

HEZEKIAH FAITH, AND DEALING WITH
THE SENNACHERIBS IN LIFE
2 CHRONICLES 31-32

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

Lee Ezell came from a tough background. She was born and raised in Philadelphia. Both parents were alcoholics. Lee was one of five daughters. She once wrote, **“I imagine I was a great disappointment to my dad as he looked forward to Lee, his son, and let me know I was an unwanted child. My father lived mostly in the basement of our home (which was plastered with pornographic pictures), and he would emerge in great fits of anger. We were battered and abused, and domestic violence calls were the norm.”**

As soon as Lee graduated from high school, she left home and took a bus to San Francisco. She eventually set up an apartment there with her mom and two sisters. She got her first job as a typist. Lee met a salesman one morning at work. He wanted to meet her that evening. She did, and she was raped. Lee was only twenty years old. He was a big guy who was twenty years her senior. She said, **“...as I escaped that night I promised myself I’d go to my grave with this secret. I couldn’t let anyone know that I was a loser.”**

Lee never saw that man again. But as rape victims and victims of abuse know, this kind of man never really goes away. He continues to be a challenge in life. He haunts their dreams and drives their fears and doubts..

King Hezekiah of Judah had a man in his life like that. His name was Sennacherib. Like Lee Ezell, King Hezekiah had a difficult family background. (PROJECTOR ON--- KINGDOM OF JUDAH) Though he grew up in a royal family in the 700s BC, his father was an evil man. King Ahaz had rejected the true God of Israel and Judah. He turned away from the Biblical tradition which he inherited from his ancestors. Instead Ahaz turned to the false gods of the surrounding nations.

The result was the judgment of God. Enemy nations began to make incursions into the kingdom of Judah. (ASSYRIA) The main challenge came from the Assyrian Empire. The son of Ahaz would spend much of his adult life dealing with the evil leader of that nation, Sennacherib.

I.

We are going to focus this morning on Chapters 31 and 32 of 2 Chronicles. You can locate that passage on p. 382 in the black Bibles under many of the chairs (ESV). Chapter 31 addresses HEZEKIAH AND THE CULTIVATION OF A LIFE OF FAITH. (I. HEZEKIAH AND THE CULTIVATION...)

Last time, when we examined Chapters 29 & 30, we saw that Hezekiah succeeded his evil father and initiated a spiritual renewal in his country. He proved to be a man of genuine faith. He immediately set out to get the priests and Levites together to restore proper worship to Judah. He had these religious leaders begin by opening and cleansing the temple in Jerusalem. They got rid of all of the idols which they could find, and they proceeded to set up a celebration of the Passover. They invited Jews from the northern kingdom of Israel, which had been overrun by the Assyrians, to join them in Jerusalem. They had a great time of celebration, which was

extended for an extra week. Hezekiah was responsible for establishing the right priority of worship.

For the sake of brevity I am just going to summarize the contents of #31. King Hezekiah extends his campaign against false gods and idol worship in Jerusalem to the rest of the country. He reinstates the system of regular sacrifices in the temple, which had been discontinued in the reign of his father. He reimposes the Mosaic law about tithing, which was necessary to provide financial support for the priests and Levites. King Hezekiah follows the pattern established by his ancestor David in having priests and Levites regularly rotate in and out of Jerusalem to lead the worship in the temple.

King Hezekiah's efforts are summarized in vv. 20 & 21: **“Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. 21 And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered.”** The author of Chronicles describes Hezekiah as the greatest king of Judah in the divided kingdom period. Because of his devotion to the true God, YHWH blesses him and prospers his administration.

Lee Ezell grew up in a family with no church connection. One night when she was a teenager, she saw an ad about a Billy Graham Crusade in Philadelphia. She and three friends decided to visit the convention center downtown for the potential laughs that it might offer them. Instead, Lee was deeply affected by the gospel message that she heard that evening. When the invitation was given to come forward after the message, she responded. She invited Jesus to come into her life. She studied the Bible lessons which were sent to her in the mail. She continued to do them and to read the Bible when she moved to San Francisco. She began to cultivate a life of faith. But then she was raped.

II.

