbol of judgment on a pole as a reminder of their sin and if they look to it, I will graciously heal them."
- vi. The bronze snake is a picture of Christ for us, according to [John 3:14-15](#), which says: *"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life."*
- vii. We should follow Hezekiah's lead and make sure there are no statues, saints, relics, or idols of any kind that receive our worship.

5. Hezekiah Brought Revival – [2 Chronicles 29:3-36](#)

- a. Hezekiah was a man on the move in the first month of his reign.
  - i. He reopened the Temple doors, which his father had ordered be shut.
  - ii. He recalled the priests and Levites to consecrate themselves and the Temple.
  - iii. He re-established worship and the offering of sacrifices and tithes.
  - iv. In other words, Hezekiah understood that it wasn't enough just to simply remove the bad things; he had to replace what was wrong with what was right!
  - v. Pastor Gary encouraged Believer's to remember that:
    - 1. "It's not enough for someone to stop looking at pornography; they need to replace that with reading the Bible."
    - 2. "It's not enough for someone to simply stop gossiping; they need to start speaking well of others."
    - 3. "It's not enough for someone to simply give up a bad habit; they need to start a good one."
    - 4. "It's not enough for someone to simply stop gambling; they need to start being generous."
  - vi. Hezekiah understood that a moral nation was a mighty nation!
  - vii. Pastor Gary said, "The absence of evil in your life does not ensure the presence of good; you must pursue righteousness."
  - viii. [Psalm 33:12](#) – *"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord..."*
  - ix. Hezekiah relied on moral principle more than military prowess.
  - x. [Proverbs 14:34](#) – *"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people."*

Hezekiah Was A Man Of Projects

6. [2 Kings 20:20](#) – *"As for the other events of Hezekiah's reign, all his achievements and how he made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought*

*water into the city, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?"*

7. One of the most famous of Hezekiah's projects is Hezekiah's Tunnel, about which the engineering marvel and mystery remains to this day.
  - a. The tunnel was "discovered" in 1838.
  - b. The water from the Gihon Spring, which is outside the city, was brought into the city at the Pool of Siloam.
  - c. The tunnel is 1,750 feet long, with an average width of two feet, and an average height of six feet.
  - d. The tunnel itself is 60 feet below the surface, and was hewn out of solid bedrock by workers who used tools of the period, and who, started at either end and zigzagged their way to a meeting point in the middle.

### Hezekiah Was A Man Of Prayer

8. Sennacherib, the new king of Assyria tried to do to Judah what his predecessor, Shalmaneser, had done to Israel.
9. According to **2 Kings 18**, Sennacherib set his sights on Jerusalem and started the process of besieging towns and villages along the way.
  - a. In 1830, a clay cylinder or prism was discovered in Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria, which documented King Sennacherib's assault on the towns of Judah.
  - b. The Taylor Prism <sup>1</sup> reads in part: "As for Hezekiah, the Jew, who did not submit to me, all 46 of his strong walled cities as well as the small cities in their neighborhood... I besieged and took. 200,150 people, great and small... I brought away from them and counted as spoil. Himself, like a caged bird, I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city."
10. When Hezekiah saw what was taking place, he panicked and tried to pay Sennacherib off by stripping the gold off of the doors and doorposts of the Temple!
11. He soon learned the lesson that you will never be able to appease a madman.
12. He prayed to the Lord, which is what he should have done in the first place.
13. **2 Kings 19:14-19** - *"Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the*

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/me/t/the\\_taylor\\_prism.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/t/the_taylor_prism.aspx)

*Lord. And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord: 'O Lord, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to insult the living God. It is true, O Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by men's hands. Now, O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God.'*

14. God answered his prayer by sending one angel to kill 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in a single night!
15. The biggest prayer of Hezekiah's life happened when he was 39 years old and gravely ill to the point of death.
16. The prophet Isaiah came to Hezekiah and basically told him, "Put your house in order because you're going to die!"
17. [2 Kings 20:2-3](#) - *"Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, 'Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.' And Hezekiah wept bitterly."*
18. God heard his prayer and healed his body and extended his life another 15 years.
19. Hezekiah had a lot going for him, and up to this point he was worth emulating.
20. Pastor Gary said we should:
  - a. Be like Hezekiah in that we become a person of principle and get rid of the bad stuff and replace it with the pursuit of righteousness!
  - b. Be like Hezekiah in that we should do well, and achieve and accomplish things for God's glory with the abilities he's given us, and all the while, allow our achievements to be the opportunity to put God on display!
  - c. Be a person of prayer!

