

# 2 Chronicles 32 Commentary

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<b>SECOND CHRONICLES</b> <b>The Kingdom of Israel</b> <b>From Splendor to Disaster</b>			
<b>Splendor</b>	<b>Disaster</b>		
<b>King Solomon</b> <b>of Judah</b> <b>2 Chronicles 1-9</b>	<b>Successive Kings</b> <b>of Judah</b> <b>2Chr 10-36</b>		
<b>Kingdom</b> <b>United</b>	<b>Kingdom</b> <b>Divided</b> <b>2Chr 10:1-19</b>	<b>Rulers of the Southern</b> <b>Kingdom of Judah</b> <b>After the Split</b>	<b>The Exile</b> <b>of Judah</b> <b>2Chr 36:17-23</b>

Inaugural 2Chr 1:1-17	Solomon's Temple 2Chr 2:1-7:22	Solomon's Glory 2Chr 8:1-9:31		
Building of the Temple		Decline & Destruction of the Temple		Temple Destroyed
~40 Years		~393 Years		

Click chart to enlarge  
 Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
 Click Chart from [Charles Swindoll](#)

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

SEE ALSO:  
[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)  
[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)  
[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

**NOTE: THESE COMMENTS ARE OFFERED IN AN "AS IS" FORMAT - IF I HAVE TIME IN THE FUTURE, THEY WILL BE UPDATED.**

**CLICK [2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES**

**2 Chronicles 32:1** After these acts of faithfulness Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself.

- these things (KJV): 2Ch 20:1,2 2Ki 18:13-37 Isa 36:1-22
- king of Assyria (KJV): 2Ki 15:19 17:6 18:11,19,20 Isa 7:17,18 8:6-8 10:5,6 Ho 11:5
- win them (KJV): Heb. break them up, Isa 10:7-11 37:24,25 Mic 2:13
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

**Related Passages:**

2 Kings 18:13 (THE DATE OF SENNACHERIB'S INVASION - 701 BC) Now **in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah**, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them.

Isaiah 36:1 Now **in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah**, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them.

**PAUL APPLE - TITLE:** WHO WILL FIGHT YOUR BATTLES? WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR DELIVERANCE? **BIG IDEA:** DESPITE FEET OF CLAY, HEZEKIAH ENCOURAGES LOOKING TO THE LORD FOR DELIVERANCE RATHER THAN TRUSTING THE ARM OF THE FLESH

**INTRODUCTION:** Having carried the northern tribes into captivity (2 Kgs. 17), the Assyrians were now threatening to do the same to Judah. Hezekiah, who had earlier paid tribute to Sennacherib (2 Kgs. 18:13–16), was hard-pressed by the Assyrians to surrender his kingdom as well. See 2Ki 18:13-19:37 for description of Hezekiah's dealings with the Assyrian King Sennacherib (see [KINGS OF ASSYRIA](#)) who came against Judah because Hezekiah refused to pay the tribute his evil father Ahaz had promised to pay to Assyria. This is a great story once again demonstrating the mysterious combination of man's responsibility (Hezekiah fortifying the city, building his famous tunnel, etc) and God's sovereignty and provision to those who trust Him (2Ch 32:8, 11) delivering Judah (2Ch 32:21, 22) who was grateful to God, "bringing gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem." (2Ch 32:23).

**THOUGHT** - Any "victory" large or small the LORD gives us should cause us to "continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His Name." (Heb 13:15+) Let it be so in each of our lives Lord. Amen

**John Olley:** Following his "acts of faithfulness" (as in 2 Chronicles 29–31; cf. 2Ch 31:20), Hezekiah saw the death of the Assyrian emperor Sargon II (721–705 BC) as an opportunity to rebel, but in 701 Sargon's successor, Sennacherib, moved against Judah (2Ch 32:1; 2 Kings 18:7, 13). Preparation for the Assyrian attack included some defensive works, but priority was given to the proper worship of God (2 Chron. 32:2–8). Hezekiah's response to the threats of Sennacherib's taunting messengers (vv. 9–20) led dramatically to deliverance (2Ch 32:21). The resulting gifts for both the Lord and Hezekiah recall the fame of Solomon (2Ch 32:22–23; cf. 2Ch 9:23–24). . . Differences in details between Kings and Chronicles result from the Chronicler's using information from Kings and Isaiah to highlight his own message of Hezekiah's leadership in preparation and reliance on God, and also the results.

**August Konkell:** For the most part, Hezekiah is regarded as a noble and successful king, but it is never forgotten that he too had feet of clay. In contrast to Ahaz, he restored the worship of God, he asked for and received a sign of divine providence, and in his time the city was delivered. Yet he also was unfaithful: his fateful alliance with the Babylonians was the first step toward that nation accomplishing what the Assyrians could not do. Jerusalem would bear the punishment of faithlessness, and Hezekiah would be partly responsible for that catastrophe. Hezekiah is a good example of how one person and one experience show many aspects of the profound calling to live by faith. In its whole account, the book of Kings emphasizes that Hezekiah demonstrated how to trust God in a manner that was unequaled (2 Kings 18:5). Yet it was this same king who fell into the trap of trusting in human alliances and dooming his city (2Ch 20:12-19). Hezekiah was the man whose life was declared to be over in his prime (Isa 38:9-20), yet he became the example of how God can revive the dead. Faith is always a matter of faithfulness. The failure of faith brings consequences that are inescapable, but the presence of faith assures us of hope that nothing can destroy.

**Andrew Hill:** Along with the building of Solomon's temple and the fall of Samaria, Sennacherib's invasion of Judah is one of the most important events in the history of southern kingdom. The Assyrian campaign is dated to 701 B.C., during the Fourteenth year of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:13). The Chronicler assumes a thorough knowledge on the part of his audience of the earlier parallel accounts (2 Kings 18-19; Isa. 36-37). Further, he ignores the problems of harmonizing posed by the conflicting details of the invasion reported in the Kings version. As Selman notes, the Chronicler has edited the earlier sources in such a way that the conflict becomes largely a "war of words."

**Martin Selman:** The key question is whether Yahweh can save or deliver his people. The underlying Hebrew word (*bassil*) is mentioned eight times (2Ch 32:10-17), with the Assyrians constantly challenging any deity to counteract the apparently superior power of the Assyrian army. Yahweh is assumed to be a god just like any other, and the Assyrians attempt to undermine the Israelites' confidence (2Ch 32:10) by casting doubt on his effectiveness. The turning-point comes when Judah's leaders pray (2Ch 32:20). Yahweh listens to their desperate plea and saves his people (2Ch 32:22), with Hezekiah as no more than a spectator. It is therefore Yahweh who really rules in Israel, and the chapter aims to stimulate faith in Israel's God rather than admiration for Israel's king.

**After these acts of faithfulness Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself** - It is surprising that after Hezekiah's "faithfulness" Assyria attacked because most often an enemy invasion was a result of disobedience. In this case it is a test for Hezekiah (2Ch 32:31).

**Morris** - The invasion of Judah by the Assyrians began in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign (2 Kings 18:13). Eight years earlier (2 Kings 18:10,11), Israel had fallen to the Assyrians and had been carried captive into Assyria. Although it is not mentioned specifically, this invasion no doubt caused many refugees from the northern kingdom to flee south into Judah, a factor which would have contributed still further to the permanent representation of all twelve tribes of Israel in the land of Judah. However, because of Hezekiah's revival, the wicked Assyrian hordes would not be allowed by God to conquer Judah as they had Israel.

**Believer's Study Bible** - The events recorded in 2 Ki 17:3-18:12 reflect events occurring in Israel during the interval between 2 Chr. 31:21 and 2Ch 32:1. That record depicts the deterioration which occurred during the last days of the northern kingdom, at the very time that Judah was experiencing revival under the leadership of Hezekiah.

**Raymond Dillard:** Here the introductory phrase "after these faithful acts" is also diagnostic of the author's intent; it places the entire narrative that follows in the context of the author's theology of immediate retribution: a righteous king should enjoy victory in warfare and rest from his enemies, and this is the moral of the story (2Ch 32:20– 23).

**J.A. Thompson:** In view of the Chronicler's retribution theology, this verse is striking after such a glowing account of faithfulness. But the invasion of Sennacherib is reminiscent of the invasion of Zerah in Asa's day (2Ch 14:9-15), where trust in God led to victory. God does not promise that his faithful ones will not have trials but that he will not forsake them. The details supplied by the Chronicler are somewhat abbreviated by comparison with the accounts in 2 Kgs 18-19 and Isa 36-37. There is no mention here of the siege of Jerusalem, of Hezekiah paying tribute, or of Sennacherib's capture of many towns in Judah. Only after Hezekiah had carried out so many faithful acts did the events of this chapter unfold. Faithful deeds are followed by divine help and deliverance.

**August Konkell:** Sometimes it seems that our efforts to serve God are rewarded with trouble and opposition. There can be no bargaining with God, no conditions for the sacrifices made to serve God's kingdom. In the Chronicler's presentation of Hezekiah, the most traumatic event of his kingdom comes after all that Hezekiah has so faithfully done (2 Chron 32:1). The attack of Sennacherib results in a blessing due to seeking the Lord. A central point of the story is that Jerusalem tended to overshadow another reality: the captivity of all the other fortified cities of Judah (2 Kings 18:13).

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### Chronology of Kings of ASSYRIA

- [Tiglath-Pileser III](#) 745-727 BC
- [Shalmaneser V](#) 727-722
- [Sargon II](#) 721-705
- [Sennacherib](#) 705-681
- [Esarhaddon](#) 681-669
- [Ashurbanipal](#) 669-627

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### G Campbell Morgan - 2 Chr 32.1

One is almost inevitably halted by these words. It would seem to be a strange answer of God to the faithfulness of His servant, that a strong foe should at this moment invade the kingdom. The story needs more details than are found in this record. They may be found in 2 Kings 18:7-16. From that passage we find that Hezekiah had flung off the yoke of the king of Assyria which his father Ahaz had consented to wear. Then Sennacherib had invaded Judah; and in a moment of weakness Hezekiah had paid him a heavy tribute, and again yielded to his rule in order to buy him off. The result was not what he desired, for Sennacherib now demanded an unconditional surrender. In this hour of crisis, resulting from his own vacillation, his faith and courage were renewed. He took immediate action to embarrass the foe, by stopping the supply of water, by strengthening the fortifications, by mobilizing his army, and finally by assuring the people: "There is a Greater with us than with him." Then, in answer to further threatenings, he took refuge in prayer, in fellowship with Isaiah. The answer was quick and final, and consisted of the rout of the enemy and the salvation of the people. The lessons of the story are patent. If amid general faithfulness, there is any measure of unfaithfulness, the results are inevitably those of difficulty; but a return to complete fidelity is always answered by deliverance. God ever demands from His servants complete loyalty; and when that is yielded, He never fails to be to them all they need

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE:** Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah. In his invasion of Judah (2Ch 32:1), Sennacherib took fortified cities of Judah (2 Kings 18:13), laid siege to Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:17), but returned without taking Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35-36). Sennacherib's own account of this invasion has been found on a clay prism he himself had made. One copy of it is now in the Oriental Institute Museum in Chicago. Sennacherib says in part:

"As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts, and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered [them].... I drove out of them 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting and considered [them] booty. Hezekiah himself I made prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were leaving his city's gate.... Thus I reduced his country, but I still increased his tribute."

While no Assyrian king would ever record a defeat such as Sennacherib's army suffered before the walls of Jerusalem (2 Kings

19:35-36), it is significant that he did not claim to have taken Jerusalem. **It is indeed a most remarkable confirmation of biblical history.** (ED: THE WORD IS TRUE FROM GENESIS 1:1 TO REVELATION 22:21. BELIEVE IN THE LIVING WORD JESUS AND BE SAVED ETERNALLY!) ([Halley's Bible handbook](#) BORROW)

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### Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 32

This chapter continues and concludes the history of the reign of Hezekiah.

- I. The descent which Sennacherib made upon him, and the care he took to fortify himself, his city, and the minds of his people, against that enemy (v. 1-8).
- II. The insolent blasphemous letters and messages which Sennacherib sent him (v. 9-19).
- III. The real answer God gave to Sennacherib's blasphemies, and to Hezekiah's prayers, in the total rout of the Assyrian army, to the shame of Sennacherib and the honour of Hezekiah (v. 20-23).
- IV. Hezekiah's sickness and his recovery from that, his sin and his recovery from that, with the honours that attended him living and dead (v. 24-33).

2Ch 32:1-8

Here is,

#### **I. The formidable design of Sennacherib against Hezekiah's kingdom, and the vigorous attempt he made upon it.**

This Sennacherib was now, as Nebuchadnezzar was afterwards, the terror and scourge and great oppressor of that part of the world. He aimed to raise a boundless monarchy for himself upon the ruins of all his neighbours. His predecessor Shalmaneser had lately made himself master of the kingdom of Israel, and carried the ten tribes captives. Sennacherib thought, in like manner, to win Judah for himself. Pride and ambition put men upon grasping at universal dominion. It is observable that, just about this time, Rome, a city which afterwards came to reign more than any other had done over the kings of the earth, was built by Romulus. Sennacherib invaded Judah immediately after the reformation of it and the re-establishment of religion in it: After these things he entered into Judah, 2Ch 32:1.

- 1. It was well ordered by the divine Providence** that he did not give them this disturbance before the reformation was finished and established, as it might then have put a stop to it.
- 2. Perhaps he intended to chastise Hezekiah for destroying that idolatry to which he himself was devoted.** He looked upon Hezekiah as profane in what he had done, and as having thrown himself out of the divine protection. He accordingly considered him as one who might easily be made a prey of.
- 3. God ordered it at this time that he might have an opportunity of showing himself strong on the behalf of this returning reforming people.** He brought this trouble upon them that he might have the honour, and might put on them the honour, of their deliverance. After these things, and the establishment thereof, one would have expected to hear of nothing but perfect peace, and that none durst meddle with a people thus qualified for the divine favour; yet the next news we hear is that a threatening destroying army enters the country, and is ready to lay all waste. We may be in the way of our duty and yet meet with trouble and danger. God orders it so for the trial of our confidence in him and the manifestation of his care concerning us. The little opposition which Sennacherib met with in entering Judah induced him to imagine that all was his own. He thought to win all the fenced cities (v. 1), and purposed to fight against Jerusalem, 2Ch 32:2. See 2 Ki. 18:7, 13.

**II. The preparation which Hezekiah prudently made against this storm that threatened him** He took counsel with his princes what he should do, what measures he should take, 2Ch 32:3. With their advice he provided,

- 1. That the country should give him a cold reception,** for he took care that he should find no water in it (and then his army must perish for thirst), or at least that there should be a scarcity of water, by which his army would be weakened and unfitted for service. A powerful army, if it want water but a few days, will be but a heap of dry dust. All hands were set immediately to work to stop up the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, turning that (it is probable) into the city by pipes under-ground. Such as this is the policy commonly practised now-a-days of destroying the forage before an invading army.
- 2. That the city should give him a warm reception** In order to this he repaired the wall, raised towers, and made darts (or, as it is in the margin, swords or weapons) and shields in abundance (2Ch 32:5), and appointed captains, 2Ch 32:6. Note, Those that trust God with their safety must yet use proper means for their safety, otherwise they tempt him, and do not trust him. God will provide, but so must we also.

### III. The encouragement which he gave to his people to depend upon God in this distress.

He gathered them together in a broad open street, and spoke comfortably to them, 2Ch 32:6. He was himself undaunted, being confident the invasion would issue well. He was not like his father, who had much guilt to terrify him and no faith to encourage him, so that, in a time of public danger, his heart was moved, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind, and then no marvel that the heart of his people was so too, Isa. 7:2. With what he said he put life into his people, his captains especially, and spoke to their heart, as the word is.

**1. He endeavoured to keep down their fears:** "Be strong and courageous; do not think of surrendering the city or capitulating, but resolve to hold it out to the last man; do not think of losing the city, nor of falling into the enemy's hand; there is no danger. Let the soldiers be bold and brave, make good their posts, stand to their arms, and fight manfully, and let the citizens encourage them to do so: Be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria." The prophet had thus encouraged them from God (Isa. 10:24): Be not afraid of the Assyrians; and here the king from him. Now it was that the sinners in Zion were afraid (Isa. 33:14), but the righteous dwelt on high (Isa. 33:15, 16) and meditated on terror so as to conquer it. See Isa. 33:18, which refers to what is recorded here.

