

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 28.1, 2 Kings 20-21, Part 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 28.1, 2 Kings 20-21, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture explores the placement of Hezekiah's story within the books of Kings and Isaiah, arguing Kings borrowed the narrative from Isaiah. He suggests Isaiah strategically reordered events to highlight that Hezekiah, though righteous, wasn't the Messiah. Oswalt analyzes Hezekiah's illness and recovery, emphasizing God's bluntness and subsequent granting of 15 more years. He connects Hezekiah's prayer to the concept of a "perfect heart," defined as complete devotion rather than flawless performance. The lecture concludes with an examination of the sign given to Hezekiah, interpreting the reversed sundial shadow as a demonstration of God's control over time. Ultimately, Oswalt emphasizes God's power and the importance of wholehearted commitment.

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 28.1 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).



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on28_1.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 28.1, 2 Kings 20-21, Part 1

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 2 Kings 20-21.

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 2 Kings 20-21

Main Themes:

- **Re-ordering of Events and Authorship:** Oswalt argues the account of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 20-21 is taken from Isaiah (specifically Isaiah 38-39) rather than originating in Kings, contrary to many modern scholars. He believes the editor of Kings extracted this material from Isaiah.
- **Hezekiah's Faith and Imperfection:** Hezekiah's story highlights the nature of faith, human fallibility, and God's sovereignty. While Hezekiah is presented as faithful, his flaws demonstrate that no human can be the Messiah or "save the world."
- **The Meaning of a "Perfect Heart":** Oswalt emphasizes that having a perfect heart, as described in the Bible, means complete and total devotion to God, not personal flawlessness. It's about wholehearted commitment, even when performance is imperfect.
- **The Significance of the Sign:** The sign given to Hezekiah (the shadow moving backward on the sundial) underscores God's power and control over time.
- **God's Purpose in Affliction:** Oswalt suggests that God sometimes brings people to a point of desperation so they recognize their dependence on Him.

Key Ideas and Facts:

- **Chronological Order:** Oswalt points out that the events in 2 Kings 20 likely occurred *before* those in 2 Kings 18-19 (Sennacherib's attack). He posits this reordering is deliberate, particularly within Isaiah. "That is, chapters 18 and 19 relate to the year 701, that date when Sennacherib came to attack Jerusalem... But almost certainly chapters 20, in particular, comes maybe as early as 712 BC."
- **Isaiah's Purpose:** Oswalt believes Isaiah placed Hezekiah's earlier, less glorified experience *after* his deliverance from Sennacherib to demonstrate that even a righteous king is not the ultimate Messiah. "Hezekiah is not the Messiah. We've got to look further to find out who the Messiah is. It doesn't matter how perfectible a human being is. No human being can save the world."

- **God's Bluntness:** Oswalt highlights the starkness of God's initial message to Hezekiah: "God says you're going to die. Have a good day." He sees this as a deliberate tactic to bring Hezekiah to a point of complete reliance on God. "Frankly, I think and this is pure speculation. But I think it is precisely to bring Hezekiah to that place of desperation."
- **The Nature of a "Perfect Heart":** Oswalt stresses the meaning of "perfect" (Hebrew *shalem*) in the context of Hezekiah's prayer. It does *not* mean flawless in action, but wholeheartedly dedicated to God. "The word is a whole heart. Complete. Total... The Bible is talking about a person who is completely God's, totally." He uses the analogy of his own "perfect heart" for his wife while acknowledging his imperfections as a husband. "My heart is perfectly hers. That's what we're talking about. You and I. Each one of us can have a perfect heart."
- **The Sign as a Bolstering of Faith:** Oswalt suggests the sign of the shadow moving backward was given to bolster Hezekiah's faith and as a sign of God's incredible power and his control over time.
- **The Importance of Continued Growth:** Although our hearts can be fully dedicated to God, Oswalt makes it clear that it is important to strive for continual growth and improvement. "I need to improve my performance and try to understand how the Holy Spirit could do more to make me walk straighter. Yes, yes, yes."

