

The Shadow That Turned Back

2 Kings 20:10-11 (KJV) And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

There is a moment in Scripture where time itself obeyed its Maker. Not the sun standing still in the sky as in the days of Joshua—that was a miracle for a nation at war. This was different. This was a miracle for one man. One dying king. One weeping soul. And in that miracle, God gave us a sermon about every single one of our lives—about the years we have, the years we waste, and the years He can restore. Let us go back to that ancient throne room in Jerusalem.

The Sundial of Ahaz: Before clocks and wristwatches, men marked time by the sun. The dial of Ahaz was likely a series of steps or stairs—a graduated arc upon which the shadow of an obelisk or column would fall. As the sun moved across the heavens, the shadow crept down those steps, step by step, degree by degree. The higher the sun, the shorter the shadow. The lower the sun, the longer the shadow—and the closer to evening. This was borrowed from the Babylonians, a device of human ingenuity to capture and measure the invisible river of time. But on that day, the Creator of time reached down and grabbed that shadow. He did not let it fall. He reversed it. Ten degrees backward. Why? Because He is the God of time.

A Righteous King Who Was Shocked by Death. Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. That means when the prophet Isaiah came to him with the words, "Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live" (2 Kings 20:1, KJV), Hezekiah was thirty-nine years old. He had reigned fourteen years. He had fifteen more to go—if God granted them. But here is the blessed part: Hezekiah was a righteous king. The Scripture says, "He did that which was right in the sight of the LORD" (2 Kings 18:3, KJV). He tore down the high places. He broke the brazen serpent that the people had begun to worship. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel so completely that "after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him" (2 Kings 18:5, KJV). **And yet—at thirty-nine years old—God said, "You are going to die."**

Hezekiah wept sore. He turned his face to the wall and prayed. And God heard him. God saw his tears. And God added fifteen years to his life. But here is what we must understand: Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, died at the age of thirty-six. And Hezekiah himself, with those fifteen added years, lived to be fifty-four. Now consider this: If Hezekiah had died at thirty-nine—if God had not intervened—he would have been a righteous man who died younger than his wicked father. This came as a shock to him. And it should come as a shock to us.

The Consciousness of Time Came with Sin. Let me tell you something that will change how you see every sunrise. In the beginning, Adam and Eve had no clocks. No calendars. No watches ticking on their wrists. No fear of Monday morning. No dread of growing old. Why? Because time was not a finite commodity in the Garden. Time was simply the river in which they swam. It had no banks. No end. No urgency. They walked with God in the cool of the day—not because they had to fit Him into their schedule, but because He was their atmosphere. They had all the time in the world because the world was eternal. **Then came the serpent. Then came the fall. Then came the curse. And with the curse came the consciousness of death. And with the consciousness of death came the consciousness of time. Suddenly, every tick of the clock became a reminder: You are running out. Every gray hair, every ache in the bones, every sunset—a whisper: Your days are numbered.**

Solomon understood this when he wrote, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, KJV). Moses understood it when he prayed, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12, KJV). We are obsessed with time because we are terrified of its end. We wear watches. We set alarms. We say, "I don't have time." We rush. We scramble. We fill every moment with noise because silence reminds us that the clock is ticking. But here is the Gospel: Jesus is the Lord of time.

God Years vs. Regular Years. Now let us look at that shadow again. Hezekiah was the only king in Scripture who was told exactly how many years he had left. God said, "I will add unto thy days fifteen years" (2 Kings 20:6, KJV). This was not a guess. This was not a hope. This was a divine decree. These were not just calendar years. These were God years. These were years that death had already claimed—and God reached into the grave and pulled them back. And what did Hezekiah do with those fifteen God-years? He finished his reforms. He strengthened the kingdom. He produced an heir—Manasseh—ensuring the Davidic line continued. He built the pool and the conduit that brought water into Jerusalem. He used those years efficiently for the glory of God.

