***Prophecy Special - 9/11 - The Final Solution of God, No. 10

PS10***

We are studying the subject of the final solution of God, and this is increment number ten. This is relative to 9/11 and to the world events in the terror situation and the pressing of nations into unity with one another in preparation for the arrival of the world government under the Antichrist.

**Prophecy**

Prophecy is one of the major evidences that the Bible is a supernatural book written by God using men as the agents of His communication. These men were under the divine inspiration of God and under His supervision. Prophecy is one of the great elements of proof that the Bible had to be written by God. Prophecy has two phases to it. Prophecy means telling fourth what God thinks. That's what we do in every service. But prophecy also predicts future events. The future in the Bible is predicted ... years in advance, always fulfilled in precise detail. This is not true of the Koran. This is not true of the Book of Mormon. It is not true of any religious book of the world.

When the Bible was originally composed, at least 25 percent of it was about predicting future events. These events which have thus far come about, which the Bible predicted, have been fulfilled in detail--not in generalities, but in exact detail with great accuracy. Prophetic utterances of God, therefore, which are yet to be fulfilled will be in the same detailed accuracy. These things are coming. What the world is headed for now is the rapture of the church. We're getting out of here. And the worst nightmare that humanity has ever faced in the seven-years of the tribulation years is going to come about. You should be well versed in that now.

Unbelievers and carnal Christians often challenge biblical prophecy because it's a threat to their lifestyle. The Bible, however, is inerrant, and it speaks in plain language. Yes, even simple series such as we've had on this subject of the final solution of God for mankind have had its detractors and its opponents. People continue to say that all these things have gone like this for years. Nothing has changed. But Peter says, "You're wrong. God is giving you your opportunity to change. But His Word will be fulfilled."

I saw a TV program this week on, of all things, the rapture of the church and secularization. And the whole point of it was: could such a thing happen as the fundamentalist biblical Christians believe? The Bible predicts there will come a time when millions of people who are born again believers will be suddenly taken out of this world. This will be in whatever situation they're in: whether they're flying in an airplane; driving down the highway; at work; or, whatever. The catastrophe will be enormous when it takes place, and people will know that something has happened. Certainly people will be gone. There was just the challenge. Has anything like this ever happened before? Is it possible that something like that could happen? And then they even quoted 1 Thessalonians 4 which describes in detail that catching away, the rapture of the church. And here the world says, "We can't believe that." But that's what the Bible says is going to happen.

Prophecy is true. One's view of prophecy, of course, will influence your view of Israel's future. That future, we have shown you, was revealed to the prophet Daniel, and is revealed in greater detail in the book of the Revelation. Israel has a future. Near the end of the seven-year tribulation era God, under the seventh bowl judgment recorded in Revelation 16:19, will obliterate the city of Babylon on the Euphrates River. That is a done deal and it is going to be the final expression of the holy wrath of God. Babylon will be destroyed, and it will send up enormous reverberations throughout the world's financial institutions. Look what happened with the attack on 9/11. Can you imagine what's going to happen when the world's center is switched to Babylon on the Euphrates during the tribulation? It will become the religious and the commercial center of all the world, and it will be brought down to ashes. Babylon then, under the antichrist's world, government, will be the control center for all commercial activities. Everything will go through Babylon. With the destruction of Babylon as the control center of world commerce will come the collapse of the whole banking and international business community and all their activities.

Yes, like 9/11, you saw all those pieces of paper coming down and littering the streets. These were all documents, bills, and records from the insurance companies and the other business enterprises that were there laying all over the street. Everything was blown up. That's what's going to happen to the control center of all the world. It'll be tighter under the antichrist than it is now.

The merchants of the earth, we read in the book of Revelation, supported the idolatrous worship of the antichrist, and they pledged their allegiance to the world government in Babylon. The political leaders of the earth will have entered into all of the immorality and the sensuality promoted by Babylon in exchange for her financial favors. With the destruction of Babylon comes total chaos in the financial world and in society. The merchants are suddenly deprived of their lucrative incomes and wealth, and *that is their life*.

