

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Lecture 29, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Josiah, and Kings of Judah

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Well, I hope you all had a blessed resurrection day. I hope you're glad to be back. What is it? Are there three weeks of class left or something of that sort? A little scary, a little scary.

If you find the extra verbiage in this announcement somewhat distracting, just think about what it's like to listen to it all the time. I've tried to illustrate that in a tiny little microcosm. Like is not filler, like is not a comma, and like is not a quotation mark.

Did you know that? Anyway, that's my hobby horse or soapbox or whatever it is for the day. Ted, is this a little bit too loud still? It's striking me as there's some echo. Down one? Yeah.

Every once in a while, I'll climb up in my soapbox and do something with like. Here it is for today. Anyway, welcome back.

That's really the only announcement, so it shouldn't have said like a few announcements. It should have said like an announcement. Most of you should have your papers back by now.

In the past, I've had some folks who have gotten the paper back as an attachment, but for some reason or another can't read the balloons. There's a comment there, and there's nothing to be read. If you're in that situation, please let me know, because I do want you to read my comments.

After all, I didn't put them there for my health. So, at any rate, that's that. We need to sing, or at least I know which chorus you are.

Shall we pray together as we start?

Gracious God, our Heavenly Father, precious Redeemer, and most Holy Spirit of truth, as we've celebrated Easter together, Resurrection Day, help us by your Spirit indwelling to keep in mind and keep in our hearts the truth of the power of the resurrection to transform us. We pray, Lord, that our lives and hearts will indeed be transformed and changed. We pray that you will be chipping away at those things that are displeasing to you.

We pray that you would be encouraging those who so long to seek you, to be close to you. We pray for one another in these days that are full of a lot of stress, Lord. We pray that we would keep our eyes focused on you and on our place as your children.

We would be bold to pray that you would use your word to teach us. We would also be bold to pray to you as master of the universe that you would be with your people around the world whose lives are in danger for whatever reason. Please bring comfort and encouragement and security and protection.

Father, we would ask these things thankfully and then praying that you would be with us this day as we study together and learn together. We pray in Christ's name with thanksgiving. Amen.

Well, we're going to have to review in just a minute because it's been a week since we've been together. We are studying the divided kingdom. I have a pointer here.

And I know we've done this quickly. On the other hand, in order to make our way into the prophetic literature and the material that we studied already in terms of wisdom literature, you've got to do the history fairly fast. So, with all due respect, you know, if you want to do more with it, come and take historical geography, where we focus on history a little bit more.

Here's a chart that we're going to use to review, especially since we've been apart from each other for a week. And, you know, things have intervened. Wonderful things have intervened.

But just a reminder, the kingdom divides in 931. That's a date you're going to want to know. And you'll remember we had the northern kingdom.

Jeroboam, son of Nebat, starts that. Rehoboam is the one who will continue the Davidic dynasty. So kind of keep these things in mind.

Last time, we made our way through the entirety of the fall of the northern kingdom. We actually started around the time of Elijah, which is where we had left off and did this whole scheme right in here. The second date you're going to want to know is 722, the fall of the northern kingdom of Assyria.

That's important. So, kind of hang on to that. Again, you don't have to know a ton of dates, but you do have to know the three that are in red up here.

The third one is going to be where we're heading today, and that is going to be the fall of the south in 587-586 to Babylon, particularly Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Our focus today is going to be this whole blue box, and you're looking at that list of names. How on earth are we going to learn all that? Well, I'm going to hit the

highlights, all right? Only the highlights in terms of the most significant kings, and they're going to be showing up in the material that follows. But we're going to make our way from Jehoshaphat, where we sort of left off that whole alliance between Jehoshaphat and Ahab.

You may remember Micaiah, the prophet there. We're going to start with his descendant, Jehoram Ahaziah. Quickly do these folks right here, very quickly, and then spend a little more time on some of our key figures, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, and then particularly Josiah.

So that's the direction we're going to go today. If I'm going too fast, please stop me. I know it's hard, and I know I've said this before, but I'll say it again.

It seems like all the names either start with J or A, and it's hard just to keep them straight. This is where flashcards, if you haven't started doing them yet, would be really, really helpful to construct for yourself or something that will work that you can carry around to study a little bit. Well, first of all, I need a word or two on international politics.

We do this all the time, but it's good to have it in mind because Israel doesn't live in a vacuum. Judah doesn't live in a vacuum. There's other important stuff going on here.

