

Zahakiel: It's time to start. Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in heaven. We are thankful for Your perfect provision... for Your faithful care. We come before Your Presence seeking the Sabbath blessing and we thank You in advance for answering our prayers. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Kimber: Amen

Barb: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Elyna1: Amen.

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Adriel7777: Amen

Marie-kadeth: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "The Faith of Hezekiah."

It is often the case that we go through the Books and characters of the Old Testament and see the sins and errors, learning a more righteous way by bearing witness to the failures of the past. The Scriptures even indicate that this is the purpose for preserving the record with such accuracy as we see; (1Cor 10:11) most ancient documents are created and preserved in order to praise the kings and warriors who are their subjects. In the Bible, however, we find the deception of Abraham, the fearfulness of Moses, the murder and adultery of David, and the idolatrous adultery of Solomon.

Tonight I would like to examine instead a positive example. With the words of the Old Testament, we will see that the Faith of Yahshua is not a faith that Yahshua taught to mankind for the first time during His earthly ministry. Instead, the Faith of Yahshua is the faith that the Son of Yahweh taught to mankind from the Garden of Eden, down through the time of the Israelite Kings, down through the time of the crucifixion, and to this very day in bright, unbroken principles of life.

At times, men and women have taken this faith and made it their own, so that we may speak of the faithfulness of Noah, Job and Daniel, just as we may speak of the wisdom of Solomon, and Paul may speak of his Gospel. (2Tim 2:8)

The blessings and glory of Yahweh are gifts that we may claim as ours, for every truly redeemed Christian says, "I have victory over sin and self." The victory is truly Christ's, in that it originates with Him, but as He has given it to us it is right to speak of it as our own by possession and use.

Tonight, then, we may speak of the Faith of Yahshua by the name "the faith of Hezekiah," because while it originates with the Son of Yah, it is through the Judean King Hezekiah that it is expressed in the examples we will read. I am encouraged, and made joyful, in the knowledge that in ceaseless ages, the redeemed and the angels will speak of us in just this way, as those who had "the faith of the 144,000."

There are two specific incidents from the life of Hezekiah that I will present, but first we may read the way that he is introduced into the sacred record. First, of his father we know this:

"Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the Yahweh his God, like David his father. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." (2Kings 16:2, 4)

Then, "Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead." (2Kings 16:20)

Here is a brief accounting of his time as King:

"Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. And he did that which was right in the sight of Yahweh, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made, for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it 'Nehushtan.' He trusted in Yahweh God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him, for he clave to Yahweh, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which Yahweh commanded Moses." (2Kings 18:2-6) Let me know when you have read this.

Adriel7777: F

Pastor Chick: F

Elyna1: F

Barb: F

Ruthline: F

Zahakiel: This is one of the most remarkable passages in the Books of the history of Israel's monarchy. Not only does it praise Hezekiah like no other King since David, but it also includes a rare mention of the name of the mother of a king, and a play on words regarding the destruction of the pagan idols in Israel. I believe that Abi's name was mentioned because, in a direct parallel to Christ, she was largely responsible for the faithful education of her son in spiritual things. Despite the apostasy of her husband, she raised a child who respected the traditions of Moses, and pleased the Almighty with his character and faith.

Also, the Bible takes the time to give an unusual fact, that Hezekiah called the broken serpent image "Nehushtan." This word means, "A thing of mere brass," while the word for snake in Hebrew is "Nahash," which sounds very similar. Like the Prophet Elijah, Hezekiah somewhat humorously pointed out the foolishness of giving worship to sticks, and stones,

and things of metal. Much later, Paul would emphasize how the worship of creatures and their images ruins the mind, turning attention away from the source of life to the created.

Last week, we touched on this topic, seeing how these attitudes and actions that remove worship from Yahweh are a form of "blasphemy," and remember it is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, or rejecting the efforts of Yahweh to heal and guide one's spirit, that ruins the mind, and renders the soul incapable of understanding grace.

So then, Hezekiah, who had learned the importance of the Word of Yahweh, perhaps from his mother, was very concerned with the state of worship in Israel, and did all that he could to drive the money-lenders of his day out of the temple. An entire series of studies might be necessary to draw attention to the parallels between Hezekiah's reign and the ministry of Christ, but tonight I wish to focus on two particular incidents that caught my attention. Here is the first...