Every now and then, people realize that their life is not in their possessions. Some never learn night, and they go through life hanging onto their possessions, and never using them for eternal consequences to their eternal joy. Consequently, when this happens to Babylon, the world's businessmen will weep. They'll shake with the emotional trauma of their financial ruin. That was their life, and now they have no life. The merchants watch from afar in horror as they see the whole city of Babylon ruined to a pile of ashes, and all is lost. The collapse of Babylon and the financial empire, the Bible says, will happen on one day in one single hour.

So expand enormously what happened on 9/11. Imagine that happening in an infinitely more important trade center in Babylon. That's Bible prophecy. Is that going to happen? Can we take that seriously? Should we govern our lives accordingly, that it's all going to go up in smoke, everything you have except what has been stored in heaven? Prophecy is real. Babylon is just a preview of history which is to come.

Many Christian denominations say that prophecy is merely the record of past history. Please remember that the amillennialists, who do not believe that Jesus Christ is going to have a kingdom on this earth, say that the whole book of Revelation was fulfilled by 70 A.D. They say that the book of the Revelation has no future prophecy in it. They're wrong. Does God tell us in Scripture what he plans to do at certain points in future time? You bet He does.

He did this with Abraham, when he was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because Abraham's nephew Lot was part of that society. Abraham went to God and said, "I wish you wouldn't do this. This is a highly cultured, sophisticated society. Yes, it's homosexual to the core, and it is corrupt, and it deserves your divine judgment, but would you extend mercy to them, God?" The Lord said, "Abraham, I will tell you what I'm going to do. If you can find 50 people in that city who are righteous and godly like your nephew Lot, I won't do this." Well He ratcheted it down because Abraham he couldn't find 50 righteous and godly people there. Then He came down to 40; to 20; and, finally to 10. He said, "Abraham, find me ten people." He couldn't. God said "Abraham, I'm going to do it. Get Lot out of there. You give him the word." God kept his prophecy. We don't even know where Sodom and Gomorrah is. It's probably in some of the waters of the Dead Sea. It was ashes, with nothing left, just as God said.

Has biblical prophecy in the past proven to be true? Absolutely. In many circles, prophecy is not taken seriously. It's considered wild speculation because you do not have people who have gotten Scriptures together to know how to explain it. And when you do not have somebody in the pulpit who is explaining what God has said, there's only one other source for you to go to, and that is your emotions which are governed by the old sin nature. That's what religious America is today. It's all hoopla and emotion. And the problem, however, is the need to discredit the Bible. The Bible still acts as a binding authority. What's happened because of the terror on 9/11? People were buying Bibles like crazy. They couldn't keep them on the shelves. All of a sudden, they were getting interested in morality. They were getting back to the divine institutions. They were getting back to doing things God's way. They were even getting back to the Constitution (if you can believe that) and the basic responsibilities and restrictions that freedom puts upon us.

**Hezekiah**

Has biblical prophecy in the past proven to be true? Yes, and there are many examples. I give you one. One of Judah's kings, Hezekiah, was a refreshing old boy, because he was a good king, unlike so many of Israel's kings. There was a northern kingdom of Israel, and there was a southern kingdom of Judah. Hezekiah was from the southern kingdom of Judah. The chief prophet was the magnificent Isaiah, the all-time great prophet of the Old Testament. Isaiah was in direct communication with God, and that was nice. They would turn to their prophet and say, "I want to ask about this. I want to do this. Would you ask God?" The prophet goes and talks to God; he comes back; and, he says, "Here's the answer." Boy, do I wish we could do that today. It would solve us a lot of problems, and a lot of muddling around trying to find our way.

However, we have something else that's better. We have the Scripture completed. They didn't. We have the Holy Spirit indwelling us to guide us by those Scriptures. They didn't. So we have even a better system once you're on target. You have doctrine in your human spirit, and you have temporal fellowship. You won't go astray.

