



***Becoming Fully Devoted Followers
by Studying the Followers Before Us***

**WEEK 27
HEZEKIAH**

JULY 2-7, 2007

DAY	<i>THROUGH THE BIBLE</i>	ABBREVIATED STUDY
Monday	Is 49-54; Ps 131	2 K 18:1-12; 2 Chron 28:1-29:2; Ps 131
Tuesday	Is 55-58; Ps 132	2K 18:1-4; 2 Chron 29-30; Ps 132
Wednesday	Is 59-61; Ps 133	2 Chron 31; Ps 133
Thursday	Is 62-66; Ps 134	2 K 18:13 - 19:37; 2 Chron 32:1-22; Ps 134
Friday	Mic 1-4; Ps 135	2 Kings 20:1-11; 2 Chron 32:24-26; Is 38:1-8; Ps 135



Connecting people to abundant life.

Walk Through The Bible Readings
MONTH AT A GLANCE

July 1, Week 27 - Hezekiah

Monday	Isaiah 49-54	Psalm 131
Tuesday	Isaiah 55-60	Psalm 132
Wednesday	Isaiah 60-61	Psalm 133
Thursday	Isaiah 62-66	Psalm 134
Friday	Micah 1-4	Psalm 135

July 8, Week 28 – Minor Prophets 1

Monday	Micah 5-7	Psalm 136
Tuesday	Nahum 1-3	Psalm 137
Wednesday	No readings scheduled	
Thursday	No readings scheduled	
Friday	No readings scheduled	

July 15-Week 29 – Minor Prophets 2

Monday	Zephaniah 1-3	Psalm 138
Tuesday	Haggai 1-2	Psalm 139
Wednesday	Jeremiah 1-6	Psalm 140
Thursday	Jeremiah 7-12	Psalm 141
Friday	Jeremiah 13-20	Psalm 142

PRAYER JOURNAL

This week I am praying for . . .

. . . the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church of Upland as they mourn the tragic loss of students and youth workers as they were returning from a week-long mission trip to Bishop, California. Those who were injured and killed had just spent a wonderful week being selfless servants in the name of Jesus Christ, in giving of their time to work at a church and among the people in a Native American congregation in Bishop, CA, the Valley Presbyterian Church. Those deceased: Becca Vetterani, driver and sponsor; Hayley Watson (parents Bob & Deborah), D.J. (Dominique) Michaels (parents Jeff & Tammy), Nick Libutti (father Michael). Those injured and undergoing treatment: Tom Vetterani in critical condition with burns, lacerations, a broken pelvis and leg and severe smoke inhalation. Brittany Jackson (mother, Stephanie), broken arm and leg and moderate burns. Corrie McClelland (parents Lynn & Luke) has fractured bones in his face and possible internal injuries; Olivia Honda (parents Bill & Marilyn) has head trauma. Lydia Depillis-Lindheim (parents Jan & Lisette) has a fractured hip. Those treated and released : Matt Borger (parents David & Leslie), Ekene Akabike (mom: Ogonne).

. . . good health, safety, and wisdom for Charly and Jodie Pine serving with the Navigator's. Pray for God's provision and patience as they are in the process of waiting 12 months to adopt a 6-12 month old little girl. Jodie is the daughter of members Dave and Betsy McIntire. Charly began serving with the Navigators in 1992 and Jodie began partnering with him in 1995 after their marriage. Charly and Jodie, along with children CJ, Joshua, and Jordan, consider their current mission site "home."

And . . .

READ

2 Kings 18:1-12

2 Chronicles 28:1-29:2

Psalms 131

REFLECT

Principle: Sin will weaken a leader and a nation.

In the past weeks, we have studied the last king of Israel, Hoshea (northern kingdom) and the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah's ministry was to the southern kingdom during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. This week we go south to learn about Hezekiah, who ruled Judah for 29 years (715-687). He became king of Judah while Hoshea was in his third year as Israel's regent. Hezekiah will rule for six years before the northern kingdom falls to the Assyrians and is exiled. All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God (2 Kings 17:7).

