

Kings and Prophets 15-08-20

This is Thursday, the 20th of August, 2015. We continue our study of Kings and Prophets. We're looking at the last half of the reign of King Hezekiah as it is communicated to us in three dimensions.

We have it in Chronicles, Kings, and four chapters in Isaiah, 36, 7, 8, and 9. Let's take a moment to go before the Lord in prayer, and then we will take up the poultice of figs. Father, thank you for granting us this day, for sustaining us through the week, for so carefully orchestrating the fine nuances as well as the large parts and pieces that form the circumstances of our lives. We know that we are held securely in your hands because we are in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have so many potentials and opportunities to exploit and to benefit from. We pray that the portion of your Word that we look at this evening will illuminate our path and strengthen and encourage our hearts. May each one find that which is meaningful and pertinent and inspirational as we see your dealings across time in the unchanging reflection of your character despite the changing appearance and events in the world.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, King Hezekiah, what can you say? He was off with a bang.

The starting gun went off and he immediately hit the ground running, got the Passover celebrated even though it was a little bit out of time. And the focus and impetus of the early days of his reign was on restoring God's place in the worship life of the southern kingdom of Judah. People from the northern kingdom came down to join him in that, people that had long despaired of ever having a place where they could truly worship and pursue the covenant relationship with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But here is a king finally that seems to get it and he had the heart of his father David, he pursued the policies of his father David, he resurrected and restored the somewhat fallen tent of David and things are very admirable up to a point. He faces this great internal situation where things are in disrepair, great amounts of blame can be heaped on his father and even though he was co-regent for a time evidently he couldn't get much done until his father was off the scene. But on day one of his reign he comes out from under that shadow and out from under that restriction and does these things and it's great and it's recorded in Scripture for all time.

The reconstruction of the infrastructure in Judah, great stuff. What is it that diminishes Hezekiah's overall king rating? His overall score comes halfway through his reign. He faces this great external crisis with the incursion of the Assyrians with Sennacherib and the challenge of on whom to rely.

If you boil this down in a nutshell, Rabshakeh comes down and says don't rely on the God of Israel. He talks to the people in the wild, don't let your king tell you you should rely on your

God. We've rolled up all of the nations and all of the other gods that have stood in our path so don't think you'll be any different.

Speak in the tongues of the people so that they can understand it. He speaks in the Hebrew tongue and they say speak to us in Aramaic and he says no, I want everybody to hear this. And so there's this great challenge.

Over the course of time this recurs. It's not just one single confrontation, a great mighty act of faith and it's all over. You remember that as you look through the three accounts you find out that in Kings there is the payment of tribute, there is the buying off of the threat, which isn't mentioned in Chronicles and isn't mentioned in Isaiah.

But the book of Kings as we have seen is more of the insider palace information, more by comparison with us, more of what we know is going on in our own heart and soul that doesn't necessarily make it out for public consumption. And interestingly in God's chronicle things that end up being regrettable that we realize were failures of faith, whatever is not of faith is sin, and we take it before the Lord and we say Lord that was a failure. I did not meet that challenge as I should have.

I didn't rely on you and claim your promises as I should have. When we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us. And God's record doesn't include, sort of symbolically speaking here in terms of thinking of Chronicles as God's record, doesn't include that information.

So we think okay, everybody has a stumble that he's not perfect. David had mistakes that he made. Hezekiah has mistakes that he made.

But something seems to have been exposed in this great crisis, something in Hezekiah's life. We're going to be in two places tonight. We're going to look at 2 Kings chapter 20 and Isaiah chapter 38.

This is so important and fulsome in terms of detail. We have three accounts. We have several chapters in each of the three books.

We could camp here for a long time. So what I thought we would do is just take a couple of representative issues and analyze those. They speak for the rest of it and understanding those we can see what's going on in the rest.

I would love to do all three accounts verse by verse, but I think we might all have to finish up somewhere in the first six or seven decades of the millennial kingdom if I did that. So we'll take this time of personal disease. Now the reason I'm kind of painting this big picture is I want to ask you a question.

Where was the challenge when Hezekiah hit day one of his independent reign, internal or external? Internal. How does he meet that? Guns blazing, pedal to the metal, everybody, you

can't get a better report card than what he gets in that situation. The second great crisis that we have looked at reflected in Chronicles and Kings, internal or external? Rabshaka, Assyrians, it's an external threat.

His father tried to build up the army and build up the defenses and all that, but it's all been rolled up and here are the Assyrians at the gates. And it's an external threat. And at one point Hezekiah takes a letter and lays it before the Lord and says, Oh Lord, what about this? It's external.