This is also the things that you're getting out of reading Old Testament parallels. So let me just sort of drop that back into the material as well. First of all, Assyria.

Assyria's been on the scene for a while. Sennacherib is going to be a major figure as we start talking about King Hezekiah. So, kind of keep him in mind.

One of the things that you're reading in Old Testament parallels will be some material from Sennacherib where he says, I had Jerusalem, or actually I had Hezekiah, king of Jerusalem, trapped like a bird in a cage. We're going to come back to that in a moment. So, Assyria's making life really difficult, not only for Hezekiah and Judah, but you'll remember last time they were the ones who were responsible for taking the entirety of the northern kingdom captive.

Then, we will repopulate with other folks and so forth just to get our context. We've also got Babylon looming on the scene. Even in the time of Hezekiah, Babylon is going to be a fairly significant figure.

You may remember that they sent envoys to Hezekiah. Hezekiah shows them all the stuff he's got, which was a little bit of a mistake. Isaiah will remind him of that a little later on.

But Babylon, or Babylonia, is particularly significant when we get to the fall of the southern kingdom. And that will be, as I've said up here, King Nebuchadnezzar. Also, it's probably more properly known as Nebuchadrezzar, but everybody says Nebuchadnezzar, so you can do either one with that.

Again, review your Old Testament Parallels, because there is a letter, there were a number of letters found when people excavated Lachish, found this Lachish letter that talks in very poignant terms about just how awful it is. They can't see the fires burning from Hezekiah. And basically those, I'll show you a map in a moment, those are the two fortified cities that remain as we read Jeremiah, that passage in chapter 34.

So, you can put those together a little bit as well and see how difficult things were for this little tiny kingdom of Judah right before its fall. And then finally, Egypt we want to keep in mind, and always a, well, an interesting force down to the south and the west, raising some problems for the people in Judah, because some people thought, hey, you know, it would be really smart, kind of go ally ourselves with Egypt and then fight against Babylon. And as we're going to see when we study the prophet Jeremiah, he's going to get himself in trouble because that's not his advice to the people.

So, there's all sorts of complicated things going on. If you want to just think of contemporary parallels, look at any political situation and the odd alliances that kind of form and then break up and form and reform with somebody else in our contemporary politics. The same thing was going on back then.

Nations don't change a whole lot. Anyway, that's just a quick thing, but again keep coming back to your Old Testament parallels, that'll help you a whole lot. Just a quick look at a map as well.

We saw this same basic geographical area when we looked at Assyrian expansion. Now we're going to look at Babylonian Empire, and notice by the time we have it in its full extent, it's coming way down into Egypt here. As a matter of fact, when we read some of the stuff in Jeremiah, we do see that the Babylonian Empire was really extensive.

Interestingly enough, it doesn't last very long, as we'll see when we pick up in the post-exilic period. Well, let's do some biblical stuff. As I said, we've got to catch up down south, and here is our fast race through some of these events, with people from the southern kingdom following Jehoshaphat.

Uzziah is going to be the next major figure. In between are a couple of key people, and I just want to kind of get them on your radar screen. I trust you're doing your reading so you've got a good sense of some of the details of this.

Last time, one of the interesting characters we talked about was this guy named Jehu, or Jehu. You may remember that he was anointed by a prophet. Well, he was fighting off in remote Gilead.

He's the guy that drives like a madman, and so he comes back roaring towards Jezreel, and when he gets there, he kills both the northern king and the southern king, all right? So that's where we pick up right here. Ahaziah is the southern king. He is the one that gets assassinated, as Jehu makes his whole sweep, gets rid of the house of Ahab, gets rid of prophets of Baal up north, and makes a clean, maybe not too clean, but at least a complete sweep of those kinds of things.

When Ahaziah is off the scene, having been assassinated, his mother, whose name is Athaliah, okay? She's in boldface up here for a reason. She married into the Southern dynasty. I hope this is making sense to you.

Omri was king up north. Omri was the father of Ahab. Omri, followed by Ahab, big open arms towards Baal worship, okay? When Jehu has wiped out the son of Ahab, the grandson of Omri, he's done a cleanup up north, but there's been this little problem down south, and that is that Athaliah had been married into the line down south, and she is a very ugly woman.