They say you can tell a Southerner by the buckle on his belt, the mud flaps on his truck and the spellin' on his mailbox. How do we know the Northern kingdom of Israel from the Southern kingdom of Judah? Judah had been headed the way of the northern kingdom at the hand of King Ahaz. The Lord sent Isaiah to Ahaz with this message, "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all." These words fell like drops of rain on a slab of granite, unable to penetrate the hardness of his heart. King Ahaz was determined to rely on Assyria and its pantheon of gods and further weakened his country in crisis. In his efforts to curry favor, Ahaz closed the doors of the temple and set up altars on every street corner in Jerusalem. He built up high places throughout Judah, shrines where the gods of other nations could be conveniently (openly) worshipped. Paul wrote in Romans 1:18-32 that this degradation of spiritual life will lead to (or gain) the open approval of those who practice it. Ahaz refused to seek the Lord's help and instead, took the strategy of

"if you can't beat it, join it." But Assyria, like the sin of compromise, would never be satisfied and demanded more money from Judah.

Hezekiah began his reign by taking an immediate stand which demanded a great deal of courage. It would have been far easier to simply maintain the status quo, to continue to forge foreign alliances and tolerate religious syncretism as the cost of doing business in a world where politics and religion were inextricably linked. But Hezekiah wasn't a political pragmatist. He was a king after God's own heart, like David had been before him. We learn from 2 Chronicles 29:2 that Hezekiah chose David as his model – a modern description would be his "hero" – not his own hapless father. Through his leadership, the southern tribes were, at least for a time, spared the fate that had overtaken their brothers in the north.

RESPOND

How would you describe yourself as a leader? Sometimes our plans work for a time, then failure happens. What is your response to failed plans? What troubles will you turn over to God with confidence in His loving care?

What is happening in our country that resembles this time? How are people still vulnerable to idolatry? What forms does it take in our world?

Who and what are the heroes today? Are you someone's hero? Why or why not? How do we, at Glenkirk, model and teach standing firm in our faith?

PRAY

Lord, You know my past and my heart today. You know my struggles with sins and I ask for Your strength to obey all You command of me and for me. Help me cultivate a quiet heart (Ps 131:2). Help me to put my hope in You, Lord, both now and forevermore.

- C.M.

READ

2 Kings 18:1-4

2 Chronicles 29-30

Psalms 132

REFLECT

Principle: Believers experience joy in the Lord and are to share it with others.

Hezekiah came to Judah's throne in a time of crisis and turmoil. The country and people were weakened by years of sin and rebellion against God. Coping with the crisis meant Hezekiah must first look not to the threat as his father did, nor to the threatened, but to the God who was over both. The name Hezekiah means "the Lord strengthens." King Hezekiah needed God's strength to accomplish all that he did. He was one of the few kings who actually removed the high places and put an end to idol worship in the hills. He restored temple worship and encouraged the people from both Judah and Israel to come to the temple in Jerusalem and worship the Lord (Deut 12). Hezekiah's formula for revival is sanctification, sacrifice, song and service.

Hezekiah did not waste any time getting Judah back to worshipping the true and living God. 2 Kings alone mentions how Hezekiah destroyed the bronze serpent made by Moses (Num 21:5-9). The serpent "Nehushstan" was a religious relic that had reached the status of an idol. Hezekiah commanded the priests to sanctify themselves and the temple and to restore the worship as the Lord had commanded through Moses. Temple worship was the heart of the Jewish nation, and if it was wrong, everything else would be wrong.

Because Hezekiah wanted more than mere housecleaning, he called the spiritual leaders into this rededication process. In his heart Hezekiah wanted the people to enter into a covenant with the Lord (29:10) and to do that he needed leaders who would set the example and lead the way for a fresh beginning. If the spiritual leaders are not right with God, how

how can He bless his people? Fourteen leaders are named (vv 12-14) including the Levitical families (Num 3-4) and temple musicians, singers and worship leaders. King Hezekiah knew that there had to be music and praise or the temple worship would displease the Lord. These leaders did all that was commanded by Hezekiah.

After sanctification was completed the sacrifices were offered, songs of praise rang out and God was worshipped (29:20-34). The service of the temple was reestablished (29:35). What a great time of rejoicing for Judah! (v 36)

Hezekiah invites all of Judah and Israel by letter to come celebrate Passover in Jerusalem. The Passover is a celebration of God's deliverance of His people from Egypt and is considered one of the main festivals. Although not all who were invited came, a very large crowd assembled in Jerusalem (30:10-13). It is breath-taking to read the closing of chapter 30, "the priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place."