**2. He endeavoured to keep up their faith, in order to the silencing and suppressing of their fears.** "Sennacherib has a multitude with him, and yet there are more with us than with him; for we have God with us, and how many do you reckon him for? With our enemy is an arm of flesh, which he trusts to; but with us is the Lord, whose power is irresistible, our God, whose promise is inviolable, a God in covenant with us, to help us, and to fight our battles, not only to help us to fight them, but to fight them for us if he please:" and so he did here. Note, A believing confidence in God will raise us above the prevailing fear of man. He that feareth the fury of the oppressor forgetteth the Lord his Maker, Isa. 51:12, 13. It is probable that Hezekiah said more to this purport, and that the people rested themselves upon what he said, not merely upon his word, but on the things he said concerning the presence of God with them and his power to relieve them, the belief of which made them easy. Let the good subjects and soldiers of Jesus Christ rest thus upon his word, and boldly say, Since God is for us, who can be against us?

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15 Inch tall 6 six-sided prism of baked clay detailing Sennacherib's exploits  
(Source: [Halley's Bible handbook](#) BORROW)

#### QUESTION - [Who was Sennacherib in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Sennacherib was the king of [Assyria](#) who reigned from about 720 BC to 683 BC. Archaeologists have uncovered the remains of his palace in Khorsebad, near the ancient city of Nineveh (Jonah 1:1–3). During the reign of King Hezekiah in Judah, Sennacherib invaded Judah, bent on conquering Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:13). Assyria had already conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC and had taken the people captive. Second Kings 18:12 says, "This happened because they did not listen to the voice of the LORD their God, but violated His covenant—all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded—and would neither listen nor obey." Now, under Sennacherib, Assyria stood poised to conquer Judah, too.

King Sennacherib's men first attacked forty-six of Judah's fortified cities and captured them (Isaiah 36:1). Then they laid siege on Jerusalem. In desperation, Hezekiah sent gold and silver as a peace offering to Assyria, hoping to appease the power-hungry Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13–16). The Lord sent word to Hezekiah that Sennacherib would not step foot inside the city of Jerusalem (Isaiah 37:33), so Hezekiah stood firm and refused to give in to the Assyrian king's boastful threats (2 Kings 18:28–35; 2 Chronicles 32:17). He commanded the terrified citizens of Jerusalem not to answer taunts from Sennacherib's men outside the wall (2 Kings 18:36). Instead, Hezekiah encouraged the people in the Lord: "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles" (2 Chronicles 32:7–8).

Hezekiah sent messengers to Isaiah the prophet to learn what God said on the matter. Because Sennacherib had blasphemed the Lord in his threats against Jerusalem, Isaiah told the king's messengers, "Tell your master that this is what the LORD says: 'Do not be afraid of the words you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own land, where I will cause him to fall by the sword'" (2 Kings 19:5–7).

Hezekiah received the message from Isaiah gladly, but Sennacherib sent Hezekiah a letter of his own: "Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, 'Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.' Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my predecessors deliver them—the gods of Gozan, Harran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? Where is the king of Hamath or the king of Arpad? Where are the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah?" (2

Kings 19:10–13). King Sennacherib had a long list of victories to boast of, but he made the mistake of thinking Israel's God was just like the gods of the nations he had defeated.

King Hezekiah took the boastful letter he received from Sennacherib to the temple where he spread it out before the Lord. Then he prayed, "Lord, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, Lord, and hear; open your eyes, Lord, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God" (2 Kings 19:15–16). Hezekiah acknowledged that Assyria was powerful, but he knew that God was more powerful: "It is true, Lord, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. Now, Lord our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, Lord, are God" (verses 17–19).

The [prophet Isaiah](#) sent word to Hezekiah that, because of Sennacherib's blasphemous taunts about the God of Israel, the Lord Himself would fight for them and destroy Sennacherib and his armies. Sennacherib was not just defying Israel; he was defying the Living God. That night, the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 in the Assyrian camp. When Sennacherib saw the carnage, he abandoned his conquest of Jerusalem and fled to Nineveh. He never stepped foot inside Jerusalem, just as Isaiah had said.

As Psalm 139:7–12 reminds us, no one can hide from the Lord. One day as Sennacherib was worshiping in his god's temple, his own sons killed him with a sword (2 Kings 19:36–37). Thus Isaiah's prophecy of verse 7 was fulfilled.

Hezekiah's passive victory over Sennacherib is another example of the Lord's promise to fight for His people (Exodus 14:14; 1 Samuel 17:47; cf. 2 Kings 19:34). As long as they honored Him and obeyed His commands, the Lord was their Defender. He often allowed them to face opposition greater than their resources in order to demonstrate His power and love. The Lord still seeks those who will honor Him so that He can show Himself strong on their behalf (2 Chronicles 16:9). The account of Sennacherib's failed siege ends with this: "So the Lord saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of all others. He took care of them on every side" (2 Chronicles 32:22). Once again, the Lord demonstrated to Judah and to all who call upon His name that "the battle is the Lord's" (1 Samuel 17:47). [GotQuestions.org](#)

## 2 Chronicles 32:2 Now when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem,

- Heb. his face was to war, 2Ki 12:17 Lu 9:51,53

[ESV Study Bible page 790 \(borrow\)](#)

## FOREWARNED IS FOREARMED

**Now when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem** -See map for Assyrian attacks on Judah. Notice that they circle around on the West and come up to lay siege to Jerusalem from the South.

**ESV Study note** - Assyria Attacks Judah 701 b.c. - During the reign of Hezekiah of Judah, Sennacherib of Assyria came and attacked cities along the western edge of Judah, and he sent officials to besiege Jerusalem and convince Hezekiah to surrender. The Cushite king Tirhakah advanced from Egypt to support Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:9; Isa. 37:9) but apparently failed. The siege of Jerusalem was broken when the angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrians in a single night. Sennacherib withdrew and returned to Nineveh in Assyria, where his own sons killed him.

## 2 Chronicles 32:3 he decided with his officers and his warriors to cut off the supply of water from the springs which were outside the city, and they helped him.

- took counsel (KJV): 2Ch 30:2 2Ki 18:20 Pr 15:22 20:18 24:6 Isa 40:13 Ro 11:34
- to stop (KJV): 2Ki 20:20 Isa 22:8-11

### Related Passages:

2 Kings 20:20 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might, and how he made the pool and the conduit and **brought water into the city** (HEZEKIAH'S TUNNEL), are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

2 Chronicles 32:30 It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all that he did.

## **WISDOM IN AN ABUNDANCE OF COUNSELORS**

**he decided** (took counsel; consulted) **with his officers** (advisers) **and his warriors to cut off the supply of water from the springs which were outside the city, and they helped** ([azar](#)) him.

**John Olley** makes an excellent point that "In both security and reforms Hezekiah consulted with others (2Ch 32:3; 30:2, 23; cf. 1 Chron. 13:1), and wide community involvement was evident (2 Chron. 32:4; 30:13). Resolute wise leadership embraced both worship of the Lord and security for the people and was possible through consultation and cooperation."

**J.A. Thompson:** It is no denial of one's trust in God if one makes certain precautionary preparations. "Pray to God and keep your powder dry" is a wise response in the face of danger at any time. Blocking off the water from the springs outside the city was a wise defensive measure because a plentiful water supply made the task of invaders easier.

**Walton** - The water supply included springs, wells and conduits. The springs and wells outside the city were stopped up in order to prevent the Assyrians from using them. The Assyrian threat caused Hezekiah to secure Jerusalem's water supply. This is what is referred to as Hezekiah's tunnel. It is cut through bedrock for 1750 feet from the Gihon spring on the east of the city by the Kidron Valley to the Pool of Siloam on the western flank of the southern tip of the city. In the late 1800s an inscription was found inside the tunnel that describes the diggers' meeting as they dug from both ends. For more information on water systems see the comment on 2 Samuel 5:8.

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE:** Hezekiah's Tunnel and the Siloam Inscription. The tunnel by which Hezekiah brought water into the city (2Ch 32:3-4; 2 Kings 20:20) has been found. The Gihon Spring was situated at the east foot of Ophel Hill (see map below), just outside the wall. Hezekiah's workmen cut a tunnel through solid rock, under the hill, that runs 1,700 feet southwest from the spring to the Pool of Siloam inside the wall, thus diverting the water of the spring from its natural flow into the Brook Kidron. The tunnel is an average height of about six feet and an average width of 2½ feet. Its drop is seven feet. At its southern exit the Siloam Inscription was found. The Siloam Inscription was discovered in 1880 by some schoolboys at the south end of the tunnel. This five-line inscription, written in Hebrew, was carelessly cut from the rock, sent to Istanbul, and now resides in a museum. This inscription describes the construction of the tunnel:

"The tunnel was driven through. And this was the way in which it was cut through: While [the stonecutters were lifting up their pick], each man toward his fellow (i.e., from opposite ends), and while there were still three cubits to be cut through, [there was heard] the voice of a man calling to his fellow.... And when the tunnel was driven through, the stonecutters hewed the rock, each man toward his fellow, axe against axe. And the water flowed from the spring toward the reservoir for 1,200 cubits, and the height of the rock above the heads of the stonecutters was 100 cubits." ([Halley's Bible handbook](#) BORROW)

**2 Chronicles 32:4 So many people assembled and stopped up all the springs and the stream which flowed through the region, saying, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find abundant water?"**

- who stopped (KJV): This was prudently done; for, without water, how could an immense army subsist in an arid country? No doubt the Assyrian army suffered much through this; as a Christian army did, through the same cause, 1,800 years afterwards.
- the brook (KJV): 2Ch 32:30 30:14
- ran through the midst of (KJV): Heb. overflowed
- kings (KJV): The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic read king, in the singular number. 2Ch 32:1 2Ki 18:9,13 19:17 Isa 10:8
- find (KJV): 1Ki 3:9,16,17 19:21

**So many people assembled and stopped up all the springs and the stream which flowed through the region, saying, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find abundant water?"**

**Utley** summarizes Hezekiah's preparations for war - First he trusted YHWH but he also prepared by (1) cutting off the local spring so the Assyrian army would have no water, 2Ch 32:4, (2) rebuilding the part of the city wall that had been broken down by Joash, the King of Israel (cf. 2 Chr. 25:23; Isa. 22:9-11), 2Ch 32:5, (3) building the towers on the wall higher, 2Ch 32:5, (4) building two walls of



fortification (location unknown), (5) strengthening the Millo (i.e., supporting terraces of the old city; see note at 2 Chr. 11:8), 2Ch 32:5, (6) making large numbers of weapons, 2Ch 32:5, (7) appointing military officers over the militia, 2Ch 32:6.

**Adam Clarke** - "No doubt the Assyrian army suffered much through this (WATER SUPPLY CUT OFF), as a Christian army did eighteen hundred years after this. When the crusaders came, in A.D. 1099, to besiege Jerusalem, the people of the city stopped up the wells, so that the Christian army was reduced to the greatest necessities and distress."

**Raymond Dillard:** Standard siege strategy calls for reducing a city through thirst by cutting off access to the water supply or by poisoning it; plentiful water only eases the task of the invading foe. Hezekiah's efforts at diverting and concealing the water sources in the area of Jerusalem anticipate the coming siege. Apart from the famous "Hezekiah's tunnel," the earlier Warren shaft, and an irrigation channel attributed to the Solomonic period (cf. Eccl 2:6; see H. Shanks, *The City of David* [Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeological Society, 1975]), comparatively little is known about the water supply of the City of David. Two springs are known to have been in the area, the famous Gihon (2Ch 32:30) in the Kidron Valley east of the city and the spring at Enrogel, two miles south.

**2 Chronicles 32:5 And he took courage and rebuilt all the wall that had been broken down and erected towers on it, and built another outside wall and strengthened the Millo in the city of David, and made weapons and shields in great number.**

- he strengthened (KJV): 2Ch 12:1 14:5-7 17:1,2 23:1 26:8 Isa 22:9,10
- that was broken (KJV): 2Ch 25:23
- another wall (KJV): 2Ki 25:4 Jer 39:4
- Millo (KJV): Jud 9:6 2Sa 5:9 1Ki 9:24 11:27 2Ki 12:20
- darts (KJV): or, swords, or weapons, 2Ch 26:14,15

**And he took courage and rebuilt all the wall that had been broken down and erected towers on it, and built another outside wall and strengthened the Millo in the city of David, and made weapons and shields in great number.** This passage does not mention the tribute Hezekiah paid to Sennacherib. See 2 Kings 18:14.

**Morris** -Remains of Hezekiah's outer wall have been excavated in recent times, thus confirming still further the historicity of the Biblical records.

**Martin Selman** - "Part of a wall which could well be Hezekiah's has been uncovered on the western hill. At seven metres thick, it is the thickest Iron Age wall known in Palestine, and was presumably designed to withstand powerful Assyrian battering rams."

**Walton** - expansion of wall of Jerusalem. Recent archaeological study has shown evidence of the enlargement of the city of Jerusalem during Hezekiah's time, as well as an expansion of the city's population. He appears to have augmented fortifications and probably established administrative centers and command posts. Excavations in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem have found segments of Hezekiah's wall that extended the enclosed portion of the city perhaps as much as seven hundred yards to the west of the north-south ridge that the city had occupied prior to this time.

**Raymond Dillard:** Building projects such as these related to the water supply and the repair of the walls are not only prudent strategy; for the Chronicler they are tokens of divine blessing given to pious monarchs. It is striking that Isaiah took a different view (Isa 22:9-11) and warned about the danger of self-reliance and a tendency to forget Yahweh.

**J.A. Thompson:** The countermeasures taken by Hezekiah were threefold. He had to care for the water problem, both from a defensive and offensive point of view. Then he had to repair weak spots in the wall, erect towers, construct an outside wall, and build up the Millo, that is, "the supporting terraces" as David and Solomon once had done (1 Chr 11:8; 1 Kgs 11:27).

**Frederick Mabie:** Hezekiah fortified "the Millo" ("supporting terraces," 2Ch 32:5) and also expanded the confines of the city of Jerusalem by what is known as the Broad Wall, described as "another wall outside" the original city wall (2Ch 32:5). This twenty-foot-thick wall expanded the walled portion of Jerusalem toward the western hill and allowed the city to accommodate the rising population as the Assyrian invasion drew near (see M. Broshi, "The Expansion of Jerusalem in the Reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh," *IEJ* 24 [1974]: 21-26). Hezekiah's most impressive achievement, however, was the tapping into the upper outlet of the Gihon spring and channeling the water underground (via the Siloam Tunnel) to the western side of the City of David (2Ch 32:3-4, 30). As a result, Jerusalem had ongoing access to fresh water that was out of the view (and access) of the Assyrian army (2Ch 32:3-4; see additional details on this tunnel at 2Ch 32:27-30).

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE:** Hezekiah's Wall. Hezekiah repaired and built the walls of Jerusalem (2Ch 32:5; Isaiah 22:10). Professor Nahum Avigad found over 200 feet of a wall dating to the 8th century B.C. (Hezekiah's century), which was 23 feet thick

and in places was preserved to a height of over 10 feet. (See also on Isaiah 22:10.) ([Halley's Bible handbook](#) BORROW)

**2 Chronicles 32:6 He appointed military officers over the people and gathered them to him in the square at the city gate, and spoke encouragingly to them, saying,**

- he set captains (KJV): 2Ch 17:14-19 1Ch 27:3,4-34
- in the street (KJV): Ezr 10:9 Ne 8:1-3,16
- comfortably to them (KJV): Heb. to their heart, 2Ch 30:22 Ge 34:3 Isa 40:2 \*margins

**He appointed military officers over the people and gathered them to him in the square at the city gate, and spoke encouragingly to them, saying**

**2 Chronicles 32:7 "Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him.**

- strong (KJV): De 31:6-7,23 Jos 1:6-9 1Ch 28:10,20 Isa 35:4 Da 10:19 Zec 8:9,23 Eph 6:10 2Ti 2:1
- be not afraid (KJV): 2Ch 20:15 2Ki 18:30 19:6,7
- for there (KJV): 2Ki 6:16 Ro 8:31 1Jn 4:4

#### **Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 31:6-7; "Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you." 7 Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance.

