

2 King 20-22 – Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

XX. HEZEKIAH (JUDAH) 18-20

A. A Good King 18:1-8

B. Assyria Attacks Judah 18:9-19:37

At this point, the Northern Kingdom of Israel has been defeated & displaced by the mighty Assyrian Empire.

They then marched south & conquered all of Judah except Jerusalem which managed through God's protection to thwart the Assyrian siege.

When the Assyrians army suffered the loss of 185,000 men in a single night it left their ranks too depleted to sustain the campaign, so Sennacherib retreated to his capital at Nineveh back in Assyria, where he was assassinated by 2 of his sons, just as God foretold.

Reigning over Judah at this crucial time was Hezekiah.

Counseling him was the great prophet Isaiah.

C. Hezekiah's Healing 20:1-11

We get a story now of something that had taken place earlier . . .

¹ In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.'" **² Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying,** **³ "Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done *what was good* in Your sight."** **And Hezekiah wept bitterly.** **⁴ And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,** **⁵ "Return and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. On the 3rd day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. ⁶ And I will add to your days 15 years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David." ' "**

Isaiah's message to Hezekiah was distressing because it came at a time of great national crisis, when the Assyrians were bearing down on Judah.

Hezekiah was concerned over *who* would lead the nation at such a desperate hour.

He knew they needed someone who was sold out to God.

Some of their recent kings had been idolaters, including Hezekiah's own father, so he asked God to delay his death, at least until the crisis was averted.

Before Isaiah had even exited the palace grounds, God told him to go back & tell the king he'd live another 15 years.

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

Along with the message for the king, Isaiah was also given a treatment that would effect his recovery.

While Hezekiah's recovery was a *miracle*, medical treatment was a part of his healing. The 'lump' referred to here could very well be a *poultice* that was applied to the infection that

drew it out of the king's body and saved his life.

8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What is the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the 3rd day?"

This isn't a lack of faith on Hezekiah's part.

He's just asking for a way to be sure Isaiah's words come at God's bidding.

9 Then Isaiah said, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing which He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward 10 degrees or go backward 10 degrees?" 10 And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down 10 degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward 10 degrees."

As a sign the promise is from God, the prophet asked if the shadow on the sundial should move forward more rapidly than usual or *reverse* its course a short distance.

Not knowing how fast this sweep would be, Hezekiah said it would be a *clearer sign* if the shadow moved backward.

Now, all kinds of suggestions have been made to account for this.

Some wild stories have been told over the years about this being proven.

One of them many years ago was told by a guy named Harold Hill who claimed he worked for NASA.

He said when they were planning the first of the Moon shots & were plotting the location of the planets and all to figure gravitational forces, the computers came up a day and several minutes short.

Then someone remembered the story from Joshua about the sun standing still for an entire day & this story about the sun reversing its course 10 clicks on the sundial – and it fit perfectly with the NASA computations.

It's not true –it was made up & helped sell a lot of books.

It doesn't say the sun went backward in its course; it says the *shadow* on the sundial went backward a short way.

You don't have to reverse the rotation of the Earth in order to make this happen.

An atmospheric disturbance could have caused the sunlight to be **refracted** so that the sun *seemed* to go backward a short way.

This would have no effect at all on time – but coming as it did at the specific request of the king, it would certainly be the sign he was asking for.

11 So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow 10 degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.

There's a reason why this sign provide to be so potent.

Most of the ancient world worshipped the sun as one of their main deities.

For the shadow of the sun to reverse it's course at the request of a king would be huge in the eyes of those who worshipped the sun.

It would seem like this king had a special relationship with god.

And indeed did – he enjoyed a special relationship with the maker of the sun – whose glory makes the sun look like a dark hole.

D. His Foolishness 20:12-19

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.

The Babylonians were one of the many nations under the Assyrian yoke.

But they had become increasingly powerful & independent-minded.

They were making moves to throw off their Assyrian masters & what better nation to make an alliance with than the one that had just humbled the Assyrians so badly?

Also, the Babylonians worshipped the sun, & the miracle of the sundial seemed to indicate their god was showing a special honor to the King of Judah.

So in typical Babylonian fashion, they sent a formal envoy & gift to Jerusalem.

