

HEZEKIAH: A TRULY GREAT MAN

Aaron Beard
Trussville
July 31, 2005

INTRODUCTION:

- A. The world's measure of a great and successful man is mainly materialistic and carnal in nature!**
1. A successful man in the world's eyes is a man who has successfully climbed the corporate ladder, one who has power and control over others, one who is financially well off
 2. One of the last things the world takes into consideration for what makes a real man is his spiritual life → His relationship with God and spiritual impact on others.
- B. During the years of the Divided Kingdom there was one who stood up as a truly great man during a time when real men seemed hard to come by! That man was Hezekiah. (2 Kings 18:1-7)**
1. Wicked king after wicked king arose to throne! Even within the kingdom of Judah that was far more righteous than Israel, good kings were scarce!
 - a. Most kings during this period had turned their backs on worshipping God to worshipping idols! They had neglected God's word and the kind of worship that pleases the Lord!
 - b. The shape the people were in was a tragic result of this kind of leadership and examples
 2. Amongst all of this darkness a light starts beaming from the throne when Hezekiah became king!
 - a. No, Hezekiah was not a perfect man – But he walked with the Lord & sought to please Him
 - b. As a result, the Lord was with him everywhere he went and prospered him in what he did
 3. Looking Hezekiah we learn what makes a man a real man! We need more like him today!

I. SOME THINGS THAT DID NOT MAKE HEZEKIAH A GREAT MAN:

- A. Hezekiah's spiritual heritage through his family did not make him a great man!**
1. Hezekiah had one of the most ungodly fathers he could have had – Ahaz (2 Kings 15:1-4)
 - a. Two comparisons are often made in reference to the kings of Israel - They either did as "their father David had done" or they did "As the kings of Israel before them"
 - b. Ahaz had very little regard for spiritual things, for pleasing the Lord, & doing what was right
 - c. Instead of trusting in the Lord Ahaz allied himself to the kings that were around him and brought their idolatrous ways back home after he'd go and visit with them
 - d. He not only did what was evil, but he tore apart spiritual things in the land
 2. Not only did he have a wicked father, but despite Hezekiah's own righteousness, his son, Manasseh was a wicked king! (2 Kings 21:1-6, 9-11)
 - a. It may be that some of the mistakes Hezekiah made had a detrimental impact on his children or that they simply decided to do wrong despite having a righteous father
 - b. Notice that all of the great work Hezekiah had accomplished and the positive steps he had made in the nation toward returning to the Lord was reversed!
 - c. We stand in amazement wondering how this could be the son of such a good king! How only one generation removed there could be such great disregard for the Lord!
 3. We see another example of this with Samuel and his sons: (1 Sam. 2:29)
 - a. Samuel certainly accomplished great things for the Lord as a spiritual leader in Israel
 - b. However, he failed to practice what he preached! He failed to instill the same spiritual values in his children that he was teaching to the children of Israel!
 4. A strong spiritual background in one's family does not guarantee spiritual strength in years to come!
 - a. There is a 3rd generation problem in many families! The grandparents were very faithful & zealous! The parents faithfully attend, but that's all! The 3rd generation is missing!
 - b. Sometimes we look at a person and assume they will be strong because their parents are!
 - c. One is not righteous because his parents were spiritually strong just as one is not an ungodly person because his parents are wicked! (Ezekiel 18:19-20)
 5. All of us must work and pray in developing our own personal strong faith (Col. 2:6-7)
- B. Hezekiah's age did not make him a great man:**
1. Hezekiah became king over Judah at a very young age relatively speaking!
 - a. He was only 25 years old when he began to reign and reigned for 29 years (till he 54)
 - b. He begins to make great religious reforms within the first year! (2 Chron. 29:1, 3)
 - c. Hezekiah, while a young man, stands up against those who were older than him with great boldness... Standing for the truth no matter what the consequences were!
 2. God wants us to begin serving Him at whatever age it is that we learn about Him!
 - a. It may be that someone does not learn the gospel until they are older in age; however, God still wants to see them begin serving Him!

