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The Ten Greatest Prayers of the Bible

By Benjamin L. Reynolds, M.Min

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For information, contact Benjamin L. Reynolds at
info@benjaminlreynolds.com or www.benjaminlreynolds.com

Ready for the Rapture
Seven Years Until Eternity: The Rise of the Antichrist
Living in the New Millennium and Beyond
40 Days of Faith

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PREFACE

Often times when we read miraculous events of the Bible we think of them as only applying to the people who lived in biblical times. In our modern era of science, medicine and technology, people rarely rely on prayer to meet their needs. The purpose of writing this book is to show the importance of prayer and how it can be relative to people of all races, gender and social classes. Prayer is powerful and should be relied upon not only as a method of last resort, but in times when we don't think that we need it. Prayer is a useful tool for kings as well as common people. It was necessary for Christ, his Apostles, their congregations and is still necessary for us today.

I would like to give my personal testimonial about the power of prayer. A few years ago, the Lord delivered me from a sickness by the power of my prayer as well as the prayers of others. In September 2006, I had been suffering from Ulcerative Colitis and bleeding for several months. After spending several weeks in the hospital, I was cleared to go home for rest and recuperation. I was not showing much improvement at home and continued to bleed every time I went to the bathroom. Early one morning, I awoke and went into the bathroom where I continued to bleed severely as I had done for days. When I tried to walk back into the bedroom I passed out and fell on the floor. I don't know how long I was unconscious but my wife found me lying on the bathroom floor and she began trying to wake me. When I

came to, I began gasping for air and was unable to breathe. Later we found out that this was due to having suffered severe blood loss and dehydration. My mother and aunt came upstairs after hearing my wife screaming and crying and called 911, and they helped my wife carry me back into the bedroom, where things only got worse. It was getting harder and harder to breathe. I felt my life slowly slipping away. After a few minutes, the struggle just became too great and I could barely keep my eyes open. At that moment, I knew that I was going to die. As I lay on the floor there was a strange peace that came over me. I felt that I was living in my final moments. I looked up at my wife and whispered, "I love you." I then closed my eyes and everything went black.

When I opened my eyes, I saw nothing but extreme darkness. It appeared that I was in a large open space, like a valley, with a black sky that had no stars. The ground beneath was blackish gray with cracks in it like a dry desert. Everything had the appearance of desolation. While there, the pain that had constantly been in my body for the past weeks had disappeared and I had intense feelings of fear and loneliness. I stood there for what appeared to be several minutes looking around and wondering what was happening. Having been a Christian for fourteen years and a pastor for the previous two years of my life, I was expecting to see something quite different in the afterlife. What I was seeing did not make any sense at all.

I thought to myself, *This cannot be all that there is in the afterlife! I have served God for too long and know that God is real. I*

have felt His love and Holy Spirit too many times. There must be a God and there must be a heaven! I began praying Psalm 23 and about halfway through, a bright flash appeared in the sky above me. When I looked up, I could see a large city with a bright gold aura, surrounded by angels in white robes. It was the city of New Jerusalem mentioned in Revelation 21 and 22.

Instantly, the loneliness seemed to vanish away as now I felt joy and relief from knowing that heaven was real and I would be going there. I then felt that there was something above and to my left. When I turned my head and looked, I saw more angels, who were closer and smiling. They were standing around someone who had a white robe with a golden belt, whose face shined with a white brightness so intense that I could not make out the features. I soon realized that this was Jesus Christ!

I tried to look into his face to make out His features, but the more that I stared, the brighter the light around his face became, forcing me to look away. Suddenly, I felt great shame and sorrow. I later realized what Daniel 10:8 meant when he said: “my comeliness in me is turned into corruption.” Compared to the righteousness and holiness of God, I could feel the sin of my lowly human nature and knew that however righteous I may have thought that I was, it was nothing compared to God’s true holiness. I felt so ashamed and embarrassed that I did not want to look up at Jesus. I stared at the ground and thought, “*I wish that I could go to that city.*” Immediately a thunderous voice reverberated

throughout my entire body and spirit saying to me; “You can come here if you want.”