Deuteronomy 31:23 Then He commissioned Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you."

Joshua 1:6-9 "Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 "Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. 8 "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. 9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

2 Kings 6:16 So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

1 John 4:4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

## **BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS**

**Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him** - The one with them is the same One Who is with us -  
- [Emmanuel-Immanuel](#) (God with us)!

**THOUGHT** - Are the "Assyrians" encroaching on you beloved? Then "**be strong** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in the Lord and in the strength of His might." (Eph 6:10+)

**Morris** - Hezekiah had perhaps heard or read about Elisha's host and the miraculous deliverance of Samaria (2 Kings 6:16-23; 7:6-7).

**Adam Clarke** - "We have more power than they have. (These words he quotes from the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings 6:16.) This was soon proved to be true by the slaughter made by the angel of the Lord in the Assyrian camp."

**John Olley:** Trusting in fortifications and military preparedness was always a temptation (cf. Isa. 22:8b–11), but Hezekiah called the people to look not to "an arm of flesh" but to the presence of "the Lord our God." While in 2 Kings 19:6–7 similar words are spoken later by Isaiah to Hezekiah, the Assyrian envoys' earlier words in 2 Kings 18:29–36 point to Hezekiah's having already encouraged reliance on the Lord.

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**Utley** - The Chronicler records several speeches of godly Judean kings as a way to communicate theological truths.

This speech has several wonderful theological affirmations.

1. encouragement of YHWH's help, so fear not
  1. be strong – BDB 304, KB 302, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
  2. be courageous – BDB 54, KB 65, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
  3. do not fear – BDB 431, KB 432, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
  4. do not be dismayed – BDB 369, KB 365, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
  5. these same kinds of encouraging words were given:
    - (1) Moses to Joshua – Deut. 31:7-8,23
    - (2) YHWH to Joshua – Josh. 1:6,7,9; 10:8
    - (3) Joshua to his military – Josh. 10:25
    - (4) David to Solomon – 1 Chr. 22:13; 28:20
2. theological truths
  1. the One with us is greater than the one with him (i.e., YHWH vs. Assyrian gods); notice similar imagery in 2 Kgs. 6:16; Ps. 118:6; Rom. 8:31
  2. with him is *only* an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and fight our battles (i.e., YHWH the Divine Warrior); notice similar imagery in Isa. 31:3; Jer. 17:5; there is more to reality than the physical!
3. the people relied on the words of Hezekiah
  1. they trusted their leader's words (cf. 2 Kgs. 18:5 for Hezekiah's faith)
  2. They trusted their God
  3. Isaiah 22 seems to criticize Hezekiah for his military preparations but Chronicles does not

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### When One Is A Majority

I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. —Psalm 3:6

When King Hezekiah saw that the king of Assyria intended to capture Jerusalem, he immediately went into action to defend the city. But when he had done all that was humanly possible, he realized it would not be enough. So he called the people together, and in the face of their desperate situation he reassured them, saying, "Be strong and courageous . . . for there are more with us than with him" (2 Chronicles 32:7).

How could he possibly make such a statement? Hezekiah gave the answer. He said, "With [Sennacherib] is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles" (v.8). Sennacherib had power, soldiers, and prestige—an "arm of flesh." The inhabitants of Jerusalem had the Lord God!

Think of your own situation. Is the enemy pressing in upon you from all sides? Does everything appear hopeless? Remember, you have God's help. He is on your side! When you face insurmountable trials—when you are completely surrounded and outnumbered—look to the Lord. Find your confidence in Him, saying with the psalmist: "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around" (Psalm 3:6).

With God, one is a majority! —R W De Haan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Does all the world seem against you?

Are you in the battle alone?

It's often when you are helpless

That God's mighty power is shown.

—Anon.

**With God on our side we are never outnumbered.**

[Joseph: Overcoming Life's Challenges](#)

[What Can I Do With My Worry? - Turning anxiety into trust](#)

**2 Chronicles 32:8 "With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.**

- an arm (KJV): Job 40:9 Jer 17:5 1Jn 4:4
- with us (KJV): 2Ch 13:12 14:11 Ps 46:7,11 Isa 8:10 41:10 Ac 18:10 2Ti 4:17,22
- to fight (KJV): 2Ch 20:15 De 20:1,4 Jos 10:42
- rested (KJV): Heb. leaned, 2Ch 32:15 20:20 Isa 36:18
- upon the words (KJV): Pr 12:25

**With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.**

**Andrew Hill:** Hezekiah organizes the citizens of Jerusalem into a militia of sorts with oversight by select military personnel (2Ch 32:6). As "commander-in-chief" he encourages the people with a motivational speech patterned after the charge to Joshua as he succeeded Moses before the conquest of Canaan (2Ch 32:6b-8a; cf. Deut. 31:8; Josh. 1:9). The king's appeal to the people is a theological treatise, not a nationalistic or patriotic rally cry. Despite the overwhelming odds stacked against Hezekiah and Jerusalem numerically speaking, victory is assured because it is God himself who is fighting for Judah (Ex. 14:14; Deut. 1:30; 20:4; cf. Deut. 17:16).

**Martin Selman:** Under Hezekiah's leadership unity and faith both increased. They joined together as a "great many people" (2Ch 32:4, NRSV, RSV) to help the king (2Ch 32:3) before assembling for their encouragement in one of the city's squares (2Ch 32:5; cf. 29:4).

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## **A Majority of One**

"With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God". --2 Chronicles 32:8

When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah, Hezekiah knew that the city of Jerusalem would come under attack, so he went into action to defend the city. He built up the broken wall and raised up another outside of it. He also "made weapons and shields in abundance" and "set military captains over the people" (vv.5-6).

But it would take more than that to save the city from the onslaught of the powerful armies of Sennacherib. So Hezekiah called the people together to encourage them. In the face of their seemingly hopeless situation, he declared, "There are more with us than with him" (v.7).

How could he say this? He gives the answer in the very next verse: "With [Sennacherib] is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles." That was their hope. Sennacherib had power, men, and prestige--"an arm of flesh"--but the inhabitants of Jerusalem had the Lord!

Is there some "enemy" pressing in on you today? Do you feel as though the opposition is about to crush and destroy you? Does everything seem hopeless? Take heart, child of God! With the Lord on your side, you are never outnumbered. --R W De Haan

A mighty fortress is our God,  
A bulwark never failing;  
Our helper He, amid the flood  
Of mortal ills prevailing.  
--Luther

**One plus God is always a majority.**

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## **Continuing To Trust**

With us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles. --2 Chronicles 32:8

Under King Hezekiah's dynamic leadership, the land of Judah experienced spiritual revival. Idols were smashed, the temple was restored, and people once again worshiped the Lord (2 Chr. 29-31). Hezekiah "did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God" (31:20). But then, on the heels of his obedience, he was suddenly besieged by Sennacherib, the vicious warrior-king of Assyria (32:1).

Hezekiah could have been angered by this discouraging turn of events. Instead, he continued to trust God. He rallied the people, saying, "With us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles" (32:8). What a remarkable demonstration of faith!

I could use a healthy portion of Hezekiah's spirit. There is something within me that wishes God would always reward my faithfulness with prosperity and protection. But God is working far beyond what I can see and is accomplishing His purposes. My present difficulties are never the final measure of His blessing and love.

Hezekiah modeled true faithfulness. He determined to obey the Lord without demanding guarantees of a trouble-free life. Like him, we can be confident of God's presence and power, and trust Him even in the darkest hours. --D C McCasland

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,  
But His smile quickly drives it away;  
Not a doubt nor a fear, not a sigh nor a tear,  
Can abide while we trust and obey.  
--Sammis

**Obstacles seem large when you take your eyes off the Lord.**

- [How Does God Keep His Promises?](#)
- [How Much Does God Control? Loving a God who is all-powerful and good](#)

**2 Chronicles 32:9 After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem while he was besieging Lachish with all his forces with him, against Hezekiah king of Judah and against all Judah who were at Jerusalem, saying,**

- Sennacherib (KJV): 2Ki 18:17 Isa 36:2
- Lachish (KJV): Jos 10:31 12:11 15:39 Isa 37:8 Mic 1:13
- power (KJV): Heb. dominion

#### Sennacherib's Siege of Lachish

The picture above is a "portion of Sennacherib's relief shows his attack on Lachish. The defenders are throwing burning torches down on the siege towers and the ladders used to scale the walls. The rest of the relief shows the attackers pouring water on the leather covers of the siege towers to keep them from catching fire." ([Halley's Bible handbook](#) BORROW)

The picture above is an Assyrian relief from the fierce battle over Lachish which was discovered in the Sennacherib relief at Nineveh and which depicts Assyrian soldiers flaying their Judean prisoners alive! (from [Halley's Bible handbook](#) BORROW)

Dilday adds that "An interesting wall relief taken from the excavation of Sennacherib's royal palace in Nineveh is preserved in the British Museum. It portrays the Assyrian king on a portable throne in his military camp outside Lachish. Prisoners of war are marching by on foot, and all the booty from the city is being displayed on ox-wagons."

**Guzik** - The mention of Lachish is important historically. Lachish was thirty miles south-west of Jerusalem. Archaeologists have discovered a pit there with the remains of about 1,500 casualties of Sennacherib's attack. In the British Museum, you can see the Assyrian carving depicting their siege of the city of Lachish, which was an important fortress city of Judah.

Chronicles omits Hezekiah's sad attempt to bribe Sennacherib for peace

2 Kings 18:14-16 Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong. Withdraw from me; whatever you impose on me I will bear." So the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15 Hezekiah gave him all the silver which was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king's house. 16 At that time Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the doorposts which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. 17 **Then the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rab-**

**saris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a large army to Jerusalem. So they went up and came to Jerusalem.** And when they went up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is on the highway of the fuller's field. 18 When they called to the king, Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, came out to them. 19 Then Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria, "What is this confidence that you have?"

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE:** The Tribute Hezekiah Sent to Sennacherib. The inscription of Sennacherib relates to the account in 2 Kings 18:14-16 and says:

"Hezekiah himself, whom the terror-inspiring splendor of my lordship had overwhelmed and whose... troops had deserted him, did send to me, later, to Nineveh, my lordly city, together with 30 talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones,... In order to deliver the tribute and to do obeisance as a slave he sent his [personal] messenger."

ESV Study Bible page 790 (borrow)

**After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem while he was besieging Lachish with all his forces with him, against Hezekiah king of Judah and against all Judah who were at Jerusalem, saying** - See map for depiction of this verse. (Read 2Ki 18:14-16 [above](#)).

**Ryrie** - Concerning Sennacherib's servants' taunt and Hezekiah's response, see 2 Kings 18:17-32 and 19:8-13.

**Raymond Dillard:** It is a form of psychological warfare: the commander of a powerful army sends messengers to intimidate surrounding cities into capitulation in the face of a threatened siege or disaster. Cf. the messages sent to Samaria by Ben-hadad (1 Kgs 20:2–12). When his messengers went to Jerusalem, Sennacherib "was besieging Lachish." It was literally a "monumental" campaign; Sennacherib commemorated the event with a mural over fifty feet long carved in stone in one of his palaces (D. Ussishkin, *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib* [Tel Aviv: University Institute of Archeology, 1982]). . . The messenger's speech is, of course, designed both to instill fear and to arouse discontent with Hezekiah. Hezekiah is charged with religious heresy, with abuse of power through forced labor, with deception, and with endangering the lives of his subjects. The "forced labor" (32:11) was presumably the conscripted assistance used for the water projects and repairing the walls and towers.

**Utley** - [Josephus Antiquities 10.1.1.](#), mentions the name of Sennacherib's military general as Rabshakeh, his two commanders as Tartan and Rab-saris (cf. 2 Kgs. 18:17). Josephus says Sennacherib ignored his promise not to besiege Jerusalem in light of Hezekiah's offer to pay a large tribute, mostly from the temple (cf. 2 Kgs. 18:13-16), but instead he attacked Egypt and Ethiopia but left a large military contingent to attack and destroy Jerusalem. Chronicles never mentions this attempted bribe of Hezekiah's.

**Ackroyd** (193) sees in v 16 echoes of Ps 2:2: speaking against Yahweh and Hezekiah was speaking "against the Lord and his anointed." Hezekiah in Chronicles is idealized in the same way the author treated David and Solomon; he takes on messianic overtones that would be developed in the postbiblical literature of Judaism.

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Utley summarizes the tactics of the enemy - The king of Assyria tried to instill fear **ED: THIS IS STILL A USEFUL TACTIC OF THE DEMONIC FORCES**) in the defenders of Jerusalem with a loud public message (cf. 2 Kings 18).

1. What are you trusting? (2Ch 32:10)
2. Asserting that Hezekiah had given them false hope. (2Ch 32:11)
3. Reminding them that Hezekiah had taken away their local worship sites (i.e., high places). 2Ch 32:12
4. Look at our military victories, has any nation or their god been successful against us? (2Ch 32:13-15, see note, *JVP Bible Background Commentary [OT]*, p. 455)
5. Do not let Hezekiah
  1. deceive you – BDB 674, KB 728, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT used in a [JUSSIVE](#) sense
  2. mislead you – BDB 694, KB 749, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT used in a [JUSSIVE](#) sense
  3. do not believe him – BDB 52, KB 63, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT used in a [JUSSIVE](#) sense

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE:** Lachish is among the cities named which suffered at the hands of Sennacherib (32:9). At Lachish there is a huge burn level dated to the destruction of Sennacherib in 701 B.C. On the walls of Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh, uncovered by Sir Austen Henry Layard, a long sculptured relief of his encampment at Lachish bore this inscription: "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of Assyria, sat upon [his] throne and passed in review the booty taken from Lachish." ([Halley's Bible handbook](#) [BORROW](#))

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## Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 32:9-23

This story of the rage and blasphemy of Sennacherib, Hezekiah's prayer, and the deliverance of Jerusalem by the destruction of the Assyrian army, we had more at large in the book of Kings, 2 Ki. 18 and 19. It is contracted here, yet large enough to show these three things:-

### I. The impiety and malice of the church's enemies.

Sennacherib has his hands full in besieging Lachish (2Ch 32:9), but hears that Hezekiah is fortifying Jerusalem and encouraging his people to stand it out; and therefore, before he come in person to besiege it, he sends messengers to make speeches, and he himself writes letters to frighten Hezekiah and his people into a surrender of the city. See,

**1. His great malice against the king of Judah, in endeavouring to withdraw his subjects from their allegiance to him.** He did not treat with Hezekiah as a man of honour would have done, nor propose fair terms to him, but used mean and base artifices, unbecoming a crowned head, to terrify the common people and persuade them to desert him. he represented Hezekiah as one who designed to deceive his subjects into their ruin and betray them to famine and thirst (2Ch 32:11), as one who had done them great wrong and exposed them already to the divine displeasure by taking away the high places and altars (2Ch 32:12), and who, against the common interest of his people, held out against a force that would certainly be their ruin, 2Ch 32:15.

**2. His great impiety against the God of Israel, the God of Jerusalem he is called**(2Ch 32:19), because that was the place he had chosen to put his name there, and because that was the place which was now threatened by the enemy and which the divine Providence had under its special protection. This proud blasphemer compared the great Jehovah, the Maker of heaven and earth, with the dunghill gods of the nations, the work of men's hands, and thought him no more able to deliver his worshippers than they were to deliver theirs (2Ch 32:19), as if an infinite and eternal Spirit had no more wisdom and power than a stone or the stock of a tree. He boasted of his triumphs over the gods of the nations, that they could none of them protect their people (2Ch 32:13-15), and thence inferred not only, How shall your God deliver you? (2Ch 32:14), but, as if he were inferior to them all, How much less shall your God deliver you? as if he were less able to help than any of them. Thus did they rail, rail in writing (which, being more deliberate, is so much the worse), on the Lord God of Israel, as if he were a cipher and an empty name, like all the rest, 2Ch 32:17. Sennacherib, in the instructions he gave, said more than enough; but, as if his blasphemies had been too little, his servants, who learned insolence from their master, spoke yet more than he bade them against the Lord God and his servant Hezekiah, 2Ch 32:16. And God resents what is said against his servants, and will reckon for it, as well as what is said against himself. All this was intended to frighten the people from their hope in God, which David's enemies sought to take him off from (Ps. 11:1; 42:10), saying, There is no help for him in God, Ps. 3:2; 71:11. Thus they hoped to take the city by weakening the hands of those that should defend it. Satan, in his temptations, aims to destroy our faith in God's all-sufficiency, knowing that he shall gain his point if he can do that; as we keep our ground if our faith fail not, Lu. 22:32.

