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**BIBLE STUDY**

**Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.**

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**“THE ARM OF FLESH VS**

**THE PRESENCE OF GOD”**

**2 Chronicles 32:1-33**

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

The events of chapter 31 are intimately linked with what happened next in Hezekiah’s reign because the threat from Assyria came after these faithful deeds on Hezekiah’s part. It appears, that even though Hezekiah had re-established worship in the temple in Jerusalem, and even though his heart was stayed upon god, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came and camped against the fenced cities of Judah.

***II Chronicles 32:2 "And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem,"***

***II Chronicles 32:3 "He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which [were] without the city: and they did help him."***

***II Chronicles 32:4 "So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?"***

The Assyrians had attacked Israel, and taken captive the people, and left just a remnant. This had been so easy for them that they, now, decided to come against Judah, and even Jerusalem. The Assyrians had underestimated the power of the God of Judah. Hezekiah had inquired of his mighty men about what they could do to stop this onslaught. They decided to stop the flowing water from the fountains just outside the city. This would make it much more difficult for Sennacherib. They wanted to make it difficult for the army of Assyria to find water. This was possibly, speaking of the pool of Siloam. This was speaking of the brook that ran through the center of the city. If the kings of Assyria found a great deal of water, they would want this land for themselves.

***II Chronicles 32:5 Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised [it] up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo [in] the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance.***

We see that Hezekiah was doing everything within his power to fortify the city and make it as unattainable as possible. The wall was a deterrent to an oncoming army. Hezekiah repaired the breaks in the wall, and even made the existing wall taller. It appears, they hurriedly constructed another wall around the existing one to stop the oncoming army. Millo was a fortress within the walls of Jerusalem. Even the darts and shields were a preparation to fight, if necessary.

***II Chronicles 32:6 "And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying,"***

***II Chronicles 32:7 "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that [is] with him: for [there be] more with us than with him:"***

***II Chronicles 32:8 "With him [is] an arm of flesh; but with us [is] the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah."***

Hezekiah kept no secrets from his people. He brought the men together to encourage them. Comfortably means he did not speak with alarm. In the physical sense, the Assyrian army greatly outnumbered the army of Judah. It would be the natural thing to greatly fear this oncoming army. Hezekiah was speaking faith to these men in his army. "If God be for you, who can be against you", was about what Hezekiah was saying. Hezekiah had placed his faith in his LORD. He encouraged his men to do the same. This large Assyrian army was strong in the flesh, but God was not with them. The army of Judah was weak in the flesh, but strong in their LORD. God would fight the battle for Judah, if they would trust Him.

***2 Corinthians 12:7-9***

***7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.***

***8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.***

***9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.***

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

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

﻿The army of Assyria showed up, and its spokesman went to great lengths to dishearten the people by mocking and insulting the true God. He explained what the Assyrians had done to the other nations, whose gods had failed to protect them. Sennacherib showed very little respect for Hezekiah, or his army. He sent subordinates to deal with Jerusalem, as if to say they were nothing. His servants came to destroy Jerusalem, while he was busy with Lachish. Lachish was a highly fortified fort. Sennacherib sent word to Hezekiah and the people, that they were surrounded. He was surprised they had not already surrendered. He asked them whom did they trust enough to endanger their lives in this futile battle?

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

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

It seems, the fame of Hezekiah's faith in the LORD had traveled even to Assyria. This heathen king is not acquainted with the LORD. He had no idea of the power of the LORD. He mocked the people for placing their faith in the LORD. Again, this heathen king did not realize that the LORD is God. He thought there was power in the many false gods that Hezekiah had destroyed in this land. The answer is yes, Hezekiah did take away the high places and the altars to false gods. He did cause a central place {the temple} to be the one place to worship the LORD. The accusations of the Assyrian king were true, but they made Judah stronger, not weaker. God was on their side for Hezekiah doing these things.

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

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

False gods are of no help at all, regardless of how many there were. They were not able to help, because they were nothings themselves. The very reason he was able to defeat them was, because they turned their backs on the LORD. This was a terrible mistake Sennacherib was making, comparing the One True God with those false gods.

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

It appears, that each country had a particular false god for their country. He did not recognize the God of Judah as being the True God. This was a terrible mistake on his part.

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

They were actually trying to get Jerusalem to surrender without a fight. It should have been aware to these people what the servants were trying to do. Had they been true believers, they would not have tolerated them speaking evil of their God. It appeared, they were not as strong in their belief in the LORD as Hezekiah was.

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

Sennacherib was trying to cause the people to turn against the LORD and against Hezekiah and surrender to him. The letters were to assure the people that this was an accurate message from Sennacherib, and not just words his servants had made up to say.

