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C1034 – September 29, 2010 – Micah 1:8-16
The Fall Of Jerusalem

If you turn in your Bible to Micah 1 we have one of the most difficult passages of the OT. Every time I study one of the OT books I remember why pastors don't teach the OT very much. It takes too much time. It's too hard and most pastors don't have the kind of time they need to study it so they just don't teach it. Since there's a lot we're unfamiliar with in the OT we want to try to familiarize ourselves with some of it tonight and come to grips with what it's teaching and its application.

Last week we studied Micah 1:2-7 which begins in vv 2-5 with a lawsuit. God is calling a jury of Gentile nations to hear His witness against Samaria and Jerusalem. Hear, O peoples, all of you; Listen, O earth and all it contains, And let the Lord GOD be a witness against you," The Lord is going to testify against Samaria and Jerusalem, the two capital cities of the two divided kingdoms, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. The irony is apparent because if the Gentile heathen can sit as jury and discern whether these two kingdoms are good or evil then obviously they're quite evil. And being that we are near the end of the Kingdoms in Decline they are on the brink of Exile. So the Lord comes to bring His lawsuit against the two kingdoms and both kingdoms are found guilty. In verse 5 we see the reason why. "All this for the rebellion of Jacob And for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the rebellion of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? What is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?" And we covered the high places, the essence of the charge is idolatry has corrupted both kingdoms and therefore God is going to judge both kingdoms by sending foreign armies to invade the land, destroy their cities and send the survivors into Exile.

It's quite straightforward in vv 6-7 covering the Fall of Samaria in 722 or 721BC. It was a three year siege by the Assyrian Warlord Shalmaneser V

that resulted in the Fall of Samaria. The difficulty is in vv 8-16 which get into literary allusions to David's life, which utilizes a series of word plays and covers the Fall of various cities including Jerusalem. We already know that Jerusalem was found guilty by the jury of nations, just like Samaria, and that they will both go into Exile. But the difficulty is determining when Jerusalem will go to destruction. Nine towns in vv 10-15 are going to go to destruction but Jerusalem is not going to go to destruction at the same time. Whatever invasion results in the destruction of these nine towns it only reaches "the gates of Jerusalem," it does not enter Jerusalem. In other words, when the other towns are destroyed Jerusalem will not be destroyed. But in the end, in the last phrase of v 16 Jerusalem will be destroyed and they will go into Exile. So it makes for a difficult passage. How is it that this long list of cities will fall but Jerusalem doesn't fall at the same time? Let's read the verses. Micah says in verse 8, **Because of this I must lament and wail, I must go barefoot and naked; I must make a lament like the jackals And a mourning like the ostriches.** ⁹**For her wound is incurable, For it has come to Judah; It has reached the gate of my people, *Even* to Jerusalem.** ¹⁰**Tell it not in Gath, Weep not at all. At Beth-le-aphrah roll yourself in the dust.** ¹¹**Go on your way, inhabitant of Shaphir, in shameful nakedness. The inhabitant of Zaanan does not escape. The lamentation of Beth-ezel: "He will take from you its support."** ¹²**For the inhabitant of Maroth Becomes weak waiting for good, Because a calamity has come down from the LORD To the gate of Jerusalem.** ¹³**Harness the chariot to the team of horses, O inhabitant of Lachish— She was the beginning of sin To the daughter of Zion— Because in you were found The rebellious acts of Israel.** ¹⁴**Therefore you will give parting gifts On behalf of Moresheth-gath; The houses of Achzib *will* become a deception To the kings of Israel.** ¹⁵**Moreover, I will bring on you The one who takes possession, O inhabitant of Mareshah. The glory of Israel will enter Adullam.** ¹⁶**Make yourself bald and cut off your hair, Because of the children of your delight; Extend your baldness like the eagle, For they will go from you into exile.** Notice on your handout a series of cities in the second column beginning with **Beth-le-aphrah**, then **Shaphir**, **Zaanan**, **Beth-ezel**, **Maroth**, etc...those towns are scheduled for imminent destruction through the Assyrian invasion but that invasion only reaches the gate of Jerusalem, it does not enter Jerusalem, yet Jerusalem will be destroyed, apparently at a later date. So there are two invasions in the passage. Invasion one is