They meet that. God honors Hezekiah's prayer and that threat is eliminated, supernaturally, in a single night. Right? Now looking at 2 Kings chapter 20, it says, The next episode that we are going to look at is, In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death.

What kind of threat is this, internal or external? It is internal. But how is it different than the first one that he faced? It's one thing to look at a situation that is external to you and say this needs fixing, let me fix it. It's one thing to meet a challenge from the outside, we've built up our infrastructure, now we're being challenged from the outside, let me go to God and we're going to meet that.

This is sort of a third kind of challenge because this is a personal challenge. Internal to the kingdom challenge, Hezekiah nails it, A plus, 99.9% on the test. External challenge, pretty good.

Gets A minus, B plus. I seriously doubt that it was God's perfect plan and form of deliverance for him to strip the gold off the temple and pay, buy off the Assyrians and it didn't work, they came back. And it's not when he stripped the gold off that he was delivered, it's when he lays the letter out before the Lord that he's delivered.

But he does okay, he gets through that. Of course a good portion of the kingdom gets rolled up in the meantime, but Jerusalem is safe, his throne is safe, the line of David is safe, he does okay. This is a third kind of challenge.

I would submit, I would suggest, if you think about it, we face similar things and something helpful as we look around at the various things we have to make decisions about and where we're supposed to be applying our faith is to decide what kind of test is this? Is this an infrastructure test? Is this an outside challenge test? Or is it personal and internal to me? Because some of us are really good at one kind and not so hot at the other. And knowing what works and what doesn't work when there is an infrastructure challenge, by infrastructure what would that be for you and me today? If we had something comparable to what Hezekiah faced when he first came to the throne, what would it be? Well, I honor God, I understand the role of God, but everybody around me hasn't been and isn't currently doing that. But I've got authority, so in my household, in the place of the sphere of my influence and my ability to control what's going on, I, as for, what did Joshua say? As for me and my house.

But Dad, I, look, my house, you live in my house, me and my house, we're going to serve the

Lord. As long as you're in my house, you're going to serve the Lord. Not serving the Lord, you're not in my house.

Because in my house, we will serve the Lord. That's what me and my house. Hezekiah in his house, when he gets charge of the house, that's what he does.

So that's one thing. He is also charged with maintaining the security and safety of the kingdom from external threats. And when an external threat comes, he's the guy.

He's got to figure out what to do. He can roll over, he can surrender, he can tell them to haul down the flag, he can say, we're all your slaves. He can try to bribe or buy them off.

He can try to negotiate. He can go try to form alliances, try to drum up support from Egypt or some other external country. He can try human solutions that other kingdoms and countries have tried to meet this challenge.

Or he can go to the Lord God. And Hezekiah kind of tries one and it doesn't work out and then he remembers that he really had to go to God and that works out okay. For us also, not just in the structure of our world where we have some say, and not just when it is an external threat.

You could think of external threats as being threats in society, challenges to the existence of Christianity, to the freedom to worship, to the freedom to maintain standards where you do not want to be passively sponsoring evil. If you see something is evil, you ought to be able to say that you think it's evil and that you don't want any part of it. And that's part of the freedom that this country was founded to establish and preserve.

It's being eaten away. But external threats, external challenges, things that are forces beyond our control, large things, big things that we have to put up some kind of a defense. And maybe they're rolling up others around us but we don't want them rolling us up.

How do you do that? Do you compromise? Do you negotiate? Do you try to get a confederation together of others and try to meet it and defeat it? How do you do that? And both of those you can look to Hezekiah and see helpful insights into meeting them. This is a third kind in my view. My suggestion to you is that this is a new and third kind of challenge.

And one of the reasons we have these three accounts is that as these various challenges come up we get insight and perspective on them that can be helpful to us. So again, 2 Kings 20, in those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. It's not his son.

It's not a plague that hit the kingdom. It's him personally. Make sense? It doesn't really matter at this point that he's the king, does it? He's sick and near death and the fact that he's the king and there's a kingdom and there are Assyrians and Babylonians and all the rest of it is really not pertinent to his immediate mental pressure.

The spiritual challenge that he's facing is, I'm about to shuffle off the mortal coil. I'm about to

travel to the burn where nobody returns. I'm checking out.

My string has run out. My time is up. Personal.

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. This seems kind of harsh. People don't invite the pastor to the sick bed or to the hospital when somebody is ill for this kind of bedside manner encouragement.