I looked up with excitement and thought that I wanted to go to the city above me. I was immediately propelled at an incredible speed up in the air towards the city just as quickly as I imagined going there. As I got closer, I could see that there were many angels surrounding the city and they were all smiling, with white robes and gold trumpets pressed to their lips. The city was completely made of gold, yet it had a white translucent glow that made it shine brightly. There were large walls with three gates on each made of white pearl.

It was very interesting to me that I saw large buildings, which resembled skyscrapers of different sizes behind the walls, which had what appeared to be windows. As I moved closer and closer at great speed, I felt that there was something behind me. I turned to look and a large screen suddenly appeared. I felt myself come to a stop. Different groups of people began to appear before me on the screen. Some I recognized as pastors and their wives, while others I did not know. At that point, a heavy burden for them and sadness swept over me. I quickly realized that it was God’s burden for the ministry and humanity. I could not help but feel that the Lord showed me these people for a reason. At that moment, I understood that a decision had to be made. I thought, “Lord, they have no one to help them.” Suddenly everything went dark and I felt myself back in my body again.

I momentarily retained the previous feeling of

euphoria and no pain. This was different after being so sick and full of pain for weeks. I could clearly notice the difference of not having any pain while I was outside of my body to then having the pain once again with the reuniting with my physical body.

I opened my eyes and saw my wife, mother and aunt above me crying. I also noticed that I was having trouble breathing again. As strange as it seems, this feeling was new, as I did not remember having the need to breathe before I returned. The paramedics arrived a little while later, put an oxygen mask on my face and took me to the hospital emergency room. I was given a blood transfusion and IV liquids through two PIC lines that were inserted directly into veins in my neck. The doctors told us that even in severe cases, it was normal to only use one PIC line into the vein to transfuse blood. However, because the situation was so critical, and I was in danger of imminently dying, they had no choice but to insert two lines. I had lost a great deal of blood and was severely dehydrated.

Later, after I had recovered, my wife told me that I was lifeless and not breathing when I was in her arms for at least five minutes back at the house. She had been rebuking the spirit of death and praying for God to put my life back in my body when I suddenly came back to life again.

This whole experience changed me. I knew that the Lord was dealing with me to give more of my life to him and to share my testimony of God's power with others. I began an intense study of all scriptures in the Bible that dealt with

prayer, healing and the resurrection of the church. It is my belief that if we want to achieve the results that great people like Moses, David, Hezekiah and Solomon had, we must look at the prayers that they gave. These people were not just great because they did great things. A greater examination of scripture shows that they did great things because they prayed great prayers. I am fully convinced that if we enter into prayer and understand that prayer is a tool for achieving greatness, we will see the same miraculous wonders that our predecessors in the Bible saw. I know that I am not alone in the belief that the only thing separating us from the great heroes of faith in the bible is the prayers we give. We have the same access and opportunity to reach out to God-but will we see the same results?

In writing the ten greatest prayers of the Bible, I used several criteria to select what I believed were truly the greatest prayers. I want to make it clear that in making my selections, it was not that the prayers I did not choose were not great; it was just that I personally felt that some were simply more outstanding. To begin, I made a list of what I felt were the greatest prayers in the Bible and then narrowed it down by looking at the overall impact of each prayer. To me, the most important aspect of the prayer people prayed was the results. Great prayers can, and should be, judged by their results. It's not like every prayer isn't important, I just believe that some prayers have a greater effect than others. I asked myself questions like: Who did the prayer impact? Did the prayer affect one person or a great number of people? Some prayers affected individuals, but a greater weight had to be given to

prayers that affected more than one person.

Secondly, I looked at the person making the prayer. Was the person someone that anyone can relate to? This is important because I wanted to know if ordinary people could pray a similar prayer and achieve similar results if they found themselves in the same kind of situation as someone in the Bible. Thirdly, I looked at the circumstances the person was in. A person who encounters an average situation will pray an average prayer while a person undergoing extreme circumstances will pray extraordinary prayers.