described in vv 10-15a and it reaches the gate of Jerusalem. We'll call this the Assyrian Invasion of Sennacherib in 701BC, that's vv 10-15a. Invasion two is described in vv 15b-16 and it destroys Jerusalem. We'll call this the Babylonian Invasion of Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC. Those two invasions are separated by 115 years. We know that because we live after the fact, we have hindsight and hindsight is 20-20, but if we'd been living when Micah wrote this, probably in the 730's during King Ahaz's reign, we might not detect two invasions here.

So if you mark in your Bible, there's a gap of time in v 15 between the town named **Mareshah** after which you see a period, a full stop, and the next sentence which begins with **The glory of Israel**. 115 years is between those sentences. Now if you say, how do you come up with such a gap of 115 years in there? The answer to this is how the prophets wrote; we have other examples of this in the Hebrew prophets. For example, Zech 9:9 describes the first coming of Messiah and Zech 9:10 describes the second coming of Messiah. Yet there's no indication in the text that they are not one and the same coming. The two comings are blended into one picture. Or for example Isa 11:1-2 describes the first coming of the Messiah and vv 3-5 describe the second coming of the Messiah. Yet again, the two comings are blended into one picture and the only way you can know in those texts that two comings are in view is to look back in hindsight. Theologians call these kinds of prophecies, double reference. And double reference is where you have two prophecies butted up against one another with no indication of a gap of time in between. If you lived in Micah's day you would think they are just one and the same prophecy but looking back we realize there are two prophecies. And we may even see things they didn't see in the text that we now know are significant. For example, in vv 9 and 12 we now see that the first invasion will only reach the gates of Jerusalem but they might not have seen that. But in hindsight we can see that. We understand that vv 15b-16 predicts a second invasion that enters the gates and destroys Jerusalem sending it's leadership, (the royalty, people like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah), going into Adullam, Adullam stands for a place of exile and Daniel went into exile in that verse. And we now know from history this is how it played out. Invasion one is the Assyrian Invasion of Sennacherib in 701BC that takes out all these Judean towns listed in vv 10-15a, then a gap of 115 years and finally invasion two is the Babylonian Invasion of Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC that takes out Jerusalem.

Now if you want to know why this gap occurred and Jerusalem did not go down during invasion one we have to investigate a man named Hezekiah. Hezekiah is one of the kings mentioned in verse 1 as reigning in Judah during Micah's ministry. He reigned, according to Thiele's chronology, from 715BC-686. I think that's wrong but we're going to work with those dates anyway because it's too much work to try and re-work all the chronology that's widely accepted today. It's been done by another man but it's not made it into the commentary literature yet so it's too difficult for me to try to inject it. Thiele's not far off but he has goof ups here and there in the kings. So 715-686BC this man Hezekiah reigns. Remember, all these men in the south are in David's dynasty, they're all David's descendants. And before Hezekiah you had Ahaz, that was his daddy and his daddy was a poor excuse for a king. He did terrible things, he was a vassal to the King of Assyria and he worshipped foreign gods thinking they would help him and the whole kingdom was infected as Isaiah and Micah describe. Things were in very bad shape, the nation was way out of fellowship and in that situation there's not much hope of the nation confessing and getting restored to fellowship. They had gone through five of the six degrees of depravity and it was social chaos, political intrigue, economic decline and spiritual adultery all over the kingdom. It's at that time that Micah is prophesying and he's the first to prophesy of the destruction of Jerusalem. And it's at that time that Hezekiah becomes king.