Well, Hezekiah was a godly king. He came to power and the first thing he did was started obeying God. In 2 Kings 18:1, Hezekiah comes to reign over the southern kingdom of Judah: "Now it came about in the third year of Hoshea, the son of Elah, king of Israel (the northern kingdom), that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah (the southern kingdom) became king. He was 25 years old when he became king. He reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. And he did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all his father David had done." He followed the leadership of the great King David, and he simply did what was right. Did David always do what was right? No. Did he correct it when he didn't do what was right? Yes. Then he confessed and went on.

Verse 4: "Hezekiah removed the high places." Those were the places where the idol gods were worshipped. "And he broke down the sacred pillars." These were the trees under which they worshipped their sacred idol gods. "And he cut down the Asherah." These were the idol gods in a female form. "He also broken in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days, the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan." Nehushtan was a piece of bronze in the Hebrew meaning there. Nehushtan was a piece of bronze. They were worshiping this thing. That was when Moses put up this brass serpent, and said, "Whoever looks upon this will escape the death by the snakes for their rebellion." Those who believed were saved. Those who didn't died. They had kept this object. Do you wonder why we don't have part of the cross of Jesus Christ? The Roman Catholic Church has so many pieces of the cross that you could make hundreds of them. They have a piece of the cross as relics everywhere. God wouldn't permit that. This piece of brass in the form of a snake, and they were worshiping and burning incense to it. Hezekiah comes along under Isaiah's direction and says, "Get rid of the thing. Melt it down."

Verse 5 says, "He trusted in the Lord." That's the secret. You believe God, the God of Israel. "So that after him, there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him." Do you understand that? We're at the high point of Israel's kingly leadership since the time of David. Hezekiah was a superb leader.

Verse 6: "For he clung to the Lord. He did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses." Fine. All is well and good. I want you to keep this in mind, because it's quite a lesson here for us in how we can go astray when we know a whole lot better, as Hezekiah went astray knowing a whole lot better. One of the things that God blessed him in was his military expedition against the corrupt Canaanite people living in the land. Notice 2 Kings 18:8: "He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory from watchtower to the fortified city."

God was with this man. However, they had fallen upon bad times because of the sin of the people in spite of this king. Hezekiah was paying tribute to the Assyrian king to avoid invasion by the Assyrians. The Assyrians, you must remember, were an enormously brutal people, especially in military matters. It was the Assyrians who devised the way of executing their enemies by cutting a top of a slender tree down; sharpening it to a point; and, then taking the person they were going to execute and impaling him on it. Four guys grabbed him; they say, "One, two, three;" and, they threw him down on the sharpened point. They would cover a countryside with these agonizing executions. Hezekiah knew this, and he did not want to fall into the hands of these brutal Assyrians.

As a matter of fact, that method of impaling upon a post was improved upon by the Romans, who said, "That's too quick. They die right away. We'll put a cross bar on to make a cross out of it, and hang him. That way, they have to linger before they finally die. That became the descendant of the impaling to the Roman crucifixion on which Christ was executed.

Now, when the Assyrian king, to whom Hezekiah was paying tribute, died, he and some kings who were allied with Hezekiah rebelled against the Assyrian king and stopped paying him tribute money. 2 Kings 18:7: "And the Lord was with him. Wherever he went, he prospered. And he rebelled against the King of Assyria, and did not serve him." The king of Assyria at this time was Sennacherib. Sennacherib sent his army into Judah post-haste, to attack Jerusalem and to punish Hezekiah.

2 Kings 18:13: "Now in the 14th year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them." The Assyrians were a super military power, and they just swept right through the territory of Judah and the cities that were there. Now, Hezekiah saw what was on the horizon for him, so he decided very quickly to submit to Sennacherib,

2 Kings 18:14: "Then Hezekiah king of Judah, sent to the King of Assyria at Lachish saying, "I've done wrong. Withdraw from me. Whatever you impose on me, I will bear." So the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah, king of Judah 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold." That was ten tons of silver, and one ton of gold. "Hezekiah gave him all the silver, which was found in the house of the Lord (the temple)." They stripped it, "And the treasuries of the king's house (they stripped his own treasury). At that time, Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the door posts which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria." Hezekiah had made the temple look even more attractive by overlaying the door posts with gold. They stripped all of that gold off to be able to pay this tribute to the king of Assyria Sennacherib.