We are going to look next at v. 24 of #32 as we consider HEZEKIAH AND THE END POINT OF FAITH. (II. HEZEKIAH AND THE END POINT OF FAITH) The author does not put all of the events in the life of King Hezekiah in chronological order. By piecing together the historical information about his administration from inside and outside of the Bible, it appears that v. 24 describes the next major event in his life. After the king gets the spiritual life of the nation set in the right direction, he encounters a major personal challenge. According to v. 24, **“In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death, and he prayed to the Lord, and he answered him and gave him a sign.”**

The author assumes that his readers are familiar with the more detailed stories about the king's illness and recovery from the books of Isaiah and 2 Kings. We are going to look at the more detailed information we have about this incident in Isaiah #38. You can find this on p. 598 in the black Bibles. In the first part of the first verse we are told, **“In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death.”**

Thus King Hezekiah realized that he was faced with death. This was going to be the end point of his life of faith on this side of the grave. But he turned to the Lord, and we read further through v. 6 of Isaiah 38: **“And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said to him, ‘Thus says the Lord: Set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not recover.’ 2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, 3 and said, ‘Please, O Lord, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight.’ And Hezekiah wept bitterly.**

“4 Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah: 5 ‘Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. 6 I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and will defend this city.’”

The consensus of Biblical historians is that Hezekiah died in 687 BC. The time of this incident would then be 702 BC. In 702 BC the king is facing threats from Assyria.

Verses 7 & 8 add, **“‘This shall be the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that he has promised: 8 Behold, I will make the shadow cast by the declining sun on the dial of Ahaz turn back ten steps.’ So the sun turned back on the dial the ten steps by which it had declined.”** Thus there was some major astronomical event that assured Hezekiah that this promise was true. In the rest of #38 in Isaiah the king has a beautiful prayer of praise and thanksgiving for this promise. Faced with death, Hezekiah keeps his faith in God and is promised fifteen more years of life.

The rape of Lee Ezell produced not only fear and trauma and stress, it also produced a pregnancy. When Lee told her mom about it, she told her daughter to get an abortion. At that time this choice meant going to Mexico. So Lee started heading south. At motels along the way she kept encountering Gideon Bibles. Her random reading brought her to Psalm 139 and its description of life in the womb. Lee could not bring the life inside of her to the end point of death.

While visiting a church in Los Angeles, a couple befriended her and took her into their home. Lee gave birth to a baby girl at Los Angeles County Hospital on February 11, 1964. She gave up her daughter for adoption immediately after she was born. That decision was a kind of loss for Lee and certainly a test of faith.

III.

We are going to move then to vv. 25-31 of #32 as we deal with HEZEKIAH AND THE STUMBLING BLOCK TO FAITH. (III. HEZEKIAH AND THE STUMBLING BLOCK TO FAITH) Verse 25 tells us, **“But Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud. Therefore wrath came upon him and Judah and Jerusalem.”** Hezekiah’s initial response to his brush with death was thanksgiving and praise toward his Maker. But then pride appears to enter in. The assurance that Hezekiah has fifteen more years of life ahead of him means that he is indestructible in the immediate future. If God’s promise is true, he cannot die.

There are also signs that the king is enjoying prosperity. As we skip down to vv. 27-29, we find this confirmed: **“And Hezekiah had very great riches and honor, and he made for himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of costly vessels; 28 storehouses also for the yield of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of cattle, and sheepfolds. 29 He likewise provided cities for himself, and flocks and herds in abundance, for God had given him very great possessions.”**

Hezekiah has led wisely. He has made good decisions for his country. But ultimately it is the Lord who has brought these blessings. Hezekiah has apparently lost recognition of that. Pride has entered in.

The king was aware of the looming threat which the Assyrians posed. So he was making preparations for that. We are told in v. 30, **“This same Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of**

the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.” The primary water supply for the city of Jerusalem was the Gihon Spring (GIHON SPRING), which was on the east side of the original city of Jerusalem. It was actually just outside of the city walls.

Hezekiah recognized the potential problem which the spring posed. An enemy laying siege to the city might be able to access the water, and the residents of Jerusalem might be cut off from the water supply. So Hezekiah made steps to wall up this spring and to construct an underground aqueduct that would bring the water inside the city. (SILOAM TUNNEL)

The tunnel was over 1700 feet long. It was about three feet wide and six feet tall. It was rediscovered in 1838. (SILOAM TUNNEL 2) It can be visited today. It empties out into the Pool of Siloam, which is mentioned in the New Testament gospels.