So turn to Jer 26:18 because a hundred years later Jeremiah was prophesying of the destruction of Jerusalem and he has something to say about Micah and Hezekiah. Jeremiah was getting a bad rap for prophesying of the destruction of Jerusalem. See, he didn't have good things to say; his message was all doom and gloom and so they were writing him off. They wanted to execute him but Jeremiah said, hey look, you guys better watch it, you execute me and you'll have innocent blood on your hands and so in verse 17 we pick up, "Then some of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying, ¹⁸Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus the LORD of hosts has said, "Zion will be plowed as a field, And Jerusalem will become ruins, And the mountains of the house as the high places of a forest.'" So see, Jeremiah isn't the first one to predict the destruction of Jerusalem. Micah said that 100 years ago. So look in your margin and see where the elders got that quote from. You should see a

reference back to Micah. What is it? Micah 3:12. So they're inferring that Hezekiah read or heard Micah 3:12 and you better believe he was the first to hear about it. If a prophet said Jerusalem was going to be destroyed the king would be the first to hear it. So Hezekiah had these words and if you turn to these words you see what caught Hezekiah's attention. For context notice Micah 3:10. The context here is very explicitly the destruction of Jerusalem. In verse 10, "Who build Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with violent injustice." He's very explicitly talking about the destruction of Jerusalem, is he not? Then he explains in verse 11 some of the reasons, "Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe," that's the justice department, "Her priests instruct for a price" that's the education department, "And her prophets divine for money," that's the religious department. So the justice system, the education system and the religious system are all bankrupt and here comes Hezekiah. Hezekiah has to rule over this kingdom and he's reading verse 12, what do you think the guy thinks as he reads verse 12? "Therefore, on account of you Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, And the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest." He sees the end of his kingdom and so Hezekiah said, it may go down but not on my watch and so Hezekiah evaluated the problems and started making corrections. To see these turn to 2 Chron 29. The Book of Chronicles records things from the perspective of the priests who served in the Temple, they're not so political; the Book of Kings is political, but the Book of Chronicles is religious. How did the king do with respect to the religion of Israel? Since this is the key problem this is a key analysis. And if you notice the last verse of the previous chapter his father, King Ahaz dies, so now Hezekiah comes to the throne. Let's open with verse 1. Hezekiah became king *when he was* twenty-five years old; and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. ²He did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. ³In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. ⁴He brought in the priests and the Levites and gathered them into the square on the east. ⁵Then he said to them, "Listen to me, O Levites. Consecrate yourselves now, and consecrate the house of the LORD, the God of your fathers, and carry the uncleanness out from the holy place. ⁶"For our fathers have been unfaithful and have done evil in the sight of the LORD our God, and have forsaken Him and turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD, and have turned *their* backs. ⁷"They have also shut the doors of the porch and put out the lamps, and have not

burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy place to the God of Israel. ⁸“Therefore the wrath of the LORD was against Judah and Jerusalem, and He has made them an object of terror, of horror, and of hissing, as you see with your own eyes. ⁹“For behold, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this.

¹⁰“Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that His burning anger may turn away from us. ¹¹“My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before Him, to minister to Him, and to be His ministers and burn incense. ¹²Then the Levites arose.” The Levitical priesthood had been abandoned so the first thing Hezekiah does is resurrect it. If we’re going to start getting something right we’re going to have to start with worship, we can’t just put on a show, this has to be genuine, we have to start worshipping God. Since worship is at the Temple and the Levites run the Temple we better reinstate the Levitical priesthood. So in verse 15, “They assembled their brothers, consecrated themselves, and went in to cleanse the house of the LORD, according to the commandment of the king by the words of the LORD. ¹⁶So the priests went in to the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse *it*, and every unclean thing which they found in the temple of the LORD they brought out to the court of the house of the LORD. Then the Levites received *it* to carry out to the Kidron valley.