But here is the tragedy: those fifteen years also saw his greatest failure. When the ambassadors from Babylon came, Hezekiah showed them all his treasures—the silver, the gold, the spices, the armory. He was proud. He was foolish. And Isaiah told him that one day, everything he had shown them would be carried off to Babylon. Hezekiah's response? "Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken.... Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?" (2 Kings 20:19, KJV). He was thinking about his own days. He was thinking about his own peace. He was not thinking about the generations to come. What are we doing with our God-years?

Joel's Promise: The Restoration of Lost Time. Hear the promise of the LORD through the prophet Joel: "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you" (Joel 2:25, KJV). The locusts have eaten your years. The enemy has devoured your time. You have wasted seasons in sin. You have spent years in bitterness. You have squandered decades chasing things that do not satisfy. But God restores the years that the locust has eaten. This is the symbolism behind the shadow moving backward ten degrees. **God took the shadow of death—the shadow that was falling, falling, falling toward evening, toward night, toward the grave—and He reversed it. He did not just add fifteen years to Hezekiah's life. He concentrated those years with divine purpose. He turned wasted time into fruitful time.**

That is what He does for you. He Can Reverse It by a Hundred Degrees Now consider this: if God can reverse the shadow by ten degrees, He can reverse it by a hundred. If He can add fifteen years to a dying king, He can add eternal life to a dying soul. "But," you say, "I have wasted so much time. I have sinned so grievously. I have wandered so far. Can God really restore the years I have lost?" Look at the thief on the cross. He lived a life of crime. He wasted decades. And in his final hours—in the eleventh hour—he cried out to Jesus. And Jesus said, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43, KJV). That thief received eternity in a single moment. His wasted years were swallowed up by the mercy of God. Look at the woman at the well. She had five husbands. She had wasted years in broken relationships. And in one conversation with Jesus, she received living water that sprang up into everlasting life (John 4:14, KJV).

Look at the prodigal son. He wasted his inheritance on riotous living. He spent years in a far country, feeding pigs, eating husks. And when he came home, the father said, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet" (Luke 15:22, KJV). He restored everything. What Are You Doing with Your God-Years? Hezekiah knew exactly how many years he had left. You do not. But you have this day. You have this hour. You have this moment. The apostle Paul commands us: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16, KJV). **The word "redeeming" means buying back. It means purchasing time from the market of vanity and using it for eternal purposes. Are you doing that? Or are you letting the shadow fall?** Every morning, you wake up to a new degree on the dial. The sun rises. The shadow begins its descent. And you have a choice: let it fall into the evening of wasted hours, or cry out to the God of time and say, "Lord, reverse the shadow! Give me fruit for these years! Let me not live in vain!"

The Glory of Jesus, the Lord of Time. Finally, consider this: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8, KJV). He is not bound by time. He invented time. He sustains time. And He redeems time. When Hezekiah prayed, the shadow moved backward. When Joshua prayed, the sun stood still. When Jesus died on the cross, the sun was darkened from the sixth hour to the ninth hour (Matthew 27:45, KJV). **The Creator of the heavens dimmed His own light to purchase your redemption.** And when He rose from the dead, He conquered time itself. Death—the great thief of time—was defeated. The grave—the great prison of wasted years—was emptied.

So I ask you, child of God: What are you doing with the time He has given you? Honor the Lord with these years. Fill these years with Jesus every single day. Do not let the shadow fall into darkness without purpose. **Do not let the locusts eat another season of your life. God gave Hezekiah fifteen years. He gave you this day. He gave you this breath. He gave you this moment. Redeem it. Buy it back from the enemy. And use it for the glory of the One who reversed the shadow, conquered the grave, and holds all of eternity in His hands. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12, KJV).**

Lord Jesus, You are the God of time. You are the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. You reversed the shadow for Hezekiah, and You can reverse the wasted years of our lives. Forgive us for the time we have squandered. Restore to us the years that the locust has eaten. Teach us to number our days. Fill every remaining moment with Your presence, Your purpose, and Your glory. We ask this in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.