

# King Hezekiah Prays for Health



Scripture Reference: [2 Kings 20:1-11](#)

**Suggested Emphasis:** Pray for the sick.



Background  
Study



Story  
Introduction



Telling  
the Story



Review  
Questions



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## Story Overview:

When King Hezekiah became sick, the prophet Isaiah told him that he would die. Hezekiah knew that there was still a lot of work to do in Judah. He wanted to help the country to be better. He wanted to teach the people to love God. He could not do that if he was dead! Hezekiah prayed that the Lord would give him a longer life. The Lord stopped Isaiah before he had even left Hezekiah's palace. He told Isaiah to go back and tell Hezekiah that he would live 15 more years.

## Background Study:

Hezekiah was a good king (2 Kings 18:5-7). It seems that Hezekiah's fatal illness occurred the same year as the Assyrian invasion described in 2 Kings 19. This could have even happened during the crisis with Assyria itself.

[Background Information on the Divided Kingdom.](#)



The Lord sent the prophet Isaiah to Hezekiah to give him the message that he was about to die. Verse one contains the familiar expression "Put your house in order." When Isaiah left, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed earnestly with tears. Hezekiah had been a good king who tried to obey God, and one of his strengths was that he was a man of prayer. He did not stop praying just because he was sick. He wanted the Lord to give him a longer life. This was not just for himself. Hezekiah knew that he was a good king and he wanted to live a long life to bring the people closer to God. He also would have wanted to produce an heir to the throne. Also, in Old Testament times, people believed that long life was a reward for righteous living. To go along with that, fear of death was greater in those days.

In the story [Isaiah Helps King Hezekiah Pray](#) the Lord took his time to answer Hezekiah's prayer. In this instance, the answer was immediate. Before Isaiah had even left the palace courtyard, God told him to go back to the king. Hezekiah would live fifteen more years! This would nearly double the years of his reign. From verse 5, it seems as though God granted Hezekiah's prayer because he was king and because he was David's descendant.

Placing the lump of figs on the boil was a symbolic act; at that time Hezekiah began to get better. A fig poultice was a way to bring a boil to the surface of the skin. Perhaps Hezekiah's illness had something to do with boils.

But Hezekiah still wanted a sign that in three days' time he would be well. Neither God nor the prophet was angry when Hezekiah asked for a sign. The stairway apparently served as a sundial of some sort. Hezekiah was given the choice of whether the shadow should go back or forward ten degrees. Hezekiah chose the way that was not possible. It happened just as he requested.

-  [What happened before this story?](#)

-  [What happens after this story?](#)
-  [List of all Bible stories and themes on this website.](#)

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## Way to Introduce the Story:

Bring some items to class that relate to illness. These items might include medicine bottles, blanket, thermometer, soup, etc. Talk about how it feels to be sick. "In today's story we are going to learn about a time when King Hezekiah was sick."

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## The Story:

King Hezekiah was a very good king. He prayed to God often, and he always obeyed God. One time King Hezekiah became very ill. He almost died. Hezekiah did not forget the Lord or blame him because of his sickness. He just continued to pray and ask God to help him.

While he was sick, the prophet Isaiah came to visit him. King Hezekiah probably hoped that Isaiah would have some good news. Instead, the news was bad. The prophet told Hezekiah, "The Lord says you are going to die. So you should give your last orders to everyone. You will not get well."

As soon as Isaiah left, Hezekiah began to pray to God. He said, "Lord, please remember that I have always obeyed You. I have done what You said was right." Then Hezekiah cried loudly. He did not want to die. The country needed him. Many of the people still did not follow God. Hezekiah wanted to teach them some more so that they would learn to love and obey God. If he died now, he could not do that. Hezekiah cried and he kept on praying and begging the Lord to make him well.

Even though Isaiah had gone, he had not gotten very far. He was still in the palace courtyard. God spoke to him and told him to go back to Hezekiah. The Lord had a special message for King Hezekiah and he wanted Isaiah to give the king the

message. This time he would have some good news to tell the king.

The Lord said to Isaiah, "Tell Hezekiah that I have heard his prayer, and I will heal him. I have decided to add more years to his life. In three days Hezekiah should go to the temple, and I will add fifteen years to his life." Isaiah did just as the Lord commanded. He went to Hezekiah and told him the good news. The King was very happy. Now he would have the chance to help his people.

Then, Isaiah had Hezekiah's servants boil some figs and make a paste. The servants spread the paste on the king's skin and he got better.

King Hezekiah wanted a sign from the Lord. He wanted a sign to be sure that he should go to the temple in three days. He wanted a sign that he really would live for fifteen more years.

So Isaiah asked Hezekiah, "Do you see the shadow on the steps?"

Hezekiah thought for a moment, "It is easy for a shadow to go forward, so let it go back ten steps as a sign from God that He will keep His promise."

Then Isaiah called to the Lord. God brought the shadow back ten steps and Hezekiah knew that God would make him well. He knew this sign meant God would keep His promise and add fifteen years to his life when he went to the temple in three days.

It happened just as the Lord said. King Hezekiah lived fifteen more years and was a good king.

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## **Ways to Tell the Story:**

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

## Review Questions:

1. When King Hezekiah got sick, what did Isaiah say would happen? He would die
2. When Hezekiah prayed for a longer life, what answer did the Lord give him? He told him he would live for fifteen more years.
3. What sign did the Lord give Hezekiah to show that he would get well? He caused a shadow on some steps to fall in the opposite way from normal.

## Song Suggestions:

- Read Your Bible Pray Everyday
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

## Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

*Activities:*

- Tell the story using a power point presentation. [Click here for downloadable presentation.](#)
- Tell the story using a printed flip chart. [Click here for downloadable flip chart.](#)
- See [Prayer in Bible Class](#) for more ideas on prayer in the classroom.
- Find out who in your congregation is sick and pray for these people with the children.
- If possible, make arrangements with the children's ward of the hospital to donate items that your class prepares. The children could collect packets of crayons and pictures to colour. They could make games or collect stickers. Just ask the children what they would want to do if they were in the hospital.
- Write the memory verse on a chalk/whiteboard. Say the verse together with the class a few times. Erase one word and have the class repeat it together again. Erase another word and recite the verse. Continue to do this until all

of the words of the verse are erased and the children can say the verse.

- Spend some time talking about prayer. Make sure that the children in your class know how to pray.
- Go outside and experiment with shadows and talk about how it was a miracle that God changed the shadow. You could do this with a lamp indoors if it is not a sunny day. You could even try making shadow shapes for fun. Here's a website with some patterns: <http://www.shadow-puppets.com/>
- Bring a fig to class and let the children have a taste.

### *Crafts:*

- Make cards or gift baskets to send to someone who is sick.

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "King Hezekiah Prays for Health" printables to print on A4 size paper](#)  
[Click here for "King Hezekiah Prays for Health" printables \(Letter size-USA\)](#)

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## **Other Online Resources:**

- [Craft: Curly paper crown from http://www.freekidscrafts.com](http://www.freekidscrafts.com)
- [Craft: Instructions for a simple paper crown from http://www.dltk-kids.com](http://www.dltk-kids.com)
- [Craft: Prayer pail with popsicle/craft sticks from http://www.lubirdbaby.com](http://www.lubirdbaby.com)
- [Activity: "Five finger prayer" to teach children to pray from http://ministry-to-children.com](http://ministry-to-children.com)
- [Lesson on prayer for children from http://ministry-to-children.com](http://ministry-to-children.com)

- [Explaining how to teach children to pray from http://ministry-to-children.com](http://ministry-to-children.com)

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