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

They had interpreters, who spoke in the Hebrew language to these Jews who were waiting on the wall. They tried everything they could think of that might sway those of Jerusalem to believe them.

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

These heathens, attacking Jerusalem, did not think of the LORD of all the earth as any more than the false gods of the heathen nations around them. The false gods of the earth were the creations of some man's hand. The LORD is the Creator of everything.

***II Chronicles 32:20 "And for this [cause] Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven."***

Hezekiah and Isaiah were both men of God. Hezekiah was a man after God's own heart. Isaiah was one of the greatest of all of God's anointed prophets. The following Scriptures are the words of the prayer.

***II Kings 19:15 "And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest [between] the cherubims, thou art the God, [even] thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth."***

***II Kings 19:16 "LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God."***

***II Kings 19:17 "Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,"***

***II Kings 19:18 "And have cast their gods into the fire: for they [were] no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them."***

***II Kings 19:19 "Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou [art] the LORD God, [even] thou only."***

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

This was an instance when the angel of the LORD did all of the work. This was an instant answer to Hezekiah's prayer. This angel killed 185,000 of the army of Sennacherib, and he went home in shame. He had mocked the LORD. God will not allow that. Sennacherib's two sons killed him.

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

This is one of the most vivid examples of the power of prayer in the entire Bible. God heard Isaiah and Hezekiah when they prayed, and God immediately took care of the situation.

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

When an army as strong as this was destroyed by one angel, it was time for the people to realize that Hezekiah's God is God.

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

There is a much fuller explanation of this in the book of 2 Kings chapter 20 beginning with the first verse and going through the end of the chapter. This is the time that God answers Hezekiah's prayer, and extends his life 15 years. The sign that was given was the shadow of the dial going backward ten degrees.

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

***II Chronicles 32:26 "Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, [both] he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah."***

This is speaking of the pride of Hezekiah, when he showed the king of Babylon the wealth of Jerusalem. This was one of the few things that Hezekiah had done, that displeased God. Jeremiah speaks of the LORD not punishing him or Jerusalem for this.

***Jeremiah 26:19 “Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.”***

***II Chronicles 32:27 "And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels;"***

***II Chronicles 32:28 "Storehouses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks."***

***II Chronicles 32:29 "Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for God had given him substance very much."***

We see the LORD had blessed Hezekiah with great abundance during his reign. Some of this had been given to Hezekiah as gifts at the end of his illness, when the LORD extended his life 15 years. God abundantly blesses all who keep themselves stayed upon God. The blessings may not be in the physical sense, but God will abundantly bless them.

***II Chronicles 32:30 "This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works."***

This is speaking of the re-routing of the water, so there would be water in Jerusalem in case of a siege. The water was brought into Jerusalem through underground channels.

***II Chronicles 32:31 "Howbeit in [the business of] the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was [done] in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all [that was] in his heart."***

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

This is speaking of the same thing we saw earlier, when the pride of Hezekiah caused him to show the king of Babylon all of his riches. There is a great deal written about Hezekiah in the book of 2 Kings in the Bible. The book of Isaiah, the prophet, mentions Hezekiah, also.

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

Hezekiah was a king, who tried to please the LORD in all his ways. God did not allow Babylon to destroy Jerusalem, until after the death of Hezekiah. He was buried honorably, as he had lived honorably. It is such a shame that such a king as Hezekiah, who did right in the sight of the LORD, would have such an evil son as Manasseh. At Hezekiah's death, one of the most evil kings, Manasseh, began to reign in his stead.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Who came and encamped against the cities of Judah?
2. What had he purposed to do?
3. What did Hezekiah take counsel with his men to do?
4. What did Hezekiah do to fortify Jerusalem?
5. In verse 7, what did Hezekiah do?
6. What did Hezekiah tell them Sennacherib trusted in?
7. Who was on the side of Hezekiah?
8. They were sent to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Jerusalem.
9. What had Hezekiah done that had been common knowledge in the lands around Judah?
10. Why were the false gods of the heathen nations unable to help them?
11. Sennacherib was comparing the One True God with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_.
12. What did he write in the letters he sent to Judah?
13. What is the language of the Jews?
14. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is Creator of everything.
15. Hezekiah was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and Isaiah was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
16. Where can we find the prayer of Hezekiah?
17. Who killed Sennacherib?
18. How many of his men did the angel of the LORD kill?
19. How long did God extend Hezekiah's life, when he was sick?
20. What sign did He give Hezekiah?
21. What is verse 25 speaking of?
22. What kind of blessings had the Lord brought on Hezekiah?
23. What was the watercourse, really?
24. Who had Hezekiah shown his riches to, that displeased God?
25. Who reigned in Hezekiah's stead at his death?