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 28.1, 2 Kings 20-21, Part 1

Hezekiah: Trust, Idolatry, and Divine Intervention

Quiz

1. According to Dr. Oswalt, from what source did the author-editor of Kings likely derive the Hezekiah narrative in 2 Kings 20-21?
2. What key difference between Isaiah and Kings does Dr. Oswalt point out regarding the phrase "Holy One of Israel?"
3. Why does Dr. Oswalt believe the events in chapters 20 and 21 likely occurred before those in chapters 18 and 19?
4. What is Dr. Oswalt's explanation for the reordering of the Hezekiah narrative in Isaiah?
5. What does Dr. Oswalt suggest is God's purpose in telling Hezekiah he will die?
6. Explain Dr. Oswalt's understanding of the word "perfect" as used to describe Hezekiah's heart.
7. In Dr. Oswalt's analogy, what does the "dead cat" in the swamp represent?
8. According to Dr. Oswalt, what assurance might Hezekiah have given the people of Jerusalem based on God's promise to add 15 years to his life?
9. What was Ahaz's reaction to the proposition to request a sign from God? How did his son, Hezekiah, react differently?
10. What is the significance of the sign of the sundial's shadow moving backward?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Dr. Oswalt believes the author-editor of Kings took the Hezekiah narrative directly from Isaiah, specifically Isaiah 38 and 39, without any significant reorganization.
2. Isaiah uses the phrase "Holy One of Israel" 26 times, while Kings only uses it once in these chapters, suggesting a different authorship or source material.
3. Chapters 18 and 19 are generally agreed to relate to the year 701 BC, when Sennacherib attacked Jerusalem, while the events in chapters 20 and 21 likely occurred earlier, perhaps as early as 712 BC.

4. Isaiah reordered the narrative to highlight that Hezekiah, though a righteous king, was not the Messiah, demonstrating that no human being, however perfectible, can save the world.
5. Dr. Oswalt suggests that God tells Hezekiah he will die to bring him to a place of desperation and to recognize his complete dependence on God for hope and salvation.
6. Dr. Oswalt explains that "perfect" in this context means complete and total dedication to God, not flawless performance or personal character.
7. In Dr. Oswalt's analogy, the "dead cat" represents the sin and imperfections hidden within the heart, of which the individual may not even be aware.
8. Hezekiah might have assured the people that they did not need to surrender because God had promised to deliver them from the king of Assyria, as evidenced by God's promise to extend Hezekiah's life.
9. Ahaz refused because he didn't want to know that God could help him; however, his son, Hezekiah, was willing to ask for a sign, demonstrating his faith and willingness to have it bolstered.
10. The backward movement of the shadow demonstrates God's power over time itself, showing that all of time is in His hands and proving His ability to fulfill His promises.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the implications of the chronological rearrangement of the Hezekiah narrative for understanding the theological message of both the Book of Kings and the Book of Isaiah.
2. Analyze Dr. Oswalt's interpretation of the word "perfect" in relation to Hezekiah's heart. How does this understanding challenge common misconceptions about holiness and righteousness?
3. Explore the significance of Hezekiah's prayer in 2 Kings 20:3. What does this prayer reveal about his character, his relationship with God, and the nature of divine-human interaction?

