

## Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 28, Part 2

### 2 Kings 20-21, Part 2

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Hezekiah's illness and now Hezekiah's tragic end. Now again, remember, he had more years after this, but there's a sense in which this event happening earlier still tells us something about where Hezekiah is going. So evidently, this illness must have been something really, really serious.

They heard about it in Babylon, 600 miles away across the desert, a thousand miles by road up and down along the Euphrates River. At that time, Marduk Baladan, son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent Hezekiah letters and a gift because he had heard of Hezekiah's illness. Now, Marduk Baladan was in perpetual revolt against Assyria.

Assyria is still the dominant power. They've got another 75 years or so to go before they finally collapse at the hands of Babylon. But at this point, Marduk Baladan is the rebel leader, and he's sort of like Arafat.

Arafat, the guy who led the Palestinian front for so long. They called him the Teflon Man because it seemed like every time he got knocked down, it all slipped off, and he got back up again. Marduk Baladan was very much like that.

He was constantly, all his life, leading revolts that the Assyrians would put down brutally, and he'd disappear into the swamps down there by the Persian Gulf. And then in a few years, he's back again. So I think it's pretty clear that he says, wow, wow, does the king of that little, no-count country over there called Judah know something I need to know? He's just experienced what is apparently a great miracle.

Go over there and talk to him. Find out what his secret is. Here is the golden opportunity.

Turn over please to Isaiah chapter two. If you've got the right Bible, it's on page 640. Isaiah chapter two, verse two.

In the last day, the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains. It will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many people will come and say, come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the temple of the God of Jacob, that he might teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths.

Here is the golden opportunity. Hezekiah, what happened to you? Oh, let me tell you about Yahweh. Let me tell you about the one who can make the shadow go back on the sundial.

Let me tell you about the God who hears our prayers—the God who can extend your life 15 years. Let me tell you about him.

Hezekiah received the envoys. Isaiah says he was delighted with the envoys. Oh yeah, imagine, imagine people from the city council of New York come to Wilmore.

Wow, wow, they're finally paying us the attention we deserve. Well, let us show you our new city hall. Let us show you the city bank book.

He showed them all that was in his storehouses: the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine olive oil, his armory, and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah didn't show them. And we say, oh no, these people are from Babylon, for pity's sake.

They've got gold coming out of their ears. The most sophisticated city in the world, even if Assyria was nominally in charge, the richest city in the world. And you're going to show off your treasury and your armaments? That's not what makes you different from them.

But there is something that would make you different from them. One thing, Yahweh. Now, why do you think Hezekiah did this? Again, Hezekiah is a good man.

What we just, I walked before you faithfully with a whole heart, did what was good in your eyes. Why would that man do this? Okay, okay, the possibility that this is, these are how this is the way God has blessed me. And all right, yeah, that's a possibility.

Yeah, yeah. Maybe he thought he was better than he really was. I think he had inferiority feelings.

Wow, Babylon, great Scott. I've heard about Babylon. I've heard about their riches and their power and their wealth.

I need to impress these people and make myself look a little bigger in their eyes. It's a little less like a grasshopper. You see, he forgot, he forgot that in God's eyes, he's a giant.

He forgot that with God's resources, those Babylonians were zero. But how easily do we get blown away by the world? So rich, so powerful, so good-looking, so slick, so smooth, so successful.

We stop looking at God and start looking at ourselves. We look mighty small compared to the world.

I mean, I'm going to go to a board meeting at Wesley Biblical Seminary the end of the week. We have almost a \$3 million endowment. Think about Harvard.

The last time I heard, it was somewhere in the billions. What's this little dinky school in Jackson, Mississippi, Iowa compared to that? Wrong standard. I like what I heard years ago: God plus one is a majority.

And so he was, he was tricked, I believe by his own inferiority feeling out of declaring what those Babylonians desperately needed to hear. They desperately needed to hear that there is a God who can raise the dead. I was dead.

Isaiah told me they were building my coffin and look here. I'm alive. It's God.

Do you know God? So, Isaiah comes to him and says, so what did you show him? And I have an awful feeling that Hezekiah tried to brazen it out. They saw everything. I showed him everything.

And Isaiah said, well, that's good because the day's going to come when Babylon's going to own it all gulp. Now, that's an important point. I, I can't camp on it, but again and again, we hear that.

Well, Isaiah couldn't have predicted the exile. That's 150 years in the future. He couldn't have named Cyrus as the Persian emperor who was going to deliver them from Babylon.

It's impossible. So, he didn't know that Babylon was one day going to conquer Jerusalem. See, it's not as simple as some of these scholars would try to make you think.

This predictive element is woven all through these books. And you can't just pull it out here and know that takes care of that. Now, it's all over the place.

His oracles against the nations begin with Babylon. So, I think it's very clear. God has told Isaiah.

No, Assyria is not the problem. Do you think Assyria is the problem? No, it's Babylon. That's a problem.

Huh? Babylon, yeah, they're rich. They're sophisticated. They're powerful, but Hey, they're just a province of the great Assyrian empire.

Babylon is the problem. And one day, Hezekiah, your sons will be eunuchs, castrated servants of the king of Babylon, the Davidic dynasty. And here's where you sort of hang your head.

The word of the Lord you have spoken is good, Hezekiah replied. For he thought there will be peace and security in my days. Oh, good.

It's not going to happen to me. It's going to happen to my descendants. That'll be their problem.

Let them deal with it. But I don't have to deal with it. Oh, dear Lord.

So, what happened? What happened is that Hezekiah saw trust as a one-shot thing. He didn't see it as a continued way of life. OK, some crisis happens in my life.

I trust the Lord. But day after day after day after day in my life, I trust myself, trust my abilities, trust my energy, trust my wisdom. Oh, goodness, God, I'm in a mess.

I'm trusting you now. In this sense, Hezekiah then embodies the problem among his people because we're going to move in just a moment to look at his son Manasseh.

Well, here's Ahaz. Here's Manasseh. Ahaz died in 716.

Manasseh, as a 12-year-old, came to the throne in 696. How many years between those two? 20. Now, in between is Hezekiah.

And we're going to move to that next section.