"And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rab-saris and Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem... Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, 'Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria: Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Yahweh, saying, Yahweh will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.'

"Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

"... [Rab-shakeh] sent messengers again unto Hezekiah... saying, "Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?" (2Kings 18:17, 28-30, 37; 2 Kings 19:9-11) Let me know when you've read this.

Lucan: F

Pastor Chick: F

Adriel7777: F

Barb: F

Elyna1: F

Zahakiel: Judah is under threat from a powerful invader who has successfully destroyed a multitude of lands, some of which were apparently greater in military might than Hezekiah's Kingdom. With threatening words, this agent of Assyria's king Sennacherib is seeking to intimidate Jerusalem into submission, or at least to weaken their morale before a fight.

Now we read how Hezekiah responds to these tempting words:

"And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up into the House of Yah, and spread it before Yahweh. And Hezekiah prayed before Yahweh, and said, 'O Yahweh, God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the Most High, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Yahweh, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, Yahweh, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

"Of a truth, Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O Yahweh our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art Yahweh Elohim, even thou only." (2Kings 19:14-19) Let me know when you've caught up.

Pastor Chick: F

Peter_Jr_18: F

Adriel7777: F

Barb: F

Lucan: F

Elyna1: F

Zahakiel: Subsequently, we read that Yah responds through the prophet Isaiah, reassuring the king that his prayers have been heard, and that the Kingdom will be delivered through miraculous means.

In considering the prayer of Hezekiah, I am reminded of a passage from the New Testament, in which Yahshua's disciples ask Him how we should pray, and He responds with these words, which are often used as a pattern:

"... Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." (Mat 6:9-13)

One of the striking things about the parallels here is that, even in danger, even under threat of destruction, Hezekiah does not begin by pouring out his problems to the Father. Instead, he takes the time to worship, to praise the Creator for His greatness, so putting himself (as Yahshua would later teach) in a state of holiness through which to properly address the matter. Inspiration tells us that prayer is the opening-up of our hearts to Yah, as unto a friend. It is an earnest, honest interaction between the divine and the human, and it is never to be done merely for the preservation of self, or for personal gain.

Even in distress, the people of Yah are given the opportunity to worship the Holy One, and to praise Him for the many blessings He has given to us, reminding the universe and

ourselves that, despite what we are facing in the moment, the same God who has given us joy in the past is in command, and that His will is one in which we may safely trust.

This is why we have, at times, hesitated to pray for others who have not repented of the thoughts and actions that have led them into trouble... at times the Spirit has said to us expressly, "Do not intercede in this matter..." It is not because we are unsympathetic, or do not wish to see healing or resolution, but because the one requesting prayer is not seeking to glorify the Father through his or her health and continuing prosperity.

Hezekiah first makes sure to offer praise, acknowledging Him as the Most High God, and creator of all that exists, infinitely superior to the false gods that the Assyrians had thus far been able to overthrow. This was the basis of his request for divine intervention. He then, after laying out the situation and requesting aid, again parallels the prayer of Yahshua in ascribing the proper motive to the request... not that Hezekiah's Kingdom should be saved for its own sake, but "that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art Yahweh Elohim."

For Yah's own name's sake, He will preserve His people; that His mercy and power may be known, He will redeem a people who can do nothing to help themselves, and so the Christian may pray "deliver us from evil, for thine is the Kingdom."

Those two phrases are not carelessly connected. Because the Kingdom, and Power and Glory are Yah's, let Him save His people for the sake of these things, that others may know His goodness through the demonstration of Agape toward His people. For Yah, for His glory, and for His love toward us all, this is the foundation of the promises He has given to us, and the faithfulness with which He fulfills them.

None of this is to suggest, let me make clear, that Yah will only save, heal, or bless when there is an audience for His actions. The love of Yah toward each individual that He has lovingly crafted with infinite care and wisdom is genuine and without limit. What He desires, however, is to "... have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1Tim 2:4)

When He answers prayers, it is more often for the benefit of the many than the few. Yahshua loved Lazarus as an individual, and called him "friend," but He did not go to the tomb at night; instead, He raised Him publicly because He also loved Martha, Mary, and the various onlookers who are unnamed in the Biblical record.

The second incident underscores this point. It is shorter; we may read of it here:

"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, 'Thus saith Yahweh: Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.' "Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto Yahweh, saying, 'I beseech thee, O Yahweh, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' And Hezekiah wept sore.

