1Thess #91

Find comfort in God’s plan and God’s timing even in illness or death.

Open up in the OT today in 2Kings chapter 19.

This will put a short but sweet close on our study of the doctrine of death.

We will go over a quick history lesson to begin with. I will show you a story where God honored a Bel and gave him extra years of life and those years actually turned out to be a failure.

Now 1st and 2nd Kings were original one book, written as one historical set of letters.

The books of 1st and 2nd Kings gives historical accounts of the reign of King Solomon right up into Babylonian captivity. With a history lesson of all the kings in between.

The kingdoms were physically, divided right around the line of real estate between Jerusalem and Samaria.

It is in these books we see a divided nation of Isarael with Judah being the southern tribe and then the Northern Kingdom of Israel, which was made up of several tribes, who had pushed for this division to occur.

It was a rebellion among the northern tribes that finally broke the nation apart.

Prior to the division - King Solomon had brought many wives and concubines into the land.

He tried to appease these women by allowing their gods and idols, along with their cultural ideologies to infest the land.

This changed many of the Jewish people, while angering others and that was the initial crack in the foundation.

Several other things accumulated but that was the first cracks in the unity of the nation of Israel.

Hezekiah reigned for 29 years over the Southern kingdom of Israel. Hezekiah did a great deal of good for the nation of Israel and he renewed the standard of old, recognizing the one true God of Israel.

So, Judah had a turning point under Hezekiah that was very prevalent. Though Hezekiah had some failures he is often remember as a great King for the Jewish people. He brought the worship of God back and destroyed the false idols.

Hezekiah sat on the throne of Judah from 715 BC until 686 BC.

The Assyrian Army was a powerful force during this time period. The king of Assyria was Sennacherib, though he was an Unbel and a wicked dictator, God used the Assyrian leader in HIS plan.

At one point the Northern tribe of Israel fell under Assyrian power. Then they marched toward the southern tribe – Judah.

King Sennacherib overtook many tribes and gathered real estate for years.

Hezekiah gave in out of fear and took tons of gold and silver from the temple of God to pay off the Assyrians to leave them alone.

This only bought a few extra years for the tribe of Judah.

Hezekiah was even willing to work out a deal with their enemy the Egyptians for protection.

As is always the case with tyrants they are only appeased momentarily and they always come back for more blood and flesh.

The old saying that you never give into a bully is solid advice!

 REPEAT

The prophet Isaiah was sent to teach and warn Hezekiah.

For all his efforts Hezekiah failed to ward off the approaching power of the Assyrian military.

This was like a 12-year assault, on and off for months at a time.

The Assyrians had several leaders within the military and they were often referred to as the kings of Assyria, yet they all answered to King Sennacherib.

/2Kin 19:20 Then **Isaiah** the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah saying, “**Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel,** ‘Because **you have prayed to Me** about Sennacherib king of Assyria, “**I have heard you.”**

God was using Assyrian power to squash other enemies of Israel, as well as a way to wake up the Jewish population. \

Many times God allows evil leadership or even those we consider enemies to have victories, so that we wake up and return to HIM!

2Ki 19:21 This is the word that the Lord has spoken against him: She has despised you and mocked you, the virgin daughter of Zion; She has shaken her head behind you, The daughter of Jerusalem!

/2Ki 19:21-31 - Isaiah makes it very clear that King Sennacherib is a tool God will use to wipe out enemies as well as wake up HIS people.

In our weakness and failure God can and will use enemies and the ungodly to eventually turn the tables in HIS favor. Which is the reason even in our failure and weakness we must stay connected to the plan of God. The victory is always IN CHRIST! \

God’s timing and God’s plan are impeccable - even if we do not always understand it.

We are called to not walk by sight but by faith!

In verse 32 God proclaims the victory for Israel.

Just as HE proclaims it, so it comes to pass.

God’s words never come back void.

/2Ki 19:35 Then it happened that night that the angel **of the Lord went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians**; and when men rose early in the morning, behold all of them were dead.

Shortly after this divine intervention, King Sennacherib and his men went back to Nineveh where the king was assassinated. \

At the tail end of the Assyrian army losing their grip on the nation of Israel, a new threat arose called the Babylonian empire and they would absorb many Assyrians into their fold.

2Ki 20:1 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.”

This was not a punishment this was an unfortunate illness that was going to bring Hezekiah face to face with the LORD.

God was allowing King Hezekiah an opportunity to get the kingdom and his own life in order to be prepared for his death.

Hezekiah was only 39 years old at this time.

2Ki 20:2 Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying,

This meant that Hezekiah used his own private time and seclusion to pray about his condition.

The protocol for serious prayer is usually having your own quiet time with GOD.

/[2Ki 20:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/2ki/20/3/s_333003) “Please, LORD, just remember how I have walked before You wholeheartedly and in truth, and have done what is good in Your sight!” And **Hezekiah wept profusely** (*gāḏôl* ).

This was a deep emotional pain, Hezekiah was in great distress. \

GAD-DOLE- speaks to a vast amount of crying out, this was very emotionally taxing on Hezekiah.

He had every right to pray – we are never wrong for requesting health or extended life that is a normal prayer.

[2Ki 20:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/2ki/20/4/s_333004) And even before Isaiah had left the middle courtyard, the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

[/2Ki 20:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/2ki/20/5/s_333005) “Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of your father David says: “**I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I am going to heal you.** On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD.

God answers prayers when they are aligned with HIS plan. Therefore, we are called to use prayer for requests, not demands or problem-solving skills. \

[/2Ki 20:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/2ki/20/6/s_333006) “And I will add **fifteen years** to your life, and I will save you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and **I will protect this city for My own sake and for My servant David’s sake.”’”**

Jerusalem and the nation of Israel was not to be completely destroyed. God’s plan was that they would fall under Babylonian captivity.\

God giving Hezekiah 15 years shows HIS grace in action. It also was a sign that Assyrian power would not be the end of the nation of Israel.