As we look at the ten greatest prayers in the Bible, I hope that you will gain an appreciation for the power of prayer and come to realize that there is absolutely no difference between us and the people who prayed these great prayers. When we realize that we all have the same potential in prayer, then we will actualize it and see great results. I chose not to list the prayers in a 1 through 10 order of best to worst or worst to best because all were equally great and each showed unique characteristics about how to pray great prayers. The only prayer that I would say was the greatest, was the one prayed by Jesus Christ. Other than that, I give them all equal weight. I hope that in reading this book, you gain insight from those who prayed some of the greatest prayers, and that this book can in some way change you and those around you.

May God Bless you, and keep praying!

1

HANNAH'S PRAYER

The Prayer

“And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.” 1 Samuel 1:10-11

What was Hannah Praying for?

Hannah was praying in bitterness of soul and spirit so that she could have a son.

Background Information about Hannah

Hannah was one of two wives married to a man named Elkenah. Although polygamy was permissible at that time under the Law of Moses, it was not an ideal situation for any woman to be in. The stresses on Hannah's marital relationship with her husband and his other wife are evident

in the first chapter of 1 Samuel. Hannah was constantly harassed and provoked by the other woman, Peninnah, about her inability to have children. We learn a great deal about Hannah's character, because, despite being provoked so much, we never see her responding in a negative or confrontational way to anyone. Most people fight back when they are personally attacked, but Hannah did not. She chose the high road of prayer as her weapon of defense. Can you imagine what it must have been like to be in her situation? First, she was sharing her husband with another woman who was arrogant, spiteful and full of pride.

Second, although her husband apparently loved her very much, (as evidenced by his giving her a double portion to offer the Lord at the temple) she could not provide him with children. This must have been devastating to her because not being able to bear children during the time she lived in was often thought of as a curse. By her own admission in 1 Samuel 1:15, she was a woman deeply troubled. 1 Samuel 1:8 says that she was depressed and even refused to eat at times. It was obvious to everyone that not being able to have a child was a tremendous problem in her life.

We know that despite her inability to have a child after many years, Hannah remained a devout believer in God. When others may have given up praying to God or would have become bitter against God, 1 Samuel 1:3 explains that she continued to go up to Shiloh year after year to worship and make her offerings. Although she didn't receive an answer to her prayer for years, she continued to have faith

that God was going to answer her prayers, as evidenced by the fact that she continued to worship and serve God as if he would answer her.

It is important to understand that Hannah experienced bitterness, but she did not become a bitter person. She never allowed her emotions to push her towards making regrettable decisions. The emotional trauma she experienced only served to motivate her more to prayer. The final prayer she made at the temple was the result of many years enduring painful insults from her husband's second wife and bitter rival, Peninnah, and from the frustration that came from years of seemingly unanswered prayers for a child. When she could not take it anymore, Hannah decided to take the next logical step when it seems like prayer is not being answered; she changed her prayer.

Key Elements of Hannah's Prayer

1. *Hannah was being provoked by her rival and made her prayer in bitterness of soul.* The fact that Hannah was constantly being provoked caused an emotional reaction in her. However, this woman of God responded in a positive, rather than negative way. She chose to fight back using the divine weapon of prayer rather than a sharp tongue or getting into a physical altercation. Many people resort to arguing with others and letting their disagreements turn physical because they lack the crucial experience of how to deal with problems in a spiritual way.

The wise person knows that not every problem in the natural world has a natural solution. Sometimes we need to look to the spiritual world for the solution, and this was the case with Hannah. In verse 1:6 we read that the Lord had closed her womb. There was nothing physical about her problem. According to the Bible, this was the Lord's doing. No matter how many fertility treatments, potions, advice, medical treatments or consultations she received, nothing was ever going to work until she received divine intervention. By understanding that the same God who caused her problem was the one who was going to fix it, she was well on her way to receiving the answer to her prayer.