"And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, 'Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith Yahweh, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the House of Yahweh. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.'" (2Kings 20:1 – 6) Let me know when you've finished this.

Lucan: F

Adriel7777: F

Barb: F

Pastor Chick: F

Elyna1: F

Peter Jr 18: F

Zahakiel: Hezekiah wept upon learning that he was to die; however, if you examine the message that Yah gave to Isaiah, it is clear that the reprieve he was granted was not based solely upon his personal plea. All that we know of Hezekiah suggests that his primary concern was the state of Judah's spirituality. In providing him with more time Yah speaks of the deliverance of the city, and defending it from Sennacherib. These things He could do without Hezekiah, of course; however, He is pleased to use willing servants, even granting them health, strength, and life beyond their natural due in order to accomplish His ends. Consider, then, we who pray for health and deliverance, how Yah will use us once we are restored or empowered. Consider the basis of a righteous prayer, to live and be blessed so that others may benefit from Yah's generosity toward us.

Again we have a parallel to Yahshua. In Gethsemane, Yahshua was in distress because He could not see beyond the darkness of the grave. Beyond this, He was unable to see the fulfillment of His work, the redemption of mankind, for in that moment He was unable to look to Heaven to see the brightness and acceptance of the Father. He who had relied upon nights spent in prayer to sustain Him through trying days and years of labor now felt disconnected, isolated, "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:44)

Even with the direct ministry of an angel, Yahshua's suffering was such that His very body began to bear the marks of His approaching mortality, and yet, in that darkest time, He nevertheless held firm, knowing that through His crisis, He would be opening the gateway to everlasting life for countless souls that had been taken captive by Satan.

Now, here is one difference between Hezekiah and Yahshua... like Abraham on the mountains of Moriah, Hezekiah got a reprieve. His prayer was answered in such a way as to add years to his life. The Father, however, because of His love for us, had to go through the act of offering His Son on the cross, and the Son had to go through the sinner's death appointed to Him from the foundation of the world.

So then, for those who are in distress of health, or finances, or a life-changing decision, let me conclude with these words: We may learn from King Hezekiah of Judah, in these matters a type of Christ, how to deal with obstacles and suffering. We may learn how to reject temptations to fear and feel self-pity, because those who surrender to such things draw attention to, and glorify, themselves. They, especially when calling themselves Christians, take worship from Yahweh, who wishes to use us as His own dear champions, and they rob Him of the opportunity to reach out to others through victorious testimonies.

In this, we may say that they blaspheme because, while bearing the name of Christ upon their lips, they do all that Satan instructs them to devalue His sacrifice, misconstrue His divine character, and make the life that He has given to them at infinite cost seem a sad and tiresome thing, not worthy of the Sabbath Rest and the Sabbath Joy that is our true inheritance.

What shall we say, then? Let us bear upon us the Faith of Yahshua, claiming it as our own that it may be called the Faith of Lucan, and the Faith of Guerline, and the Faith of Daphna, and the Faith of Jaime. It is the Faith of Yahshua as expressed through our own individual and unique experiences, the better to glorify the Father, and hold His name up to be praised.

When we are challenged, let us worship – worship rather than despair; let us do always the opposite of blasphemy, and glorify Him instead. Let our prayers be based always on the will of Yah to shed great beams of light into the world, and so provide a beacon for those in need of redemption. When we face challenges, and perplexities, and distress, let us then offer our Father, through the generosity with which He has gifted us, the opportunity to take the reins into His own inerrant hands, and so bring about the miracles that will enlighten the souls of those who remain in the shadow of the world. So shall we Sabbath in the promises of Yahweh, and reveal to others the testimony of the blessed Savior.

Are there any comments or questions about tonight's study?

Adriel7777: Amen!

Elyna1: Amen and Amen!

Zahakiel: If there are not, then I'll ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the perfect faith you have freely given. We thank you for the examples of those who have exercised it before us. And, we thank you for the opportunity to do so ourselves before the last generation, and the watching universe. May we each be inspired with wisdom from above as we use your blessings for the blessing of others. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Adriel7777: Amen

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Zahakiel: Amen.

Peter_Jr_18: Amen.

Elyna1: Amen.

Ruthline: Amen