#### Hezekiah Was A Man Of Pride

21. The account of the Babylonian messengers is given in [2 Kings 20:12-19](#).

22. The messengers brought gifts because the king of Babylon had heard about Hezekiah's illness and how he had recovered.
23. Hezekiah's "discern-o-meter" must have been broken, because he unwisely showed the messengers all of the wealth of his kingdom.
24. The prophet Isaiah went to Hezekiah to find out what he told the messengers.
  - a. **2 Kings 20:15** - *"The prophet asked, 'What did they see in your palace?' 'They saw everything in my palace,' Hezekiah said. 'There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them.' "*
25. Isaiah rebuked Hezekiah and told him that the Lord would set a time when the Babylonians would come to wreak havoc by ravaging the land and taking everything Hezekiah's descendants owned!
26. Hezekiah's response was that he was glad that this prophecy wouldn't be fulfilled in his lifetime!
  - a. **2 Kings 20:19** - *" 'The word of the Lord you have spoken is good,' Hezekiah replied. For he thought, 'Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?' "*
27. **2 Chronicles 32:25** - *"... Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him..."*
28. **2 Chronicles 32:31** - *"But when envoys were sent by the rulers of Babylon to ask him about the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land, God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart."*
29. When the Babylonians came to inquire about Hezekiah's miraculous recovery, it was as though God stepped back and said, "Let's see how you answer this one, Hezekiah."
30. Instead of giving glory to God, Hezekiah took them on a tour of all that he had accumulated and accomplished.
31. And it came to pass, you might say, that about 115 years later, the Babylonians came, just like Isaiah prophesied, and seized the people, the land, and all of their possessions!
32. Instead of using the opportunity to put the Lord on display regarding his miraculous healing, Hezekiah pointed to all of his riches, success and wealth,

instead of making known to the Babylonians the rich blessings of the one true God.

33. Hezekiah put himself on display – even after all God had done – and all he seemed to want to do was to show his guests what he had done.
34. It's as though God said, "Fine. You want to take credit for your health, your success, your possessions, your popularity, then you won't mind if I give it to the very people you showed it to!"
35. [1 Peter 3:15a](#) – *"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."*
36. [2 Corinthians 4:7](#) – *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."*
37. [Psalm 115:1](#) – *"Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness."*

#### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 Kings 18:1-8](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Review the long list of good things Hezekiah did in his life.
4. If you were asked to write an overview of the "good things" you've done in your life, what would you write about?
5. Looking back, what are some of the ways you've seen the Lord work in your life? (See #2 above)
6. Pastor Gary said, "In the course of life, if you are a Believer, there will be plenty of opportunities to give credit where credit is due, so when people ask you the "secret" of your healing, your marriage, your success, or your perseverance through adversity, God will step back and say to you, "Who are you going to put me on display, yourself or me?"

- a. Allow the people in your group to share examples of times when they followed Hezekiah's example and failed to give God the glory, as well as times when they "got it right," and put God on display.
7. How do you think your family and friends would say about you being or not being a person of principle?
8. How would you describe your prayer life?
9. Would others say you were a person of prayer?
10. How has the Lord helped you become a person of principle/prayer?
11. What is the Lord doing in your life that others would find worthy of emulating?
12. Read and discuss [Psalm 115:4-8](#), as well as Pastor Gary's comment about worship. (See #4c above)
13. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's encouragement to Believers. (See #5A, V. 1-4)
14. Read and discuss [Psalm 33:12](#) and [Proverbs 14:34](#).
15. What has been your modus operandi when it comes to prayer?
16. Read and discuss [2 Kings 19:14 -19](#).
17. Do you think you're a prideful person or is pride something you don't struggle with?
18. Read and discuss [1 Peter 3:15](#), [2 Corinthians 4:7](#), and [Psalm 115:1](#).
19. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).