

2Chronicles 32:1 ¶ After these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself.

Eventually, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, turned his attention to conquering Judah. The writer of Kings tell us that this was in the 14th year of King Hezekiah's reign.

2 Kings 18:13 "Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them."

The Assyrian king laid siege to the walled cities, intending to capture them and make them part of his empire.

Note: These events are also recorded in 2Kings 18-20 Isaiah and Isaiah 36-39.

**2Chronicles 32:2 And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem,
2Chronicles 32:3 He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which *were* without the city: and they did help him.
2Chronicles 32:4 So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?
2Chronicles 32:5 Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised *it* up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo *in* the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance.**

When King Hezekiah was made aware that Sennacherib had invaded and that he intended to conquer Jerusalem, he consulted with his top officials, and they decided to hide (from the Hebrew) the waters of the springs outside the city. They gathered together many people to help them and explained that they didn't want the king of Assyria to be able to locate their water sources. The king also had his men repair the breaks in the wall around the city, building towers and adding a second layer to the wall. He also repaired Millo in the city of David, the lower part of the city, and made a great quantity of darts and shields.

It was during this time that "Hezekiah's tunnel," one of the authentic historic sites one can go through today, was built. It is said that he had men start digging on both sides of the city wall until they met in the middle, quite an amazing feat without all the technology and tools available today.

**2Chronicles 32:6 And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying,
2Chronicles 32:7 Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that *is* with him: for *there be* more with us than with him:
2Chronicles 32:8 With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the**

words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

The king then organized his military and gathered them together in the open area at the gate to the city to encourage them. He told them to be strong and courageous. There was no reason to be afraid because no matter how big the Assyrian army was, they were no match for the LORD "our" God who would help us fight our battles. The people took the words of the king to heart.

Hezekiah's words bring to mind the words of the prophet Elisha when surrounded by the troops of Syria.

*2 Kings 6:15-17 "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, **Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.** And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."*

In the face of danger, Hezekiah is both practical and strong in his faith. He doesn't hesitate to use common sense and get prepared, but his faith/confidence is focused on the fact that God is with them. I think that is an important principle to live by. God expects us to equip ourselves for spiritual battle as listed in Ephesians, but our faith is to be in His working in and through us to achieve victory.

Ephesians 6:11-17 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God....

2Chronicles 32:9 ¶ After this did Sennacherib king of Assyria send his servants to Jerusalem, (but he *himself* laid siege against Lachish, and all his power with him,) unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto all Judah that were at Jerusalem, saying,

2Chronicles 32:10 Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege in Jerusalem?

2Chronicles 32:11 Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The LORD our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

2Chronicles 32:12 Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it?

2Chronicles 32:13 Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of *other* lands? were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand?

2Chronicles 32:14 Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand?

2Chronicles 32:15 Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand?

While Sennacherib laid siege to Lachish, he sent his servants to deliver a message to Hezekiah and his people. The message (my paraphrase): What makes you think you can outlast me in a siege? Is your king condemning you to death by famine and thirst by telling you that the LORD your God will deliver you from my armies? Didn't that same king take away the high places and altars devoted to your God and dictate that you could only worship Him at the altar in Jerusalem? Don't you know that we have already defeated many other nations and proven their gods to weak to protect them? Can you name even one god of the other nations that was able to deliver his people out of my hand? Why do you think your God is any different? Don't let Hezekiah deceive you; don't believe him. Your God won't be any more successful at delivering you from my armies than the gods of any of the other nations I have conquered.

Note: Lachish was about 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem; it was an important fortress city of Judah that guarded the road to Egypt. Guzik states, "In the British Museum, you can see the Assyrian carving depicting their siege of the city of Lachish...."

The IVP Commentary had an interesting historical note: "Excavations at Lachish are still going on, and among other discoveries is that of an iron blast-furnace, with slag and ashes, which is supposed to have existed B.C. 1500. If the theories of experts are correct, the use of the hot-air blast instead of cold air (an improvement in iron manufacture patented by Neilson in 1828) was known fifteen hundred years before Christ."

2Chronicles 32:16 And his servants spake yet *more* against the LORD God, and against his servant Hezekiah.