Well, that got Hezekiah off the hook, or off the impaling hook, so to speak. And not too long afterward, Sennacherib decides to come back for a second invasion. 2 Kings 18:17: "Then the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rab-saris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a large army to Jerusalem. So he went up and came to Jerusalem, and when they went up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway of the fuller's field."

Sennacherib comes in with a second invasion. Now, for the moment, let's go over to Isaiah, because Isaiah also recorded these events for our understanding in Isaiah 36:13. Rabshakeh is the commander in the field for Sennacherib. He's going to taunt the Israelites (the Jews). He's going to taunt Hezekiah and his people about their God who can't protect them.

Isaiah 36:13: "Than Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in Judean and said, 'Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus, says the king: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord saying: The Lord will surely deliver us. This city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Do not listen to Hezekiah, for thus, says the king of Assyria: Make your peace with me and come out to me, and eat each of his vine; each of his fig tree; and, drink of the waters of his own cistern, until I come and take you away to a land like your own, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.'"

He says, "I will take you back to Assyria as captives and slaves." Well, that's what happened to the ten northern tribes eventually. "Beware that Hezekiah does not mislead you, saying 'The Lord will deliver us.' Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria?"

Here is that idiotic thing that we hear today: "All these religions are equal. The Muslims are equal to Christianity." No, they're not. "Judaism is equal to Christianity." No it isn't. "Mormonism is equal to Christianity." No, it isn't. "They're all equally true before God." No, they're not. And you're hearing a lot of this. People don't like what we are saying: that this is a war against Islam, because what is happening is what Muhammad taught should be done to those who are the infidels, the Jews and the Christians.

So Rabshakeh says, "What good did all their gods do?" He was equating the God of creation with just one of these podunk low level gods. "'Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And where have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the Lord would deliver Jerusalem from my hand?' And they were silent and answered him not a word, for the king's command was, 'Do not answer them.'" Hezekiah says, "Listen to him, but don't say anything to him. Don't respond." But these were chilling words to Hezekiah.

"Then Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and told him the words of Rabshakeh." They said, "King, the news is bad. These guys are going to bring us down."

Here's a godly man going about the Lord's business, and he's facing death. He is at the hands and the mercy of the most powerful military force of the time in the world, a world power. What should he do? Well, Hezekiah, in fear, consults with God's prophet Isaiah. That's the way you should do it. Go to God. In those days, you went through your prophet. The prophet said, "Hezekiah, the news is good. I have some words of comfort. I've consulted with the Lord."

Isaiah 37:1-7: "When King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and entered the house of the Lord, the temple. Then he sent Eliakim who was over the household and Shebna the scribe and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth to Isaiah, the prophet, the son of Amos. They said to him, 'Thus says Hezekiah. This day is a day of distress, rebuke, and rejection. For children have come to birth, and there is no strength to deliver. Perhaps the Lord, your God will hear the words of Rabshakeh whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God and rebuke the words which the Lord your God has heard. Therefore, offer a prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. They said, "Isaiah, please pray for us." What if Isaiah was busy doing something and he said, "Yeah, sure. Okay, I'll do this," and then not do it? Samuel said, "It's a great sin when people ask you to pray for them and you do not do that. God is not unmindful of your sin. When they ask you to pray for something, especially if you indicate, "I'll stand with you," you should pray.

So here they came and said, "Isaiah, you're God's point of contact for us. Pray for us." What's going to happen? Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master. Thus says the Lord, 'Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard with which the servants of the King of Assyria have blasphemed Me.'" That's what they did. "Behold, I'll put a spirit in him so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land. I will make him fall by the sword in his own land." God says, "Don't worry about Sennacherib. I'm going to send a rumor. He's going to get word that there's trouble in the capital back home, and he's going to rush off to take care of that."