Oh, I see you're not feeling well. He's just saying, is your will made out? God says you're dying. You're going.

You're gone. It is emphatic. He could have said, you know, the Lord says you're not going to live much longer.

You're going to die and not live. Both. Both at the same time.

Rather insensitive. I don't think Isaiah is going to be giving classes in tact and bedside manner in the kingdom. So Hezekiah somewhat understandably turns his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord saying, remember now O Lord, how I have walked before you in truth and with a loyal heart and I have done what was good in your sight.

And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Now, is there anything wrong with this? Lord, remember how I have walked before you in truth and with a loyal heart and I have done what was good in your sight. What is the, those of you that are interested in debate and logic and, you know, what is a fallacy? What is a, what is a legitimate argument, counter argument? You know, there's, there's a world of these things where you use facts and evidence.

You use prothesis and hypothesis. You start with a premise and you arrive at a conclusion. And all of this, if you're going to get anywhere, it's like science.

It needs to be legitimate and valid and well-founded and not have big holes in it where you end up in falsehood and not truth. So let's just take a second here and just parse this argument right quick. I'm really feeling bad.

Somebody get the prophet. Isaiah walks in. O king, live forever.

Except you're not. God says you're not going to live forever. You're not going to live forever.

You will die and not live. So he turns his face to the wall, not to the prophet, not to heaven, not to the temple. He turns his face to the wall and he prays and he says, Lord, remember I pray that I've done good things for you.

I have walked before you in truth and with a loyal heart and have done what was good in your sight. What is the point of this prayer? Why does he say this? What's his argument? What is the prothesis? You know what the prothesis is? This is the premise. This is what starts the ball

rolling here.

If I say to somebody who is standing there smoking a cigarette, your gas tank is leaking. That's the prothesis. That's the premise.

What is the implied hypothesis or conclusion? You should get away from the leaking gas with that lit cigarette. This is what I am suggesting to you. You're standing there with an open flame, with sparks, with little bits of flaming tobacco.

There is a danger here. So all I say is your gas tank is leaking. Somebody can put together the conclusion.

God says you will die and not live through Isaiah. What is the argument here? Lord, remember all of the good things I have done so that what? I should not die now. I should not die because I've been a good guy.

Isn't this the argument? Lord, remember that I walked before you in truth. I followed you with a loyal heart. What's the implication here? You shouldn't let me die.

I deserve to live because I have done well. Is this a legitimate argument? Kind of. What does it say in the law of Moses? Follow these commands that your days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God gives you.

Long life and prosperity were thought to accompany those who were faithful and obedient in Israel. Right? This is the general truth. Now I am slowing down and teasing out the threads of this for a reason.

Is he, at least apparently, appealing to a legitimate scriptural point of view? People who are righteous and obedient to God can expect to claim the general promise that they will live long in the land which the Lord gives them. He is the king of the land and he has done well, so he would have a legitimate expectation that that principle, that general promise would apply. Right? Go like this.

Yes, he should be able to do that. Heads nodding in the affirmative. However, as you know from Genesis to Revelation, there are general truths that generally hold and then there are specific times when they don't.

Generally speaking, you swim in water or you sink and drown in water. You do not stand on top of and walk on water. Right? The general rule is in the water you have to either float, swim or drown.

There are times when specific exceptions are made to that general rule. Generally speaking, people will live long in the land and prosper when they are faithful and obedient. But if God sends a major prophet into your room and says, thus says the Lord God, set your house in order, a command, for you will die and not live.

A declaration from the Lord God, not a general truth, a specific truth for you. Generally speaking, two people get married and have children. It's a general pattern.

There are all kinds of exceptions. Sometimes people don't get married. Sometimes they get married and don't have children.

Sometimes they get married and one spouse dies and they marry somebody else. There are always exceptions to the general rule. The general rule to which Hezekiah is appealing here is, I've been a good guy.

I shouldn't be dying now. I'm too young to die and I'm too good to die. Where God has just sent him a specific declaration for him personally.

And this is an important distinction to make. You and I as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are possessed of a wide knowledge of the teaching of the Word of God, the general principles that hold. Everybody I'm looking at here, everybody listening to the sound of my voice, has been a student of the Word of God for a long time.

You know the general truths. You also know that there are exceptions and particularly individual exceptions that are a part of the plan of God for us. If you become aware of the fact that there is an exception in your case, and by this I don't mean, well, I know that there are no apostles since the close of the canon of Scripture, but there's an exception in my case.