2 Chr 32 tells us following his healing, Hezekiah went through a short season of *pride* that clouded his vision.

Maybe hearing he had 15 more years made him feel invincible, so losing the sense of his own mortality he grew haughty.

This accounts for *why* he showed the Babylonians all his wealth.

He wanted to *impress* them—but all it did was *incite their greed*.

The envoys returned to Babylon & told their king what they'd seen.

A later king named *Nebuchadnezzar* will rise to lead Babylon in victory over the Assyrians.

Then, moved by the story of Judah's treasure, which grew in the telling, he came into Judah & took these treasures back to Babylon.

Hezekiah fell into a trap, one all too common when we're not walking in an abiding trust in the Lord – that's the temptation to **impress others**, specially the ungodly.

While he showed the envoys all **HIS STUFF** → He *could have* shown them the **WAYS OF THE LORD**.

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."

Here's the evidence of Hezekiah's pride – he **BRAGS** to Isaiah of how he'd impressed the Babylonians!

How **shameful** to the repentant are the things they once boasted of while walking in the flesh!

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?"

This comment from the king is a sign he's not yet out of his haughtiness.

He says, "It's fine judgment is coming – just so long as it doesn't come in *my* lifetime!! → I don't care so much if my descendants pay, but as long as I can skate – it's all good."

There will be **no revival** while this attitude marks the people of God.

When delayed judgment leads us to say, "Whew!" **but no more** – there'll be no revival.

When we think of the leaders of the Reformation, we usually think of John Calvin in Geneva &

Martin Luther in Germany.

Standing toe to toe with these 2 was John Knox in Scotland.

Knox was deeply distressed over the corruption he saw in the established church.

He knew as the church went, so went the culture.

Judgment could not be far off, so he worked feverishly for reform & prayed constantly for revival.

At one point his agony on behalf of change was so intense he cried out, “O great God, give me Scotland or I die!”

That’s the kind of prayer that sees revival!

Hezekiah ought to have understood.

Isaiah told him – “You’re going to die soon.” Hez prayed & God put it off.

His own experience of God’s mercy & grace ought to have moved him to cry out for revival.

The sins of *our age* are a hideous stench in the nostrils of God & He’d be more than just to rain fire on us now.

Only mercy stays His hand.

And only grace allows us to enjoy the freedom & abundance we have.

What we OUGHT to be using this time for is not to say, “Whew!” but to cry out in desperation for God to send revival.

E. His Death 20:20-21

20 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—all his might, and how he made a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 21 So Hezekiah rested with his fathers. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

The evidences of Hezekiah’s preparation for the Assyrian siege abound in Jerusalem.

We’ll look more closely at them when we study 2nd Chronicles.

What’s chilling is the mention of his son who rises to replace him – *Manasseh*; this guy makes Ahab look like Billy Graham & Jezebel like Mother Teresa.

XXI. MANASSEH (Judah) 21:1-18

A. An Exceedingly Wicked King vs. 1-9

1 Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king, and he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hephzibah.

If Manasseh was 12 when he ascended the throne, he was born during the 15 year extension Hez received.

If Hez had known Manasseh would be the fruit of his extra years, he may have prayed instead that God would take him sooner, rather than delay his death.

Manasseh had one of the longest reigns; a wonder in light of his wickedness.

Why did God give him such a long term as king if he brought such evil to Judah?

Simple –He’s longsuffering & was giving Manasseh time to repent & reverse the course of evil that would inevitably lead to judgment.

Manasseh’s name has been found in the annals of the Assyrians identifying the tribute the rulers of this region brought them.

2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

The hideous & abominable rituals the Canaanites had practiced before Israel arrived were

renewed.

These were the very things God had **USED** Israel to judge.

It was for these kinds of things the Canaanites had been defeated, expelled, and put to the sword.

Yet here's Manasseh reviving them.

We're talking about the most disgusting kinds of violence, sexual perversion & brutality elevated to the place of religious devotion.

3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed;

Manasseh didn't just give the people permission to rebuild; he remade them personally.

He used the resources of the State to rebuild.

he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done;

You'll remember the wooden image Ahab & Jezebel had installed at Samaria – it was a

disgusting, lewd figure which gave evidence to just how morally & spiritually sick they were.

Manasseh thought it was cool and made a new one for Jerusalem.

This guy is one sick puppy.

and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.

The Babylonians were deep into astrology & attributed spiritual power to the objects of the night sky.