The tunnel was dug by workers who advanced from both ends of the project. Experts are still unsure about how they pulled off this engineering feat and were able to meet up with each other underground. (SILOAM INSCRIPTION) An inscription was found on the wall of the tunnel to mark the spot where the tunnelers connected. The inscription reads, **“And this is the narrative of the tunneling: While the stone-cutters were wielding the picks, each toward his co-worker... and while there were still three cubits to tunnel through, the voice of a man was heard calling out to his co-worker, because there was a fissure in the rock, running from south to north. And on the final day of tunneling, each of the stonecutters was striking the stone forcefully so as to meet his co-worker, pick after pick. And then the water began to flow from the source to the pool, a distance of 1200 cubits. And 100 cubits was the height of the rock above the head of the stone-cutters.”** (PROJECTOR OFF)

Back in v. 31 of our passage we read, **“And so in the matter of the envoys of the princes of Babylon, who had been sent to him to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land, God left him to himself, in order to test him and to know all that was in his heart.”** This “sign” in reference to Hezekiah’s healing was also mentioned in v. 24. We saw from Isaiah #38 that this involved a declining of the sun’s shadow in the opposite direction that was to be expected. Somehow the astrologers in the Babylonian court detected this astronomical phenomenon and made a connection to Judah. Probably the story of Hezekiah’s healing and this supernatural sign reached Babylon.

For a fuller explanation of what happened next we will turn to the prophet Isaiah. If you are using one of the church Bibles, turn to p. 599. We are going to look at part of #39. In v 1 we are told, **“At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent envoys with letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered.”** So it would seem that there was Babylonian interest in both the healing of Hezekiah and the astronomical phenomenon.

The story continues in vv. 2-8 of Isaiah 39: **“And Hezekiah welcomed them gladly. And he showed them his treasure house, the silver, the gold, the spices, the precious oil, his whole armory, all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them. 3 Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah, and said to him, ‘What did these men say? And from where did they come to you?’ Hezekiah said, ‘They have come to me from a far country, from Babylon.’ 4 He said, ‘What have they seen in your house?’ Hezekiah answered, ‘They have seen all that is in my house. There is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them.’**

5 “Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, ‘Hear the word of the Lord of hosts: 6 Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord. 7 And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ 8 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ‘The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good.’ For he thought, ‘There will be peace and security in my days.’” The Babylonians would eventually replace Assyria as the dominant power in the Middle East. Daniel and his three friends would be the fulfillment of the prophecy that sons of the Davidic kings would be eunuchs in the palace of Babylon.

In what happens with Hezekiah and the Babylonian envoys we see evidence of pride. Hezekiah is perhaps unwisely showing off his riches to the Babylonians. There would be consequences for that. The Babylonians would one day claim them as their own.

There is evidence that Hezekiah repented of this pride. Look at v. 26 back in our text: **“But Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.”** Part of the motivation for that repentance was the advance of the Assyrians. King Sennacherib was coming for Hezekiah and his people.

Spiritual growth and success often produce prosperity and other blessings. But there is always the danger that we can begin to credit these good things to ourselves. The challenge is always to keep the Lord in first place in our lives.

IV.

We come then to HEZEKIAH AND THE PERFECTION OF FAITH. (PROJECTOR ON--- IV. HEZEKIAH AND THE ...) This is the subject of vv. 1-20 of #32. It is after these other events in the life of Hezekiah when the following challenges unfold. According to v. 1, **“After these things and these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah and encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them for himself.”**

The previous three chapters have shown Hezekiah’s efforts to prioritize worship of the true God of Israel. Hezekiah has responded correctly to health challenges and to inappropriate pride. He seems to be on track with the Lord. But now he is faced with an evil foe who is strong and powerful. Hezekiah’s father had been forced to become a vassal to the king of Assyria. He paid annual tribute to the Assyrians.

At some earlier time King Hezekiah had decided that this agreement should no longer stand. (2 KINGS 18:7) In 2 Kings #18 v. 7 the Bible says, **“And the Lord was with him [Hezekiah]; wherever he went out, he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and would not serve him”** Sargon II was king of Assyria at the time. He was occupied with other foreign policy concerns when Hezekiah rebelled. Judah was OK for a while. Sennacherib replaced his father in 705 BC. Assyria was growing in power. King Sennacherib began to move against Judah. He was gunning for Hezekiah. The northern kingdom of Israel by this time had been wiped out.

Sennacherib was successful in his advance on Judah. (SENNACHERIB PRISM) Archaeologists discovered this prism which records key events in the administration of King Sennacherib. At one point this text proudly proclaims that the Assyrians captured 46 cities in Judah.

In 2 Kings #18 v. 14 (2 KINGS 18:14) we are told about how Hezekiah responded to this: **“And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, ‘I have done wrong; withdraw from me. Whatever you impose on me I will bear.’ And the king of Assyria required of Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.”** This appears to satisfy the Assyrians for a while. But now Hezekiah is in subjection again to the evil Assyrians and King Sennacherib, who all have a reputation for great cruelty.

Some years later King Hezekiah joins with the Pharaoh of Egypt and Cush named Tirhakah to push back against the Assyrians. (2 KINGS 19:9) In 2 Kings #19 v. 9 we read, **“Now the king [Sennacherib] heard concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, ‘Behold, he has set out to fight against you.’ So he sent messengers again to Hezekiah...”** In this preceding time Hezekiah had made war preparations. But things are now getting tense.