I am an apostle. I know that the supernatural gifts and manifestations of the Spirit ceased in the lifetime of the apostle John, but there's an exception in my case. I can raise the dead.

I can heal the sick. I can cure leprosy. This is not what we're talking about.

It's not I am a special case and the rules don't apply to me. This is not what I'm saying. I'm saying that there are times when normal promises that are made will be accepted, and it is for a purpose.

God had a purpose in taking Hezekiah out early. Generally speaking, somebody who is righteous will live a long time. God says, but I need to take you out now.

Generally speaking, parents who are given a child to raise can expect to raise them to adulthood and watch them grow and move out and become the next generation, but sometimes those parents lose their child. It's an exceptional case. It's not the norm.

We don't expect that God is going to take our children. We don't expect that we're going to be bereaved of our spouse, but there are times when we are. I'm not talking about the rules don't apply to me.

I'm saying that there are times when God does something special in our case, and it's usually in terms of a loss. We lose a capability. We lose a person.

We lose an opportunity. We lose a function. Something that we would normally expect in the general rule isn't there, and God says, this is my doing.

Paul the apostle said, do I not have the right to lead about a wife, as the other apostles do, but I don't. It was a loss. He got sick.

He had a thorn in the flesh. We don't know exactly what it was. It could have been lost eyesight from getting stoned outside of Lystra, but three times he went to the Lord and said, can you take this away? I'm trying to be an apostle here and this thorn in the flesh is really slowing me down.

It's a messenger of Satan and it buffets me. God says, this loss, this lack is from me, and my grace is sufficient for you to bear it. You need this for some reason, and I'm not going to remove it.

That's the kind of thing we're talking about here. Hezekiah wants more life. God says, it's time for it to go, and sometimes it's hard for us to understand why would that be? Well, Hezekiah's case is a place where God has said, I'll show you why.

When I decree an exception in your case, an exceptional lack or an exceptional loss, here's what happens if I reverse that. I have a good reason for it. All things work together for good, but if you really can't enter into it, if you can't believe that my grace is sufficient for you and my wisdom is superior to yours and I know what I'm doing when I ordain this exception in your case, then let me put an example in the Bible of what happens when I don't follow through on that.

He says, and you could say, well, this makes God a liar. God says, you will die and not live. Set your house in order, certainly implying that it's going to happen in a few days.

Everybody dies and not lives at some point, but this is a timing issue, right? So Hezekiah prays, remember now, Lord, how I have walked before you in truth and with a loyal heart. I have done what was right and good in your sight. And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

Now, to get a 100% on this test, to get a perfect score, what would the prayer say? What did Jesus say in the Garden of Gethsemane when God said, I need you to die young? I need you to die now. What were the exact words of the Lord Jesus Christ translated into our English language? Not my will, but thine be done. What did Mary say when Gabriel came to her and said, you're going to be an exceptional case.

You're going to lose your reputation. People are going to accuse you of sleeping with a Roman soldier. You're going to be pregnant out of wedlock, so to speak.

What did she say when Gabriel finished up delivering the message? Let it be to me according to your word. That's the 100% right answer. Not my will, but thine be done.

Let it be to me according to your word. If Hezekiah had met and passed this third challenge, this internal test, that's what he would have prayed. And he wouldn't be weeping bitterly.

He'd be thinking, well, I'm going to where my father David is, where Solomon is. I will be laid to rest in the tomb of the kings. People will remember me for the example I have set and the priorities that I have encouraged and the worship life in Israel that I have resurrected from near death.

And I have done my best. God says it's time for me to go. Let's go.

Let's get on with it. But why is he praying this prayer? Why is he so unhappy about dying now? He loves this material life a little too much. Weeping bitterly, apparently all of his accomplishments, all of the tests that he has passed, all of the sustaining grace that God has given him isn't sufficient.

And he's crying bitterly, his face to the wall. So it happened before verse 4, Isaiah had gone out into the middle court that the word of the Lord came to him saying, 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 third day you shall go up to the house of the Lord. On the third day. How many times have we seen this? My dead bones will rise after two days.

On the third day we will live again. 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.

Now, do you think that God already had a plan to defend the city for the sake of his people and his servant David without Hezekiah being present? Yes, he did. He's going to do it a different way now but he says, I've heard your prayer. I've seen your tears.

I will heal you. And on the third day you will rise and live again, so to speak. So Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs.