As the power & influence of Babylon grew, so did the popularity of their religions.

Manasseh was a guy who was open to every & all religion, except the true one.

He was an *eager spiritualist*, but had no time for truth.

4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name." 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the 2 courts of the house of the LORD.

Since the temple was the center of religion, Manasseh decided to plant altars to *all* the gods there.

6 Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

These are all occult practices & totally outside what was acceptable.

The law of Moses said anyone who practiced these things **was to be put to death**.

It was the king's job to enforce this Law – but now here's a king who's doing the very thing that ought to have been punished!

The supreme evidence of Manasseh's wickedness was that contrary to all natural affection & sense, he sacrificed his own son by casting him into the fires of one of these gods, either Molech of Chemosh.

7 He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8 and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them." 9 But they paid no attention, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

This image was the one referred to before – a huge wooden phallic symbol – set up in the very temple of God.

Where God had set His holy name, Manasseh set this lewd abomination.

Here's the point, God would not cohabit with such a thing.

If Manasseh insisted on placing this object there, God would leave.

Which is exactly what happened.

As we consider God's departure from the temple which Jeremiah documents for us in his prophecy, it makes me wonder about the Church of Laodicea in Rev. 3, ***a church from which Christ had departed.***

If they had such a thing, the sign out front would identify it as a Christian church, but in fact, ***Jesus was not in it.***

He left because the message taught there wasn't the Gospel of Grace; it was a feel-good message of health & wealth.

The call to follow Christ by dying to self had been turned into a message of ***self-realization.***

Following Christ had been turned into a journey to earthly riches & power.

The result of such a gross perversion of the message of Christ was His departure from their midst.

B. Judgment Foretold vs. 10-15

¹⁰ And the LORD spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, ¹¹ "Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols), ¹² therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. ¹³ And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. ¹⁴ So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, ¹⁵ because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.' "

Manasseh's wicked reign was the proverbial straw that broke the back of God's forbearance.

The evil of those days simply could not go unanswered.

So God said the judgment that would come upon Judah & Jerusalem would be severe – worse even than that which had come upon Samaria.

Throughout Manasseh's term, the prophets Hosea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, & Isaiah all spoke & warned of impending judgment.

Though the king, other leaders and the culture at large had abandoned God, still the faithful remnant loved & served the Lord.

Their message went from being a ***warning*** that hoped for ***repentance*** to an ***announcement*** that acted as a ***witness against*** the evil of the times.

Even when others no longer listen, God's people must never stop announcing the truth.

C. Manasseh's Violence vs. 16-18

¹⁶ Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin,

in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

The innocent blood was that of those who were persecuted because of their devotion to Yahweh.

You see, this is the way it ALWAYS goes – without exception.

When *all things* become permissible, it quickly leads to *one thing* being prohibited – the true God.

Reason & common sense within a person create a tension that cannot reconcile the idea of a holy God with an “anything goes” morality.

The desire for pleasure pushes them to get rid of the holy-God idea instead of the anything goes idea.

Consider Manasseh’s progression /digression– [Guzik]

First, idolatry is *tolerated* among God’s people.

Then idolatry is *promoted*.

Next, idolatry is *supported & funded*.

Then the worship of the true God is *undermined*.

Then the worshippers of the true God are *persecuted & murdered*.

It’s *then* that the divine wrath falls.

Where are we in this digression?

17 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh—all that he did, and the sin that he committed—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 18 So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

XXII. AMON (Judah) 21:19-26

19 Amon was 22 years old when he became king, and he reigned 2 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. 20 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. 21 So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked; and he served the idols that his father had served, and worshiped them. 22 He forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD. 23 Then the servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. 24 But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place. 25 Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 26 And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place.

After 2 exceedingly evil rulers, we get a glorious reversal in Josiah.

But the judgment set loose by Manasseh cannot now be turned aside.

It is a runaway train Josiah manages to *slow down* but not *stop*.

XXIII. JOSIAH (Judah) 22-23:30

A. A Good King 22:1-2

1 Josiah was 8 years old when he became king, and he reigned 31 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

While Josiah was himself a good king who loved & served Yahweh, the evil implanted in the nation had irrevocably infected the heart of the people.

Josiah is a king who will try to effect revival, but it doesn't take.

The faithful remnant comes out of hiding because official persecution is removed.