RESPOND

How easy it is for human nature to want to honor religious relics that have no power. We need leaders like Hezekiah who trust in the living God and call God's people away from worshipping a dead, useless image.

What is at the heart of your worship? Pray for the leaders in our church as they look to replace our music director. Pray that we will be trusting God to guide us in seeking pastoral leadership.

What steps do you need to take to be cleansed of sin? Who can you invite to church this month?

PRAY

Lord, thank you for the godly leadership You have provided for us. Help us to trust You through our times of change. Guide our hearts and minds to offer sincere praise and worship.

- C.M.

READ

2 Chronicles 31

Psalms 133

REFLECT

Principle: Faithfulness will produce fruitfulness towards God and His people.

When a person comes to the Lord for the first time or comes back to walk with the Lord, there will be evidence that a new life is present. 2 Chronicles 31 recounts what happened in Judah following the revival and Passover celebrations. This chapter reflects significant changes that propelled further faith and devotion by God's people.

The first evidence of a new life we see is cleansing. When the Passover celebration ended, there was a national house cleaning of all sources and evidences of idol worship (v 1). If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Whenever something sinful or unfruitful is removed from our lives we need to establish and then strengthen the good in its place. The second evidence then is new activities or renewed activities that lead to greater faith. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 6:17-18, "But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves of righteousness." Hezekiah made certain the priests obeyed God's law and ministered at the temple (v 2).

The third evidence of new life in the Lord is in the area of giving. The king set the example by contributing from his own possessions for the daily offerings (v 3). Hezekiah called the people back to obedience by giving what God had commanded for the service of the Levites. If the priests are to serve faithfully, the people must support them. One of the

wonderful signs of a heart changed by God is in its generosity. The people responded with such generosity that plans had to be made to add storehouses for the abundance (vv 5-12)! Paul encourage the church at Corinth to do the same, "But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2 Cor 8:7).

The final evidence we see from Hezekiah was for the supervision and organized provision for the priests and their families (vv 13-19). Although we do not have a temple tax or priestly tax, we are responsible to faithfully and financially support those who serve us in our church. Paul's general instruction from Romans 13:6-7 is helpful, "This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. "

RESPOND

In all Hezekiah did he prospered (v 21). What does it mean for us today to be prosperous in our faith? What bad habit or sin do you need to cleanse from your life to be fruitful for God? How rich are you towards God and His servants? What steps will you take to ensure our staff and pastors are faithfully supported? Can you give a few hours this summer so our regular Sunday School helpers can have a break?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank You for this lesson that reveals how You change our lives from the inside. We praise You for the abundance in our lives and our church. Help us this week to follow the example of Hezekiah to make lasting changes that will produce fruitfulness for You.

- C.M.

READ

2 Kings 18:13-19:37

2 Chronicles 32:1-22

Psalm 134

REFLECT

Principle: God's people can face the fiercest foe or disaster with God's help.

A few summers ago I read a fascinating book called, What If? This book is a historical compilation of military events with important world impact. Each of the military actions chosen was examined from the perspective of: *What if* it happened differently; how would the world, as we know it, be different today. The first "*What If?*" in this book has to do with this week's subject: King Hezekiah. The historian, William McNeill, chose King Hezekiah of Judah facing Sennacherib of Assyria in 701 BC.

From our study so far this year we understand the trouble the chosen people of God were in and how they got there. This Promised Land gifted by Jehovah God to His people for their mutual blessing was in great jeopardy (Isaiah 34:1-3). From our biblical perspective we can answer the question: how did it go so wrong when they had it so good? Though they knew God, they chose not to honor God and instead replaced Him with an idolatrous and immoral lifestyle. The Apostle Paul wrote, "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Romans 1:18).

The book's perspective is of one looking through a worldly viewfinder. Therefore this historian could explain away the plague, even reduced the number of soldiers present, and the lack of importance of little Judah to the enormous nation of Assyria. And this begs the question then, what is the big '*what if?*' It centers back to the people of

God. *What if* they chose to see the events of that night through the world lens versus a God lens. Yes, *What If?*

The secular historian noted that the critical spiritual revival that King Hezekiah started 13 years prior to the time of this invasion was essential to our life and faith today. Sennacherib's letter prompted Hezekiah's prayer and seeking the Lord. All of Judah was prepared to believe the Word from Isaiah, "Do not be afraid...I will take care of you," because their leader trusted God and acted on that trust.