So they took it and laid it on the boil and he recovered. 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 third day? Now, you remember when Gabriel went and visited Mary and he said, you know, you're going to be the mother of the Messiah. And she said, What sign will you give me that I'm going to be the mother of the Messiah? Remember that? And Gabriel said, Well, what would you like me to do? That isn't in there.

Why? What's the difference between Mary and Hezekiah? I take God at His word. Signs are for the weak. Signs are for those who have no ability to, not having seen, believe.

Who would you think is the weakest of the disciples in terms of just taking Christ at His word? I

will not believe until I get a sign. I need something. I need some evidence here.

I'm not gullible enough to just have somebody tell me something and I believe it. I need a little science here. Do you remember in John chapter 14? There's sort of a harbinger of that.

Just turn real quickly to John 14. Have you probably memorized this? Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God.

Believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, I will come again, receive you to Myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. Where I go, you know, and the way you know.

What is verse 5 of John 14? Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You're going, and how can we know the way? This is the Hezekiah mindset. Give me some bona fides. I mean, I know You're God and all, and I know, you know, we really worship You and so on, but I need something to prove to me that You're really going to do what You say You're going to do.

Tragic failure and an example for us. It is one thing to have formal worship of God in your life. I have set a priority on going to Bible class.

I am going to have a time of devotions or reflections or meditations or time set aside for prayer and reviewing my notes. Whatever it is you do, you have built the temple back up. You've unbarred the doors and you've got the formal worship of God going in your life.

When there are incursions from the outside, you say, look, I'm a Christian and I don't hold with that. We're not going to cheat. We're not going to steal.

We're not going to do things that bring shame on the name of the Lord Jesus. We're going to live our external life as Christians, and we are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, the power of God, and salvation. We represent Him on this earth.

When an external threat comes, we will stand and deliver. In the internality of our personal tests, when God says, I'm going to short you, you're not going to get what you expected. You're not going to get what you hoped for.

You're not going to get what you had really set your sights on. For Hezekiah, he had big plans for the upcoming years. Finally got everything squared away internally.

Finally got these Assyrians off my back. I got some stuff I'm going to do and God says, no, you're checking out. But he's invested in that.

He's got this personal investment and God says, all right, you want this so badly, I will give it to you. I will add to your life. You will live and not die.

I'll even tell you how long you're going to live. How many people get to know that in precise terms? He says, well, how do I know? This is where Hezekiah and others should be glad that I'm not God. Because I would say, you know what? Forget, belay my last, you're dying now.

I tell you, you're going to live and you're asking me, you want me to prove it? If you wait three days, won't you know? Well, I can't wait three days. I need a sign now. Show me a sign now.

This is the kind of thinking we want to find in ourselves and expunge. Torch out. I get the idea that people found this thinking in themselves and that's why they did that flagellation.

They just beat themselves with a whip and said, don't think that way, don't think that way, don't think that way, you moron, you idiot. You're questioning the Lord God in heaven. He just gave you a promise and you're asking Him to prove it? It's surprising to me that Isaiah didn't say, excuse me while I just step back into a corner here because I have a feeling that one of these Mount Carmel incursions is about to take place from heaven and I just want to be at a safe distance.

But God is gracious. And so He asks him for a sign. What sign will God give me that I will live and not die? So, Hezekiah and others should be asking this question.

Isaiah responds and tells him, this is the sign to you from the Lord that the Lord will do the thing which He has spoken. This is the sign that the Lord will do the thing that the Lord has spoken. Just that alone should have probably started causing Hezekiah's face to melt a little bit.

The insult that is delivered to God that God has spoken. The Lord will do the thing which He has spoken. Shall the shadow go forward 10 degrees or go backward 10 degrees? Hezekiah answered it is an easy thing for the shadow to go down 10 degrees.

No, let the shadow go backward 10 degrees. Let me just ask you something. Who makes the shadow go forward 10 degrees? Why do we have a sun and shadows and the sun consistently moves in a predictable pattern every day so that if you wait you will see the shadow progress 10 degrees? Whose work is that? Is it any more difficult for him to make the universe continue to function than it is for him to make an exception to his own laws? Putting the thing in place and getting it running is the great fiat act of creation by this God.

So whether the shadow goes forward or back, if you think there is a difference, you don't realize who you are dealing with. The God who makes the shadow go back 10 degrees is the God that put the whole thing in place so that there is a shadow that normally goes forward 10 degrees. This is a rebuke.

When Hezekiah says I want the shadow to go back 10 degrees, it is evidence that he is not appreciating who God is. If he thought about it, he would say, you know what, never mind, I don't need a sign. Obviously, look at the work of God around me.