**II. The duty as well as the interest of the church's friends, and that is in the day of distress to pray and cry to Heaven. So Hezekiah did, and the prophet Isaiah,** 2Ch 32:20. It was a happy time when the king and the prophet joined thus in prayer. Is any troubled? Is any terrified? Let him pray. So we engage God for us; so we encourage ourselves in him. Praying to God is here called crying to Heaven, because we are, in prayer, to eye him as our Father in heaven, whence he beholds the children of men, and where he has prepared his throne.

**III. The power and goodness of the church's God. He is able both to control his enemies, be they ever so high, and to relieve his friends, be they ever so low.**

**1. As the blasphemies of his enemies engage him against them (Deu. 32:27), so the prayers of his people engage him for them.** They did so here.

**(1.) The army of the Assyrians was cut off by the sword of an angel,** which triumphed particularly in the slaughter of the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains, who defied the sword of any man. God delights to abase the proud and secure. The Targum says, The Word of the Lord (the eternal Word) sent Gabriel to do this execution, and that it was done with lightning, and in the passover night: that was the night in which the angel destroyed the first-born of Egypt. But that was not all.

**(2.) The king of the Assyrians, having received this disgrace, was cut off by the sword of his own sons.** Those that came forth of his own bowels slew him, v. 21. Thus was he mortified first, and then

murdered-shamed first, and then slain. Evil pursues sinners; and, when they escape one mischief, they run upon another unseen.

## 2. By this work of wonder,

**(1.) God was glorified, as the protector of his people.** Thus he saved Jerusalem, not only from the hand of Sennacherib, but from the hand of all others, 2Ch 32:22; for such a deliverance as this was an earnest of much mercy in store; and he guided them, that is, he guarded them, on every side. God defends his people by directing them, shows them what they should do, and so saves them from what is designed or done against them. For this many brought gifts unto the Lord, when they saw the great power of God in the defence of his people. Strangers were thereby induced to supplicate his favour and enemies to deprecate his wrath, and both brought gifts to his temple, in token of their care and desire.

**(2.) Hezekiah was magnified as the favourite and particular care of Heaven** Many brought presents to him (2Ch 32:22, 23), in token of the honour they had for him, and to make an interest in him. By the favour of God enemies are lost and friends gained.

### 2 Chronicles 32:10 “Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria, ‘On what are you trusting that you are remaining in Jerusalem under siege?’

- Thus saith (KJV): 2Ki 18:19 Isa 36:4
- siege (KJV): Heb. strong-hold

#### Related Passages:

2 Kings 18:20-21 (OMITTED BY THE CHRONICLER) - “You say (but they are only empty words), ‘I have counsel and strength for the war.’ Now on whom do you rely, that you have rebelled against me? 21 “Now behold, you rely on the staff of this crushed reed, even on Egypt; on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him.

Isaiah 36:5-6 I say, ‘Your counsel and strength for the war are only empty words.’ Now on whom do you rely, that you have rebelled against me? 6 “Behold, you rely on the staff of this crushed reed, even on Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him.

## SENNACHERIB'S AUDACIOUSLY ARROGANT APPEAL TO JERUSALEM

**Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria, ‘On what are you trusting that you are remaining in Jerusalem under siege?’**- The pagan king asks King Hezekiah a great question. One can only imagine the Holy Spirit nudging Hezekiah's heart when he heard this challenging question! The result is described in 2Ch 32:20-21. One is reminded of David's words in Psalm 20:7 "Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God." Hezekiah did the latter!

**THOUGHT** - Is the enemy taunting you today, not audibly of course, but through a seemingly unceasing barrage of fiery missiles (Eph 6:16+) resulting in anxiety, fear, discouragement, etc? Then in the power of the Spirit, put on your armor (Eph 6:10-18+) and go to war, doing your part (praying, trusting, etc), and remembering that the battle is the Lord's, and that in His perfect timing and way, He will win the victory because of His ultimate eternal victory at the Cross!

### 2 Chronicles 32:11 ‘Is not Hezekiah misleading you to give yourselves over to die by hunger and by thirst, saying, “The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria”?’

- to give over (KJV): 2Ki 18:27 Isa 36:12,18
- The Lord our God (KJV): 2Ch 32:15 2Ki 18:30 19:10 Ps 3:2 11:1-3 22:8 42:10 71:11 Mt 27:43

**‘Is not Hezekiah misleading you to give yourselves over to die by hunger and by thirst, saying, “The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria”’**



**Utley on "the hand of the king of Assyria"** The word "hand" has several connotations and usages.

1. literal (i.e., hand of a human)
  - a. symbol of the entire person, Ezek. 3:18; 18:8,17; 33:6,8
  - b. symbol of human weakness, Ezek.7:17,27; 21:7; 22:14
  - c. symbol of foreign enemies, Ezek. 7:21; 11:9; 16:39; 21:31; 23:9,28; 28:10; 30:12; 34:27; 38:12; 39:23
  - d. literal hand, Ezek. 8:11; 12:7; 16:11; 37:17,19,20
  - e. symbol of false leaders' power, Ezek. 13:21,22,23; 34:10
  - f. symbol of a nation, Ezek. 23:31,37,42,45; 25:14; 27:15; 28:9; 30:10,22,24,25; 31:11; 39:3
2. anthropomorphic of deity
  - a. YHWH's giving of revelation, Ezek. 1:3; 3:14,22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1 (2:9 is other imagery of revelation – scroll on a hand)
  - b. YHWH's power in judgment, Ezek. 6:14; 13:9; 14:9,13; 16:27; 20:33; 25:7,13,16; 35:3; 39:21
  - c. YHWH Himself (His personal Presence), Ezek. 20:22
  - d. YHWH's power to deliver, 20:34 (possibly key usage from Exodus, cf. 3:20; 4:17; 6:1; 7:19; 13:3)
3. anthropomorphic of Cherubim, Ezek. 1:8; 8:3; 10:7,8,12,21
4. anthropomorphic of destroying angels, Ezek. 9:1-2; 21:11
5. symbol of a pledge or oath, Ezek. 17:18; 20:5 (twice), 6,15,23,28; 36:7; 44:12; 47:14
6. symbol of joy, Ezek. 25:6
7. anthropomorphic of an angel, Ezek. 40:3,5; 47:3

**Related Resource:**

- The Hand of the Lord

**2 Chronicles 32:12 'Has not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, "You shall worship before one altar, and on it you shall burn incense"?'**

- Hath not (KJV): 2Ch 31:1 2Ki 18:4,22 Isa 36:7
- taken away (KJV): This was artfully malicious: many of the people had sacrificed to Jehovah on high places, (ch. 31:1;) and Hezekiah had removed them, as incentives to idolatry. Hence Rabshakeh insinuates that by so doing he had offended Jehovah, deprived the people of their religious rights, and that, consequently, he could neither expect the blessing of God, nor the cooperation of the people.
- Ye shall worship (KJV): De 12:13,14,26,27
- one altar (KJV): 2Ch 4:1 Ex 27:1-8 30:1-6 40:26-29 1Ki 7:48

**Has not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, "You shall worship before one altar, and on it you shall burn incense"**

**Guzik** - The Assyrian accuser knew that King Hezekiah had implemented broad reforms in Judah, including the removal of the high places (2 Kings 18:3–4). Yet in the Assyrian's thinking, Hezekiah's reforms had really displeased God, so he should not expect help from the LORD God of Israel. The Assyrian would say, "Look at all the places there used to be where people would worship the LORD God of Israel. Now, since Hezekiah came in, there is only one place. More is always better, so the LORD God of Israel must be pretty sore at Hezekiah!" The enemy of our souls has an amazing way of discouraging our disobedience. If Hezekiah was not careful, this argument of the Assyrian would start to make sense, when really it was demonic logic through and through.

**2 Chronicles 32:13 'Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of the lands? Were the gods of the nations of the lands able at all to deliver their land from my hand?'**

- I and my (KJV): 2Ki 15:29 17:5,6 19:11-13,17,18 Isa 10:9,10,14 37:12,13,18-20 Da 4:30,37 5:19
- were the gods (KJV): 2Ch 32:19 2Ki 18:33-35 19:18,19 Ps 115:3-8 Isa 44:8-10 Jer 10:11,12,16 Ac 19:26 1Co 8:4

**Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of the lands? Were the gods of the nations of the lands able at all to deliver their land from my hand?**

**Guzik** - The Assyrian's speech was intended to destroy their trust in God. His message was simple, and brilliant in its Satanic logic: "The gods of other nations have not been able to protect them against us. Your God is just like one of them, and can't protect you either." For anyone who had the spiritual understanding to see it, Judah could have started planning the victory party right then, when the Assyrian wrote so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand. It is one thing to speak against Judah, its people and leaders. It was another thing all together to mock the LORD God of Israel this way, and count Him as "just another god."

**J.A. Thompson:** Sennacherib's message was typical of those who place their faith in human power rather than in the invisible power of God. Like many such people, he considered faith in the living God to be the same as all "religion," and he mocked the reforms of Hezekiah as meaningless in the face the power of the sword he carried. There is great irony in these verses. Whereas Sennacherib is engaging in psychological warfare, he is doing so by quoting truths thinking they are lies. The phrase "the Lord our God will save us from the King of Assyria" is truth but Sennacherib quoted it as if it were an impossibility. Similarly, in 2Ch 32:12 Hezekiah's reforms were not against the wishes of this "god" but were conducted in fear of the Lord. Sennacherib alluded to history in 2Ch 32:13-14 and the fact that no god had stopped them yet. The problem for Sennacherib was that he had never confronted the One true God, Yahweh, the God of Israel. When he did, he returned defeated and disgraced (2Ch 32:21).

**Andrew Hill:** The gist of the Assyrian message is a call to surrender the city of Jerusalem or die in the siege. King Sennacherib's emissaries offer two logical reasons for Judah's capitulation to the invading army.

- (1) The success of the Assyrian campaign in the outlying regions of Judah is interpreted as necessary retribution against Hezekiah because he has offended the gods in his purge of the "high places" (2Ch 32:11-12).
- (2) Recent history has shown that none of the gods of the other nations was able to deliver their people from the Assyrian juggernaut (2Ch 32:13-15).

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

- among (KJV): Isa 10:11,12
- your God (KJV): Ex 14:3 15:9-11 Isa 42:8

## **SENNACHERIB'S BLASPHEMOUS DECLARATIONS**

**Who was there among all the gods of those nations which my fathers utterly destroyed who could deliver his people out of my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand?** Sennacherib is not just expressing his pride in the previous passages but now is overtly blasphemously by placing the Most High God, the Only God, on the level as the impotent gods of pagan peoples! As the saying goes, Sennacherib would eat his words and in his place of eternal punishment will forever rue (bitterly regret) the day he spoke those words, words recorded forever in the Bible (Luke 21:33+)

**2 Chronicles 32:15 'Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like this, and do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?''**

- deceive (KJV): 2Ki 18:29 19:10
- persuade (KJV): 2Ch 32:11 1Ki 22:22 Isa 36:18 Ac 19:26 Ga 1:10
- much less (KJV): Ex 5:2 Da 3:15 Joh 19:10,11

**Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like this, and do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver**

you from my hand?'

**2 Chronicles 32:16 His servants spoke further against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah.**

- yet (KJV): Job 15:25,26 Ps 73:9
- against (KJV): Joh 15:21

**His servants spoke further against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah.**

**Utley summarizes 2Ch 32:16-19** The king of Assyria sent letters to instill fear against Hezekiah's leadership.

1. These letters insulted YHWH, v. 17.
2. They asserted that no other national god had delivered their people and neither could YHWH, v. 17.
3. The Assyrian messengers read this letter publicly and loudly, in Hebrew (cf. 2 Kgs. 18:26), before the walls of Jerusalem, v. 18.
4. They asserted that YHWH was a manmade idol like the other gods of the nations, v. 19.

The theological stage is set! YHWH must defend His name. He is not one of the gods of the nations; He is more powerful than the gods of Assyria.

**2 Chronicles 32:17 He also wrote letters to insult the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, "As the gods of the nations of the lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand."**

- He wrote (KJV): 2Ki 19:9,14 Ne 6:5 Isa 37:14
- to rail (KJV): 2Ki 19:22,28 Isa 10:15 37:23,24,28,29 Rev 13:6
- As the gods (KJV): 2Ki 19:12

**He also wrote letters to insult the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, "As the gods of the nations of the lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand."**

**2 Chronicles 32:18 They called this out with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten and terrify them, so that they might take the city.**

- they cried (KJV): 2Ki 18:26-28 Isa 36:13
- to affright (KJV): 1Sa 17:10,26 Ne 6:9

**They called this out with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten and terrify them, so that they might take the city.** This verse also assumes a familiarity with 2Ki 18:26-37 or Isaiah 36:11-20.

**2 Chronicles 32:19 They spoke of the God of Jerusalem as of the gods of the peoples of the earth, the work of men's hands.**

- spake (KJV): 2Ch 32:13-17 1Sa 17:36 Job 15:25,26 Ps 10:13,14 73:8-11 139:19,20
- the God (KJV): 2Ch 6:6 Ps 76:1,2 78:68 87:1-3 132:13,14 Isa 14:32 Heb 12:22
- the work (KJV): De 4:28 27:15 2Ki 19:18 Ps 135:15-18 Isa 2:8 37:19 44:16-20 Jer 1:16 10:3,9 32:30 Ho 8:5,6

## **BLASPHEMY OF GOD**

**They spoke of the God of Jerusalem as of the gods of the peoples of the earth, the work of men's hands.**

**Morris** - This equating of "the God of Jerusalem," who is the true God of creation, with "the gods of the people of the earth," who are evil spirits and whose images are mere constructs of men's hands or men's philosophical speculations, is actually blasphemy. Such action cannot go unpunished forever. It is forbidden in the very first of God's Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-5).

**2 Chronicles 32:20 But King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed about this and cried out to heaven.**

- Hezekiah (KJV): 2Ki 19:14-19 Isa 37:1,14-20
- the prophet (KJV): 2Ki 19:2-4 Isa 37:2-4
- prayed (KJV): 2Ch 14:11 20:6-12 Ps 50:15 91:14,15

**But King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed about this and cried out to heaven**- Recorded in 2 Kings 19:15-19

Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16 "Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. 17 "Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have devastated the nations and their lands 18 and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. 19 "Now, O LORD our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O LORD, are God."

Isaiah the prophet brought assurance of the answer to Hezekiah's prayer in 2 Kings 19:20-34

**Utley** - As is true of so much of Chronicles, its account is based on prophetic writings. Here, the great prophet Isaiah is named (cf. Isa. 36:1-37:38). Notice both the king and the great prophet prayed (cf. 2 Kings 19). YHWH answered in power (2 Chr. 32:21). This powerful act of deliverance is detailed in 2 Kgs. 19:35-37. Notice, too, the answered prayers. Hezekiah and Isaiah pray for military victory, 2Ch 32:20. Hezekiah prays for healing, 2Ch 32:24. Hezekiah prays for forgiveness, 2Ch 32:26 (cf. 2 Chr. 7:14; 30:18,20). See [INTERCESSORY PRAYER](#)

**F B Meyer - 2 Chronicles 32:20 Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, prayed and cried to heaven.**

It was the indignity done to Jehovah that stirred these two holy men to the heart. Not that their lives, and the lives of their people, and the beautiful holy city, were in danger; but that Sennacherib 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. Oh that we were possessed with a similar zeal for God, so that we might look at sin as it affects Him, and lament over the awful wrongs which are continually being perpetrated against His holy, loving nature! What an argument this would give us in prayer!

This constitutes a special reason why we should plead for a revival of religion throughout our land. Men speak and act so shamelessly, as though God had abdicated His throne, and was hardly to be taken account of. They sin against Him with so high a hand, and treat His laws with so much contumely. Are there no Hezekiahs and Isaiahs who will pray and cry to the God of our fathers to do again the great works He did in their days, and in the old time before?