But the average citizen of Judah is an idol-worshipping pagan now & not interested in Josiah's reforms.

B. The Bible Rediscovered 22:3-20

³ Now it came to pass, in the 18th year of King Josiah,

So he's about 26 years old --

that the king sent Shaphan the scribe, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the house of the LORD, saying: ⁴ "Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money which has been brought into the house of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people.

2 Chr. 34 tell us that there was an earlier dedication of himself Josiah had made a few years before.

During that time it seems he recognized the temple was in bad need of repair, so he set a special donation box at the gate to help fund the project.

Enough time has passed that there ought to be enough to get started, so he sent an official to get the project going.

The high priest mentioned here, Hilkiah, is the father of the prophet Jeremiah.

[Josiah's instructions continue] ⁵ And let them deliver it into the hand of those doing the work, who are the overseers in the house of the LORD; let them give it to those who are in the house of the LORD doing the work, to repair the damages of the house— ⁶ to carpenters and builders and masons—and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. ⁷ However there need be no accounting made with them of the money delivered into their hand, because they deal faithfully."

Josiah knew there was no need to add more bureaucracy to the project by insisting on auditors because the people involved were solid men of God who worked with integrity.

So the work began.

The first stage was to clear away the abundance of refuse & rubble that had collected in & on the Temple grounds.

When they did, they made an important discovery . . .

⁸ Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. ⁹ So Shaphan the scribe went to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "Your servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of those who do the work, who oversee the house of the LORD." ¹⁰ Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. ¹¹ Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes.

Up to this point, all Josiah had done was based on the oral teaching and traditions he'd learned from the priests.

There simply was no written copy of the law at hand.

Now, the scholarship of the faithful priests was pretty solid but it wasn't the same as

actually having a written scroll.

When it was read to Josiah, he realized just how far Judah had fallen from the true worship of God.

When he heard of the warnings and curses God had pronounced in Deuteronomy & Joshua, he knew everything God had said they ought not do, his father & grandfather had taken a delight in doing.

Surely judgment was not far away. So he tore his royal robes in the sign of the utmost grief and repentance.

What's **troubling** about this story is how the Word of God could have gotten LOST in the House of God.

How is it that the priests, those men charged with representing the Lord had not kept tabs on it and made it the center of their ministry?

How is it that they could think the House of God could operate without the Word of God? How could they, the priests of God, could minister to the people of God without the Words of God.

But they did – **for DECADES!**

No wonder a man like Manasseh could come to the throne and get away with his evil administration – because those who were supposed to represent God were doing so out of their own authority instead of submitting to the Authority of God's Word and using that as their base form which to resist the tide of evil that threatened the nation.

Nothing has changed. Today, there are thousands of churches that operate with human programs, religious aphorisms, and spiritual sentiments but the Word of God is absent.

Oh, a Bible verse is sprinkled here and there to sanctify someone's opinion or agenda, but the Bible is lost in the House of God – covered by heaps of religious rubbish.

Because of that, there's no power, no conviction, no interest in dealing with the evil that's taking over more & more of the culture.

Like Nero of old – pastor's & priests play their church-fiddle while the culture burns.

The discovery of the Word of God brought first a deep personal repentance to Josiah, & from that, a revival that moved him to take direct action to bring reform.

The righteous rejoiced in those reforms.

12 Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, 13 "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us." 14 So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. (She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.) And they spoke with her. 15 Then she said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me, 16 "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read— 17 because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath shall be aroused against this place and shall not be quenched.' " ' "

The wickedness of Judah had been too great to turn back the wrath of God. Judgment was on its inevitable way.

18 But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Concerning the words which you have heard— 19 because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard you," says the LORD. 20 Surely, therefore, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place." ' ' ' So they brought back word to the king.

Unlike Hezekiah, when Josiah heard God's judgment was delayed, he used the extra time to do all he could to bring reform.

What he did is described in ch. 23 which we'll look at next time.

Let's pray God sends us some *Josiahs* – some vigorous men & women of passion & power who will take an uncompromising stand for God & righteousness – in both the Church & government.

People who will unashamedly look to God's Word for direction instead of "the experts" & analysts & polls.

People who will decided what is right & wrong from Scripture , not by sticking a wet finger in the air to see which way the winds of popular opinion are blowing.

Feed My Sheep

Feed My Sheep