2Chronicles 32:17 He wrote also letters to rail on the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, As the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of mine hand.

2Chronicles 32:18 Then they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech unto the people of Jerusalem that *were* on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them; that they might take the city.

2Chronicles 32:19 And they spake against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth, *which were* the work of the hands of man.

The servants of Sennacherib continued to belittle the LORD God of Israel and

King Hezekiah. It seems that he had also sent a letter speaking out against the LORD God. In it he reiterated that the gods of other nations had not proven able to deliver their people from him and neither would Hezekiah's God.

The historian notes that the messengers spoke boldly in the language of the Jews to ensure that the people of Jerusalem understood them, hoping to make them afraid and make it easier for the Assyrians to conquer the city through the use of psychological warfare. They talked about the God of Jerusalem like he was the same as all the false gods of other nations, idols made by the hands of men.

Isaiah tells us that they even offered to give Hezekiah 2000 horses if he had enough soldiers to ride them, making the point that the Assyrians (more than 185,000 strong as you will see below) did not fear such a small army.

Isaiah 36:8 "Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them."

2Chronicles 32:20 And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven.

Isaiah tells us a bit more.

Isaiah 37:1–2 "And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz."

Isaiah 37:6–7 "And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

King Hezekiah clothed himself in sackcloth and sent a message to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos. The messengers were Eliakim, overseer of the palace, Shebna the scribe and the elders of the priests; all were wearing sackcloth. The prophet was ready with an answer from the LORD. He told the messengers to tell the king not to be afraid because the LORD had heard how the Assyrian king's messengers had blasphemed Him. He then prophesied that the LORD was going to cause a rumor to reach Sennacherib that would cause him to return home, and he would eventually be murdered in his own land.

Fulfilled prophecy is unique to the LORD, the one true God. Every fulfilled prophecy is an affirmation of God as the great I AM.

Isaiah 42:8–9 "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them."

Isaiah 46:9–10 “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure....”

John 14:29 “And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.”

2Chronicles 32:21 And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.

Once again we learn more from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 37:36–38 “Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.”

When the Assyrian army encamped en masse outside Jerusalem, the LORD sent one of His angels to kill 185,000 of the enemy troops. Sennacherib beat a hasty retreat with his army back home to Nineveh. He left home full of pride and boasting only to return in great shame.

Just as God had prophesied through Isaiah, Sennacherib was killed by the sword—by his own sons—in the temple to his god! Joe Focht notes that this murder occurred 20 years later.

2Chronicles 32:22 Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *other*, and guided them on every side.

2Chronicles 32:23 And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.

The LORD saved Hezekiah and Jerusalem from Sennacherib and all other enemies surrounding them. Leaders of other nations sent gifts to the LORD to Jerusalem as well as to King Hezekiah. He was held in great esteem by the other nations from that time forward.

2Chronicles 32:24 ¶ In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign.

Isaiah 38:1–8 *“In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, And said, Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, 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. Then came the word of the LORD to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. **And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria:** and I will defend this city. And this shall be a sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken; Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.”*

And the writer of Kings tells us bit more.

2 Kings 20:7–11 *“And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered. And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? 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.”*

We learn from Isaiah (as shown in bold above) that it was during the time of Sennacherib’s invasion, that King Hezekiah developed an illness that was deemed fatal. Isaiah told the king that the LORD said he should get his house in order because he was going to die. Hezekiah did not want to accept that verdict. He turned to the LORD in passionate prayer, reminding Him how he had walked before Him in truth and obedience with a whole heart; he had done what was good before the LORD.

The LORD sent the prophet back to the king to tell him that He had heard his tearful prayer and that he would add 15 years to his life. He then told him that he would deliver Jerusalem from the Assyrians. From Kings we learn that Isaiah told them to put a lump of figs on the king’s boil; when they did, he recovered. The prophet then told the king that the LORD would give him a sign to affirm His word. He asked the king if he wanted the shadow to go forward 10 degrees or back 10 degrees. The king reasoned that it would be harder to make the shadow go backwards. So Isaiah called out to the LORD and the shadow on the sundial (that had belonged to Ahaz) went 10 degrees backward.