Then the Lord would save us, and guide us on every side (2 Chronicles 32:22). There never was a more conspicuous and glorious deliverance than when the angel of God wrought for Israel against Assyria. The Lord became a place of broad rivers and streams across which the enemy could not pass. As the mother bird settling down on her nest, He covered the city with His outspread wings. And the rich spoils of the foe were left for the beleaguered garrison. Pray on, beloved; the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us.

**2 Chronicles 32:21 And the LORD sent an angel who destroyed every mighty warrior, commander and officer in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned in shame to his own land. And when he had entered the temple of his god, some of his own children killed him there with the sword.**

- the Lord (KJV): 2Ki 19:20,35-37 Isa 10:16-18 37:21,36,37 42:8
- angel (KJV): 2Sa 24:16 Ps 18:50 Da 3:28 6:22 Mt 13:49,50 Ac 12:23
- cut off all (KJV): Job 9:4 Ps 76:5,7,12
- the leaders (KJV): Isa 10:8,16-19,33,34 17:12-14 29:5-8 30:30-33 33:10-12 36:9 Rev 6:15,16 19:17,18

- with shame (KJV): Ps 132:18 Pr 11:2 16:18
- he was come (KJV): 2Ki 19:36,37 Isa 37:37,38
- slew him (KJV): Heb. made him fall

### Related Passages:

2 Kings 19:7 "Behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own land. And I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.""

2 Kings 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 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home, and lived at Nineveh. 37 It came about as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son became king in his place.

Isaiah 37:36 Then [the angel of the LORD](#) went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead.

## HOW TO HAVE A BAD NIGHT!

2 Kings 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 the LORD sent an angel who destroyed every mighty warrior, commander and officer in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned in shame to his own land. And when he had entered the temple of his god, some of his own children killed him there with the sword.** - There is disagreement as to whether this was [the angel of the LORD](#) or simply "an" angel from the LORD sent to destroy the Assyrians. John MacArthur includes 2Ki 19:35 and 2Ch 32:21 in his list of appearances of THE Angel of the LORD in the OT (Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth) and I also favor this as an OT Christophany. We will have to wait until Heaven to find out for sure!

**Guzik** - Against all odds, and against every expectation except the expectation of faith, the Assyrian army was turned back without having even shot an arrow into Jerusalem. The unstoppable was stopped, the undefeated was defeated.

**Grogan** - "Herodotus, the Greek historian, recorded that one night Sennacherib's army camp was infested with mice (or rats) that destroyed the arrows and shield-thongs of the soldiers. He probably got this tradition from Egyptian sources, and it could well be a somewhat garbled version of the event recorded here."

**Payne** writes that "This event ranks, in fact, with Israel's crossing of the Red Sea as one of the two greatest examples of the Lord's intervention to save his people."

**Mark Boda:** The Chronicler communicates the total devastation by referring to three levels in the military: mighty warrior, commander, and officer (2Ch 32:21)

**ESV Study note on shame** - The Chronicler's addition, highlighting the element of confrontation between the arrogant Assyrian king and God himself (see Ps. 34:4-7; 35:4-5). Although Sennacherib's army withdrew shortly afterward, his murder did not occur until 20 years later, in 681 b.c. (see 2 Kings 19:35-36; 19:37).

**Guzik on So he returned shamefaced to his own land:** The shame seems to have left his face rather quickly. After this retreat from Judah, Sennacherib commissioned a record, which is preserved in the spectacular Annals of Sennacherib (the Taylor Prism), which can be seen in the British Museum. It shows how full of pride Sennacherib's heart still was, even if he could not even claim he conquered Jerusalem.

"I attacked Hezekiah of Judah who had not subjected himself to me, and took forty-six fortresses, forts and small cities. I carried away captive 200,150 people, big and small, both male and female, a multitude of horses, young bulls, asses, camels, and oxen. Hezekiah himself I locked up in Jerusalem like a bird in its cage. I put up banks against the city. I separated his cities whose inhabitants I had taken prisoners from his realm and gave them to Mitiniti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Zilbel, king of Gaza and thus diminished his country. And I added another tax to the one imposed on him earlier." (Cited in Bultema, commentary on Isaiah)

"The Biblical account concludes with the much debated statement that the Assyrian army was struck down in some way during the night with considerable loss of life, following which the siege was called off ... The Assyrian Annals tacitly agree with the Biblical version by making no claim that Jerusalem was taken, only

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE:** Sennacherib's Assassination. Concerning Sennacherib's assassination (2Ch 32:21; 2 Kings 19:36-37), an Assyrian inscription says: "On the 20th day of Tebet, Sennacherib was killed by his sons in revolt. On the 18th day of Sivan, Esarhaddon, his son, ascended the throne." ([Halley's Bible handbook](#) BORROW)

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

**EXB** So the Lord saved [rescued; delivered] Hezekiah and the people in Jerusalem from [the hand of] Sennacherib king of Assyria and from all other people. He took care of [guided; or gave rest to] them on every side.

**LXE** 2 Chronicles 32:22 So the Lord delivered Ezekias and the dwellers in Jerusalem out of the hand of Sennacherim King of Assyria, and out of the hand of all his enemies, and gave them rest round about.

- Lord (KJV): Ps 18:48-50 37:39,40 144:10 Isa 10:24,25 31:4,5 33:22 Ho 1:7
- guided (KJV): Ps 48:14 71:20,21 73:24 Isa 58:11 Joh 16:13 2Th 3:5

### GOD'S GIFT OF REST

**So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria and from the hand of all others, and guided them on every side** - The verb guided (nahal) means to lead or guide to a watering place, bring to a place of rest, refresh. The Septuagint translates nahal with the verb katapauo which means to cause to cease, to bring to a place of rest (as used in Ex 33:14; Dt 3:20; Josh 1:13; cf spiritual rest in Heb 4:8+).

**THOUGHT** - Have you entered His rest?

**Utley - Rest**" is a recurrent covenant promise (i.e., Exod. 33:14; Deut. 3:20; 12:10; 25:19; Josh. 1:13,15; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1; 2 Sam. 7:1,11; 1 Kgs. 5:4; 1 Chr. 22:9,18; 23:25; 2 Chr. 14:6,7; 15:15; 20:30).

**2 Chronicles 32:23 And many were bringing gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem and choice presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.**

- gifts (KJV): 2Sa 8:10,11 Ezr 7:15-22,27 Ps 68:29 72:10 Isa 60:7-9 Mt 2:11
- presents (KJV): Heb. precious things, 2Ch 9:9,10,24 17:5,11 1Ki 4:21 10:10,25
- he was magnified (KJV): 2Ch 1:1 1Ch 29:25

**And many were bringing gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem and choice presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.**

**Iain Duguid:** Further, while Sennacherib had departed in "shame" (2 Chron. 32:21), Hezekiah received gifts and "was exalted in the sight of all nations," another comparison with Solomon (2Ch 9:23-24). The narrative that began with threat ends in honor to Hezekiah because he (and the people) had honored the Lord, who had heard their prayer.

**Utley** - YHWH's actions on behalf of His people caused both fear and honor (i.e., bringing gifts). (1) FEAR - Ex 15:14-16; 23:27; Deut. 2:25; 11:25; Josh. 2:9; 1 Chr. 14:17; 2 Chr. 17:10-11; 20:29 and (2) HONOR - Ex 3:22; 11:2; 12:35-36; 2 Chr. 9:23-24; 17:10-11; 26:8; 32:23

**2 Chronicles 32:24 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill; and he prayed to the LORD, and the LORD spoke to him and gave him a sign.**

- Hezekiah (KJV): 2Ki 20:1-3 Isa 38:1-3

- gave him a sign (KJV): or, wrought a miracle for him, 2Ki 20:4-11 Isa 38:4-8,21,22

### Related Passages:

2 Kings 20:4-11 Before Isaiah had gone out of the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 5“Return and say to Hezekiah the leader of My people, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, “I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. 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.”” 7 Then Isaiah said, “Take a cake of figs.” And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered. 8 Now Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What will be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?” 9 Isaiah said, “This shall be the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that He has spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten steps or go back ten steps?” 10 So Hezekiah answered, “It is easy for the shadow to decline ten steps; no, but let the shadow turn backward ten steps.” 11 Isaiah the prophet cried to the LORD, and He brought the shadow on the stairway back ten steps by which it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz. (See also Isaiah 38:1-22)

**In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill; and he prayed to the LORD-** The time phrase **in those days** should beg the question what days? While this is not an easy answer the **NIV Study Bible** says "The Chronicler again abridges the narrative in 2Ki 20:1-11 (and Isa 38:1-8), assuming the reader’s familiarity with the role of Isaiah and the miraculous sign of the shadow reversing ten steps."

**ESV Study note on 2 Kings 20:1 - In those days.** 2Kings 20:1-19 represent a “flashback” to the period around 713-712 b.c., some 12 years before Sennacherib’s invasion and some 15 years before Hezekiah’s death (cf. 2Ki 20:6). (**ESV Study note** on 2Chr 32:24-26, 31) These events preceded Sennacherib’s invasion by a few years. The sign was the miraculous backward movement of the shadow, signifying the extension of Hezekiah’s life in answer to prayer. Related to this incident was the king’s proud display of his wealth before the Babylonian envoys. This incurred God’s wrath, but Hezekiah and the people’s humble repentance (see 2 Chron. 7:14) is said to have spared Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah (see 2 Kings 20:16-18). Even a good king such as Hezekiah could contribute to Judah’s fate; like Josiah (2 Chron. 34:28), however, he was spared from seeing it in his days.

**Utley** - This illness is not specified in Chronicles but in 2 Kgs. 20:7; Isa. 38:21, it is related to a boil (BDB 1006), which was one of the plagues on Egypt – Exod. 9:9-11 one of the consequences of covenant disobedience – Deut. 28:27,35 [Josephus Antiq. 10.2.1.](#), calls it "distemper" (physical) and "melancholy circumstances" (mental, i.e., no heir)

**and the LORD spoke to him and gave him a sign** - We read the sign in 1 Kings 20:11 "Isaiah the prophet cried to the LORD, and He brought the shadow on the stairway back ten steps by which it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz." Sadly the sign was not received with an attitude of gratitude but with an attitude of pride bringing God's (2Ch 32:25). Hezekiah quickly came to his senses, recognizing his sin had brought God's discipline and he humbled himself (along with the people) resulting in the Lord withdrawing His wrath (2Ch 32:26).

**THOUGHT** - This is a powerful illustration of the immutable truth of God's Word that He is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6+). While all adversities we experience clearly is not the result of the sin of pride, some surely are. This begs the question are you experiencing God's discipline because of a prideful heart? If so, then follow Hezekiah's example and humble yourself before the Lord and He will exalt you at the proper time (James 4:10+).

### YOUR CHOICE

There is a prayer at times we pray,  
Sincere in our request,  
Asking God to humble us,  
Knowing this is best.

But God has clearly told us  
It is something we must do.  
Humility is a choice  
That He leaves up to you!

So when the chance arises  
To be exalted or abased,  
Choose the road less traveled--  
Don't let it go to waste.

Criticism unfounded  
May take you low today.  
In His time He will exalt you,  
When your pride's out of the way.  
-- *Steve Canfield*  
*in Wisdom for the Revived Life*

**J.A. Thompson:** The reference to Hezekiah's illness is brief in Chronicles and assumes familiarity with the account in 2 Kgs 20:1-11, which gives details of the miraculous sign (mopet). The Chronicler made use of the sign to link together the two separate accounts in Kings of Hezekiah's illness and the visit of the Babylonian envoys. The healing God gave to Hezekiah became an occasion for pride. When Hezekiah, with the citizens of Jerusalem, humble himself in respect to his pride, the wrath of God did not fall on the people in the days of Hezekiah.

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### **Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 32:24-33**

Here we conclude the story of Hezekiah with an account of three things concerning him:-

**I. His sickness and his recovery from it, 2Ch 32:24.** The account of his sickness is but briefly mentioned here; we had a large narrative of it, 2 Ki. 20. His disease seemed likely to be mortal. In the extremity of it he prayed. God answered him, and gave him a sign that he should recover, the going back of the sun ten degrees.

**II. His sin and his repentance for it, which were also more largely related, 2 Ki. 20:12, etc.** Yet several things are here observed concerning his sin which we had not there.

#### **1. The occasion of it was the king of Babylon's sending an honourable embassy to him to congratulate him on his recovery.**

But here it is added that they came to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land (2Ch 32:31), either the destruction of the Assyrian army or the going back of the sun. The Assyrians were their enemies; they came to enquire concerning their fall, that they might triumph in it. The sun was their god; they came to enquire concerning the favour he had shown to Hezekiah, that they might honour him whom their god honoured, 2Ch 32:31. These miracles were wrought to alarm and awaken a stupid careless world, and turn them from dumb and lame idols to the living God; and men were startled by them, but not converted till a greater wonder was done in that land, in the appearing of Jesus Christ, Mt. 2:1, 2.

#### **2. God left him to himself in it, to try him, 2Ch 32:31.**

God, by the power of his almighty grace, could have prevented the sin; but he permitted it for wise and holy ends, that, by this trial and his weakness in it, he might know, that is, it might be known (a usual Hebraism), what was in his heart, that he was not so perfect in grace as he thought he was, but had his follies and infirmities as other men. God left him to himself to be proud of his wealth, to keep him from being proud of his holiness. It is good for us to know ourselves, and our own weakness and sinfulness, that we may not be conceited or self-confident, but may always think meanly of ourselves and live in a dependence upon divine grace. We know not the corruption of our own hearts, nor what we shall do if God leave us to ourselves. Lord, lead us not into temptation.

#### **3. His sin was the his heart was lifted up, 2Ch 32:25.**

He was proud of the honour God had put upon him in so many instances, the honour his neighbours did him in bringing him presents, and now that the king of Babylon should send an embassy to him to caress and court him: this exalted him above measure. When Hezekiah had destroyed other idolatries he began to idolize himself. O what need have great men, and good men, and useful men, to study their own infirmities and follies, and their obligations to free grace, that they may never think highly of themselves, and to beg earnestly of God that he will hide pride from them and always keep them humble!

#### **4. The aggravation of his sin was the he made so bad a return to God for his favours to him, making even those favours the food and fuel of his pride (2Ch 32:25):**

He rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him. Note, It is justly expected that those who have received mercy from God should study to make some suitable returns for the mercies they have received; and, if they do not, their ingratitude will certainly be charged upon them. Though we cannot render an equivalent, or the payment of a debt, we must render the acknowledgment of a favour. What



shall I render that may be so accepted? Ps. 116:12. 5. The divine displeasure he was under for this sin; though it was but a heart-sin, and the overt-act seemed not only innocent but civil (the showing of his treasures to a friend), yet wrath came upon him and his kingdom for it, v. 25. Note, Pride is a sin that God hates as much as any, and particularly in his own people. Those that exalt themselves must expect to be abased, and put under humbling providences. Wrath came on David for his pride in numbering the people. 6. His repentance for this sin: He humbled himself for the pride of his heart. Note,

(1.) Though God may, for wise and holy ends, suffer his people to fall into sin, yet he will not suffer them to lie still in it; they shall not be utterly cast down.

(2.) Heart-sins are to be repented of, though they go no further.

(3.) Self-humiliation is a necessary branch of repentance.

(4.) Pride of heart, by which we have lifted up ourselves, is a sin for which we ought in a special manner to humble ourselves.

(5.) People ought to mourn for the sins of their rulers. The inhabitants of Jerusalem humbled themselves with Hezekiah, because they either knew that they also had been guilty of the same sin, or at least feared that they might share in the punishment. When David, in his pride, numbered the people, they all smarted for his sin. The reprieve granted thereupon. The wrath came not in his days. While he lived the country had peace and truth prevailed; so much does repentance avail to put by, or at least to put off, the tokens of God's anger.