2. *Hannah made her prayer at the Temple – (The House of God)*

The house of God has always been associated with God meeting mankind in prayer. Jesus reaffirmed this in Matthew 21:13 by saying that the temple was called “the house of prayer.” First and foremost, the churches and places where we worship God should be respectfully looked upon as places of prayer. Referring to the temple with the familiar word “house” gives it a familiar and comforting feeling. It helps us know that our places of worship should be viewed as homes where the people of God should feel free to discuss their thoughts and issues with their heavenly father. For Hannah, the temple was the place where she could meet with God and where he could

meet with her. We should look at our churches the same way. By making her prayer at the temple, as opposed to in her home, she was using it exactly the way God intended: as a place of worship and divine communion. A house is meant to be a place of rest, relaxation and refuge. This is what the house of God is supposed to be for us in a spiritual sense because God's name, presence, and power rests and dwell specifically in the house of God.

“And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.” 1 Kings 9:3

The important thing to understand about the house of God is that it is more than wood, mortar and stones. It is the place where God has put his name and represents his power, authority and presence. His eyes are in his house constantly to see everyone who comes to make prayer. His heart is there constantly to *feel* the emotion of anyone who comes make prayer. When Hannah came to pray for a child, God not only saw her, but he *felt* her need. He felt the bitterness of her soul and was determined to give her not just a son, but also one of Israel's greatest son's and prophets—Samuel.

When God is not answering our prayers, we

should look not only at how we are praying but *at where* we are praying. Where we are praying has just as much to do with how and what we pray since the house of God is supposed to be designated as the house of prayer. Not using the church for prayer is akin to having a car and choosing to walk rather than drive. Praying at home and other places is fine, but as Christians, we have to make better use of the church when we pray since it is the place where God has chosen to meet his people and we can expect to have better results. When it comes to prayer, you can walk in the spirit, run, or drive. Which do you prefer?

3. *Hannah vows to give her child to the Lord and make him a Nazirite.* Although Hannah's prayer focused on her personal needs, her prayer was not selfish because she vowed to give up the very son that she was praying for. How many of us would ask the Lord to bless us with something so that we can give it all back to him? To the normal person, this doesn't make sense. Many of us pray for financial blessings, promising to give God back ten, twenty or even thirty percent. Hannah's prayer was different in that she pledged to give *one hundred percent* of her request back to God. She did this knowing that she would only have a precious few years to wean the child before she would have to surrender him to the service of the Lord in the temple. To Hannah, a few years would be better than nothing at all.

Hannah's pledge was important because it filled

two very important needs at that time. First, Hannah wanted a son to fulfill her personal desires to have a child and be a mother. It would also put an end to the stressful situation she had to deal with on a daily basis with Peninnah. Secondly, the Lord needed another man of God to be able to minister to his people and succeed the elderly head priest, Eli. At that time, Eli had two sons who were notoriously corrupt and scandalous. After Samuel was born, he was sent to serve at the temple. According to 1 Samuel 2:12, Eli's sons were wicked and had no regard for the Lord. They stole from the offerings that people brought and fornicated with women who served at the tabernacle. Their sin and blasphemy was so great that God decided to kill them. Meanwhile, Samuel was ministering before the Lord and grew in stature and favor with God and men.

God knew what the future was going to bring and had chosen Hannah to provide him with a righteous man of God—even though Hannah did not understand why she was going through her trials of not being able to have a child. We should understand that when we are going through trials in our lives, it is often because God is preparing something in us that will later on be a blessing to others. The discouragement that we are temporarily experiencing will later turn into encouragement for others if we just continue to be faithful in prayer. As a pastor, I often have to encourage people while they are undergoing difficult circumstances. However, in order for me to be there to encourage them, I needed to have overcome the

difficult circumstances that I experienced earlier in my life. How can I encourage someone if I failed all of my trials and remained discouraged? By overcoming one trial, you can potentially help hundreds of people overcome their trials. So it was with Hannah. By overcoming in prayer, Hannah later bore a son who ministered to millions. Thank God for persevering in prayer!

