

Hezekiah & the Sundial

⁵Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, 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 the LORD ⁶And 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. ⁷And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered. {2 Kings 20:5-7}

Hezekiah was a great king and “...did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. ⁴He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan...”

⁵He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him. ⁶For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. ⁷And the LORD was with him; *and* he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. {2 Kings 18:5-7}

Significantly Hezekiah sought the spiritual healing of salvation and wanted to know when it would be time for him to go up to the house of the Lord.

⁸And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, **What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?** ⁹And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? ¹⁰And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let **the shadow return backward ten degrees.** ¹¹And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz. {2 Kings 20:8-11}

The same account is brought to our attention in the book of Isaiah:

⁸Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, **which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward.** So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down. ⁹The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness: {Isaiah 38:8-9}

A sundial is an ancient timekeeping device, which indicates the time of day by position of the shadow on some object on which the sun's rays fall. The shadow is measured in units on a pre-marked wall or a circular horizontal surface. As the day progresses the sun evolves around the fixed object causing the shadow to move to indicate the time of day. The reference to the "sun dial of Ahaz" implies that the time units denoted is more than the hours of a single day.

Ahaz, whose name means "possessor," was a most wicked king of Judah who typified Satan's hold on the church during a time of great tribulation. (2Ki 16:7, 15:29, Isa 8:19)

¹²And the altars that *were* on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. ¹³And the high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. {2 Kings 23:12-13}

Like King Hezekiah, true believers would also like to know the time "to go up the house of the Lord..." To help us understand the significance of turning the shadow of the sundial backward ten degrees, it would behoove us to carefully examine the life and historical circumstances surrounding the reign of Hezekiah.

King Hezekiah inherited a throne of spiritual corruption and political upheaval upon the death of his wicked father, Ahaz who reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem "according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel." {2 Ki 16:3} It was during the time of the captivity of Israel by the Assyrians, as well as the captivity of Judah by the Babylonians, which both were ultimately led to destruction. From a prophetic viewpoint, the division and collapse of the two kingdoms occurred because of the failure on part of the rulers and the people to heed to the warnings of God's messengers.

Hezekiah's legacy was his successful religious reformation, which he set about with vigor immediately after his accession to the throne. "He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that **after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.**" {2 Ki 18:5} He began with the most pressing constructive need, the opening and cleansing of the temple, which his father Ahaz had left closed and desecrated. (2 Chr 28:24) Abolishing all shrines and sacred pillars, Hezekiah renewed full-scale worship after a lengthy period of idol worship had taken root in the land and refused to pay tribute as his father had paid, but "rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not." {2 Ki 18:7}

To the great benefit of his reform, Hezekiah's objective placed great emphasis renewing the tradition of the Passover pilgrimage inviting the remnants of the tribe of Israel, and those who have not gone captive for the first time in many generations since the kingdom had been split. Because the priests and Levites, as well as the temple, had not yet been sanctified by the first month of Passover (Nisan 14) under Hezekiah, an alternate time (a second Passover) was established in the second month according to God's preset instructions:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet **he shall keep the passover unto the LORD. The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.** ...But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbearth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his **appointed season**, that man shall bear his sin. And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land. {Num 9:9-14}

And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel. **For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month.** For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation. So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written. {2 Chr 30:1-5}

For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him. **So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.**...And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation....Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD...Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one...And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the

people. And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD. And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the LORD: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers. **And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept *other* seven days with gladness.....So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem.** {2 Chr 30:9-26}

The congregation was so spiritually moved by the observance that they agreed to extend the Passover an additional seven days. (2 Chr 30:23) In relation to our time, the king's reformation identifies with the mass warning movement before the cutoff of salvation on May 21. During the "latter rain," many took heed to the warnings of the impending judgment in anticipation of the end of the world. Those who consecrated themselves and became saved were in effect "keeping the Passover" or "passing over" judgment, just before the eternal fate of mankind was determined.

When the Lord "healed" and extended 15 years to the life of Hezekiah (2 Ki 20:6; Isa 38:5), God actually bestowed upon him eternal life because the number "15" (5+10) identifies with Pentecost just as the number "50" (5x10). Based on our previous study "*The Promise of His Coming*," we are aware that a spiritual period of "50," begins at Passover and ends at Pentecost, which will manifest signs in the sun, moon and stars.

Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, 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 the LORD. 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. {2 Ki 20:5-6}

And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz. At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and showed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house

have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them. **And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.** {2 K 20:11-16}

Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, 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. **And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.** {Isa 38:5-8}

It should be noted that at the traditionally observed Pentecost (June 13), the five months of torment for the unsaved described in Revelation 9 would be shortened by over three weeks from May 21st.

⁴And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. ⁵And to them it was given that they should not kill them, **but that they should be tormented five months:** and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. ⁶**And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.** {Rev 9:4-5}

But since the Lord has the power to turn the shadow of sundial 10 (spiritually “completeness”) degrees backwards in the time (*or “sun dial”*) of the wicked king Ahaz; instituting the “complete” five months of torment would be no “light thing.”

Blessed Is He that Cometh in the name of Lord. Hosanna in the Highest!

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