



In 2 Kings 20–21, we see the rulers sway the nation of Judah into good and evil. Hezekiah, a good but flawed king, led the nation to worship God, breaking pagan altars and pleading for God's favor. Unfortunately, one of the last notes on his life included his prideful choice to fail to give glory to God. Still, his life ended on a more positive note about his accomplishments. However, his son Manasseh became perhaps Judah's worst king, leading the people of God into sin. Yet his grandson Josiah would be reformer for the nation, and maybe even the nation's best king. You do not need to follow in the footsteps of your ancestors.

1. Context

a. Hezekiah was the king of Judah at this time.

i. Hezekiah was a comparatively good king, though he stumbled at the end of his life.

ii. Hezekiah was deathly sick.

1. The prophet Isaiah told Hezekiah that he needed to get his affairs in order because he would die from this illness.

2. Hezekiah got alone with the Lord and cried, pleading with Him for healing.

3. The Lord had mercy on Hezekiah and healed him using poultice, extending his life 15 years.

4. **2 Kings 20:5–6a** – *“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 third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. And I will add to your days fifteen 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.’”*

a. Hezekiah may have had sepsis.

b. God used a medical means to heal Hezekiah. He can use any method He chooses.

iii. Unfortunately, when Hezekiah recovered, pride went to his head.

2. **2 Kings 20:12–18** – *“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. 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. 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.’ 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.’ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, ‘Hear the word of the LORD: “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. “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.”’”

- a. The rising power
 - i. The divided kingdom of Israel had been in sin for a long time, so God had not allowed them to be the dominant power.
 - ii. The power of that time was the Assyrian empire, but Babylon would soon rise to prominence after it.
- b. The visit
 - i. The king of Babylon came to give his respects to the recovered king of Judah.
- c. Hezekiah’s folly
 - i. Hezekiah did not stop to give glory to God.
 - 1. **DISCUSS:** Do you keep your eyes open to opportunities to share your testimony and give God glory? When has God sent someone your way so that you could testify of Him?
 - ii. Hezekiah showed off all his stuff.
 - 1. He arrogantly displayed his earthly prestige.
 - 2. He foolishly did not consider that Babylon was the rising power and that showing your enemy the treasures they could have by conquering your land was a bad idea.
 - 3. John Calvin said that pride is the pregnant mother of all sins.
 - 4. **DISCUSS:** How do you identify pride growing in you before it gets the best of you?
 - iii. Isaiah rebuked Hezekiah for parading his wealth before their future conquerors.
 - iv. When Isaiah asked, Hezekiah used the word “my” repeatedly to talk of his wealth (verse 15).
 - 1. Hezekiah was blessed because of God’s favor, and yet he had taken credit for God’s gifts to him.
 - 2. Hezekiah’s descendants would be taken captive as eunuchs to serve in Babylon.
 - a. This prophecy was fulfilled in roughly 115 years, during the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in which Daniel was taken captive.
 - b. In those days, those who were forced to serve at the king’s court were made eunuchs to avoid the possibility of their seed corrupting the royal line.

3. **DISCUSS:** Do you show off your gifts as if they were your own? How do you avoid taking credit for God's work in your life?
- v. 2 Chronicles gives us another angle by which to study this story.
 1. **2 Chronicles 32:25a** – *“But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him.”*
 2. **2 Chronicles 32:31b** – *“God withdrew from him [Hezekiah], in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.”*
 - a. Hezekiah's pride led to God withdrawing from him.
 - b. **DISCUSS:** When has your pride created a distance between you and the Lord? How did humbling yourself before Him allow you to grow in intimacy with Him?
3. **2 Kings 20:19–21** – *“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?’ 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? So Hezekiah rested with his fathers. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.”*
 - a. Hezekiah's selfishness
 - i. Our fight is not just for our generation, but also for the generations to come.
 - ii. This is why the church must stay engaged with the people around us and our culture.
 1. **DISCUSS:** How do you engage with the people and culture around you?
 - b. Hezekiah's tunnel
 - i. The chapter ends in a positive note about Hezekiah's life: his construction of a tunnel.
 1. This tunnel was discovered in 1838.
 2. Hezekiah's tunnel is 1,750 feet long, 2 feet wide, and an average of 6 feet high.
 - a. At some points, the tunnel is 4 feet high.
 3. This was chiseled out of solid bedrock, 60 feet below ground.
 4. Workers dug the tunnel out with pickaxes going from two directions.
 - ii. Hezekiah ordered this to be made because most of the water of the Gihon Spring was outside the walled city.
 1. Enemies could easily lay siege to the city by stopping up the Gihon Spring.
 2. Hezekiah's tunnel joined the spring to the lower pool of Siloam and made the city better able to fight against a siege.
 3. The inscription of the inside of the tunnel says that the workers met in the middle and created the tunnel for the glory of God.