4. *Hannah's Prayer was blessed by the man of God when she finished.*

As a sign of affirmation that Hannah was indeed praying for the right thing, Eli, the man of God, blessed her prayers. Why was this significant? Well, the Bible constantly confirms the fact that God blesses prayers when more than one person agrees on the subject matter of the prayer. Two or three people agreeing on serious matters is a principle first put forth in the Old Testament and then established in the New Testament:

“One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.” Deuteronomy 19:15

Consider the words of Christ:

“Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:19-20

When two or more people agree that, a matter is serious enough to be brought before the throne of God so that it can be established in the earth, God takes it more seriously than when one person makes the request. This is not to say that the prayers of one person are not serious enough for God to consider, because indeed, they are, but God takes the request *more* seriously when more than one person is making the request. Doesn't our government take our petitions more seriously when more than one person makes the petition? Are not lawsuits more powerful when people file class action lawsuits as a group rather than as singular individuals? The same principle applies to the prayer request that we make to God.

Result of the Prayer

Hannah gave birth to Samuel a year later and he became one the greatest prophets in the history of Israel. Not only was he a prophet, but he became the judge and the spiritual leader of the nation for many years. It can be said that the one child that Hannah bore was more significant than all the children of Peninah, Hannah's rival for many years. Not only was Hannah blessed to have Samuel, but the Lord continued to bless her with more children than she asked for. 1 Samuel 2:21 says, "The Lord visited her and she had three more sons and two more daughters." God often provides overwhelming blessings when answering our prayers. Hannah went from having no children to probably having to hire a nanny to help her with the five she had at home and the one at the temple! Psalm 23:5 comes to my mind when I think

about Hannah's situation with her rival.

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” Psalm 23:5-6

Hannah was living with her enemy but God gave her the peace of mind and strength to be able to endure the constant harassment and humiliation. Although the answer to her prayer was not immediate, God's anointing, goodness and mercy were so plentiful that she could coexist peacefully with her enemy. Over the next few years, the Lord provided an overwhelming blessing of five more children. Her cup ran over with more than what she could ever dream of. This was God's goodness and mercy following her throughout the rest of her life. Faithfulness in prayer will bring overwhelming blessing every time!

2

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER FOR HEALING

The Prayer

"I beseech thee, O LORD, 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." 2 Kings 20:3

What was Hezekiah Praying for?

Hezekiah was praying to be healed of a boil. This boil had brought upon a sickness that was going to cause him to die.

Background Information about Hezekiah

Hezekiah was king of Judah and a very godly man. When we look at the life of Hezekiah, we see that he was no stranger to prayer and doing God's will. 2 Chronicles 31:20 says that everything Hezekiah did throughout Judah was good, right and faithful before the Lord. This means that he was righteous in the sight of God and to those who knew him. 2 Chronicles 31:21 continues with how he sought God

and worked wholeheartedly in everything that he undertook in the service of God's temple and in obedience to the law and commandments. In the first month of his reign he purified the temple by removing everything that was defiled or unclean. (2 Chronicles 31:29). In 2 Chronicles 31:4-7, we read that Hezekiah restored celebrations, feast offerings and called on the people of Judah to return to the Lord. He ordered the Israelites to bring tithes and offerings in accordance to the Old Testament law to support the temple and priests. He destroyed the high places and restored worship at the temple. All of these activities show that he valued his role as a spiritual leader just as much as being a political leader. Because of all of the good deeds he did in God's sight, he prospered greatly.

Hezekiah had already made a great prayer to God and received miraculous deliverance from Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, as described in 2 Chronicles 32:1-22. After this great victory, 2 Chronicles 32:23 says that many brought gifts unto the Lord in Jerusalem. Hezekiah was magnified in the sight of all nations from that point. He had everything a person could dream of before sickness suddenly came upon him: wealth, power and a fantastic relationship with the Lord. When Isaiah the prophet came to tell him to set his house in order because he was going to die, it would have seemed as if he had lost everything that was important to him in this world.

