CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JUNE 15 2024

not like other gods

Scripture Story: 2 Chronicles 32; 2 Kings 19.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 30.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Jerusalem is attacked by the forces of Sennacherib, king of Assyria. King Hezekiah prepares the city's defenses for a long siege and cuts off the supply of fresh water outside the city, where the Assyrians will be camped. He encourages his people to place their trust in the Lord. The Assyrians launch a propaganda campaign, reminding the citizens of Jerusalem that Sennacherib's army has already steamrolled a number of other countries, and none of *their* gods lifted a finger to save them. Why should Israel's God be any different?

But Israel's God is not like other gods—He fights for His people. The story as told in 1 Kings 19 and 2 Chronicles 32 records that 185,000 Assyrian soldiers died mysteriously in a single night—slain by the angel of the Lord. Sennacherib retreated to his own country in disgrace.

Focus this week's lesson discussion on the fact that we can trust God to care for us. That doesn't mean that we will never have troubles. God did allow Israel and Judah to be threatened and attacked by foreign armies when it was part of His larger purpose. But He promises to always protect and care for His people, even in the most difficult situations. God is not just an idea or a concept like the gods of the pagans. He is a powerful, personal Being who cares about each of us. Students should leave this study assured that God is trustworthy even when times are tough.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that God has the power to save in desperate situations. *(Know)*
- Trust God to protect and care for them. *(Feel)*
- Surrender their current fears and worries to God, trusting Him to provide. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Holy Scriptures, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 1

"The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the definitive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Have students suggest several different situa-

tions in which a person might pray for God's deliverance. Some ideas to get them started might be:

- Writing an exam
- Moving to a new community
- Speaking out when friends are doing something you believe is wrong
- Facing serious illness

Discuss each scenario they come up with. Is there a "God's role" and "our role" here? Does relying completely on God mean we don't do anything, or do we have a part to play in the answering of our prayers?

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

A well-known story tells of a man who prayed to God to save him when a flood threatened his home. A radio report warned residents to evacuate, but the man stayed in his house, insisting that God would save him.

He climbed to the roof of his house as the floodwaters rose and was clinging there when a neighbor passed in a rowboat. "Do you want to get in the boat?" the neighbor asked.

"No, God is going to save me!" the man replied.

The waters rose; the man climbed higher. A rescue helicopter hovered overhead. From the helicopter, a voice called down, "We're here to rescue you! We'll drop a ladder and you can climb up into the helicopter."

But the man waved the helicopter away, saying, "I prayed! God will save me!"

Before drowning, the man asked God, "Why didn't You save me?"

"I sent a radio report, a rowboat, and a helicopter," God pointed out. "What more did you want?"

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

We often face situations in which we can't see a way out. As Christians, it's natural for us to cry out to God for help. Sometimes we do our best to meet the crisis, and God helps us in our efforts. Other times, God intervenes miraculously. In today's story, God miraculously delivered Jerusalem from an invading army—but only after King Hezekiah took a lot of practical steps to prepare the city for an attack.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

Discuss the *Out of the Story* questions with the class, then direct the class's attention to the Bible texts in the *Punch Lines* section. If you have a small class, choose one text that class members find inspiring. For a large class, divide into groups and assign one text to each group.

Supply fabric, glue, and fabric paint or markers

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Prophets and Kings. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Hands-on Illustrations

Making banners provides not only a hands-on art project that will vividly illustrate the lesson of God's power to protect us, but an ongoing reminder that God is on our side. Don't let the project end when the banners are made—choose as a group where in your Sabbath School room or church you will put them on display. Use them and refer back to them to remind your students that we may be under siege by Satan, but God is going to fight for us.

to each group and have them make a banner of their Bible text. Say: Throughout history, armies have carried banners into battle showing their allegiance to their kings and commanders. These banners we are making today will remind us that we go into battle under the colors of a God who promises to fight for us and deliver us.

For further discussion, ask the following questions:

- What does this story tell us about God?
- What does this story tell us about us?
- What does this story tell us about our relationship with God?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Story of Jericho (Joshua 6); story of Gideon (Judges 6; 7); Jehosaphat's victory over Moab and Ammon (2 Chronicles 20:1-30).

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

The same account of this military campaign can be found in 2 Kings 18:13–19:37, as well as in Isaiah 36 and 37.

Sennacherib, King of Assyria. Sennacherib was a formidable foe. This narrative, which took place in 701 B.C., describes the first of many campaigns against Hezekiah. "In his annals he claims to have taken 46 of the fenced, or walled, cities of Judah and to have carried away captive 200,150 people, besides a large amount of booty" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 300).