¹⁷Now they began the consecration on the first *day* of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they entered the porch of the LORD. Then they consecrated the house of the LORD in eight days, and finished on the sixteenth day of the first month. ¹⁸Then they went in to King Hezekiah and said, “We have cleansed the whole house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering with all of its utensils, and the table of showbread with all of its utensils. ¹⁹Moreover, all the utensils which King Ahaz had discarded during his reign in his unfaithfulness, we have prepared and consecrated; and behold, they are before the altar of the LORD.” So they’re ready to worship now, the Levites are consecrated, the utensils used in Temple worship are consecrated, the next thing to do is get it underway. So pick up in verse 20.

“Then King Hezekiah arose early and assembled the princes of the city and went up to the house of the LORD. ²¹They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, the sanctuary, and Judah. And he ordered the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD. ²²So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests took the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. They also slaughtered the rams

and sprinkled the blood on the altar; they slaughtered the lambs also and sprinkled the blood on the altar. ²³Then they brought the male goats of the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them. ²⁴The priests slaughtered them and purged the altar with their blood to atone for all Israel, for the king ordered the burnt offering and the sin offering for all Israel. ²⁵He then stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with harps and with lyres, according to the command of David and of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for the command was from the LORD through His prophets." See what Hezekiah is doing? He's sticking with the text of the word of God. Verse 26, "The Levites stood with the *musical* instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. ²⁷Then Hezekiah gave the order to offer the burnt offering on the altar. When the burnt offering began, the song to the LORD also began with the trumpets, *accompanied* by the instruments of David, king of Israel. ²⁸While the whole assembly worshiped, the singers also sang and the trumpets sounded; all this *continued* until the burnt offering was finished. ²⁹Now at the completion of the burnt offerings, the king and all who were present with him bowed down and worshiped. ³⁰Moreover, King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with the words of David and Asaph the seer." That's the Book of Psalms, they pulled that out and started using it as a worship manual. "So they sang praises with joy, and bowed down and worshiped. ³¹Then Hezekiah said, "Now *that* you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the LORD." And the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all those who were willing *brought* burnt offerings. ³²The number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD. ³³The consecrated things were 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep. ³⁴But the priests were too few, so that they were unable to skin all the burnt offerings; therefore their brothers the Levites helped them until the work was completed and until the *other* priests had consecrated themselves. For the Levites were more conscientious to consecrate themselves than the priests. ³⁵There *were* also many burnt offerings with the fat of the peace offerings and with the libations for the burnt offerings. Thus the service of the house of the LORD was established *again*. ³⁶Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced over what God had prepared for the people, because the thing came about suddenly." The point there is there's been a major change in the kingdom all of a sudden. Now suddenly the nation is ready to worship the Lord.

So in chapter 30 all Israel is invited to the Passover, even those left over who had escaped the destruction of Shalmaneser V which we studied last week, the stragglers, they were invited. Verse 1, “Now Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel.” See, here we’re trying to re-unite the two kingdoms. They’d been divided for two centuries, now Hezekiah is trying to re-unite them. Verse 2, “For the king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month, ³since they could not celebrate it at that time, because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient numbers, nor had the people been gathered to Jerusalem. ⁴Thus the thing was right in the sight of the king and all the assembly. ⁵So they established a decree to circulate a proclamation throughout all Israel from Beersheba even to Dan,” (that’s the whole nation, from Dan to Beersheba they used to say), “that they should come to celebrate the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem. For they had not celebrated *it* in great numbers as it was prescribed.” See, this is proper worship; Hezekiah is following the word of God. Verse 6, “The couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the hand of the king and his princes, even according to the command of the king, saying, “O sons of Israel, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that He may return to those of you who escaped *and* are left from the hand of the kings of Assyria. ⁷“Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were unfaithful to the LORD God of their fathers, so that He made them a horror, as you see. ⁸“Now do not stiffen your neck like your fathers, but yield to the LORD and enter His sanctuary which He has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that His burning anger may turn away from you. ⁹“For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your sons *will find* compassion before those who led them captive and will return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate, and will not turn *His* face away from you if you return to Him.” Here’s the key - the nation repenting and returning to the Lord. If they do that then the Lord will restore them. That’s what Hezekiah is urging them to do. Verse 10, “So the couriers passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun, but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them.” That’s the response they got from the majority in the north, not exactly a positive response. But verse 11 there’s a remnant, “Nevertheless some men of Asher, Manasseh and

Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. ¹²The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.” So the kingdom is coming together.