However, Hezekiah receives an ultimatum from the field commander Rabshakeh ridiculing any hope he has that he's going to escape the consequences of the Assyrian army. The Assyrian soldiers are out there cutting the trees down; sharpening the tops; putting a sharp point on them; and, they're ready to impale the leaders and the officers in charge. Rabshakeh demands surrender.

Isaiah 37:8-13: "Then Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Syria fighting against Libnah, for he had heard that the king had left Lachish. When he heard them say concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, 'He has come out to fight against you,' and when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 'Thus you shall say to Hezekiah, king of Judah: Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you, saying Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the lands, destroying them completely. So will you be spared? Did the gods of those nations which my fathers have destroyed deliver them, even Gozan and Haran and Rezeph and the sons of Eden who were at Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, and of Hena and Ivvah?'"

Well, this was a disheartening communication for Hezekiah to receive. But this is a good king. This is a king that knows that the machinery of God's judgment and of God's dealing in our lives is hinged on one thing, and one thing only: prayer for the believer who is in fellowship. I don't care what it is. That's the linchpin. If you don't have prayer, you don't have anything. A church body which will not come out to pray as a group will have far less in time and eternity than they could have had if they had said, "Yeah, we could make time for God to gather at a Wednesday night prayer meeting. You bet we can." The result would be consequences beyond their fondest dream. Hezekiah, because he was a man of God in deep trouble, knew this. So he goes; takes this letter in hand; goes into the temple; kneels down; and, begins praying with this letter in front of him.

Isaiah 37:14: "Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messenger and read it, and he went up to the house of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord, and Hezekiah prayed to the Lord, saying, 'O, Lord of hosts.'" You know what the word "hosts" means, don't you? It means "O, Lord of armies." Our God is the one has the real armies. They're the ones that determine the outcome of battle, not human armies. "Oh, Lord of armies, the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim. You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth, you have made heaven and earth." Remember, the cherubim are the special class of angels. They are the only ones that have wings. And they stand as the honor guard around God's throne in heaven. These are the highest of all angels.

Verse 17: "Incline Your ear, O Lord and hear. Open Your eyes, O Lord and see. Listen to all the words of Sennacherib, who sent them to reproach the living God. Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have devastated all the countries and their lands. They have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hand's, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. But now, O Lord, our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, Lord, are God."

What a splendid prayer. Hezekiah says, "Sure, they could knock off all those other nations with their idol gods, but now they're dealing with the true God. They're dealing with the omnipotent one. They're dealing with the omniscient one, the omnipresent one. And they will not bring us down unless You let them."

Well, God responds to Hezekiah's humble prayer through the prophet, Isaiah. Isaiah 37:21. It's a long passage here, but I think we need to read it: "Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent word to Hezekiah saying, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Because you have prayed to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word that the Lord has spoken against him.'" Isn't that interesting? How much trouble do you and I have in our lives because we don't pray to the Lord about it? We do something about it. We hustle in some way. We struggle in some way. We make up our own pretense of what is in the future of God's purpose for us, instead of saying, "You show me. You're the righteous one. I am your humble servant, and I'll follow." That's what Hezekiah was saying. He was a really godly leader.

Verse 22: "This is the word that the Lord has spoken against him (Sennacherib--Assyria): 'She has despised you and mocked you. The virgin daughter of Zion. She has shaken your head behind you, the daughter of Jerusalem. Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? And against whom have you raised your voice and haughtily lifted up your eyes? Against the Holy One of Israel.'" Sennacherib, do you know what you're doing? Do you know who it is that you're blaspheming?

Verse 24: "Through your servants, you have reproached the Lord, and you have said, 'With my many chariots I came up to the heights of the mountains, to the remotest parts of Lebanon, and I cut down its tall cedars and its choice cypresses. And I will go to the highest peak, its thickest forest.'" Sennacherib says, "I'm going to the top." He has total contempt for God.

