

A Great King

Hezekiah is remembered as one of the great kings in Judah. The nation prospered under his rule and his royal record draws high marks (2 Kings 18:5-6). What was it that made him a great king? And, what might we learn that will help us be effective servants of God?

First, it should be observed that his greatness did not come based on his family relationships. His father, Ahaz, was a horrible ruler — even offering some of his own children as sacrifices to pagan gods (2 Kings 16:2-4). But Hezekiah overcame the terrible heritage passed down from his father. We, too, can overcome the unfortunate “baggage” of our kinship, for Ezekiel 18:20 says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” Everyone can make their own decision!

Furthermore, Hezekiah was not great because he was “older and wiser” when he came to office. He was only 25 years old when he assumed the throne (2 Kings 18:1-2), yet he was diligent and faithful from day one. Ezra records, “Hezekiah began to reign when he was five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them” (2 Chronicles 29:1-3). Young people today need to realize that they have great potential in God’s service — even in their youth.

The defining statement about Hezekiah is in 2 Kings 18:3: “He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.” Notice that it was not what was right in the sight of men, but of the Lord. Men would have likely wanted to continue in the sinful ways of Hezekiah’s father, but this new king was determined to do what God desired. And this was no mere lip service to God, but real action. “He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves.” He even “brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses made” because the people had turned it into an idol (v. 4). There was no compromising spirit in Hezekiah. “He clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments” (v. 6). Hezekiah’s example of obedience to God and loyal service is a fantastic example for us!

Adapted from Greg Gwin