Verses 2-6 (PROJECTOR OFF) describe what happened next: **“And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and intended to fight against Jerusalem, 3 he planned with his officers and his mighty men to stop the water of the springs that were outside the city; and they helped him. 4 A great many people were gathered, and they stopped all the springs and the brook that flowed through the land, saying, ‘Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?’ 5 He set to work resolutely and built up all the wall that was broken down and raised towers upon it, and outside it he built another wall, and he strengthened the Millo in the city of David. He also made weapons and shields in abundance. 6 And he set combat commanders over the people and gathered them together to him in the square at the gate of the city and spoke encouragingly to them...”** Any remaining pride which Hezekiah has is being drained out of him. The situation is becoming desperate.

Hezekiah proceeds to give spiritual encouragement to his people. According to vv. 7 & 8 he tells them, **“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him, for there are 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 took confidence from the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.”** Literally the text says that the people “rested upon the words of Hezekiah.”

Verses 9 & 10: **“After this, Sennacherib king of Assyria, who was besieging Lachish with all his forces, sent his servants to Jerusalem to Hezekiah king of Judah and to all the people of Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying, 10 ‘Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria, “On what are you trusting, that you endure the siege in Jerusalem?””** (LACHISH SIEGE) Lachish was the second largest city in Judah. A huge wall relief was discovered in Nineveh which shows in stages the conquering of Lachish by the Assyrians.

Verses 11-19 describe the rest of Sennacherib’s message and actions (PROJECTOR OFF): **“Is not Hezekiah misleading you, that he may give you over to die by famine and by thirst, when he tells you, ‘The Lord our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria’? 12 Has not this same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, ‘Before one altar you shall worship, and on it you shall burn your sacrifices’? 13 Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of other lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands at all able to deliver their lands out of my hand? 14 Who among all the gods of those nations that my fathers devoted to destruction was able to deliver his people from 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 in this fashion, and do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you out of my hand!”

16 “And his servants said still more against the Lord God and against his servant Hezekiah. 17 And he wrote letters to cast contempt on the Lord, the God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, ‘Like the gods of the nations of the lands who have not delivered their people from my hands, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver his people from my hand.’ 18 And they shouted it with a loud voice in the language of Judah to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten and terrify them, in order that they might take the city. 19 And they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as they spoke of the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the work of men's hands.” So goes the psychological warfare which King Sennacherib uses against Hezekiah and his people. The outward circumstances do not look good for the people of Jerusalem. But Sennacherib has insulted and blasphemed the true God of heaven.

Verse 20 says, **“Then Hezekiah the king and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, prayed because of this and cried to heaven.”** This was extremely stressful for Hezekiah. Isaiah #37, which is on p. 596, vv. 1-4 gives us a more complete picture: **“As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the Lord. 2 And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. 3 They said to him, ‘Thus says Hezekiah, “This day is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. 4 It may be that the Lord your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that the Lord your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.”””**

So Hezekiah and Isaiah and the others pray, and God answers with a message through the prophet Isaiah. The message is that YHWH, the God of Israel, has been offended by King Sennacherib. According to Isaiah 37 v. 29 God declares this to the Assyrian king: **“Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come to my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came.”** In the midst of this time of great crisis the faith of Hezekiah is being perfected.

Trials and suffering that come into the lives of of the people of God may be the result of discipline for bad behavior. This was a factor that was at work for many of the people of Judah and Israel who had turned away from God. But Hezekiah was a good guy who was basically trying to do good for his people. Trials in his life served to perfect his faith.

(PROJECTOR ON--- JAMES 1:2-4) In the New Testament Book of James in #1 vv. 2-4 the inspired author declares, **“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, 3 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. 4 And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”** “Perfect” here does not mean sinless. It has a reference to spiritual maturity.

Lee Ezell did not initially count it all joy to be raped and to discover that she was pregnant. It was not a joy to give up her baby. It was not a joy to wonder for years about the fate of her daughter, to still remember the attack of an evil man who had caused her pregnancy. She was distrustful of men after this. But she grew in faith. Eventually she met Hall Ezell at a Bible conference. They

fell in love and married. He had two earlier wives who both died of cancer. He also had two daughters, which Lee eventually adopted in the Los Angeles County Courthouse where the adoption of daughter had once been arranged.

Still Lee wondered about the fate of her little girl. Her husband advanced in his career and was appointed by President Reagan to be the Western Region Director for the Immigration and Naturalization Service. In this high profile position the Ezells faced criticism from the media. They had bomb threats and death threats. Yet in the midst of these challenges their faith was perfected.