Now they celebrate Passover in verse 13. They hadn’t been celebrating it for who knows how long. What event established Passover? The Exodus. And if they’re not commemorating the Exodus then they’re not remembering what the Lord has done for them. They’ve forgotten their history so here they’re learning their history. They’re going to have one big class in Jerusalem; this is our history, this is who God is, this is what God has done for us. Verse 13, “Now many people were gathered at Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month, a very large assembly. ¹⁴They arose and removed the altars which *were* in Jerusalem; they also removed all the incense altars and cast *them* into the brook Kidron.” Verse 15, “Then they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* on the fourteenth of the second month. And the priests and Levites were ashamed of themselves, and consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the house of the LORD. ¹⁶They stood at their stations after their custom, according to the law of Moses the man of God;” (see, once again, they’re doing everything according to the word of God).

And “the priests sprinkled the blood *which they received* from the hand of the Levites. ¹⁷For *there were* many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves; therefore, the Levites *were* over the slaughter of the Passover *lambs* for everyone who *was* unclean, in order to consecrate *them* to the LORD. ¹⁸For a multitude of the people, *even* many from Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover otherwise than prescribed. For Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, “May the good LORD pardon ¹⁹everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though not according to the purification *rules* of the sanctuary.” ²⁰So the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.” So there we see the grace of God in the OT. God is gracious in the OT, here’s a passage that shows it. Verse 21, “The sons of Israel present in Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread *for* seven days with great joy, and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day after day with loud instruments to the LORD. ²²Then Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good insight *in the things* of the LORD.” That means they were some good Bible students and they were opening up the text and explaining it to the people. “So they ate for the

appointed seven days, sacrificing peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD God of their fathers. ²³Then the whole assembly decided to celebrate *the feast* another seven days, so they celebrated the seven days with joy. ²⁴For Hezekiah king of Judah had contributed to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep, and the princes had contributed to the assembly 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep; and a large number of priests consecrated themselves. ²⁵All the assembly of Judah rejoiced, with the priests and the Levites and all the assembly that came from Israel, both the sojourners who came from the land of Israel and those living in Judah. ²⁶So there was great joy in Jerusalem, because there was nothing like this in Jerusalem since the days of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel. ²⁷Then the Levitical priests arose and blessed the people; and their voice was heard and their prayer came to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.” Alright, now we’re getting somewhere. We’ve had the Levitical priesthood reinstated, we’ve had the Temple cleansed and now we’ve drawn the whole nation together to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover as it was prescribed.

Now we come to chapter 31 and watch what happens. All this is coming about because Hezekiah read Micah’s prophesy of the destruction of Jerusalem and he went positive to the word of God. Verse 1, “Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah, broke the pillars in pieces, cut down the Asherim and pulled down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all.” They’re having a little clean up here, they’re destroying all the idolatrous high places and you know what went on up there, we described it last week. “Then all the sons of Israel returned to their cities, each to his possession.

Now verse 3 we have more reforms. “*He also appointed* the king’s portion of his goods for the burnt offerings, *namely*, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths and for the new moons and for the fixed festivals, as it is written in the law of the LORD. ⁴Also he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion due to the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the law of the LORD. ⁵As soon as the order spread, the sons of Israel provided in abundance the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of all. ⁶The sons of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah also brought in the tithe of oxen and

sheep, and the tithe of sacred gifts which were consecrated to the LORD their God, and placed *them* in heaps.” What’s all this describing? Income tax, the income tax was all going to the king’s house to make him rich while the people got poor and the Levites didn’t get support. But the law, the law commanded that they pay the Levites so they could study the word of God and teach the Bible to the nation. Just think if Bible teaching in this country was supported by the government. Oh, can’t have that. Separation of church and state. Baloney!