Siege Warfare. A common tactic in ancient times when cities were surrounded by walls occurs when an attacking army encounters a city or fortress that won't surrender and can't be easily conquered. The attacking army surrounds the city, cutting off supplies, reinforcement, and escape routes for the people inside. While waiting outside, the attacking army usually attempts to break through the walls by the use of siege weapons such as catapults. The defenders, inside the city walls, are in a strong defensive position but can hold out only as long as food supplies and morale last. This was the approach that Sennacherib of Assyria used in trying to conquer Jerusalem.

Hezekiah stopped the water supply with a double purpose in mind: "To cover the springs . . . so that the Assyrians would not have a convenient water supply, and to convey the water through a tunnel into the city to increase his own supply during the siege (2 Chron. 32:30; see on 2 Kings 20:20)" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 300).

We often talk about "spiritual warfare," but Satan's war on Christians is often more like a siege. We may not feel like we're actively fighting, but there's an enemy camped outside the walls, ready to attack when we let our guard down, always trying to lower our morale. How can we defend against Satan's siege? We need to strengthen our defenses—just as Hezekiah strengthened the walls of Jerusalem—by being firmly grounded in God's Word and surrounding ourselves with Christian influences. We can keep our spirits up and resist the enemy's morale-sapping attacks by reminding ourselves, as Hezekiah reminded his people, that the Lord will fight for us.

Encouraging Words. Hezekiah was a compassionate leader, speaking comforting words to his army and encouraging them to trust in God. "Regardless of the power of the enemy, the man who trusts and reveres the Lord always has reason for courage, for the battle is not his but God's (see ch. 20:15)" (*ibid*., p. 301).

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Direct the students' attention to Tuesday's and Thursday's portion of the student lesson. In pairs, invite them to share with each other examples of times when God has helped them (or family members or friends) in the past. Remind them that these experiences, along with Bible stories and promises, can build our faith to help us prepare for difficult times in the future.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The army of Assyria was a powerful enemy. King Hezekiah and his people must have been terrified as Sennacherib's soldiers marched toward the city. They did everything they could to prepare, but they also knew that they couldn't face this threat alone. They needed God's power.

The same is true for us. Of course, we should do everything we can to be well-prepared to face life's challenges. But, ultimately, our hope is in the Lord. We can trust Him to care for us and fight life's battles for us. And the more we trust Him with our problems and challenges, the stronger our faith will grow.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 30.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 2 Chronicles 32; 2 Kings 19.
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Photo by The Crystal Lenz

keytext

"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, NIV)

flashlight

"Nothing more quickly inspires faith than the exercise of faith. The king of Judah had prepared for the coming storm; and now, confident that the prophecy against the Assyrians would be fulfilled, he stayed his soul upon God. . . . What though the armies of Assyria, fresh from the conquest of the greatest nations of earth, and triumphant over Samaria in Israel, should now turn their forces against Judah? . . . Judah had nothing to fear; for their trust was in Jehovah" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 351).

what do you think?

Circle "Agree" or "Disagree" to indicate your opinion on each statement.

Agree	Disagree	People who believe in God never need to be afraid.
Agree	Disagree	God will make sure nothing bad ever happens to His people.
Agree	Disagree	We can trust God to care for us even when things are going wrong.
Agree	Disagree	Preparing for hard times shows a lack of trust in God.

INTO THE STORY

"After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities, thinking to conquer them for himself. When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to wage war against Jerusalem, he consulted with his officials and military staff about blocking off the water from the springs outside the city, and they helped him. . . . Then he worked hard repairing all the broken sections of the wall and building towers on it. . . . He also made large numbers of weapons and shields.

"He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate and encouraged them with these words: '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.' And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.

"Later, when Sennacherib king of Assyria and all his forces were laying siege to Lachish, he sent his officers to Jerusalem with this message for Hezekiah king of Judah and for all the people of Judah who were there:

" 'This is what Sennacherib king of Assyria says: On what are you basing your confidence, that you remain in Jerusalem under siege? When Hezekiah says, "The LORD our God will save us from the hand of the king of Assyria," he is misleading you, to let you die of hunger and thirst. . . .

" 'Do you not know what I and my predecessors have done to all the peoples of the other lands? Were the gods of those nations ever able to deliver their land from my hand? . . . No god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my predecessors. How much less will your god deliver you from my hand!' . . .

"King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out in prayer to heaven about this. And the LORD sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the commanders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king. So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace. And when he went into the temple of his god, some of his sons, his own flesh and blood, cut him down with the sword.

"So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from

did you know?