- b. It may be that someone learns the gospel at while still a young person, they have many years ahead of them; yet God wants them to start serving Him then! (**Ecc. 11:9-12:1**)
- c. Our age has nothing to do with whether or not we can do great things in God's kingdom!
- 3. As we learn from Hezekiah, spiritual success can begin in our youth! (**I Tim. 4:12-13**)
 - a. Why do think the Bible records for us when children of God were young and how they accomplished great things and took bold stands? It's a lesson for us today!
 - b. Some young people want to wait till they are older to take stands in their faith, wait till they are older to develop a deep faith, wait till they are older to do things in God's service
 - c. The tragedy is if you do not do these things now you may find yourself never doing them!
 - d. If you do decide later on to do them, you will look back on your youth with great disappointment in the invaluable time & opportunities you wasted!
- 4. For Hezekiah more time was not necessarily better! He was going to die, but God extended his life
→ It's in that "extra" time that we find him making some huge mistakes!

C. Hezekiah's wealth and honor did not make him a great man:

- 1. He had accumulated a great treasures which he evidently took pride in! (**2 Kings 20:12-18**)
 - a. 2 Chron. 32 tells us he had very great wealth and honor! By the world's standards Hezekiah was a great and successful man → But it appears this went to his head!
 - b. This pride was the source of great sorrow and much trouble in Hezekiah's life!
- 2. The things that made him great by the world's standards would be taken away!
 - a. He would be humiliated by some of his children being taken away as servants in Babylon
 - b. All of his riches and treasures would be carried off to Babylon as well
 - c. Had his greatness and success been tied up in wealth & honor he would've been a failure!
- 3. Pride in material and carnal things does not make us great but only brings sorrow into our lives!
 - a. If all that we had in this world was suddenly taken away – Would our lives be a failure or still a success? The answer depends on what we are living for!
 - b. Pride in this world brings destruction and sorrow! (**Prov. 29:23; 16:18**)

II. WHAT DID MAKE HIM GREAT?

A. He was a great & admirable man because he did what was right in the Lord's eyes:

- 1. A great statement on the type of life Hezekiah led: "He what was right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father David had done" (**2 Kings 18:3**)
 - a. There are only two other kings of Judah of which this said → Asa and Josiah
 - b. It would have been the highest compliment one could ever pay a king of Judah or Israel!
 - c. Hezekiah gave his whole heart in his efforts to "seek God" (**2 Chron. 31:20-21**)
- 2. Hezekiah sought the Lord's approval and God's pleasure in all aspects of his life!
 - a. This would mean that he would lose popularity among some of the people...
 - b. Hezekiah was not out seeking the approval of men and their pleasure – What he sought was to be approved of by God! His major concern was what would please the Lord!
 - c. It was this that made the difference between Hezekiah and his father! His seeking God's approval, no man's, made all the difference in how he lived!
- 3. Nothing says more about you than the one whose approval you are after! (**2 Cor. 10:12, 17-18**)
 - a. **Illustration:** A child in school seeking approval from a particular group of friends
 - b. Nothing will influence our conduct and attitude more than the seeking after of that approval!
 - c. Some seek approval and acceptance from men! A godly person cares first and foremost about receiving a good commendation from the Lord!
- 4. It is very sad and tragic events happen when men decide that pleasing other men is more important than pleasing the Lord! (**Mark 15:15**)
 - a. Pilate released Barabbas & crucified Jesus in desire to please the crowds!
 - b. People will make decisions they know are not right, decisions that they would not normally make, because what other men will think or do becomes more important!
 - c. This is not the response of a real man! It's a response of a man who so greatly fears the consequences of standing up for the truth that he allows evil to prevail!

B. He was a great and admirable man because, in his faith, he was a man of action!

- 1. Hezekiah stood with uncompromising conviction for the truth and righteousness! (**2 Kings 18:4**)
 - a. For Hezekiah this would mean taking a stand that would go against his friends and family
 - b. He knew that if he stood up for the truth and righteousness it would mean condemning some that he really loved → Including his own father! Yet stood uncompromisingly!
 - c. Hezekiah made bold religious reforms in spite of what consequences he might have to face!
 - d. Hezekiah could have hesitated in this work because the whole country was given over to

