

2 Kings Series #13 - "The Next Generation" - 2 Kings 20:12-19

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Commentaries*

1. Every week, as I prepare for the message, I follow a set pattern of study
2. I read the chapters we are going to be covering in the mid week study, and look for something in them that would be good to elaborate on on Sunday morning
3. Then I prayerfully consider the text and ask the Lord to give me an outline of what we are to look at
4. Once I've got the main idea, then I crack open the other books I've gathered which comment on the text
 - a. history books
 - b. grammar and language guides
 - c. commentaries
 - d. even sermons that have been preached on the passage by men I respect
5. Then I take all this study, and sit down just with the bible, and fill out the outline

B. *This Week*

1. Well, followed that pattern this week, but things turned out differently in my study
2. As I was reading through the text I saw some things in vs. 12-19 of Ch. 20 that I thought deserved special attention
 - a. I made a rough outline as usual
 - b. identified the main idea
 - c. and then opened the books to begin to study
 - d. and quickly realized that there is a lot of difference in the way this passage is viewed
3. The commentaries were of little help
4. And none of my sermon collections contained a message preached on this text
5. Yet still, I think there are some marvelous insights for us to be gleaned here

II. TEXT

A. *The History*

{12} At that time Berodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

{13} And Hezekiah was attentive to them, and showed them all the house of his treasures; the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory; all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

{14} Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?" So Hezekiah said, "They came from a far country, from Babylon."

{15} And he said, "What have they seen in your house?" So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that *is* in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

{16} Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD:

{17} 'Behold, the days are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD.

{18} 'And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.'"

{19} So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken *is* good!" For he said, "Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?"

1. This all takes place during that period of world history in which several empire, all located around the Middle East, were vying with each other for supremacy
 - a. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and the Hittites in Asia Minor
 - b. were in constant struggle with one another to assert their dominance over one another
 2. The chief empire at this time was Assyria
 3. But Babylonia, which lay on Assyria's southeastern border, was on the rise and presented a real threat to her
 4. Judah, under Hezekiah's leadership, had become a notable and important player as well
 5. And here we see the king of Babylon seeking to enter into friendly relations with him
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6. Hezekiah had been very sick, but in answer to his prayer for healing, God had graciously promised to add 15 more years to his life
 7. He had even given a sign as evidence of the healing and promise of 15 years by causing the sun to reverse it's course in the sky, 10 degrees
 8. Berodach-Baladan, the king of Babylon rightly figured that it would be wise to make an ally of Hezekiah, a man who seemed to curry the favor of God in such a dramatic way
 9. So he sent a delegation of ambassadors, bearing greetings and a present to Hezekiah, congratulating him on his recovery from his illness
 10. V. 13 tells us that Hezekiah was "attentive" to these Babylonian officials
 - a. indeed he was
 - b. the word means more than that he *received* them in an *official* capacity
 - c. Isa. 39:2, which also tells this story, says that he was exceedingly glad when they came
 11. Hezekiah's head was turned that the mighty king of Babylon, who lived so far away, would be interested in him and would even have heard of him or his illness
 12. How would it make you feel if you got a get well card and a floral arrangement from the President?
 13. This envoy from Babylon was a surprise and delight to Hezekiah

14. And it could not escape his notice that this was a polite but discreet offer to join Berodach in empire building

15. This explains *why* Hezekiah opened the treasure houses of Jerusalem and Judah and showed the Babylonian ambassadors all the wealth and might of the kingdom
 - a. he wanted to impress them with his secret wealth
 - b. you see, these were treasures that Solomon had collected and which had remained hidden from sight and knowledge for generations
 - c. the weapons cache, the oil stores, the treasure trove of balsam were all secret
 - d. until now
16. No doubt Hezekiah gave them a tour of these things to impress them and make them realize that Judah wasn't some little backwater, and petty province
17. If they were offering an alliance with Babylon, this would sweeten the deal, and elevate Judah in their eyes—
18. At least, that's what Hezekiah *thought*

19. No sooner had the Babylonians left than Isaiah the prophet came to Hezekiah
20. He wanted to know what had happened
21. Hezekiah told him
22. Isaiah then prophesied a rebuke to the king
 - a. the days were coming when all of the royal treasure would be carried as booty to Babylon
 - b. all that Hezekiah had been so proud of and used to impress the ambassadors would be taken away
 - c. indeed, the Babylonians were impressed with what they saw
 - d. so much so they were determined to have it themselves
 - e. but even worse, not content to take the treasure, even his own descendants would be taken to Babylon and made servants to the king
23. Isaiah here foretells the eventual destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews by Babylon; an event which took place a little over 100 years later

B. Hezekiah's Reply

1. It's Hezekiah's reply in v. 19 that I want to focus on today
- {19} So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!" For he said, "Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?"**
2. Understand this verse as quoting two separate comments by Hezekiah
 - a. only the first was spoken to Isaiah
 - b. the second comes after a pause and reveals Hezekiah's relief that judgment will not come in his time
3. Hezekiah replies to Isaiah's prophecy with words of submission and acceptance, as all believers should
4. God's word is good—His ways, perfect
5. But then Hezekiah heaves a private sigh of relief and in effect says,

6. "Okay, judgement is coming and Jerusalem will be overrun by her enemies; but at least my days will be peaceful."
7. "My descendants are going to be deported and made slaves in Babylon, but whew; at least I'll be able to live out my life here in the palace in Jerusalem."

8. An important insight on this is given to us in 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.

{31} Regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was *done* in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all *that was* in his heart.