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, ruled his empire for 24 years. During those years, Assyria was the most powerful and feared nation in that part of the world. Sennacherib's father, Sargon, defeated the northern kingdom of Israel and led 27,000 Israelites into captivity. The deported people were probably put to work digging canals in the new Assyrian capital city of Nineveh. Sennacherib also defeated the Babylonians, but he was unable to defeat King Hezekiah of Judah, even though Judah was a small nation and not very powerful. Trusting God made King Hezekiah and his people able to stand their ground against a tyrant who defeated all others.

the hand of all others. He took care of them on every side."

(2 Chronicles 32:1-22, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What preparations did King Hezekiah make for Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What message of hope did Hezekiah have for his people?

_____
_____
_____

How did Sennacherib try to frighten the people of Judah? What was his confidence based on?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How do you think the people of Judah reacted to Sennacherib's message?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Why do you think the Lord defeated the Assyrians directly, rather than having Judah's army fight and win?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

punch lines

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth" **(Psalm 121:1, 2, NIV).**

"Do not be afraid of them; the LORD your God himself will fight for you" **(Deuteronomy 3:22, NIV).**

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God" **(Psalm 20:7, NIV).**

"Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's" **(2 Chronicles 20:15, NIV).**

"What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" **(Romans 8:31, NIV).**

further insight

"Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. It will lead to love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father's care."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 77

Sabbath

Read 2 Chronicles 32:1-6.

When Sennacherib's army came to lay siege to Jerusalem, Hezekiah took some practical steps to get ready for war. List three specific things Hezekiah did to get Jerusalem ready for attack.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What do Hezekiah's preparations tell us about his trust in God? Do they show that he did trust God, or that he didn't?

_____

_____

Imagine you're taking a tough exam. You ask God for help—but you also study as hard as you can! Being well prepared doesn't show a lack of trust in God—rather, it puts us in a place where God is able to help us.

Sunday

Read Deuteronomy 3:22.

Siege was a popular battle tactic back in the days of walled cities. You simply parked your army outside the enemy city and waited for them to surrender or starve. This was Sennacherib's plan for conquering Jerusalem.

Of course, if you were the one sitting outside, your soldiers might get bored, or sick, or simply start to drift away if they didn't have some action. So the attacking army did what they could to make the siege go faster. This included sending messages to try to weaken the morale of those inside the walls.

Sennacherib's message to the people of Jerusalem hit right at the heart of their hope—Hezekiah's faith in God. What did Sennacherib remind God's people of, to try to weaken their faith?

_____

_____

The Assyrian armies had experienced huge success. None of the gods of the nations they'd conquered had been able to stand against them. But the God of Israel wasn't like other gods—He was real, ready, and able to defend His people.

Monday

Read 2 Chronicles 32:22.

Read the *Key Text* in a few different Bible translations (if you don't have multiple Bibles handy, go online to www.biblegateway.com). Notice how the last part of the text ("He took care of them on every side," NIV) is translated in different versions.

Which of these translations is most encouraging to you, when you think about God's protection over you? Explain.

_____

_____

Tuesday

Read 2 Chronicles 20:15.

Nothing more quickly inspires faith than the exercise of faith." The *Flashlight* passage from *Prophets and Kings* tells us that the best way to develop greater trust in God is simple—try trusting Him! The people of Judah discovered that the Lord was not like other gods—He actually had the power to save them.

Think about a situation in your life today in which you need to trust God to care for you. Then, think of three times in the past when you know God protected and helped you. List them here:

_____

_____

How does the knowledge of your experiences in the past of God's guidance and protection give you hope for the future?

_____

_____

_____

Wednesday

Choose one of the Bible texts from *Punch Lines* that you find encouraging. Cut a 1-inch strip from a piece of construction paper or cardstock and copy that verse neatly onto the strip. Use it as a bookmark in your Bible to remind you to trust God in difficult times!

Thursday

Read Psalm 20:7.

Look back at Tuesday's lesson. Do you have trouble trusting God because you don't have a lot of experience trusting Him? You can also learn from the experiences of others! If you didn't have three things to list on Tuesday, talk to a parent, teacher, or friend who's been a Christian longer than you have. Ask them for examples of times God has proven His ability to take care of them.

How do their experiences encourage you?

Parent _____

Teacher _____

Friend _____

If you still need a third example, write: "God saved Jerusalem from Sennacherib's army." The Bible is full of examples showing how God comes through for His people!

Friday

Read Romans 8:31.

Ellen White tells us, "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history" (*Selected Messages*, vol. 3, p. 162). How do these words encourage you as you think of those experiences that you and others have had of God's guidance, protection, and power?

_____

_____

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 30.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.