Hezekiah and all of Judah were able to view the events (2 Chronicles 32:20-22) as coming from their God because they had set their lives apart from the world. Their belief in monotheistic Yahweh against the paganism rampant in their culture held them through future bad kings, exile and their return to the Promised Land.

RESPOND

What if we did the same? Paul instructs us in Romans 12:2 "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will." There are "what ifs" in all our lives. What if my friend never invited me to Glenkirk? What if I shared my faith with my next-door neighbor? What if God were to bring a Sennacherib into my life today? What if I get laid off, sick, divorced, or married? Think about what you might need to do to prepare and strengthen your faith before and during a time of crisis.

PRAY

Come, bless God, all you servants of God! You priests of God, posted to the night watch in God's shrine. Lift your praising hands to the Holy Place, and bless God. In turn, may God of Zion bless you – God who made heaven and earth! Let us always praise God who will deliver the faithful from their fiercest foe and disaster. (Psalm 134)

- C.M.

READ

2 Kings 20:1-11

2 Chronicles 32:24-26

Isaiah 38:1-8

Psalms 135

REFLECT

Principle: The discipline of the Lord is always for our good.

“If I had only one sermon to preach it would be a sermon against pride.” – G.K. Chesterton

Our final lesson is about pride, sickness and miracles; a fitting formula for our day. The events given in these passages take place fifteen years before Hezekiah's death in 687, so his sickness and healing, as well as the visit of the Babylonian ambassadors, occurred in the year 702 B.C. The next year, the Assyrians returned and attacked Jerusalem.

Did the Lord send this sickness to discipline Hezekiah because he compromised with the Assyrians? 2 Chronicles 32:24 tells us that the king had become proud and this was one way the Lord humbled him. The fact that Isaiah visited him with such a solemn message indicates how serious this experience really was, for the king was going to die. “Set your house in order” involved most of all appointing an heir to the throne. The throne of David was in jeopardy because the heir, Manasseh, was only seven.

Hezekiah's response was to turn away from all around him and pray to the Lord. If his statement in 2 Kings 20:3 and Isaiah 38:2 sounds like boasting, keep in mind that Hezekiah was only claiming the promise of 2 Chronicles 6:16-17. This promise was part of the Lord's gracious covenant with David and his descendants (2 Sam 7:1-17) and Hezekiah was simply reminding the Lord that he had been faithful to obey His law. In other words, as a faithful son of David, he was “qualified” to live. God's message to the king through Isaiah emphasized the importance of

King David and the continuation of his descendants on the throne in Jerusalem.

God answered Hezekiah's prayer by telling Isaiah how to bring about healing and also by giving Isaiah two great promises to share with Hezekiah. First, the king would recover and worship at the temple within ten days; and second, if the Assyrians returned, the Lord would defend and deliver the city of Jerusalem. Remember, Hezekiah's illness occurred before the second invasion of Sennacherib's army. And God gave Hezekiah a miraculous sign: the shadow on the steps of Ahaz (large sundial) went backwards ten degrees. As the sun went down, the shadow would naturally get longer but suddenly the shadow became shorter. Did God reverse the movement of the planet Earth simply to cause the shadow itself to go back on the steps? God doesn't explain His miracles and it's unwise for us to do it for Him.

RESPOND

God disciplines us because He loves us and wants to prevent us from disobeying Him and losing His blessing (Hebrews 12:1-11). Chastening isn't the work of a stern judge as he punishes a criminal. It's the ministry of a loving father as he seeks to bring out the very best in his children, for the Father wants us to be “conformed into the likeness of His Son” (Romans 8:29).

What is your response to the discipline of the Lord? What is your pride and joy?

“I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears.” Who might need you to pass on these words of comfort from the Lord?

How would you describe your prayer life? What promises will you claim today from Scripture for that need or illness?

PRAY

Hallelujah! Praise the name of God. Your name endures forever, your renown, O Lord, through all the generations. Thank you for your Word that brings healing in our lives

- Carole Matthews