9. When God healed Hezekiah, He more than delivered him from the illness; He promised him 15 more years of life
10. Rather than render to God the praise and honor due Him for such a wonderful promise, he became proud and arrogant
 - a. after all, if he had God's promise of another 15 years of life
 - b. he would get to feeling pretty invincible
 - c. he would lose the sense of his own mortality:
 - d. which is a dangerous state for any human being
11. Hezekiah's problem was one of pride; It says his *heart was lifted up*
12. So God, who had miraculously blessed him with healing and a remarkable sign of turning the sun back on its course, momentarily drew back His hand of blessing and grace from Hezekiah
13. God wanted to test Hezekiah;
 - a. not because God wanted to see what he would do
 - b. as God, He already knew
 - c. but He wanted Hezekiah to see what kind of a man he was without God's blessing and grace
 - d. he wanted Hezekiah to see into his own heart and realize how utterly corrupt and weak it was
14. Hezekiah had been a good king and a godly man because of God's grace
 - a. his part had been to realize his own weakness and need and turn to God for help
 - b. God had wonderfully responded to this faith and made Hezekiah one of Judah's greatest and most godly kings
 - c. but now, Hezekiah had lived in the blessing and grace of God for so long, he had begun to mistake it for his own innate goodness
 - d. he felt that *he* was special and powerful and godly in and of his own strength
15. God's withdrawing from Hezekiah was not judgment; it was grace
16. It's grace when God reminds us of who and what we are apart from Him
17. It's a blessing to be rebuked for pride
 - a. though the lesson is hard, it is essential
 - b. though it is bitter at first, it becomes sweet to the soul in the long run
18. How often we need to be warned against a creeping sense of self-

- satisfaction
19. How frequently we need the corrective of honest self-evaluation
 20. To be proud is to be blind
 - a. pride clouds our thinking
 - b. it darkens our perception of truth
 - c. well has pride been called the *spiritual hallucinogenic*—
 - d. for it causes us to see ourselves and the world around us through lenses of unreality
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21. God withdrew from Hezekiah so that he might be reminded that all he had and all he was was the result of God's goodness, not His own
22. Hezekiah lost the battle, but not the war; He failed the quiz, but later aced the exam
23. In 2 Chr. 32:26 we read

Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

24. Note that, he humbled *himself*
 - a. it is one thing to be humiliated
 - b. it is an altogether different thing to humble one's self
25. God does not delight in humiliating us; He does not delight in judgment
26. So the word tells us to *humble ourselves*

(James 4:10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

(1 Pet 5:6) Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.

27. How do we humble ourselves?
28. First, we ask the Holy Spirit to show us where pride has crept in to our lives
 - a. once we see it, we repent of it
29. Really, the best way to humble ourselves is to remember the cross
 - a. want to know what you are in and of yourself?
 - b. consider the Cross of Christ
 - c. who and what you are, apart from Christ, is what put Jesus on the cross
 - d. the Romans didn't crucify Jesus—you and I did
 - e. Lance hammered the nails into his hands and thrust the spear in His side
30. To truly apprehend the message of the Cross is to see the end of pride

C. The Lesson

1. Let's return now to 2 Kings 20 and read again the words of v. 19

{19} So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!" For he said, "Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?"

2. Where this fits in to the life of Hezekiah is a bit uncertain
3. But I think it's safe to see it as occurring before Hezekiah's humbling himself
4. In fact, it's a statement of pride
 - a. Isaiah had just said Jerusalem would be ruined and his own descendants carried away captive

- b. and all Hezekiah can say is, "Great, at least my days will be okay."
 - 5. What a far cry this is from the cry of a faithful heart
 - 6. What if I told you, "The United States will be judged by China and LA will be utterly devastated. Then Chinese troops will occupy the land and relocate you children in Communist re-education centers."
 - 7. Would your response be, "Whew - well at least I'll be able to live in peace!"
 - 8. No—in fact, we'd be duly appalled by anyone who said that
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- 9. Here's the point in all this:
 - 10. Hezekiah was a good and godly man; but even he fell
 - 11. The root of his failure was self-sufficiency rather than a daily humble trust in God to sustain him
 - 12. Because he lost touch with God, he lost touch with reality
 - 13. The only right response to Isaiah's words was not, "That's great!"
 - 14. It was, "Dear God, please don't bring judgment and carry my children away as eunuchs to the king of Babylon."
 - 15. "Please don't let the glory of your name be defamed by the heathen."
 - 16. "I have erred God and was lifted up by pride. But Lord do not let my fault destroy your people."

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Are We Like Hezekiah?*

- 1. Are we like Hezekiah?
- 2. Are we so busy enjoying the peace and blessings of our own day that we fail to plead before the throne of God for the next generation?
- 3. Have we come to think that the grace of God ends with us?
- 4. Have we set our children adrift on a troubled sea of uncertainty because we are too arrogant and full of ourselves to be diligent with the task of training them in the ways of the Lord?
- 5. Psalm 127:3 says "Behold, **children** are a **heritage** from the LORD."
- 6. Do we realize that our children, are the greatest gift we can leave to the next generation?
- 7. That believing young men and women, raised by faithful and godly moms and dads are this sorry world's only hope?
- 8. We only have about 12 years to mold our children's hearts in shape of love and truth
- 9. Then another 4 or 5 to progressively launch them into adulthood
- 10. 16 years: it seems like a long time, until you look *back*

B. *Moms & Dads*

- 1. Mom & Dad—Don't be a Hezekiah
- 2. Train your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord
- 3. Now, you might be thinking, "Well, I don't have any children so this isn't for me."
- 4. If you are a Christian, you are a parent, and you have children
- 5. Your children are the young people of your church

6. As Paul says in Romans 14:7, in the church, none of us lives to themselves
 - a. we are all responsible for and to each other
 - b. as members of the family of God we are called into spiritual relationships as brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers
7. May God grant us a vision for our children and gives us the special grace to be diligent and effective in training the next generation to follow and serve Him