"I dug wells and drank waters, and with the sole of my feet, I dried up the rivers of Egypt. Have you not heard? Long ago I did it. From ancient times I planned it. I have brought it to pass, that you should turn fortified cities into ruinous heaps. Therefore, their inhabitants were short of strength. They were dismayed and put to shame, and were as the vegetation of the fields, and as a green herb, as the grass on the housetops is scorched before it is grown up." God says, "Yes, Sennacherib, you have conquered these people. That's because I did it, I permitted you to bring judgment on these people. That was My judgment, and it was My doing.

Verse 28: "But I know your sitting down, and I know your going out and your coming in and your raging against me." He says, "I know all about Sennacherib."

"Because of your raging against me and because your arrogance has come up to my ears, therefore, I'll put my hook in your nose." Boy, that hurts. "And my bridle on your lips." That's even worse." I will turn you back by the way you came." He says, "I'm going to make a horse out of you. I'm going to jerk your chain." This is where that expression originated. "I'm going to jerk your chain, and you will do my will, Sennacherib."

"Then this shall be the sign for you. You shall eat this year what grows of itself, in the second year what springs from the same, and in the third year sow, plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. The surviving remnant of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward." He says, I'm going to protect My people."

"For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." He says, "I'm going to save Israel."

"Therefore, thus, says the Lord, concerning the King of Assyria, 'He shall not come to the city or shoot an arrow there. Neither shall he come before it with a shield nor throw up a mound against it (to go over the wall). By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come to this city,' declares the Lord. 'For I will defend the city to save it for My own sake, and for My servant David's sake.'" This is what God does. He defended the White House on 9/11 from being hit by one of those planes that was on its way there. He defended the capital building from being hit by one of the planes designated for that. This is what the God of all power does. He is in charge; He is real; He is there; and, His people know the true religion of faith in Jesus Christ and are under his protective custody.

So God said through Isaiah to Hezekiah, "God's going to take care of you. Put your heart at ease. Here are the words, Hezekiah. God is sending the angel of the Lord." Do you remember who the angel of the Lord was in Old Testament times? That was the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. It's a technical term. It never appears in the New Testament. God says, "I'm going to send the second member of the Trinity to handle this case." And so indeed God did.

Isaiah 37:36: "Then the angel of the Lord went out and struck 185,000 in a camp of the Assyrians, and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead." 185,000 crack military personnel of the Assyrian army woke up dead in the morning. There they were, all over the place. How could this happen? Isn't the Lord Jesus Christ the God of peace? Yeah. But He went through that camp and he slaughtered every one of them, one-by-one, and suddenly Sennacherib's arrogance was drained right out of him.

Verse 37: "So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, returned home, and lived at Ninevah (the capital). It came about as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god." Sennacherib didn't learn anything. He goes right back home and starts worshiping the same gods that have gotten him into this pickle.

"It came about as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons killed him with the sword, and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son became king in his place." He's worshiping his god; two of his sons come running through with a sword; and, Sennacherib dies before his very god. Is that ironic justice or what?

Now, Hezekiah has been saved by a dramatic act of God. This godly king who followed the path of prayer has been victorious. But Christians are not free of hard times. Suddenly Hezekiah finds that he's not feeling well, and as he consults with the physicians, he finds that he is not only ill, but he is mortally ill. He's going to die. It's just going to be a matter of time.

2 Kings 20:1-11: "In those days, Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah, the prophet, the son of Amos came to him and said to him, 'Thus, says, the Lord, set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.'" He says, "This is it, Hezekiah. Get things arranged the way you want your successors to handle your life, your church, your kingdom, your family, and all that pertains to you as the ruler."

"Then he turned his face to the wall and he prayed to the Lord saying (This is Hezekiah speaking to God.), 'Remember now, O Lord, I beseech you, I've walked before You in truth (And he had.), with a whole heart (And he had.), and have done what is good in Your sight." And he did. He used his wealth to do enormously good things--things of construction. Hezekiah's tunnel is a famed place to this very day as a water duct. He used what means he had and the power he had to honor God and to bless people.

