

Exegetical Analysis – 2 Kings 20:6

6 – I will add fifteen years to your life, and I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.

וְהוֹסַפְתִּי עַל־יָמֶיךָ חֲמִישֵׁי עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה וּמִכַּף מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר אֶצִּילְךָ וְאֶת הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְגִבּוֹתֶיהָ עַל־יְהוֹיָכִן הַמֶּלֶךְ לְמַעַן דָּן עַבְדִּי

“The most natural understanding that perfectly explains this Scripture is that God’s statement, “you will die, and not live,” hinged upon a condition, and it was a condition that God knew full-well that Hezekiah would meet. In fact, God had Isaiah say these words to Hezekiah to bring about that condition, and God had no intention of actually killing the king. Of course, the condition was repentance. God, through Isaiah, was telling Hezekiah that his disease was malignant. Its ordinary outcome would be death. This was the logical extension of Hezekiah’s disease at the time Isaiah came to him. This is clear in the parallel account in 2 Chronicles 32:24: “In those days Hezekiah was terminally ill, and he prayed to the LORD; and he spoke to him, and gave him a sign.” But that logical extension—the natural end of Hezekiah’s illness—was closed; it was not a reality because God had decreed in eternity that the reality would be the king’s repentance and healing.

Hezekiah understood that God did not mean there was no recourse. Hezekiah had a problem with pride. God knew that the way to get his attention was to give him a terminal illness and then tell him so. This is not expressing a limitation in God’s knowledge, nor is it a lie. The illness was deadly. It would have been fatal if Hezekiah hadn’t turned to God for healing. And God knew all along that the king would do this and that He would heal him. God’s statement to Hezekiah was a statement of the fact of his illness and was conditional and God knew that the king’s meeting the condition was not just a possibility. It was a sure thing. Hezekiah repented, and God healed him.

By the way, if, as the open theists assert, God knows the future only as possibilities, how could He have accurately pinpointed to Hezekiah that he would live fifteen more years (2 Kings 20:6)? If God didn’t even know the future well enough to know Hezekiah would repent, how could He know that Hezekiah would live fifteen years? If open theists were consistent, they would have to admit that, according to their view of God, all He could have said was that Hezekiah might possibly live another fifteen years. I should also point out that Hezekiah’s heir, Manasseh, was born during this fifteen year period, and Manasseh appears in Jesus Christ’s legal pedigree (Matthew 1:10). God had no intention of letting Hezekiah die before producing his heir.”

—— Peter Ditzel

Website Reference: <http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/wp/open-theism/>