### III. Here is the honour done to Hezekiah,

#### 1. By the providence of God while he lived

He had exceeding much riches and honour (2Ch 32:27), replenished his stores, victualled his camp, fortified his city, and did all he wished to do; for God had given him very much substance, 2Ch 32:29. Among his great performances, his turning the water-course of Gihon is mentioned (2Ch 32:30), which was done upon occasion of Sennacherib's invasion, v. 3, 4. The water had come into that which is called the old pool (Isa. 22:11) and the upper pool (Isa. 7:3); but he gathered the waters into a new place, for the greater convenience of the city, called the lower pool, Isa. 22:9. And, in general, he prospered in all his works, for they were good works.

#### 2. By the respect paid to his memory when he was dead.

(1.) **The prophet Isaiah wrote his life and reign** (2Ch 32:32), his acts and his goodness or piety, or which it is part of the honour to be recorded and remembered, for examples to others.

(2.) **The people did him honour at his death** (2Ch 32:33), buried him in the chief of the sepulchres, made as great a burning for him as for Asa, or, which is a much greater honour, made great lamentation for him, as for Josiah. See how the honour of serious godliness is manifested in the consciences of men. Though it is to be feared that the generality of the people did not heartily comply with the reforming kings, yet they could not but praise their endeavours for reformation, and the memory of those kings was blessed among them. It is a debt we owe to those who have been eminently useful in their day to do them honour at their death, when they are out of the reach of flattery and we have seen the end of their conversation. The due payment of this debt will be an encouragement to others to do likewise.

**2 Chronicles 32:25 But Hezekiah gave no return for the benefit he received, because his heart was proud; therefore wrath came on him and on Judah and Jerusalem.**

**AMP** But Hezekiah did nothing [for the Lord] in return for the benefit *bestowed* on him, because his heart had become proud; therefore *God's* wrath came on him and on Judah and Jerusalem.

**CSB** However, because his heart was proud, Hezekiah didn't respond according to the benefit that had come to him. So there was wrath on him, Judah, and Jerusalem.

**CEV** But Hezekiah was so proud that he refused to thank the Lord for everything he had done for him. This made the Lord angry, and he punished Hezekiah and the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

**EXB** But Hezekiah did not thank God for his kindness [did not respond to/was not grateful for the kindness shown him], because he was so proud. So the Lord was angry with [wrath came upon] him and the people of

Judah and Jerusalem.

**MSG** But the sign, instead of making Hezekiah grateful, made him arrogant. This made God angry, and his anger spilled over on Judah and Jerusalem. But then Hezekiah, and Jerusalem with him, repented of his arrogance, and God withdrew his anger while Hezekiah lived.

- 2Sa 24:1,10-17 1Ch 21:1,12-17
- rendered (KJV): De 32:6 Ps 116:12,13 Ho 14:2 Lu 17:17,18
- his heart (KJV): 2Ch 32:31 25:19 26:16 De 8:12-14,17 2Ki 14:10 20:13 Eze 28:2,5,17 Da 5:20,23 Hab 2:4 2Co 12:7 1Ti 3:6 1Pe 5:5,6
- therefore (KJV): 2Ch 24:18

## **THE EVER PRESENT DANGER OF A PROUD HEART**

**But Hezekiah gave no return for the benefit he received, because his heart was proud; therefore wrath came on him and on Judah and Jerusalem** - Ingratitude and a prideful heart brought down the hand of discipline from the LORD!

**Raymond Dillard:** Illness in Chronicles ordinarily is the result of sin (2Ch 16:7–12; 21:18–19; 26:19–21), though here the Chronicler does not provide any precipitating reason for Hezekiah's illness. Rather, his recovery and the sign he was given become the occasion for pride, from which Hezekiah must humble himself, recalling again the language of 2 Chr 7:14, and contrasting to Uzziah (2Ch 26:16).

Uteley - he account of Hezekiah's prideful act and its consequences is found in 2 Kgs. 20:12-21 (note v. 31 here). This does show that even godly people in good times still have a pull towards self! This is the residue of the Fall of Genesis 3. Hezekiah's pride brought terrible consequences, to his descendants and to all the people of Judah. His sin affected the whole nation! This same theological issue of corporality can be seen in (1) Adam's sin of Genesis 3 – Rom. 5:12-21, (2) Achan's sin at Jericho – Joshua 7, (3) David's sin with Bathsheba – 2 Samuel 11, (4) Solomon's sin in his old age with his foreign wives – 1 Kgs. 11:1-8, (5) Messiah's substitutionary death – Isaiah 53. **(ED: ALL ARE NEGATIVE EXCEPT #5 - PRAISE THE LORD FOR HAVING THE LAST WORD SO TO SPEAK!)** [SPECIAL TOPIC: THE HEART.](#)

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### **The Hidden Rattler**

A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor. —Proverbs 29:23

Read: 2 Kings 20:12-21

When I was a boy, our family lived on a farm. One spring, we killed 13 rattlesnakes in a brief period of time.

A rattler can be easily destroyed if you know where it is and how far it can reach when it strikes. So my brothers and I never worried about the snakes we could see. We were genuinely concerned, however, about stepping on one whose presence we had not detected.

King Hezekiah was subtly "bitten" by a hidden temptation, not seduced by a gross and obvious evil. He allowed a measure of pride and self-reliance to blight his career. He should have put his full trust in the Lord for protection from his enemies, but instead he sought safety through an alliance with idolatrous men (2 Chronicles 32:25,31).

It's too bad that this otherwise good king marred his reign by this sin. We need to be on guard lest we allow pride to build up in our hearts until we, like Hezekiah, succumb to the wiles of the enemy. We may be prepared to stand against obvious invitations to sin that would besmirch our name, but we may not be ready for life's subtle temptations.

Beware of "hidden rattlers"—they're the most dangerous of all! by Herbert Vander Lugt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The devil has many enticements,  
There's danger wherever you go;  
But if you are tempted in weakness,  
Ask God for more grace, and say, "No!"  
—Palmer

**If you want to master temptation, let Christ master you.**

**2 Chronicles 32:26 However, Hezekiah humbled the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come on them in the days of Hezekiah.**

- 2Ki 20:16-19 Isa 39:6-8
- Hezekiah (KJV): 2Ch 33:12,19,23 34:27 Lev 26:40,41 2Ki 20:19 Jer 26:18,19 Jas 4:10
- pride (KJV): Heb. lifting up
- so (KJV): 1Ki 21:19
- days (KJV): 2Ch 34:27,28 1Ki 21:29

## **HEZEKIAH RESPONDS IN HUMILITY**

**However, Hezekiah humbled the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come on them in the days of Hezekiah** - Humbling himself is a picture of repentance, a change of heart and mind, which resulted in the LORD withdrawing His wrath.

**Related Resource:**

- [SPECIAL TOPIC: REPENTANCE \(OT\)](#)

**2 Chronicles 32:27 Now Hezekiah had immense riches and honor; and he made for himself treasuries for silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuable articles,**

- exceeding much (KJV): 2Ch 1:12 9:27 17:5 Pr 10:22
- treasuries (KJV): 1Ch 27:25-31
- pleasant jewels (KJV): Heb. instruments of desire

**Now Hezekiah had immense riches and honor; and he made for himself treasuries for silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuable articles,**

**Raymond Dillard:** Hezekiah's wealth once again reflects the concern of the author to effect parallels with David and Solomon. . . Riches and building programs are among the tokens of divine favor; Hezekiah's tunnel was a monumental undertaking, a task requiring the grace and favor of God; see 32:2-5.

**Utley - "spices"** It seems unusual to modern westerners that perfumes (BDB 141, lit. "spices") were a source of wealth (cf. 1 Kgs. 10:2,10,25; 2 Chr. 9:1,24; Ezek. 27:22). In 2 Kgs. 20:13 and Isa. 39:2 "spices" are linked with "precious oils" (BDB 1032 and BDB 373 II).

**August Konkell:** The Chronicler is most interested in Hezekiah's achievement (vv. 27- 30). He focuses on two matters: his wealth (vv. 27-29) and his water project (v. 30). The meticulous mention of the various items, with the repeated emphasis on quantity, is intended to suggest that the kingdom of Hezekiah was comparable to that of Solomon. The list of Hezekiah's wealth is constructed as one single sentence (in MT), including the building projects necessary to accommodate his possession: - Hezekiah made treasuries for his wealth (v. 27), - storehouses for all his produce (v. 28a), - stalls for all his cattle and pens for his flocks (v. 28b), and - cities (possibly meaning state-owned lands) for his vast herds of sheep and cattle (v. 29). The whole is rounded off by emphasizing his exceedingly great possessions as a sign of God's blessing (v. 29b).

**2 Chronicles 32:28 storehouses also for the produce of grain, wine and oil, pens for all kinds of cattle and sheepfolds for the flocks.**

- Storehouses (KJV): 2Ch 26:10
- stalls (KJV): 1Ki 4:26
- cotes (KJV): 2Sa 7:8

**storehouses also for the produce of grain, wine and oil, pens for all kinds of cattle and sheepfolds for the flocks.**

**2 Chronicles 32:29 He made cities for himself and acquired flocks and herds in abundance, for God had given him very great wealth.**

- possessions (KJV): 2Ch 26:10 Ge 13:2-6 1Ch 27:29-31 Job 1:3,9 42:12
- God (KJV): 2Ch 25:9 De 8:18 1Sa 2:7 1Ch 29:12 Pr 10:22 1Ti 6:17,18

**He made cities for himself and acquired flocks and herds in abundance, for God had given him very great wealth**

**2 Chronicles 32:30 It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all that he did.**

- Hezekiah (KJV): Or, "Hezekiah stopped the upper going out ({motza,} i.e., the egress into the open air,) of the waters of Gihon, and brought them underneath, ({lemattah,} by a subterraneous course,) to the west of the city of David:" See Note on 1 Ki 1:45.
- stopped (KJV): 2Ch 32:4 Isa 22:9-11
- Gihon (KJV): 1Ki 1:33,38,45
- And Hezekiah (KJV): Jos 1:7,8 Ps 1:1-3

## HEZEKIAH'S TUNNEL

**It was Hezekiah who stopped the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all that he did.**

**John MacArthur** - A 1,700 ft. long tunnel cut through solid rock (below Jerusalem) redirected water from the spring Gihon outside of Jerusalem (to the E) toward the S of Jerusalem into the pool of Siloam within the city to provide water in time of siege. The tunnel was a remarkable feat of engineering and boring skill, often 60 ft. below the ground and large enough to walk through. It was discovered in 1838, but not until 1909 was it cleared of the debris left by the destruction of Jerusalem back in 586 b.c. This may not have been the first water shaft, since David may have entered Jerusalem 300 years earlier through a water shaft (cf. 2Sa 5:6-8).

**Ryrie** - An inscription found in 1880 near the mouth of the Siloam tunnel describes this remarkable engineering feat by which water was brought from the Spring of Gihon to a place inside the city. Diggers worked from both ends, meeting almost exactly in the middle of this 1,200 cubit-long tunnel (since it measures 1,777 ft, or 541 m, the cubit being about 18 in).

**Raymond Dillard**: "succeed" (2Ch 32:30), is another term characteristic of the Chronicler's theology of immediate retribution. In saying that Hezekiah succeeded in all that he did, the Chronicler is emphasizing only one part of the attitude taken to the Babylonian emissaries in the earlier two accounts (2 Kgs 20:17-19 // Isa 39:6-8). In the earlier accounts Hezekiah's display was a harbinger of a day when the Babylonians would carry away Judah's wealth and royal household, though Hezekiah would have peace and security during his reign. The Chronicler regards this testing as successful, focusing only on its positive outcome.

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**GIHON (2) [ISBE] - (gichon, gichon (in 1 K), from root gayach "to burst forth"):**

A spring in Jerusalem, evidently sacred, and, for that reason, selected as the scene of Solomon's coronation (1 Ki 1:38). It is without doubt the spring known to the Moslems as `Ain Umm edition deraj ("the spring of the steps") and to the Christians as `Ain Sitti Miriam ("the spring of the lady Mary"), or commonly as the "Virgin's Fount." It is the one true spring of Jerusalem, the original source of attraction to the site of the early settlers; it is situated in the Kidron valley on the East side of "Ophel," and due South of the temple area. See JERUSALEM. The water in the present day is brackish and impregnated with sewage. The spring is intermittent in character, "bursting up" at intervals: this feature may account for the name Gihon and for its sacred characters. In New Testament times it was, as it is today, credited with healing virtues. See BETHESDA. Its position is clearly defined in the Old Testament. Manasseh "built an outer wall to the city of David, on the West side of Gihon, in the valley" (= Nahal, i.e. the Kidron; 2 Ch 33:14). From Gihon Hezekiah made his aqueduct (2 Ch 32:30), now the Siloam tunnel.

The spring is approached by a steep descent down 30 steps, the water rising deep underground; the condition is due to the vast accumulation of rubbish--the result of the many destructions of the city--which now fills the valley bed. Originally the water ran down the open valley. The water rises from a long deep crack in the rock, partly under the lowest of the steps and to a lesser extent in the mouth of a small cave, 11 1/2 ft. long by 5 ft. wide, into which all the water pours. The village women of Siloam obtain the water at

the mouth of the cave, but when the supply is scanty they actually go under the lowest step--where there is a kind of chamber--and fill their vessels there. At the farther end of this cave is the opening leading into the aqueduct down which the water flows to emerge after many windings at the pool of Siloam. The first part of this aqueduct is older than the time of Hezekiah and led originally to the perpendicular shaft, connected with "Warren's tunnel" described elsewhere (see SILOAM; ZION).

The preeminent position of importance which Gihon held in the eyes of the earlier inhabitants of Jerusalem is shown by the extraordinary number of passages, rock cuttings, walls and aqueducts which exist all about the spring. Walls have been made at different periods to bank up the waters and direct them into the channels provided for them. Of aqueducts, besides the "Siloam aqueduct," two others have been formed. One running from the source at a considerable lower level than that of Hezekiah was followed by the present writer (see PEFS, 1902, 35-38) for 176 ft. It was very winding, following apparently the West side of the Kidron valley. It was a well-cemented channel, about 1 1/2 ft. wide and on an average of 4 1/2 ft. high, roofed in with well-cut stones. There are no certain indications of age, but in the writer's opinion it is a much later construction than Hezekiah's aqueduct, though the rock-cut part near the source may be older. It was discovered by the Siloam fellahin, because, through a fault in the dam, all the water of the "Virgin's Fount" was disappearing down this channel. A third aqueduct has recently been discovered running off at a higher level than the other two. It is a channel deeply cut in the rock with curious trough-like stones all along its floor. It appears to be made for water, but one branch of it actually slopes upward toward its end. The pottery, which is early Hebrew, shows that it is very ancient. The whole accumulated debris around the source is full of pre-Israelite and early Israelite pottery. E. W. G. Masterman

**2 Chronicles 32:31 Even in the matter of the envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who sent to him to inquire of the wonder that had happened in the land, God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.**

- in the business (KJV): 2Ki 20:12,13 Isa 39:1,2-8
- ambassadors (KJV): Heb. interpreters
- the wonder (KJV): 2Ki 20:8-11 Isa 38:8
- left him (KJV): Jud 16:20 Ps 27:9 51:11,12 119:116,117 Joh 15:5
- to try him (KJV): Ge 22:1 De 8:2,16 Job 1:11,12 2:3-6 Ps 139:1,2,23,24 Pr 17:3 Zec 13:9 Mal 3:2,3 1Pe 1:7 Jas 1:13
- that he might (KJV): De 8:2 13:3

#### Related Passages:

2 Kings 20:12 At that time [Berodach-baladan](#) a son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

2 Kings 20:17-18 **'Behold**, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. 18 'Some of your sons who shall issue from you, whom you will beget, will be taken away; and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.'

Deuteronomy 8:2-3+ "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that **He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart**, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 3 "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.

### GOD TESTS HEARTS TO PURIFY HEARTS!

**Even in the matter of the envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who sent to him to inquire of the wonder(SIGN) that had happened in the land, God left him alone only to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart** - The Great Physician in effect does His "Electrocardiogram" (EKG) of Hezekiah's heart! See [GOD TESTS HIS PEOPLE](#)

**THOUGHT** - Do you get an annual medical examination? What about a daily "cardiac" examination? The former is important for our physical life, but the latter is more important, because it is about our spiritual life! A good test that is inexpensive (in contrast to modern medical care!) is Psalm 139:23-24 - "**Search** me, O God, and **know** my heart; **Try** me and **know** my anxious thoughts; And **see** if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way." Notice there are five **commands**, not that we can in one sense command God to do anything, but more reflective of the deep desire of our heart begging Him to do a divine cardiac checkup. I think I will pause and pray this now!