Key Elements of Hezekiah's prayer

1. *Hezekiah reminded God of everything good that he had done.* Some say that our works do not matter because God justifies and saves us by faith alone. This is simply not true. James says this concerning faith:

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”
James 2:17

When Hezekiah became sick and knew that he was going to die, he wisely reminded God about the works he had done in his life. Hezekiah was known for his steadfast righteousness when facing trials in his life. He did not allow himself to bow to political pressure but stood steadfast and unwavering in his commitment to make all of Judah godly again. As a king, Hezekiah led reformations in his country to restore the true worship of God, so everyone knew what he stood for. When faced with invasion, he told his people not to trust in military numbers but to trust in God to deliver them. (2 Chronicles 32:6-8) This was something no one could deny. No one could deny that Hezekiah trusted in God. When he prayed to be healed, God remembered his righteousness. He let God know that he deserved to continue living because he was an example of righteousness to others.

Having been in this situation myself, I know that Hezekiah told the Lord that if he extended his life, he would not only continue to exalt the name of the Lord, as

he had in the past, but that he would do even more for God because of his great mercy. How could God refuse such a bargain? Hezekiah had already proved himself righteous, so God knew that he would keep his oath and give him more glory, praise and honor in the sight of men.

2. *Hezekiah humbled himself to make his prayer.* After everything he had done for God, Hezekiah could have become frustrated and bitter because God allowed him to become sick. As someone who has dedicated his life to serving God, and experienced a life threatening sickness, I can relate to Hezekiah's situation. I know the humiliation and distress that comes from being a man of God stricken with sickness. Those who do not believe in God mock you with lies that God, who is supposed to have everything in control, could not control your sickness. Those who at one time believed in you now have doubts because they see that your life and everything you have done is now in jeopardy. Others may wonder about you as a leader because foresaw things before they happened in others lives, but you did not foresee your own trial.

As a leader, this can be an extremely frustrating test of your faith. Everything, especially your very life is at stake if God does not heal you. Either God heals you and you live, or you die and your legacy is finished. Most people choose to give up on God at this point. However, here we see Hezekiah's display of great faith by offering up one last prayer. This was what many would consider a "Hail

Mary" prayer to see if God would answer. It worked because Hezekiah's continued faith showed that he trusted God and did not resort to bitterness. Because of this, God answered him.

3. *Hezekiah was broken and contrite.* In 2 Kings 20:30, it tells us that Hezekiah "wept bitterly". He had no shame in letting out all of his emotions and concerns. On one's deathbed, most people have a tendency to get honest about everything they have done and who they are. The deathbed is no place to hide things from God and Hezekiah used his last opportunity to plead his case to God for an extension on his life. God loves when people are completely open, honest and emotional with him in regard to their present state.

The psalmist says this:

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Psalm 34:18

The heart that is broken and contrite draws the Spirit of God to it because it no longer has pride, guile or stubbornness residing within it anymore. Because of this, it is now easy for the Lord to penetrate and work. Anything that once stood against God has spilled out through every broken area of the heart and now God can finally get through and have his way. When the stony wall of our heart is broken down, the Lord can enter and do the wonderful and miraculous things that he has always wanted to do. Hezekiah's situation allowed a completely

open and honest dialogue with God that was sure to be answered.

Result of Hezekiah's Prayer

This prayer is great for several reasons. First, God reversed a previous decision he had made about letting Hezekiah die. The Lord spoke to the prophet Isaiah and instructed him to turn around, go back to the king and tell him that he would not only be healed, but would have fifteen additional years of life added. (2 Kings 20:4-6)

Second, God does another great miracle by turning the shadow of the sun dial back ten degrees as a sign that Hezekiah would be healed. (2 Kings 20:8-10) An interesting note about Hezekiah's miraculous healing was that God did not simply make the sickness disappear, but rather he had the prophet Isaiah give him a *prescription* through which he would be healed. This shows us that God does sometimes performs miraculous healings through the marvels of modern science. God can directly heal someone without intervening through men, or he may choose to work through people. God chose to work through men in Hezekiah's case in the form of lump of figs that was placed on the boil that had caused his sickness. (2 Kings 20:7)