That’s not in the constitution. So here they are bringing in mass amounts of dollars to support Bible teaching. And look at verse 20, verse 20 gives a summary, “Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah; and he did what *was* good, right and true before the LORD his God. ²¹Every 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.” And what’s it all based on? The word of God. Hezekiah returned to the word of God and for that he was prospered. This is what the Lord wanted all along and here out of the blue this guy comes to the throne and he turns the whole nation around in a matter of months. This is one of the great moments of history when a single man’s faith turned a whole nation back to the Lord. But then something happens, it’s the thing Micah predicted in invasion one. What’s invasion one? The Assyrian Invasion of Sennacherib, it’s 701BC. But remember, they didn’t perceive there was an invasion two, they didn’t have hindsight like Jeremiah and Daniel and us. So for all they know this is the end of Jerusalem; it’s going to be destroyed.

So in chapter 32 he begins, note how the author begins, “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.” Now that’s all the cities mentioned in Micah 1:10-15a, all the one’s listed on your handout and others. Of this campaign here’s what Sennacherib had written on the Taylor Prism, “Because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke,” what that’s pointing to is a passage in 2 Kings where it says Hezekiah rebelled against the king of Assyria and the way he rebelled was he stopped paying the annual tribute and so Sennacherib says, “I came up against him, and by force of arms and by the might of my power I took 46 of his strong fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about, I took and plundered a countless number. From these places I took and carried off 200,156 persons, old and young, male and female, together with

horses and mules, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude.” So he’s taking over all the cities just like Micah predicted and then we come to 2 Chron 32:2, “Now when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to make war on Jerusalem, ³he 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. ⁴So 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?” The first thing he does is stop up all the springs. One of the springs that caused a double dilemma was the Gihon Spring and if you come down to verse 30 you’ll see what he did with it. “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.” What’s described here is one of the most interesting engineering projects in the ancient world called Hezekiah’s tunnel. Here on the east side just outside the upper city of David was a spring called Gihon and normally they could go out there and get water but during a siege they couldn’t go outside of the walls so Hezekiah came up with a solution. He built a tunnel diverting the water underneath the city down to the foot of the city in the Pool of Siloam so people could access the water during the siege without going outside the city walls. Here’s some of the statistics. Look at the length: it’s 6 football fields long and about 150 feet beneath the city, they tunnel through solid bedrock. I’ve got pictures I’ll show you in a minute. One of the most remarkable statistics is the elevation drop. Two feet. From the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam the grade is only 0.6%. Who engineered this thing?



Here's a cutaway of the city of David, you can see the Gihon Spring and the Pool of Siloam at the foot of the city and they've shown us the winding path the tunnel takes.



In the late 1800's a little Arab boy was walking through the tunnel and he saw an inscription in the rock. It's in the Turkish Museum today. It was placed near the exit of the tunnel. It describes how they built the tunnel. Here's what it says, "[...when] (the tunnel) was driven through. And this was the way in which it was cut through: While [...] (were) still [...] axe(s), each man toward his fellow, and while there were still three cubits to be cut through, [there was heard] the voice of a man calling to his fellows, for there was an overlap in the rock on the right [and on the left]. And when the tunnel was driven through, the quarrymen hewed (the rock), each man toward his fellow, axe against axe; and the water flowed from the spring toward the reservoir for 1200 cubits, and the height of the rock above the head(s) of the quarrymen was 100 cubits." So that's the story of how the tunnel was built and there's still water running through it; it can be deep or shallow, it just depends on what time of year you go. Turkey controlled Palestine under the Ottoman Empire until the British Mandate of 1917 so that's why it's in Turkey.