**William MacDonald** - Ambassadors came from Babylon, intrigued by the celestial wonder that God had given Hezekiah. They would be especially interested in this since they worshiped the sun and stars. The king foolishly showed them his treasures, arousing their desire to possess them, a desire that was soon to be fulfilled.

**John MacArthur** - Babylon "was gradually gaining power as Assyria declined due to internal strife and weak kings. Assyria was crushed in 612 b.c. and Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, became the world ruler (cf. 2Ki 20:14)."

**THOUGHT** - "God wants genuine character and faithfulness in his people, and He will expose them to trials in order to train and shape them. The path of sanctification is not an easy one (cf. Ge 22:1) (**ED: BUT IT IS THE BEST PATH!**)." (J.A. Thompson)

**August Konkell:** The visit of the Babylonian envoys is cast in terms of well-known eastern interest in astrology (2Ch 32:31). Kings accounts for the visit as an inquiry into Hezekiah's health (2 Kings 20:12). For the Chronicler, they came investigating a sign, no doubt a reference to the return of the shadow (2 Kings 20:8-11). This is presented as a test from God, the real cause for their appearance. God was not testing Hezekiah's actions but needed to know what was in his heart (the expression is derived from Deut 8:2). Though this is not presented as a test in Kings, the story there does show that Hezekiah responded positively to the prophet's warning and resigned himself to the divine will (2 Kings 20:12-19). The story in both versions ends on a positive note, indicating Hezekiah's devotion to the divine purpose whether the final outcome be good or bad.

**Andrew Hill:** Hezekiah's "success" (2Ch 32:30) may be viewed as God's reward for overcoming the circumstances of God's testing in his life (2Ch 32:31). Divine testing is a recurring Old Testament theme, not because God needs to know the intents of the human heart, but rather because the Lord tests the hearts of his servants so that they might respond to him in complete faith as a result of the discernment that emerges from this kind of self-knowledge (cf. Deut. 8:2-3).

**Utley - the wonder that had happened in the land**" What "wonder" (lit. "sign," BDB 68, cf. 2 Chr. 32:24)?

1. Because the term "wonder/sign" is used in vv. 24 and 31, most think it was Hezekiah's healing (cf. 2 Kgs. 20:12); possibly because they were astral worshipers and the "sign" involved the sun.
2. But "in the land," along with "envoys of the rulers of Babylon, who were enemies of Assyria," I think it was the miraculous defeat of Sennacherib's large army (v. 1) who had not been defeated before this (vv. 21-22; cf. 2 Kgs. 19:35-37). Also note the information in 2 Kgs. 20:13-21 and Edwin M. Yamauchi, *The Stones and the Scriptures*, p. 80.

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### **C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening —2 Chronicles 32:31**

Hezekiah was growing so inwardly great, and priding himself so much upon the favour of God, that self-righteousness crept in, and through his carnal security, the grace of God was for a time, in its more active operations, withdrawn. Here is quite enough to account with the Babylonians; for if the grace of God should leave the best Christian, there is enough of sin in his heart to make him the worst of transgressors. If left to yourselves, you who are warmest for Christ would cool down like Laodicea into sickening lukewarmness: you who are sound in the faith would be white with the leprosy of false doctrine; you who now walk before the Lord in excellency and integrity would reel to and fro, and stagger with a drunkenness of evil passion. Like the moon, we borrow our light; bright as we are when grace shines on us, we are darkness itself when the Sun of Righteousness withdraws himself. Therefore let us cry to God never to leave us. "Lord, take not thy Holy Spirit from us! Withdraw not from us thine indwelling grace! Hast thou not said, 'I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day'? Lord, keep us everywhere. Keep us when in the valley, that we murmur not against thy humbling hand; keep us when on the mountain, that we wax not giddy through being lifted up; keep us in youth, when our passions are strong; keep us in old age, when becoming conceited of our wisdom, we may therefore prove greater fools than the young and giddy; keep us when we come to die, lest, at the very last, we should deny thee! Keep us living, keep us dying, keep us labouring, keep us suffering, keep us fighting, keep us resting, keep us everywhere, for everywhere we need thee, O our God!"

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### **John MacArthur - WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART? - [Truth for Today](#) (BORROW)**

God withdrew from him [King Hezekiah], in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart. 2Ch 32:31

God didn't need to test Hezekiah to know what was in his heart. God already knew by omniscience. But He tests us so we can find out. He assists us in doing a spiritual inventory on ourselves by bringing trials into our lives to demonstrate the strength or weakness of our faith. If you're currently experiencing a trial and are shaking your fist at God and wondering why it's happening, that's a good indication that you have weak faith. If, on the other hand, you're resting and rejoicing in the Lord, having placed the trial into His care, then you have strong faith.

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## **DIAL OF AHAZ [ISBE]- di'-al, a'-haz:**

### **1. Hezekiah's Sickness and the Sign:**

One of the most striking instances recorded in Holy Scripture of the interruption, or rather reversal, of the working of a natural law is the going back of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz at the time of Hezekiah's recovery from his illness. The record of the incident is as follows. Isaiah was sent to Hezekiah in his sickness, to say:

"Thus saith Yahweh, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of Yahweh. .... And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that Yahweh will heal me, and that I shall go up unto the house of Yahweh the third day? And Isaiah said, This shall be the sign unto thee from Yahweh, that Yahweh will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or go back ten steps? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to decline ten steps: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten steps. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto Yahweh; and he brought the shadow ten steps backward, by which it had gone down on the dial of Ahaz" (2 Ki 20:5-11). And in Isa 38:8, it is said, "Behold, I will cause the shadow on the steps, which is gone down on the dial of Ahaz with the sun, to return backward ten steps. So the sun returned ten steps on the dial whereon it was gone down."

### **2. The Sign a Real Miracle:**

The first and essential point to be noted is that this was no ordinary astronomical phenomenon, nor was it the result of ordinary astronomical laws then unknown. It was peculiar to that particular place, and to that particular time; otherwise we should not read of "the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent .... to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land" (2 Ch 32:31). It is impossible, therefore, to accept the suggestion that the dial of Ahaz may have been improperly constructed, so as to produce a reversal of the motion of the shadow at certain times. For such a maladjustment would have occasioned the repetition of the phenomenon every time the sun returned to the same position with respect to the dial. The narrative, in fact, informs us that the occurrence was not due to any natural law, known or unknown, since Hezekiah was given the choice and exercised it of his own free will, as to whether a shadow should move in a particular direction or in the opposite. But there are no alternative results in the working of a natural law. "If a state of things is repeated in every detail, it must lead to exactly the same consequences." The same natural law cannot indifferently produce one result, or its opposite. The movement of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz was, therefore, a miracle in the strict sense of the term. It cannot be explained by the working of any astronomical law, known or unknown. We have no information as to the astronomical conditions at the time; we can only inquire into the setting of the miracle.

### **3. The "Dial" a Staircase:**

It is unfortunate that one important word in the narrative has been rendered in both the King James Version and the Revised Version (British and American) by a term which describes a recognized astronomical instrument. The word "dial" (ma'aloth) is usually translated "degrees," "steps," or "stairs," and indeed is thus rendered in the same verse. There is no evidence that the structure referred to had been designed to serve as a dial or was anything other than a staircase, "the staircase of Ahaz." It was probably connected with that "covered way for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without," which Ahaz turned "round the house of Yahweh, because of the king of Assyria" (2 Ki 16:18 the Revised Version, margin). This staircase, called after Ahaz because the alteration was due to him, may have been substituted for David's "causeway that goeth up," which was "westward, by the gate of Shallecheth" (1 Ch 26:16), or more probably for Solomon's "ascent by which he went up unto the house of Yahweh" which so impressed the queen of Sheba (2 Ch 9:4).

### **4. Time of Day of the Miracle:**

At certain times of the day the shadow of some object fell upon this staircase, and we learn from both 2 Ki and Isa that this shadow had already gone down ten steps, while from Isa we learn in addition that the sun also was going down. The miracle therefore took place in the afternoon, when the sun moves on its downward course, and when all shadows are thrown in an easterly direction. We are not told what was the object that cast the shadow, but it must have stood to the west of the staircase, and the top of the staircase must have passed into the shadow first, and the foot of the staircase have remained longest in the light. The royal palace is understood to have been placed southeast of the Temple, and it is therefore probable that it was some part of the Temple buildings that had cast its shadow down the stairway in full view of the dying king, as he lay in his chamber. If the afternoon were well advanced the sun would be moving rapidly in altitude, and but little in azimuth; or, in other words, the shadow would be advancing down the steps at its quickest rate, but be moving only slowly toward the left of those who were mounting them. It may well have been the case, therefore, that the time had come when the priests from Ophel, and the officials and courtiers from the palace, were going up the ascent into the house of the Lord to be present at the evening sacrifice; passing from the bright sunshine at the foot of the stairs into the shadow that had already fallen upon the upper steps. The sun would be going straight down behind the buildings and the steps already in shadow would sink into deeper shadow, not to emerge again into the light until a new day's sun had arisen

upon the earth.

### 5. Hezekiah's Choice of the Sign:

We can therefore understand the nature of the choice of the sign that was offered by the prophet to the dying king. Would he choose that ten more steps should be straight-way engulfed in the shadow, or that ten steps already shadowed should be brought back into the light? Either might serve as a sign that he should arise on the third day and go up in renewed life to the house of the Lord; but the one sign would be in accordance with the natural progress of events, and the other would be directly opposed to it. It would be a light thing, as Hezekiah said, for the shadow to go forward ten steps; a bank of cloud rising behind the Temple would effect that change. But no disposition of cloud could bring the shadow back from that part of the staircase which had already passed into it, and restore it to the sunshine. The first change was, in human estimation, easily possible, "a light thing"; the second change seemed impossible. Hezekiah chose the seemingly impossible, and the Lord gave the sign and answered his prayer. We need not ask Whether the king showed more or less faith in choosing the "impossible" rather than the "possible" sign. His father Ahaz had shown his want of faith by refusing to put the Lord to the test, by refusing to ask a sign, whether in the heaven above or in the earth beneath. The faith of Hezekiah was shown in asking a sign, which was at once in the heaven above and in the earth beneath, in accepting the choice offered to him, and so putting the Lord to the test. And the sign chosen was most fitting, Hezekiah lay dying, whether of plague or of cancer we do not know, but his disease was mortal and beyond cure; he was already entering into the shadow of death. The word of the Lord was sure to him; on "the third day" he would rise and go up in new life to the house of God.

### 6. Meaning of the Sign:

But what of the sign? Should the shadow of death swallow him up; should his life be swiftly cut off in darkness, and be hidden until a new day should dawn, and the light of a new life, a life of resurrection, arise? (Compare Jn 11:24.) Or should the shadow be drawn back swiftly, and new years be added to his life before death could come upon him? Swift death was in the natural progress of events; restoration to health was of the impossible. He chose the restoration to health, and the Lord answered his faith and his prayer.

We are not able to go further into particulars. The first temple, the royal palace, and the staircase of Ahaz were all destroyed in the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and we have no means of ascertaining the exact position of the staircase with respect to Temple or palace, or the number of the steps that it contained, or the time of the day, or the season of the year when the sign was given. It is possible that if we knew any or all of these, a yet greater significance, both spiritual and astronomical, might attach to the narrative.

### 7. The Fifteen "Songs of Degrees":

Fifteen years were added to the life of Hezekiah. In the restoration of the second temple by Herod fifteen steps led from the Court of the Women to the Court of Israel, and on these steps the Levites during the Feast of Tabernacles were accustomed to stand in order to sing the fifteen "songs of degrees" (Pss 120 through 134). At the head of these same steps in the gateway, lepers who had been cleansed from their disease presented themselves to the priests. It has been suggested that Hezekiah himself was the compiler of these fifteen "songs of the steps," in thankfulness for his fifteen years of added life. Five of them are ascribed to David or as written for Solomon, but the remaining ten bear no author's name. Their subjects are, however, most appropriate to the great crises and desires of Hezekiah's life. His great Passover, to which all the tribes were invited, and so many Israelites came; the blasphemy of Rabshakeh and of Sennacherib's threatening letter; the danger of the Assyrian invasion and the deliverance from it; Hezekiah's sickness unto death and his miraculous restoration to health; and the fact that at that time he would seem to have had no son to follow him on the throne--all these subjects seem to find fitting expression in the fifteen Psalms of the Steps. E. W. Maunder

**2 Chronicles 32:32 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his deeds of devotion, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.**

- goodness (KJV): Heb. kindnesses, 2Ch 31:20,21
- in the vision (KJV): Isa 36:1-39:8
- in the book (KJV): 2Ki 18:1-20:21

**Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his deeds of devotion, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.**

**ESV Study note on written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet,-** Not the canonical book of Isaiah's prophecy but a historical work now lost ([see notes on](#) 1 Kings 14:19).



**Believer's Study Bible** - Events from the life of Hezekiah are also recorded in the Books of Kings and Isaiah. The Hebrew text implies that the "vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz," is the original text and that the account in Kings is an excerpt of Isaiah's narrative (Isa. 36:1-39:8; cf. 2 Kin. 18:9-20:19; Isa. 7:1). According to tradition, Isaiah suffered martyrdom by being sawn asunder by the servants of King Manasseh, who ascended to the throne in 696 B.C. at the age of 12. Since Isaiah probably outlived Hezekiah, it seems appropriate that he would be knowledgeable of the events associated with the death of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and the ascension of Esarhaddon in his stead in 681 B.C. (cf. Isa. 37:37, 38).

**2 Chronicles 32:33 So Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper section of the tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death. And his son Manasseh became king in his place.**

- slept (KJV): 1Ki 1:21 2:10 11:43
- chiefest (KJV): or, highest
- did him (KJV): 2Ch 16:14 Ge 50:10,11 Nu 20:29 De 34:8 1Sa 2:30 25:1 Pr 10:7
- And Manasseh (KJV): 2Ch 33:1-20

**So Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper section of the tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death. And his son Manasseh became king in his place.**

**Utley - honored him"** Honor is used of several godly kings. David – 1 Chr. 29:12,28, Solomon – 1 Kgs. 3:13; 2 Chr. 1:11-12, Jehoshaphat – 2 Chr. 17:5; 18:1, Hezekiah – here. Mostly the term is used of YHWH giving them honor, but here of the people of Judah and Jerusalem honoring Hezekiah at his burial.

#### **PAUL APPLE -DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

- 1) Why doesn't obedience and faithfulness lead to an easy life of prosperity and favorable circumstances?
- 2) How do the taunts of Sennacherib and his forces compare to those of Goliath and the Philistines?
- 3) What does it look like for us to trust in the arm of the flesh?
- 4) In what ways can we humble ourselves before God?

#### **QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**Andrew Hill:** Hezekiah the Encourager – Michael Wilcock has compared Hezekiah with "the pastor coping with crisis" in his handling of the Assyrian invasion of Judah. He offers four principles for the Christian leader facing such crossroads in ministry: - looking up to God (i.e., worship and obey God first of all), - looking around at the church (i.e., focus on the needs of God's people as a whole), - looking into the heart (i.e., emphasize the inward response of genuine devotion and true spirituality), and - looking out at the enemy (i.e., fully trust God for deliverance). . . Yet, striking in its absence from Wilcock's list is Hezekiah's role as an encourager – a key duty of the pastor or Christian leader. Three times the Chronicler conspicuously reports how Hezekiah speaks words of encouragement to the people, affirming their service to God and instilling confidence in them despite the dire circumstances portended by Sennacherib's invasion of the southern kingdom (cf. 2Ch 30:22; 32:6-7, 8). . . There is a sense in which encouragement may be viewed as an extension of the virtue of courage. Courage is "a settled disposition to feel appropriate degrees of fear and confidence in challenging situations . . . It is also a settled disposition to stand one's ground, to advance or retreat as wisdom dictates"; more simply stated, courage is "acting bravely when we don't really feel brave." The attributes of courage and encouragement are related in that a timid or fearful person is more susceptible to the encouragement of example than the rash or reckless person. The former may be inspired to act courageously while the latter's overconfidence may do more harm than good in a crisis situation. To encourage, then, is to embolden another to overcome a paralyzing fear or deepseated reluctance. To encourage is to inspire, to hearten, and to offer hope to another through word or deed. The New Testament values encouragement as a Christian virtue because it serves to embolden the timid in the service of Christ (1 Thess. 5:14). The encourager also contributes to the righteous endurance of the Christian in that daily mutual encouragement prevents the heart from being hardened by sin's deceitfulness (Heb. 3:13; cf. Heb 10:25). The encourager thus helps build the kingdom of God because those who endure "will . . . reign with him [i.e., Christ]" (2 Tim. 2:12).

