

**BBC - 8/4/24; Home Bible Study Guide – “Guarding our Blessings” – [1 Cor 9:24-27](#) & [Heb 12:1-2](#)**

Christians in a fallen world are under constant scrutiny and criticism for their flaws. We must strive to finish well for God. Satan is always on the search for opportunities to raise accusations, create divisions, weaken faith, destroy God’s works. But God “*giveth more grace*” ([James 4:6](#)). We must not squander the blessings & opportunities He gives us to serve Him. Jesus warns ([Luke 12:48b](#)) that; to whom much has been given, of that person much will be required.

Our opening passage from [1 Cor 9](#), depicts our earthly lifetime as a race to eternity; striving to obtain a crown from God.

As a prime example, we continue from last week’s study on Judah’s 13<sup>th</sup> king, Hezekiah.

The Bible states that besides David, there was no more stellar king than Hezekiah. He began strong, but finished weaker. As we had outlined, Hezekiah started and conducted his reign in an exemplary manner of faithfulness before God.

**Review:** Read [2 Kings, chapters 18-20](#). (NOTE: Israel = 10 northern tribes; and Judah = 2 southern tribes, Jerusalem is their Capital)

- Became king of Judah at age 25 – having already witnessed Assyria invade and overthrow Israel a few years earlier.
- In his 4<sup>th</sup> year, in a final campaign of conquer, Assyria besieged Samaria (*Israel’s capital*), which was destroyed by 6<sup>th</sup> yr.
- Hezekiah, resisted Assyria’s advances on Judah, & also beat back another enemy, the Philistines, all the way to Gaza.
- But in Hezekiah’s 14<sup>th</sup> year, the Assyrians overtook some cities of Judah, and now advanced to besiege Jerusalem.
- Jerusalem was in a stranglehold with no hope of survival. The Assyrians taunted them non-stop & insulted their God.
- Hezekiah was forced to apologize for his previous resistance, and turned over to them all palace/Temple silver & gold.
- Assyria’s Commander Rabshakeh, all the more taunted & intimidated the Jews, proclaiming victory over the LORD.
- Hezekiah calls nation to prayer, retreats to Temple himself to pray, and sends for the prophet Isaiah to intercede.
- Isaiah proclaims that God will cause Assyria’s Commander to retreat back to where he came from.
- Rabshakeh does depart, but leaves a threatening letter of ridicule for Hezekiah that leaves him & leadership in panic.
- Hezekiah spreads out the letter before God in the Temple. God promises deliverance, without an arrow shot at them.
- That same night, God sends His angel to slay 185,000 of the Assyrian army – they’re all found dead in the morning.
- Immediately thereafter (*still in Hezekiah’s 14<sup>th</sup> yr*), Hezekiah falls sick unto death and Isaiah confirms he’s about to die.
- Hezekiah prays earnestly, pleading his cause before God, citing how faithful to Him he has been as Judah’s king.
- God sends Isaiah back to tell Hezekiah that he will be healed in 3 days, and that God will add 15 years to his life.
- Hezekiah asks for a sign! God grants an extraordinary sign, causing the sundial shadow to go backwards 10 degrees.
- Hezekiah receives his healing & begins his 15-year life extension. This more than doubles his reign, from 14 to 29 yrs.
- But the king of Babylon (*eventual conqueror of Judah*) slyly sends letters & presents to Hezekiah, “*I heard you were sick.*”
- Without praying for God’s wisdom, Hezekiah invites a Babylonian delegation to Judah & reveals the kingdom to them.
- Isaiah confronts Hezekiah, who confirms to the prophet that he revealed every bit of the nation’s treasures to them.
- Isaiah prophetically foretold that the days are coming when Judah would be spoiled, and all of the nation’s treasures would be taken by the Babylonians, including the king’s offspring who will be made eunuchs in Babylonian captivity.
- Hezekiah’s response is found in [2 Kings 20:19](#) – “*Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he (Hezekiah) said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?*”

**Discussion:**

- 1) How does [2 Kings 18:2-8](#) describe Hezekiah’s career as Judah’s 13<sup>th</sup> king? What righteous acts did he accomplish?
- 2) If Hezekiah was such a good king (*2<sup>nd</sup> only to King David*), why would God allow such a dire military calamity to happen in Jerusalem during the 14<sup>th</sup> year of his reign?
- 3) Since Judah could not fight back against Assyria militarily, how did Hezekiah wage war against his nation’s enemy?
- 4) Why after God’s amazing overnight deliverance from the Assyrians (*still in Hezekiah’s 14<sup>th</sup> year as king*), does Hezekiah get a terminal illness that was to inevitably lead to his imminent death (*as also initially confirmed by the prophet Isaiah*)?
- 5) When assured he’d be healed, and have 15 years added to his life, why do you think Hezekiah asked God for a sign? And why did God immediately grant it, without reprimanding him for his unbelief?
- 6) After Hezekiah’s healing and 15-year life & reign extension, what indication is there that he became self-assured?
- 7) After Isaiah scolded Hezekiah with a dire prophetic prediction, was Hezekiah’s response in [20:19](#) more indicative of Hezekiah’s humble submission to the will of God, or concern for his own legacy? Why did he not intercede in prayer, as he had successfully done in previous calamities?