

A VICTORY WITHOUT A BATTLE

BIBLE TEXT : II Chronicles 32:1-23; II Kings 19:14-37

LESSON 344 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "With us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles" (II Chronicles 32:8).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

2 Chronicles 32:1-23 (KJV)

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.

² And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem,

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.

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?

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.

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,

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:

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.

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,

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

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?

¹² Hath not the same Hezekiah taken

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Busy for the Lord

Half-hearted service for God had no place in the life of Hezekiah. Read Lesson 340 and learn of the worth-while tasks accomplished by him. God's blessings always follows those who serve the Lord with all their heart; and, like Hezekiah, they, too, will prosper.

Very often when people begin to work for the Lord, Satan will come along and try to hinder the work. Jesus once told a story about a man who sowed good seed in a field. But during the night an enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way (**Matthew 13:24-25** ²⁴ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: ²⁵ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.).

A Wicked King's Boast

In this lesson we find that an enemy came lurking around to try to hinder the good king Hezekiah in his work for God. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came with an army and pitched camp near by the fenced cities of Judea and thought he could take them. After all, had he not won a great many battles in his day? Why, with his great army of more than 185,000 strong, he boasted, "No god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, . . . how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand?" What was Sennacherib trying to say? Was he saying that the God of Hezekiah was weaker than the gods of the heathen nations (**2 Kings 19:12-13** ¹² Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which *were* in Thelasar? ¹³ Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?)? Let us see.

It possibly did not matter so much to Hezekiah what King Sennacherib said against **him**, but when letters were received which contained railings against the Lord God of Israel whom Hezekiah loved, worshiped, served, and obeyed, that was going one step too far.

Hezekiah's Trust

Did Hezekiah send his soldiers out at once to fight the enemy now that his army was well-organised? Captains had been appointed, walls had been built up, a great many weapons of warfare had been made. All was in readiness, but Hezekiah's trust was not in those things.

In the street of the city he told his army not to be afraid of the king nor the great army that was with him, for "there be more with us than with him," he said. Sennacherib was trusting in the strength of his great army; but Hezekiah said, "With us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles." What words of encouragement from their leader! All fear was removed from the army of Judah – they had faith in their leader.

Faithful Leaders

How thankful we are today for leaders who take their stand for

away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it?

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?

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?

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?

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

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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

God and encourage our hearts to trust in the God of Hezekiah! If we are fortunate enough to have overseers, pastors, and ministers of the Gospel who dare to trust God when the enemy seems the strongest, let us appreciate them and "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake" (1 Thessalonians 5:13).

There are always some who try to shake the faith of those who trust in God and in their leader. Someone will say, "You don't have to follow his advice," or, as Sennacherib said, "Let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you . . . neither yet believe him." But we know that God is with those whom He has appointed to watch over the flock, and it is our privilege and duty to have utmost confidence in their judgment.

The Prayer Weapon

But the victory was not yet won — there was something more to do. Speaking words of encouragement goes a long way toward lifting up the feeble one. A word of cheer goes far toward raising the faith of one who is discouraged. But there is more for us to do than just say to a sick one, "Oh, you'll be all right!" There is something more than a smile or a handshake or a bouquet of flowers for a shut-in who is fighting a battle against sickness or discouragement. Those things are very good, but there is still a better weapon of warfare that we must use against the enemy. It is the weapon of prayer, the only weapon that really puts the enemy down — not merely a moment or two of hurried prayer, but the prevailing kind that holds on until the answer comes.

Jacob prayed until the breaking of day, and his prayer was answered (**Genesis 32:24** ²⁴ And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.). Elijah prayed seven times before he had the desires of his heart (**1 Kings 18:43** ⁴³ And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is nothing.* And he said, Go again seven times.). Hannah continued in prayer and weeping before the Lord until her prayer went through, and she "was no more sad" (**1 Samuel 1:10-18** ¹⁰ And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. ¹¹ And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. ¹² And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. ¹³ Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. ¹⁴ And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. ¹⁵ And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶ Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. ¹⁷ Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him. ¹⁸ And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*.). That kind of praying brings results today.

Hezekiah's Prayer

As we think upon King Hezekiah, we can almost see him as he goes into the house of the Lord. His face expresses the earnestness of his heart and in his hand he carries the letter of defiance to the God of Israel, written by Sennacherib, king of Assyria. We see Hezekiah kneel in prayer; we hear him say, "O LORD God of Israel, . . . thou art the God, even thou alone." In his prayer he admits that the king of Assyria has destroyed other

thenceforth.

2 Kings 19:14-37 (KJV)

¹⁴ And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

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.

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.

¹⁷ Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,

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.

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.

²⁰ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

²¹ This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

²² Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even* against the Holy *One* of Israel.

²³ By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, *and into* the forest of his Carmel.

²⁴ I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.

²⁵ Hast thou not heard long ago *how* I have done it, *and* of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste

nations and lands and cast their gods into the fire. "For," he adds, "they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them." He pleads with God: "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."

God will never fail to answer a prayer from the depths of the heart of one who lives close to God, as did Hezekiah. God sent a messenger from Isaiah the prophet of God to tell him, "That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib . . . I have heard" (II Kings 19:20). The Lord said that Sennacherib should not come into the city nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with a shield, but he should return the same way by which he came. "For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

Victory

The battle had been fought by Hezekiah upon his knees, and victory was just ahead. No gun was fired, no arrow was shot, no smoke of battle arose in the enemy camp. During the night, while God's army rested in peace, the angel of the Lord stalked through the enemy camp. Early in the morning when Hezekiah's men arose they discovered 185,000 corpses in the enemy camp! Sennacherib, the proud boaster, returned to his own land defeated and ashamed.

The Devil's Lies

That is the way the god of this world works — he promises victory, joy, wealth, peace, and prosperity. Those who believe his lies are many times stripped of all that is good, worth-while, and honourable. Many a young girl has been blinded by the god of this world and has sold her beauty, purity, and virtue for the lies of the devil, and has been left with nothing but regrets. Young boys, too, are hoodwinked by the devil's promises of popularity or money-making, and the feeling that they can sin without being found out.

The Lord God, Ruler of All

This time Sennacherib had been overcome by a God stronger than Nisroch, his favourite god. What happened? Nisroch has let you down, Sennacherib. Why don't you turn unto Hezekiah's God? Why don't you admit that He and he alone is the Lord God?

Back to the house of Nisroch goes Sennacherib, once more to worship before this dumb idol. God in Heaven sees it all. It is enough! This is the last time, Sennacherib, that you shall worship your god or any other god. The door of mercy is closed for you. Your chance to repent is now past. His own sons slew him that very day as he was in the house of his god.

"Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God" (Ecclesiastes 8:12).

QUESTIONS

1. What did Hezekiah do to protect his cities? Was his trust in those things?
2. Tell of his words of encouragement to his army. Did his soldiers have faith in their leader?
3. What was the boast of Sennacherib? Had he ever been defeated?
4. What kind of letters did he send to Hezekiah?
5. What did Hezekiah do when he received them?
6. How did he know that his prayer was answered?
7. In what was Sennacherib trusting?
8. Tell what happened in the enemy camp during the night.
9. What was the end of Sennacherib?
10. What does this lesson teach us?

fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps.

²⁶ Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* the grass on the housetops, and *as corn* blasted before it be grown up.

²⁷ But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

²⁸ Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

²⁹ And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

³⁰ And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

³¹ For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this.

³² Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.

³³ By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

³⁴ For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

³⁵ And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses.

³⁶ So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

³⁷ And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.