Then if you look at verse 5 we have some descriptions of further preparations for siege, "And he took courage and rebuilt all the wall that had been broken down and erected towers on it, and *built* another outside wall" that other outside wall is what they call the broad wall in Jerusalem. Part of it has been excavated. It's about 24 feet wide and it's about 24 feet tall, so they

constructed this wall very rapidly. Isaiah says they used people's houses so they had an instant supply of rocks to cement together. And he also says in verse 5, "and strengthened the Millo *in* the city of David, and made weapons and shields in great number. ⁶He appointed military officers over the people and gathered them to him in the square at the city gate, and spoke encouragingly to them, saying," (and you'll notice, just because you make war preparations doesn't mean you're not walking by faith, they're not trusting in their preparations, but they're not stupid either, you don't just sit around and say, well, the Lord will save us, no you prepare, you prepare to protect your women and children). Verse 7, you'll notice words recalling the mouth of Joshua. "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. 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." So they are trusting the Lord

Let's see what happens in verse 9, "After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem while he *was* besieging Lachish with all his forces with him," before we read the rest, here's Sennacherib's inscription after defeating Lachish. This will help you understand what he says next. This was found in his central palace in Ninevah over a series of reliefs depicting his victory at Lachish, "Sennacherib, king of the world, king of the land of Assyria, sat on a throne; the booty of Lachish passed before him." So, the guy is a little bit arrogant. He sends his servants to Jerusalem with the message of verse 10, "Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria, 'On what are you trusting that you are remaining in Jerusalem under siege? 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"? 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"? 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? 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? 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?" Notice the arrogance. This is the kind of thing that ticks the God of the universe off. Verse 16, "His servants spoke further against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah. ¹⁷He 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." So he puts the God of Israel on par with all the other gods of the pagan nations. Verse 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. ¹⁹They spoke of the God of Jerusalem as of the gods of the peoples of the earth, the work of men's hands. ²⁰But King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed about this and cried out to heaven." So what do you do when you don't have a solution to your problem? You go to the Lord in prayer. And how did the Lord answer? Verse 21, "And the LORD sent an angel who destroyed every mighty warrior, commander and officer in the camp of the king of Assyria." If you look in the Kings and Isaiah cross reference it was 185,000 Assyrian soldiers lay dead, the Jews went out the next morning to the stench of 185,000 dead bodies. "So, the chronicler says, "he returned in shame to his own land."

In conclusion let's look at Sennacherib's account. One of the unique things about the Bible is it records Israel's losses, you don't find that in pagan king's accounts, they didn't keep diaries of their losses, it's only the victories, and it points to the authenticity of the Bible. What did Sennacherib say about Jerusalem? "As for him (i.e. Hezekiah), like a caged bird in Jerusalem, his royal city, I confined him; I linked together siege forts against him; whoever came forth from the gate I turned back in humiliation." He doesn't make any mention of taking the city, he doesn't make any mention of losing 185,000 soldiers. But on the face of it we know something happened. If you had Hezekiah surrounded "like a caged bird in Jerusalem" why didn't you take the city, huh? Well, we know why: he didn't have an army and you can't take a city without an army.

Now for the application. This is a fantastic picture of what God can do when we walk by faith. Hezekiah led a whole generation of Jews back to the Lord and when they got back to the word of God and trusted Him and obeyed His

commandments. It's the same kind of thing the Lord can do for us. And the Lord dares us, I dare you to trust me and see what happens. And what will happen is something we could never accomplish. Not in our wildest dreams could we accomplish this kind of defeat of our enemies. But if we walk by faith He can accomplish it. It's easy for Him. Who's going to stop the God of the universe? And when we trust Him He gets the glory and not us. So the challenge of Hezekiah is can you trust the Lord in every detail of Scripture and let Him handle the results? It delayed the destruction of Jerusalem 115 years, from a human perspective and from a perspective of prayer. And now you know why Micah has two invasions. Now you know why Jerusalem wasn't destroyed in invasion one, now you know the great story of Hezekiah who read Micah's prophecy and led the nation to repent and return to the Lord their God and because of that you have invasion two 115 years later. Shall we learn to live by faith in all the details of life and trust God for the results.

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