



"The desire for even a good thing becomes a bad thing when that desire becomes a ruling thing."

—Paul David Tripp

**03-Mar-17**

## **The Word of the Lord Is Good (Part Two)**

In Part One, we saw that, in some ways, King Hezekiah of Judah was a mixed bag spiritually. Although Scripture lists him as one of the best kings of Judah, he made significant mistakes during his reign, showing both a great deal of pride and imprudence. In this way, he can be seen as a great deal like us.

In II Kings 18, under threat of the Assyrians, we see him relying on [God](#) only when he had no other options:

The LORD was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. . . . And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. ([II Kings 18:7](#), 13)

Rather than relying on God, who was with him, as verse 7 says, he quailed and tried instead to appease the Assyrian king:

Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. ([II Kings 18:14-16](#))

After taking all the treasures of Jerusalem, the king of Assyria, Sennacherib, arrayed his armies against the city. Only then—with his back to the wall, so to speak—did Hezekiah turn to God for help. II Kings 19, II Chronicles 32, and Isaiah 37 record how God responded to his plea.

II Kings 20-21 lists at least ten terrible consequences of Hezekiah's interference in God's plan, consequences that only the king's death from his fatal disease would have prevented (see [Isaiah 38:1-5](#)). Certainly, one can argue that God, in His sovereignty, would have brought about the same ends in His own time and manner, but God made sure He recorded Hezekiah's tearful unwillingness to accept His will in the matter. It is often said, "Be careful what you ask for," and it is a perfect fit for this situation. Here are the scriptures that comprise the list:

1. "Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left," says the LORD. ([II Kings 20:17](#))
2. "And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." (verse 18)
3. Manasseh [born after Hezekiah was healed]. . . reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. . . . And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. ([II Kings 21:1-2](#))

4. For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. (verse 3)
5. He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name." And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. (verses 4-5)
6. Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used [witchcraft](#), and consulted spiritists and mediums. (verse 6)
7. Manasseh seduced [the people of Judah] to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. (verse 9)
8. "So I [the LORD] will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies." (verse 14)
9. Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another. (verse 16)
10. Amon [his heir]. . . did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. (verses 19-20)

These terrible consequences continued even after good King Josiah's reign ended:

Moreover [Josiah](#) put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem. . . . Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of [Moses](#); nor after him did any arise like him. Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, because of all the

provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. ([II Kings 23:24-26](#))

We can hope that we will never have to deal with anyone like Manasseh. However, these being the end times, God wants to know what is in our hearts, perhaps causing us to encounter extreme people, situations, and conditions ranging from disease, poverty, imprisonment, and even our own death of self or that of a loved one. Will we, like Hezekiah, seek special privilege to escape God's will?

God's winnowing out of the unfaithful chaff will continue until Christ returns. We can only increase our efforts to be diligent in seeking the Kingdom first, as [Matthew 6:33](#) advises. It is a tall order, encompassing everything required for entrance into the Kingdom: repenting, developing the [fruit of the Spirit](#), loving the brethren, remaining unspotted from [the world](#), studying, praying, fasting, forgiving, being humble, donning the whole armor of God—the list is nearly endless. We need to be mentally tough—no "snowflakes" countenanced—and develop an unyielding [faith](#) in Christ and devotion to God. Is it any wonder only a few are chosen?

Notice [Psalm 32:10](#) from *The Amplified Bible*: "Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in and relies on the LORD shall be surrounded with compassion and lovingkindness." This was the attitude Hezekiah should have expressed before God, as [Jesus Christ](#) did in the Garden of Gethsemane ([Luke 22:39-46](#)). It makes a lofty goal to which we can aspire.

- Mike Fuhrer

---

## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Seeking God's Will \(Part Six\): Forethought](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

The Pilgrims' thanksgiving experience in 1621 followed a horrendous loss of life in the Plymouth Colony in 1620. The original settlers had no inkling that their offspring would eventually number 300 million people, spreading from

sea to sea. The extent of father Abraham's blessings were totally unrealized. The Pilgrims were unprepared for the bitter New England winters. They had very little practical foresight, paying a heavy toll for not counting the cost. God, on the other hand, has abundant forethought, having clear insight into the consequences of every behavior. Israel, the majority of the time, had rejected truth and good sense, having no understanding of spiritual cause and effect, having no perception or insight. God demonstrated forethought in creation, with each herb, animal, microbe and metal, etc, having multiple uses and applications. Adam and Eve did not demonstrate foresight, taking no time to think things through, basing their decisions on the whimsical lusts of the flesh. Thankfully, our Elder Brother carefully counted the cost when He emptied His divinity, becoming a flesh- and- blood human being, but looking ahead to a better end. Jesus spent a great deal of time in prayer, planning His day-by-day strategy. We, as parents, must teach our children to plan and think ahead, turning away from attractive, but dangerous, detours.

---

## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[Before Honor Is Humility: The Story of Andrew](#)**

by Martin G. Collins

The apostle Andrew is a sterling example of humble service. Martin Collins takes what little we know about this early Christian and shows how Andrew's character should encourage the average Christian.

---

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).