4. Compare and contrast the responses of Ahaz and Hezekiah to the possibility of receiving a sign from God. What do these contrasting responses reveal about their faith and their understanding of God's character?
5. Evaluate Dr. Oswalt's assertion that God is not primarily concerned with building our reputation. How does this perspective challenge traditional notions of success and leadership, particularly within religious contexts?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Chronological Order:** The arrangement of events in the sequence in which they occurred.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of idols or false gods, often involving the substitution of created things for the one true God.
- **Messiah:** The promised deliverer of the Jewish people, often associated with a future king from the line of David.
- **Perfect Heart:** In the context of the passage, a heart that is completely and totally dedicated to God, without reservation.
- **Sign:** A miraculous or extraordinary event used to confirm or demonstrate divine power or promise.
- **Sennacherib:** King of Assyria who besieged Jerusalem in 701 BC.
- **Holy One of Israel:** A title for God used frequently by the prophet Isaiah.
- **Trustworthiness:** The quality of being reliable and worthy of confidence.
- **Sanctification:** The process of being made holy or set apart for God's purposes.
- **Consecration:** The act of dedicating something (or someone) to a sacred purpose.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 28.1, 2 Kings 20-21, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about Hezekiah and the Book of Kings

1. Why does Dr. Oswalt believe the Hezekiah narrative in Kings is taken from Isaiah, rather than the other way around?

Dr. Oswalt argues that the author-editor of Kings likely pulled the Hezekiah narrative from Isaiah for several reasons. First, Isaiah uses the phrase "Holy One of Israel" 26 times, while Kings uses it only once in these chapters. More significantly, the chronological order of the events in Kings seems reversed, placing Hezekiah's earlier failure to glorify God (when he was ill) after his demonstration of faith in 701 BC when Sennacherib attacked. This reordering makes sense in Isaiah to demonstrate that Hezekiah is not the Messiah, as no human can save the world, while it obscures the narrative in Kings.

2. Why might Isaiah have reordered the events of Hezekiah's life in his book?

Isaiah likely reordered the events to make a theological point about the limitations of human leaders. By placing Hezekiah's earlier failure after his later success, Isaiah demonstrates that even a righteous king like Hezekiah, who initially faltered, is not the ultimate savior or Messiah. This points the reader to look beyond human figures for true redemption.

3. What is the significance of God telling Hezekiah he will die?

Dr. Oswalt suggests that God's blunt announcement of Hezekiah's impending death serves to bring Hezekiah to a point of desperation. This forces him to recognize his own helplessness and rely solely on God's intervention. It's a way for God to break through Hezekiah's self-reliance and prompt him to seek divine help.

4. What does it mean to have a "perfect heart" in the biblical context, according to Dr. Oswalt?

Having a "perfect heart" does not mean flawless performance or personal perfection. Instead, it signifies a heart that is completely and totally devoted to God, without reservation. It means one's entire being—thoughts, feelings, and decisions—are wholly given to God. It's a commitment of "lock, stock, and barrel."

5. How does Dr. Oswalt describe his own ongoing relationship with God in relation to having a "perfect heart"?

Dr. Oswalt describes his relationship with God as a process of ongoing discovery and refinement. Even with a heart fully devoted to God, there may be hidden "dead cats" (sins or shortcomings) that God brings to light. This doesn't diminish the perfection (completeness) of his heart's devotion, but rather highlights the continuous need for God's cleansing and guidance.

6. What is the significance of God healing Hezekiah and adding 15 years to his life, according to Dr. Oswalt?

Dr. Oswalt believes this event, which likely occurred before the events of 701 BC, served as a basis for Hezekiah's faith during Sennacherib's siege. God's promise to heal him and add years to his life became a foundation for Hezekiah's belief that God would also deliver Jerusalem from the Assyrians. It demonstrated God's power and faithfulness.

7. Why did Hezekiah ask for a sign, and what does the sign of the sundial going backward represent?

Hezekiah asked for a sign to bolster his faith, demonstrating a willingness to believe God's promise. The sign of the sundial's shadow moving backward showcases God's power over time and creation. It reinforces the idea that God is in control of all things and can alter the course of events according to His will.

8. What is the primary takeaway from Hezekiah's story, and how can it apply to our own lives?

The primary takeaway is the importance of complete devotion to God, even amidst imperfections and failures. Like Hezekiah, we should strive to have hearts wholly dedicated to God, trusting in His power and seeking His guidance. Even when we fall short, we can still have a "perfect heart" through complete commitment and a willingness to allow God to refine us.