**Raymond Dillard:** The Chronicler was much concerned with the themes of exile and restoration. Hezekiah is a model for avoiding exile or for enjoying restoration. He showed the path to recovery from the difficulties and foreign domination under Ahaz; his faithfulness avoided exile for Judah in his days (2Ch 32:26). These were lessons for the post-exilic community. The God of Israel will not brook hubris. Those who take their stand against him or his anointed are rebuked in his wrath (Ps 2). Taunts of an enemy

delivered to those high on a city wall were answered by the power of a heaven-sent destroyer (2Ch 32:21). Taunts delivered to one high on a cross were answered by resurrection from the dead, victory over that last and greatest enemy. The hubris of an Assyrian king was crushed by force; the hubris of mankind, by the foolishness of the cross. Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord (1 Cor 1:31).

### **Geoffrey Kirkland: Why does God bring trials?**

- to HUMBLE us of our pride
- to EMPTY us of our self-confidence
- to MOLD us like the Man of Sorrows
- to WEAN us off the present world
- to USE us in evangelizing thru suffering
- to DRIVE us to persistent praying
- to MATURE us to greater strength & usefulness

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### **STEVEN COLE - A Strange Reward for Obedience (2 Chronicles 32)**

For centuries philosophers and theologians have wrestled with the problem of pain. Simply put, it is, "If God is both good and all-powerful, then why is there pain and suffering?" It seems that the existence of suffering either negates the love or the omnipotence of God. A decade ago, Rabbi Harold Kushner, who lost his own son in death, tried to answer the question in his best-selling book, *When Bad Things Happen To Good People*. His pathetic answer was that God is good, but He isn't quite strong enough to eradicate suffering. Others have denied God's goodness, concluding that He is a sadistic tyrant. Such a view hardly inspires trust and intimacy with God!

The problem, of course, is not merely philosophical, but deeply personal, since we all face repeated trials throughout life. It is essential, if we want to walk with God and grow in the Christian faith, that we understand and submit to God's perspective on "why bad things happen to good people."

While not giving a comprehensive answer, 2 Chronicles 32 addresses this problem. Consider the words of 2Ch 31:20-21, summarizing the good king Hezekiah's life: He "... did what was good, right, and true before the Lord his God. And every work which he began in the service of the house of God in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and prospered." You would expect the next verse to read, "After these acts of faithfulness, Hezekiah lived a long, happy, trouble-free life."

But instead we read, "After these acts of faithfulness Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and besieged the fortified cities, and thought to break into them for himself" (2Ch 32:1). What a strange reward for Hezekiah's obedience! Why didn't God intervene to prevent this good king and his people from going through this difficult trial? Where was God in all this?

The answer to that question is implicit in 2Ch 32:21, which records how an angel of the Lord destroyed the Assyrian army so that they did not conquer Jerusalem. The accounts in 2 Kings 18 and Isaiah 37 report that 185,000 soldiers--more than three times the population of Flagstaff--were wiped out in one night! And to do the job, the Lord didn't bother to get off his throne. He didn't muster an army of 100,000 angels. He called *one* angel and said, "Go take care of Sennacherib's army." God just flicked the mighty Sennacherib out of the way like an ant. So the answer to the question, "Where was God when Sennacherib invaded Judah?" is obvious: God was sovereignly sitting upon His throne, observing every move of this proud king.

But that raises another question: Why didn't God send His angel to polish off Sennacherib's army *before* it caused all the problems for Hezekiah? If God could do it later, He just as easily could have done it sooner. Why did He allow the good king Hezekiah to experience the trauma of Sennacherib's invasion? More personally, why does God allow us to go through trials? Our text suggests four reasons:

## **1. God allows trials to motivate us to strengthen our defenses against evil.**

When Hezekiah saw what was coming, he got his people busy getting prepared for the trial (2Ch 32:1-6). They cut off and re-routed the water supply from the spring of Gihon outside the city wall. The water tunnel which Hezekiah's men built was discovered by archaeologists in 1880 and is an amazing engineering feat. They dug through solid limestone with hand tools, starting at opposite ends, 1700 feet apart. A plaque which was discovered describes how the workers finally were five feet from one another and could hear each others' voices. They chipped their way toward one another until the tunnel was completed and the water from the spring flowed into the city. The workers also repaired the broken walls and got the city fortified for the attack. There are two lessons here for us:

## **A. THE TIME TO GET READY FOR TRIALS IS BEFORE THEY HIT, NOT AFTER.**

Proverbs 24:10 states, "If you are slack in the day of distress, your strength is limited." In other words, the day of distress reveals your strength, not a day of calm. So you'd better use the present to prepare for the day of distress (see also, Prov. 1:24-29). You can count on it: At some point some Sennacherib will invade your life. If you aren't sinking down roots with God now, you won't be able to stand against the storm.

## **B. DON'T TRUST YOUR PREPARATIONS; TRUST THE LORD.**

(See Isa. 22:9-11.) Apparently some in Judah (in light of 2 Chron. 32:7-8, I don't think Hezekiah was included) were trusting in their water tunnel and fortifications, not in the Lord. That's always a danger. Preparation and planning are good, but we dare not trust in such things.

We all should develop a daily habit of spending time in God's Word and in prayer, fortifying our lives against the enemy. But we need to be on guard against trusting in our Bible knowledge or in our quiet times or in some method rather than in the Lord Himself. The enemy is subtle and will try to get us to trust in anything other than the living God. So the main goal of a daily time with God should be to walk in dependence on Him. Knowing that trials will come should motivate us to strengthen our defenses, putting on the full armor of God so that we're ready to stand in the day of trouble.

## **2. God allows trials to increase our trust in Him.**

Trials will either strengthen your faith in God or destroy it. You won't stay in the same place. It's clear that there is a battle of faith going on here: Hezekiah called the people to trust God in this crisis (2Ch 32:7-8); Sennacherib sought to undermine trust in God and in Hezekiah as God's leader (2Ch 32:10-16). Scripture is clear that our main need in a time of trial is to rely on God alone and to resist the lies of the enemy.

Sennacherib and Satan have something in common: They're both tyrants. When you rebel against a tyrant, he visits you very quickly. Some new Christians get thrown by this. They put their trust in Christ and begin to cast off Satan's tyranny, and suddenly they have more problems than before they came to Christ. And they wail, "What happened?" It's easy: When you rebel against a tyrant, he visits you quickly. When you face a trial, Satan whispers, "If your God is so good and powerful, then why is this happening to you? I wouldn't call this good, would you? And your pastor tells you to trust in God? Come on! That's a trite phrase if I ever heard one!" But resisting Satan by trusting God is precisely what the Bible tells us to do when we face trials (see 1 Pet. 5:6-11). What does trust mean?

## **A. TRUST IN GOD MEANS SUBMITTING TO HIS SOVEREIGNTY OVER YOUR TRIALS.**

You've only got two choices: Either God is sovereign over the likes of Sennacherib (or whatever your trial is named), or He was on vacation and this trial is going to alter His sovereign will. And if you conclude that God is sovereign over your trial, you've got two choices: Either you submit to His sovereign hand (1 Pet. 5:6-7), or you shake your fist at Him and sulk, "It's not fair! Is this the way You treat me after all I've done for You?" But there is no word of that with Hezekiah. Instead of complaining, he rallied the people to trust in God (2Ch 32:7-8).

## **B. TRUST IN GOD MEANS ACKNOWLEDGING GOD AS THE SOURCE OF YOUR STRENGTH.**

(See 2Ch 32:7-8.) Trusting God isn't passive and vague; it's active and specific. Let's say you have some overwhelming problem. Believe me, Sennacherib and company were an overwhelming problem! Some bas-relief art recovered from the ruins of Nineveh depicts Sennacherib's siege of Lachish (2Ch 32:9, about 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem). The soldiers are battering down the walls with huge war machines. A number of prisoners are impaled on poles. Others are being flayed alive, while some are bowing in obeisance before Sennacherib. If you were on this guy's hit list, you had a problem! Let's be honest--it's one thing to say we trust in the Lord, but it's altogether different thing to do it when guys like this are knocking on your door!

How do you do it? You line up your problem against the living God and every time you fear, you keep coming back to affirm your trust in God. We can't be sure, but Psalm 46 may have been written in this situation. It's a great affirmation of God as the source of strength:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling place of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His

voice, the earth melted. the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold (Ps. 46:1-7).

Thus, trust in God means submitting to His sovereignty over your trials; it means acknowledging Him as the source of your strength.

### **C. TRUST IN GOD MEANS CASTING YOUR CARES ON HIM THROUGH PRAYER FOR HIS GLORY.**

(See 2Ch 32:20.) The other accounts (2 Kings and Isaiah) record how Hezekiah took Sennacherib's threatening letter into the house of the Lord, spread it out before the Lord and prayed about it. The gist of his prayer wasn't, "God help us out of this trial so that we can be happy." Rather, it was, "Lord, deliver us so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God" (2 Kings 19: 14-19). As our text states, Sennacherib and his envoys "spoke of the God of Jerusalem as of the gods of the peoples of the earth, the work of men's hands" (2Ch 32:19). God's honor was first in Hezekiah's mind, not just relief from his problems.

When you pray in a time of trial--whether for yourself or for others--make sure that God's glory is the object of your prayer. The point of prayer is *not* to use God to secure my happiness. I need to seek God's glory above all else. He may be glorified by delivering me from my trial, or through my enduring the trial by His grace, or by taking me to be with Him. I need to trust Him by casting all my anxiety on Him, submitting to whatever brings Him glory (1 Pet. 5:7).

God allows trials to motivate us to strengthen our defenses against evil and to increase our trust in Him.

### **3. God allows trials to enrich our experience of His salvation.**

(See 2Ch 32:22.) Israel went to bed (if they slept at all), on the brink of annihilation, surrounded by 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. They got up the next morning surrounded by 185,000 Assyrian corpses. Can you imagine the relief and joy that must have spread through the city that morning! "Have you heard the good news? God rescued us!" Those people were thankful to God!

One reason many, especially those reared in Christian homes, have a lukewarm faith and are not grateful to God is that they have never seen what a horrible fate God rescued them from when He saved them from His certain judgment. I like the way Harry Blamires puts it in his book, *Recovering the Christian Mind* [IVP], pp. 16):

What is the experience of conversion like? Is it like opening a book one day and saying, "Ah, now I understand: in future I shall guide my life by these precepts"? It is not. If the men and women of true faith are to be trusted, the relief felt after conversion is the relief of someone who has been saved from drowning, spotted struggling in the sea, winched up on to a helicopter and laid panting there. The convert does not speak as though he has achieved something, mastered some difficult truth at last, solved some problem, attained some new insight. He speaks as one torn from the bowels of destruction by the watchfulness, the care, the unspeakable love of a Saviour. His emotions are of relief, gratitude, and complete self-commitment to the One to whom he owes everything.

Our problem is, our proud fallen nature makes us think that we're capable of handling things by ourselves, whether it's getting into heaven by our own goodness or dealing with trials by our own ingenuity. So God has to humble us, to make us despair even of life, as the apostle Paul put it, so that "we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead" (2 Cor. 1:9). Then when He delivers us, we rejoice in His salvation!

God allows trials to motivate us to strengthen our defenses against evil; to increase our trust in Him; to enrich our experience of His salvation.

### **4. God allows trials to humble us under His mighty hand.**

The major sin of the human race is pride. It reared its head in a good man like Hezekiah when he gave "no return" when the Lord healed him from a terminal illness (2Ch 32:25). Later, when some Babylonian envoys came to inquire of the miraculous sign God had performed of making the shadow go backwards on the stairs, rather than bearing witness of the great God who did such a thing, Hezekiah boastfully showed them all of his riches (2Ch 32:31). If a good man like Hezekiah (2Ch 31:20) fell into pride, none of us are exempt from the problem. God has to send trials to remind us that even good people are not essentially good.

When trials hit a "good" person, we're inclined to ask, "If God is all loving and all powerful, then why does a good man like this suffer?" We begin to think that good people have some sort of claim on God due to their goodness. But we need to remember that when we talk about a good person, we're talking only from a human perspective. Only God is truly good. God's perspective on the human race is: "There is none righteous, not even one. There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God. All have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good; there is not even one" (Rom. 3:10-12).

When I start thinking that God owes me a trouble-free life because of my uprightness, I had better start thinking differently. God owes me nothing but hell for my sin. The question, "God, how can You allow this to happen?" is the wrong question. The right question is, "God why have You not blotted me off the face of the earth for my sins? Even though in the sight of men I may be a good person, in Your holy presence I am full of all uncleanness and deserve only Your judgment."

That's a healthy and helpful reminder. It humbles our pride. God allows trials to remind us that even good people are not essentially good. We all need His grace or we would rightfully perish. None can demand His blessing as a wage due.

## Conclusion

So our text is telling us that ...

God allows trials to bless sinners who cast themselves on Him.

Trials motivate us to strengthen our defenses against evil. They increase our trust in God. They enrich our experience of His salvation. They humble us before Him, thus making us appreciate His abundant grace.

The following incident happened at a class in New York City called "Family Folklore: Preserving the stories of the past" (*Reader's Digest* [Jan., 1984], pp. 127-128):

A small, middle-aged woman stood and began speaking somewhat nervously. "I was born in Estonia," she said. "And I have never told anyone this story until now." She looked about hesitantly. Then she began to describe how, when she was a child, her parents had given her a beautiful doll from France. Cherie, she had called the doll. It became her most precious possession. Her cousin Doris came to stay with her when she was 12, after Doris's father died. Doris played with Cherie constantly, and when it was time to leave, she clutched Cherie to her. "Doris has lost her father, and she needs the doll more than you do," the 12-year-old's mother had said. "Let Doris have it. God will return it to you."

"I cried and cried," the woman said. "As time went by, and Cherie was not returned, I lost my faith in God." It was a harrowing time. "This was when we had to flee Estonia because of the Nazis," she said. She learned that Doris's house had been bombed by the Luftwaffe and had burned to the ground. Doris and her family escaped from the house with only the clothes on their backs. Soon all the relatives fled Estonia. Those who did not die in the Holocaust were widely scattered and started their lives again in new lands.

Eventually, the woman said, she found her way to the United States. Years went by, but she never forgot Cherie. Then, to her surprise, she learned that Doris was alive--and also living in America. Their paths crossed once or twice. But neither cousin ever mentioned the doll.

"When my first child was born," she said, "Doris came to visit. She brought with her a present." The woman struggled with tears. "It was Cherie. Doris told me that when she ran from the burning house, she put Cherie in her kerchief. She carried Cherie all through the war.

"If you think I wept before," the woman continued, "it was nothing to the tears I wept when I saw Cherie. And then my faith in God was restored. For what my mother had said was true."

Perhaps God has given you what you consider a strange reward for your obedience to Him. Some Sennacherib has invaded your life. Will you trust Him that in His time, if not in this life then in eternity, He will work it all together for good? If you cast yourself on Him, submitting to His sovereign hand, He will use such trials to shape you into the image of His Son, who learned obedience through the things He suffered (Heb. 5:8).

## Discussion Questions

1. Does God send trials or merely permit them? Does it make any difference? Can Satan cause trials apart from God's permission?
2. One grateful reader of Rabbi Kushner's book wrote to him, "Maybe now I can believe in a more realistic God." How would you respond that comment?
3. Why is humility an essential part of enduring trials (see 1 Pet. 5:6-11)?
4. What is the biblical answer to the critic's taunt, "If God loved you and is able, He would spare you from terrible trials"?

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