Hezekiah’s health was symbolic of the nation of Israel getting another opportunity to turn back and fully embrace God.

As soon as Hezekiah begins to feel better look what happens;

/2Ki 20:12 At that time Berodach-baladan, a son of Baladan, **king of Babylon, sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah,** because he heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

Satan will always attempt to attack when we are either tired and frustrated or just coming off a victory feeling relaxed! \

The Babylon culture had a wide spread reputation for worshipping false gods and in fact having many evil practices in its culture.

/2Ki 20: 13 And **Hezekiah listened to them, and showed them all his treasure house**, the silver, the gold, the balsam oil, the scented oil, the house of his armor, and everything that was found in his treasuries. **There was nothing in his house nor in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them**.\

This was the beginning of the end for Hezekiah and the nation of Israel.

Jump back into the NT John chapter 11.

/Every time we become intimate with the cosmic system and the culture of Satan’s ideologies we are allowing evil to infiltrate our inner house (soul and personal life). We are setting ourselves outside the timing of God and the plan of God. Many times, we believe if we just had more time or more of our own plans come to fruition we could find contentment. Never assume we have better timing and better plans then the Creator of the heavens and earth! \

This is probably where the old saying – *be careful what you wish for*, was coined!

Jhn 11:1 Now a certain man was sick: Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

[/Jhn 11:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/2/s_1008002) And **it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment**, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose **brother Lazarus was sick**.

This is a close intimate friend of Jesus and a devoted family of disciples. \

[Jhn 11:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/3/s_1008003) So the sisters sent *word* to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”

Now Jesus gets word of one of HIS close friends in dire need.

[/Jhn 11:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/4/s_1008004) But when Jesus heard *this,* He said, “This sickness is not meant for death, **but *is* for the glory of God**, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”

Relax, this is about the plan of God and the timing of God. Some of the most difficult challenges are designed to glorify GOD, yet most people allow emotions to override spiritual discernment. \

Jesus makes a clear statement that this is all part of the plan.

[Jhn 11:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/5/s_1008005) (Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus.)

/[Jhn 11:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/6/s_1008006) So **when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days** *longer* in the place where He was.

My ways are not your ways, My thoughts are not your thoughts. (Isa 55:8) \

[Jhn 11:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/7/s_1008007) Then after this He said to the disciples, “Let’s go to Judea again.”

Now jump down a few verses;

Notice our Lord was in no big rush.

Jhn 11:20 So then Martha, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed in the house.

/[Jhn 11:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/21/s_1008021) Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, **if You had been here**, my brother would not have died.

IF – 2nd class condition showing great frustration. Meaning, IF - in the negative sense, it is not true.\

It was almost a form of rebuke toward the power and person of TLJC.

[Jhn 11:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/22/s_1008022)“Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”

[Jhn 11:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/23/s_1008023) Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise *from the dead.*”

She is in a panic, while Jesus Christ is extremely calm.

God always has everything under control, no need to question or become angry toward God.

[Jhn 11:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/24/s_1008024) Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day.”

[Jhn 11:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/25/s_1008025) Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; the one who believes in Me will live, even if he dies,

**/**[Jhn 11:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/26/s_1008026) and **everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die**. Do you believe this?”

This was a powerful lesson on the resurrection, because Jesus was going to bring a dead man back to life – super natural resuscitation. \

Jesus Christ had to be the first fruits of resurrection not Lazarus.

We can not supersede the timing of God or the plan of God with emotional outbursts or even praying for something that is NOT inside the plan of God.

One of the shortest verses in the Bible is in this chapter – Jesus wept.

The humanity of Christ felt the pain of everyone around HIM.

/Jhn 11:38 So **Jesus, again being deeply moved within**, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39 Jesus said, “Remove the stone.” Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, “**Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days**.”\

God is not tied to your emotional outburst nor is HE tied to your human viewpoint – HE loves you and cares deeply for you.

Yet HE will fulfill HIS plan in HIS way and HIS timing.

[Jhn 11:40](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/40/s_1008040) Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

/[Jhn 11:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/41/s_1008041) So they removed the stone. And **Jesus raised His eyes**, and said, “**Father, I thank You that You have heard Me**.

The humanity of Christ knew that protocol inside the plan of God is tantamount to obedience and spiritual maturity. \

[Jhn 11:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/42/s_1008042) “But I knew that You always hear Me; nevertheless, because of the people standing around I said *it,* so that they may believe that You sent Me.”

[Jhn 11:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/43/s_1008043) And when He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”

/[Jhn 11:44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/jhn/11/44/s_1008044) **Out came the man who had died,** bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “**Unbind him, and let him go**.”

Death has no power over the Believer because Jesus Christ delivered the victory! \

This was designed as the final lesson for the early church to understand resurrection. God’s plan was to use divine resuscitation as a shadow of what was to come.

/In death or illness, it is God’s design that we are able to grow and glorify HIM in the angelic conflict. Sometimes, illness and death is working in you for the sake of others (2Cor 4:8-12). God’s plan and timing in the temporal, is that we have a beginning, a middle and an end, until we reach eternity. You have no power over the time of death or birth. We have to learn to accept God’s perfect plan and timing even when it challenges our own plans and timing. \

2Cor 4:8 *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed;

[2Co 4:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/2co/4/10/s_1082010) always carrying around in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

[2Co 4:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/2co/4/11/s_1082011) For we who live are constantly being handed over to death because of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal flesh. 12So death works in us, but life in you.