The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament shows forth His handiwork. When God

says let there be light, there is light.

When God separates light from darkness, that is what light and shadow is, right? Nature obeyed. Why can't I obey? Dumb nature responds to God's command, as it were, and I am questioning it. This is such a horrific thing.

The more you look at it, the more you think, are you kidding? I hope I never do this. Forward or back? Hezekiah says, well, it is easy to get the shadow to go forward. Easy? Okay.

Your homework between now and next Thursday is to go create a universe with a solar system in it and a sun and a planet, atmosphere, refraction, properties of light, gravity, you know, all that stuff. See if you can knock that out by next Thursday because according to Hezekiah, it is an easy thing to get a shadow to travel across ground. You see the myopia, the nearsightedness that this reflects? This is what you and I have to look for and get rid of in our soul.

The God of creation is on our side. The God of creation is intimately involved in the details of our life. We have seen the fine detail, the intricate machinery reflected in the feasts, right? That is the God who makes us promises.

To ask for a sign, to need a sign, to think that God does not know what He is doing is a horrible insult delivered to God from us. But Hezekiah does not see it. Let the shadow go backward ten degrees.

So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the Lord and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward by which it had gone down on the steps of Ahaz. Not the sundial, the steps. This goes across the steps.

We will look at this in detail last time. We studied it in great detail when we did the last four chapters of the 36, 37, 38, 39 in Isaiah about five years ago. We will quickly review what this means.

What is the poultice of figs? Why is that in there? But here is something to ponder between now and then. There is only one major difference in the Isaiah account of this illness and healing and the song that Hezekiah is going to compose on the occasion of his healing that is coming up here. If you look at your page there in 2 Kings chapter 20 and following, right at after his healing you see that there is some poetry there.

It is in Isaiah chapter 38 verse 10 and following. I said in the prime of my life I shall go to the gates of Sheol and so on. I think his song is there.

But the difference is that you can look for in one account, look where the poultice of figs is mentioned and then in the Isaiah account look where the poultice of figs is mentioned. You saw it in 2 Kings that we just read. As soon as he says he is going to go ahead and heal him, it says Isaiah told him to apply the poultice of figs, right? Verse 7, 2 Kings 20 verse 7, Isaiah said take a

lump of figs.

They took it and laid it on the boil and he recovered. If you flip over to Isaiah chapter 39, after the whole event, Hezekiah's life is extended. Hezekiah writes this big song.

After everything, the very last two verses in the chapter, Isaiah had said, let them take a lump of figs, apply it as a poultice and he shall recover. Hezekiah had said, what is the sign? I shall go up to the house of the Lord. The two verses are pretty close in the two accounts, but in Isaiah, they're at the very end where in Kings, they're at the beginning.

Why did it move? This isn't just mere stylistic variation. So your homework between now and next Thursday is to think about what we've said regarding the emphasis in these different accounts. What is the perspective in Isaiah? What is the perspective in Kings? And why would that particular note about the lump of figs move to the end in Isaiah, the prophet versus Kings, the sort of human record, the King's diary.

Final point though, quick summary, what kind of test is it? And if I'm going to be faithful and pass that test, what do I rely upon? Fixing up the temple, he relied on the Word of God. How did he know how to fix it? He went back to Torah, went back to the instructions that had been left behind, saw what Solomon had done. When he faced the outside threat, what did he do? He went to the Lord, laid the letter out, sort of unprecedented.

He laid it out and the Lord solved that. Now he's got this personal issue and it seems as though his faith in the Lord has just seriously faltered. When it's personal, sometimes it's tough for us to be objective.

It's tough for us to remember who we are and why we're here. It's tough for us to credit God with integrity and with veracity and direct faith toward him as we should. And a guy that did it right in the first two times really seriously fell on his face when it was personal.

It's always our greatest challenge when it's personal. So we look to this example and hope that we can do better ourselves. We'll pick this up next time but we'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for how vividly and meaningfully these things are expressed for us. It is memorable. It is helpful because we look outside ourselves and see the elements of a challenge and the elements of the solution where there is victory and where there is failure.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will use these truths to guide us, to illuminate our path, to motivate us, strengthen us and encourage us so that we can truly reflect your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, on this earth. We can represent him as his body. We can, by example, draw those who desire relationship with you toward the light so that they will ask us a reason for the hope that is in us.

And we will have the opportunity to share the wonderful truth of your salvation through the Lord Jesus and the bright future both in this life and in the ages to come that you offer us

through him. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.