2Chronicles 32:25 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

2Chronicles 32:26 Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the

LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah's actions subsequent to the LORD's healing were not good; he became prideful and that made God angry. We learned more in our journey through Kings.

2 Kings 20:12–19 “At that time Berodachbaladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?”

It seems that word spread of Hezekiah's healing and the miraculous sign God gave him—and I would assume that the sun going back 10 degrees was noticed by all. The king of Babylon sent letters and a present to Hezekiah. The king then proceeded to show off all his treasures. After they left, the prophet Isaiah confronted him. The king confessed that he had shown the Babylonians all of his treasures. Isaiah then told the king that the LORD would judge his sin. All the treasures he had shown the Babylonians in great pride would one day be carried off to Babylon; nothing would be left. (This would occur some 120 years in the future.) The next part of God's judgment must have seemed bittersweet to Hezekiah. He had no sons until after his illness. He was told that he would have sons (120 years later would equate to great grandsons), but that some (not necessarily all) would be taken away to serve the king of Babylon as eunuchs (castrated servants dedicated to service—often assigned to guard the harem).

At first read, Hezekiah's response sounds selfish, but I don't believe that is the case. God has allowed him to be tested, but he doesn't turn into a totally wicked man after living such a righteous life. He just messed up—just like we do when we don't acknowledge God in any given action. We need God's guidance step by step, day by day. He acknowledges that God's judgment is “good.” In that acknowledgement, he is also admitting his sin before the Lord and that it deserved to be punished. It included an acknowledgement of God's grace with the promise that he would have sons. It also acknowledged God's mercy in allowing him to finish his days in peace and stability (from the Hebrew for the word *truth*).

We too should respond to God's chastisement in our lives with repentance and acknowledgement of God's justice, grace, and mercy, and love. God reminds us in His word that He only chastens those He loves.

Deuteronomy 8:5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Hebrews 12:6-7 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Another lesson we should learn from Hezekiah is that the sin of pride is a trap we can all fall into so easily—even those who seem to be the most committed Christians. God blesses us with talents and abilities; and when those God-given gifts result in great success, we think we are deserving of any resulting honor and reward. We need to remember that all glory goes to God for such blessing.

2Chronicles 32:27 And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels; 2Chronicles 32:28 Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks. 2Chronicles 32:29 Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for God had given him substance very much. 2Chronicles 32:30 This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.

The Chronicler tells us that Hezekiah was a very wealthy man; he possessed treasuries of silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of jewels. He also had great storehouses of corn, wine and oil, as well as stalls for different kinds of cattle and flocks. God blessed him greatly so that he was able to build cities and acquire flocks and herds in abundance.

Just to be sure that there is no mistake, the Chronicler declares this to be the same Hezekiah that diverted the water from the Gihon spring to the west side of the city of David. This is a reference to Hezekiah's tunnel mentioned earlier in this chapter. The NIV Commentary added the following details: "Hezekiah . . . channeled" the flow of "the Gihon spring" through a 1,700 foot tunnel cut into the rock beneath Jerusalem (v. 30). Archaeological confirmation of this engineering feat came in 1880, with the discovery, at its lower portal, of the Siloam Inscription, written in old Hebrew by the very workers who accomplished it."

2Chronicles 32:31 Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the

land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all *that was* in his heart.

The Chronicler makes the point that the LORD used the visit from the Babylonians to prove what was in Hezekiah's heart—not to God, but to Hezekiah himself.

Hezekiah had experienced so much blessing from the Lord that he needed to be reminded of who he really was without the LORD in his life. So God "left him," took His Spirit from him.

We that are true believers today are blessed to know that God's Spirit will never be taken away from us. He is the earnest seal of our salvation, the guarantee of our future in the presence of God in heaven.

Ephesians 1:12–14 "That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

2Chronicles 32:32 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they *are* written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

2Chronicles 32:33 And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

The historian closes his account of Hezekiah by noting that more can be read about him in the writings of Isaiah and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

When Hezekiah died, he was buried in an elevated area of the royal graveyard of David's descendants. All the people of the kingdom honored him at his death. His son Manasseh became the next king.