- idolatry! However, idolatry was WRONG and it must be stomped out at once!
2. Hezekiah's religious reforms took place suddenly! He was a man of action! **(2 Chron. 29:3-11, 36)**
 - a. Hezekiah looked around him and saw idolatry everywhere and issued a bold command, "Carry out the rubbish!" → This rubbish was being worshipped by many people!
 - b. Notice the demands he made upon the Levites → NOW sanctify yourselves!
 - c. There was no time for indecision – The reforms of Hezekiah took place SUDDENLY!
 - d. Hezekiah headed up these reforms even though it would mean rebuking his religious leaders! He respected their position; but, they were wrong and he demanded change!
 3. Like Hezekiah was, people of faith today are people of action!
 - a. Hezekiah's decree needs to be loud and clear in our hearts today: Carry out the rubbish!
 - b. Too often we allow rubbish to pile up in our personal lives - When will we do something about it? Does our faith mean enough to us to do something about it? **(1 Peter 4:1-3)**
 - c. Many congregations are full of rubbish – Whether it be sin that is being ignored among the number or false doctrine – The time to do something is NOW! **(1 Cor. 5:2; Jude 3-4)**
 - d. Hezekiah was a man of faith and because of that he was a man of decision – We allow ourselves to be paralyzed spiritually because of indecision!
 4. We must be uncompromising in our stands for righteousness, truth, and justice! **(Hebrews 11:35)**
 - a. Compromise often occurs for two reasons:
 - (1) Good men grow weary of standing up and battling for what's right
 - (2) The fear of the consequences! Standing up for what's right means that it will cost me something personally – Friends, status, my own desires
 - b. It's the lessons we learn from men like Daniel & Joseph: Uncompromising despite the cost!
 5. A real man is not necessarily a physically strong man or a man who is an overachiever in the business realm! A real man is a man of faith and a man of action! **(1 Cor. 16:13 - KJV)**

C. He was a great and admirable man because he trusted and held fast to the Lord!

1. A strong statement of praise! No one had trusted in the Lord like Hezekiah did! **(2 Kings 18:5)**
 - a. As Hezekiah took great stands for what was right, it took a great amount of trust! He put himself in what could have been a vulnerable position, but he trusted in God!
 - b. He knew that God could and would care for him as long as he did what was right!
 - c. The entirety of Hezekiah's life was marked by great trust in God and God's ways!
2. Part of Hezekiah's trust in the Lord was the fact that he held fast to the Lord **(2 Kings 18:6)**
 - a. He "cleaved" to God → He pursued God and stuck to Him like God!
 - b. Hezekiah was the type of man that you could observe growing closer and closer to God
 - c. As other kings, like Saul, grew further away from God as they continued on the throne, Hezekiah stuck fast to the Lord and the Lord's ways!
3. The Lord has given us every reason in the world to trust in Him with all of our hearts!
 - a. He has proven Himself in the ultimate way worthy of our trust & devotion! **(1 Tim. 1:15)**
 - b. God has promised a way of escape from every temptation! He is faithful in that that way is always there; however, sometimes we don't trust His paths! **(1 Cor. 10:13)**
4. In holding fast to the Lord we must do those things we know will keep us close to God! **(James 4:8)**
 - a. We have to continue to do those things which we know will keep us strong in our faith!
 - b. It's when we begin to abandon prayer, worship, and Bible study that we drift away from God

D. He was a great and admirable man because he didn't depart from following the Lord!

1. Hezekiah continued to follow God throughout his life and obeyed Him **(2 Kings 18:6)**
 - a. There were some kings before Hezekiah who began to serve the Lord, but as time went on they would depart from Him → Hezekiah DID NOT DEPART from following Him!
 - b. When you look at Hezekiah you see a life of consistency! In following and obeying
 - c. Because Hezekiah loved God and wanted to please God, keeping God's law mattered to Hezekiah! He was not a legalist, but a man who loved the Lord with all his heart!
2. We must be on guard against taking a lead in our walk with the Lord instead of following Him!
 - a. When we begin to take a lead, we begin to be more concerned with what I want to do and what pleases me than with what God wants me to do **(Jer. 10:23)**
 - b. The same call that Jesus issued to His disciples when He walked this earth is what all of us must answer today – "Follow Me!" **(Matthew 16:24; Phil. 2:5)**
 - c. If you cannot look up and seek Christ ahead of you then you must not be following Him!
3. There must be a faithfulness in our lives! A life that is full of faith living!
 - a. Even in Christianity, where we are not justified by law keeping, you cannot ignore the instructions of the Lord! **(John 14:15; Luke 6:46)**
 - b. Why is obeying God's laws so important to us? Not necessarily because we love rules and

- regulations, but because we love God and want to do that which pleases Him!
4. When you find a person who is following the Lord and trying to obey Him, you've find a successful and truly great man!

CONCLUSION: Because of the character of Hezekiah, he was a great and successful man. The greatest statement that could be ever said of a man is said of Hezekiah – ***The Lord Was With Him!*** (vs. 7). That's what all of us should be seeking after in our lives... Without this, everything we do is pointless!