4. The tunnel was made with zig-zag lines so that they can more easily meet in the middle.

4. **2 Kings 21:1-9** – *“Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hephzibah. 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. For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, ‘In Jerusalem I will put My name.’ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 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. 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; 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.’ 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.”*

- a. When Hezekiah died, a 12-year-old Manasseh became king of Judah.
- b. Manasseh reigned 55 years.
 - i. He had the longest reign of any king of Israel or Judah.
- c. Manasseh was a wicked king.
 - i. He rebuilt the pagan altars that his father had sensibly destroyed.
 - ii. He practiced the occult.
 - iii. He sacrificed his son to the false god Molech.
 - iv. He put an image of Asherah in God’s temple.
 1. Asherah was the god of love and sexuality.
 2. Asherah’s image was a phallic symbol.
- d. Manasseh was born during the time God gave extending Hezekiah’s life.
 - i. Some wonder why God extended Hezekiah’s life if he would father such an evil king by having him live longer.
 - ii. Hezekiah was a relatively good man, but Manasseh chose to oppose his legacy.
 1. A bad heritage does not make us bad. A good heritage does not make us good. We must choose God for ourselves.
 2. **DISCUSS:** When did you encounter God for yourself? How do you avoid dodging accountability for the state of your relationship with the Lord?

5. **2 Kings 21:10–15** – *“And the LORD spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, ‘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), 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. 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. 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, 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.”’”*
- a. God’s prophets
 - i. God sent prophets to His people during Manasseh’s reign to correct them.
 - 1. The prophets Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk operated during this time.
 - 2. **DISCUSS:** Are you listening to the voices God sends your way to correct you?
 - b. God’s message
 - i. God promised that the ears of those who hear His prophecy *“will tingle.”*
 - 1. This phrase was a common way to describe the fear of those who hear the message.
 - 2. **DISCUSS:** Does it take consequences from God for you to learn to fear God? How have you learned obedience?
 - ii. God strongly rebuked His people, for they had strayed from him from the time He took them out of Egypt unto that day.
 - 1. God had brought His people out of Egypt around 1400 B.C.
 - 2. God gave this rebuke around 700 B.C.
 - 3. God had been patient for 700 years.
 - 4. God said He would wipe them like a dish.
 - 5. God said he would *“forsake”* Israel.
 - a. The word *“forsake”* is **nāṭaš** in the Hebrew.
 - b. Dr. Russell Dilday commented that **nāṭaš** could be used for skinning an animal.
 - c. Symbolically, God was taking the hide off Israel.
 - d. God would take Israel back, after a time.
6. **2 Kings 21:16–26** – *“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. 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? 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. Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. 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. He forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD. Then the servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. 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. 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? And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place."

- a. Manasseh's sins
 - i. He was a bloody man, killing people and leading Israel into sin.
 - ii. He died at age 67.
 - iii. His son Ammon reigned in his place.
- b. Ammon's reign
 - i. Ammon began to reign at age 22, and only for two years.
 - ii. He followed in his father's evil footsteps.
- c. Josiah's reign
 - i. Josiah was made king after Ammon.
 - ii. Josiah was likely the best of all the kings.
 - 1. Just as Manasseh was not good like his father Hezekiah, Josiah was not evil like his grandfather Manasseh.
 - 2. You can follow God regardless of what kind of people your ancestors were.
 - 3. Josiah brought great reform in the nation of Judah.
 - 4. Perhaps God extended Hezekiah's life so that Josiah would eventually be born.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)