"And Hezekiah wept bitterly. And it came about before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court that the word of the Lord came to him, saying." Hezekiah had delivered the bad news. He leaves, but he doesn't get too far before, all of a sudden, Isaiah hears again the voice of the Lord. The voice of God says, "Just a minute, Isaiah. I'm giving you an addendum to that message."

Verse 5" "Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of my people: 'Thus, says the Lord, the God of your father David, I have heard your prayer. I've seen your tears. Behold, I will heal you. On the third day, you shall go up to the House of the Lord." Three more days, and you'll be well.

"And I'll add 15 years to your life, and 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 My servant David's sake." "Yes. You're a good man, Hezekiah, but I'm not defending this city because of you. I'm defending it because of my promises that are eternal and irrefutable, and cannot be changed, that I made to the Jewish people. That's the kind of promise I'm making to you. You can count on it. You will live."

"Then Isaiah said, 'Take a cake of figs, and they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered. Hezekiah said to Isaiah, what will be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house the third day?'" Now this is good news, but Hezekiah says, "I can't believe this, Isaiah. Are you sure you didn't make a mistake? Are you just making this up to make me feel good? What evidence do I have that God would do a thing like that? Add 15 years to my life?"

"Isaiah said, 'This shall be the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that He has spoken. Shall the shadow go forward ten steps or go back ten steps?'" He says, "Look at the sundial. Do you want the shadow to go back ten minutes or do you want it to go forward ten minutes?

"Hezekiah answered, 'It's easy for the shadow to decline ten steps?'" That is, to go forward is what he meant. It keeps going. The shadow keeps going.

He said, "Let the shadow turn backward ten steps." Now, that would be something else. That would be opposite of the direction it's normally going.

"Isaiah the prophet cried to the Lord, and God brought the shadow on the stairway back ten steps by which it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz. The stairway was the shadow that governed the clock. The shadow on the stairway determined the time. The stairway was a sundial, and it went backwards. That cannot be. That's contrary to what the sun is doing, but that's exactly what happened.

Please notice the wonderful thing in 2 Chronicles 32:25: Hezekiah (who now was healed, sure enough) was a mortal man and a good man, but the sin nature is still there. "But Hezekiah gave no return for the benefit he received because his heart was proud. Therefore, wrath came upon him and on Judah and on Jerusalem." He did not respond to this in a humble way. That's hard to believe. He gave himself credit: "I'm really special with God. I'm really somebody. That's why He couldn't get along without me." He couldn't be the humble man that he had the opportunity to be.

2 Chronicles 32:27: "Now Hezekiah had immense riches (honor), and made for himself treasuries for silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields, and all kinds of valuable articles. He had storehouses also for the produce of grain, wine and oil, pens of all kinds of cattle, sheep foals, and flocks. Boy, this man was prospered materially.

"And he made cities for himself, acquired flocks and herds in abundance. For God had given him great wealth. It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them to the west side of the city of David." He created an aqueduct for water supply.

"And Hezekiah prospered in all that he did."

But then, Hezekiah is guilty of a great folly. This man now has it all. He has his life back. He has 15 years. He has great wealth. He has enormous opportunity now to live out 15 years of life in the service of God, packing heaven for rewards as hard as he can. You would think that anybody who went through an experience like this would have had a very humble spirit, and would have said, "God has brought me back from the grave. He has honored me. Because He has done this for me, and He has made me responsible for this wealth, that puts an enormous burden on me because it's not mine--it's His. And, by heaven, He's going to hold me accountable for it." He did good things for it, but it did not humble him. It did not cause him to realize that it was the grace of God and the mercy of God that had saved his life and continued to bless him. So he then makes a move that is total disaster--folly beyond anything anybody can imagine. Please join us in the next session as we look at Hezekiah's folly.

Dr. John E. Danish, 2002

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