V.

In the last two sets of verses in #32 we come to HEZEKIAH AND THE REWARD OF FAITH. (V. HEZEKIAH AND THE...) Hezekiah was faced with an overwhelming enemy. Sennacherib had overrun a number of countries around Judah. He had occupied the vast majority of Judah. Jerusalem was surrounded. From outward appearances it seemed that King Hezekiah and his people were doomed. But Hezekiah is trusting in the true God and His assurances through the prophet Isaiah.

So we read in the first part of v. 21, **“And the Lord sent an angel, who cut off all the mighty warriors and commanders and officers in the camp of the king of Assyria.”** In Isaiah #37 vv. 36 & 37 (ISAIAH 37:36) we have a fuller description: **“And the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. (ISAIAH 37:37) Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh.”**

We are not told the exact instrumentality of the work of this angel. But it is a great victory. It is recounted here in Isaiah, in our passage, and in 2 Kings. It is confirmed in an indirect way by the administration of King Sennacherib. Kings in the Ancient Near East never recorded defeats in their records. But the prism of Sennacherib, which I showed you earlier (SENNACHERIB QUOTATION), has this fascinating statement: **“Himself [Hezekiah] I made a prisoner in Jerualem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage.”** The obvious omission is that he did not capture the city or Hezekiah. The loss of a large part of his military force meant that Sennacherib had to retire.

In the second part of v. 21 in our text (PROJECTOR OFF), we read, **“So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he came into the house of his god, some of his own sons struck him down there with the sword.”** Assyrian records confirm this manner of death at the hands of Sennacherib’s sons, although it was a number of years later when it happened.

Verse 22: **“So the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib king of Assyria and from the hand of all his enemies, and he provided for them on every side.”** Here is the reward of faith. Sennacherib was Hezekiah’s nemesis for a number of years. I suspect that he haunted his dreams. He threatened his life. But God intervened in Hezekiah’s favor.

Verse 23: **“And many brought gifts to the Lord to Jerusalem and precious things to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from that time onward.”** The news of this great victory spread to other countries which suffered at the hands of Sennacherib. They expressed their appreciation in tangible ways.

Skip down to vv. 32 & 33: **“Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his good deeds, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 33 And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper part of the tombs of the sons of David, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honor at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his place.”** Thus the faith of Hezekiah is honored and appreciated by his people in his death.

Lee Ezell (PROJECTOR ON--- LEE EZELL) was haunted for many years by her nemesis, the rapist. Then she had to deal with the fact that she gave up her daughter for adoption. It was the right thing to do. But she did not know what had come of her daughter's life. She did not seek her out because she did not want to interfere in the raising of this precious girl by her adoptive parents.

Then one day Lee got a phone call from the Los Angeles family who took her in when she was pregnant. Lee's daughter was looking for Lee. She wanted Lee to call her. This is the story in Lee's words: **“As I dialed the phone number they gave me, what a shock it was to hear the voice of ‘the missing piece’ of the puzzle of my own life. This gal, Julie Makimaa (LEE EZELL 2), living in Michigan, methodically told me she had two motivations for trying to seek me out and find me. One was to let me know I was a grandmother! And her second motivation was even sweeter than the first to me: she tried to lead me to Christ over the phone.... What a thrill it was to tell her that she had already led me to walk with Christ many years ago, as I discovered that although life is not fair, God is just.**

“I was determined that Julie would not find out about her conception through rape. But it was so important to my husband that Julie understood this that he privately chatted on the phone with Julie's husband Bob, telling him the circumstances surrounding her conception. Bob's reaction was simply: ‘Wow... to think that is what happened more than 20 years ago just to give me Julie!’”

“The first time we got a glimpse at each other, I know we were both so nervous. ... But as she walked through the door, a mirrored image of myself, we were in awe. The first words she said, as she passed me a baby, was ‘now go to your grandma’. Her husband Bob Makimaa waited his turn and then stretched out his long arm to say ‘I want to shake your hand, Lee: thank you for not aborting Julie. I can't imagine what my life would be like without Julie and children.’” (*The Missing Piece*, Servant Press) Such is the reward of faith. Suzy and I had a chance to meet both mother and daughter years ago in Boston. (PROJECTOR OFF) Lee passed away a little over a year ago.

Some of you may have a Sennacherib in your life. It may be someone who haunts your dreams. It may be someone who continues to pose a threat of some kind to you. If you know Jesus, be confident that He has His purposes and that he can use this difficult situation for good. Keep your faith in the God of the Bible.