If you've read the text, you know that she does a major purge because she's trying to get rid of all the Southern dynasty folks, and frankly, if you read between the lines, here's what's going on. She's seen some ugly stuff happen up north, but she's determined not to let Baal worship disappear, and so you can kind of see that she wants to establish Baal worship as the major object of worship down in the south as well, and therefore she does this whole purge, and she rules for a seven-year reign of terror, basically, wiping out all sorts of people. However, who gets hidden away by his nurse? A little guy named Joash.

Joash, brilliant. Yeah, a little guy named Joash. He escapes this purge of Athaliah, and he's hidden by his nurse and by the priest Jehoiada for seven years, and then they bring him out.

They crown him king. They say we're going to keep the covenant, and interestingly enough, Athaliah is beheaded. She's executed.

She's off the scene because she's been a really serious damaging force to the Davidic dynasty and to the worship of Yahweh. Joash is a great king for a while. In fact, Joash is a great king for as long as the priest Jehoiada is alive.

Jehoiada was a great mentor if you want to think about it that way. Unfortunately, when Jehoiada dies, Joash pretty much apostatizes. He caves into the advice of some

of the people around him, the nobles, et cetera, and they basically reestablish Baal worship again and Asherah.

Baal and Asherah go together. Baal is the male. Asherah is the female consort in this whole ugly part of, what should I say, imported Phoenician worship.

When this happens, after Jehoiada dies and after Joash caves in and goes back to that, he gets rebuked by a prophet whose name is Zechariah. But in his anger, he's going to have Zechariah assassinated. And then in retribution for that, I mean, you see the tension here and the revenge and vengeance just building up and building up.

In retribution for that, Joash himself will be assassinated. Likewise, his son Amaziah will be assassinated. Are you seeing just a really sad, tragic dissolution of the southern kingdom at this point? It's going downhill in a major way.

But then along comes a man named, well, first of all, Azariah, but we know him probably better as Uzziah. So, think of those as parallel names. When you read Azariah, it's the same as Uzziah.

I will refer to him as Uzziah. He's a good man. He's a good king.

2 Chronicles has excellent things to say about him. He does make a critical mistake, and we're going to talk about that in a moment. But prior to that, we learn that he's been successful.

He expands the borders of Judah back out again. It says he's a person who developed war machinery. It says he's a person who loves the soil and loves to be out working.

So, a whole well-rounded type person. Unfortunately, and this is a story you probably know, in a moment of pride, he does something he should not have done, which is to go right into the temple with the incense, and the Lord will strike him with leprosy as a result of that. Because that's true, he does have to live in seclusion, and he and his son Jotham will co-reign during the last years of his reign.

So Jotham's time of reign will overlap with that of Uzziah. Jotham is a good king as well. We don't read a lot about him, but we do read he's a good king.

And then along comes Ahaz. We're going to read a little bit about Ahaz because this is going to set the stage for something we're going to do with one of the major prophets, who happens to be Isaiah, a little bit later on. And let me explain some politics that you probably know, but it doesn't hurt to go over them again.

When you think of Judah, and here's our little Judah right here, small, small country. To the north, much bigger had been Israel. At the time of Ahaz, Israel still exists.

We wiped it out last week, but at the time of Ahaz, Israel still exists. Who's to the northeast of Israel? Syria. Good.

Also known as Aram. The buffer zone between Israel-Judah and our major superpowers in Mesopotamia, whoever they happen to be. And at this point in time, they're all Syria.

So, you've got four major entities here that are significant. When the northern kingdom, again, before it's full, the northern kingdom and Syria gang up on Judah, it's a scary thing because Judah's tiny to start with. And here you've got this northern kingdom. It's big, and they've got an alliance with Syria, which is also powerful.

When they gang up on Judah, King Ahaz gets scared. And so, what does he do? Well, something that was an easy temptation, he makes an alliance with the superpower of the day and pleads with them for help.

And we're going to pick up the story. I'm actually going to read it out of Kings. Chapter 16, verse 10.

King Ahaz went to Damascus. So, they're meeting in the buffer zone area because Tiglath-Pileser, who's king of Assyria, has made some life difficult. King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria.

He saw an altar in Damascus and sent to Uriah the priest to sketch of the altar. So, Uriah, the priest, built an altar in accordance with all the plans that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus and finished it. When the king came back, he saw the altar.

He approached it and presented offerings. There's a whole muddle of stuff that Ahaz is doing. One is a political problem.

I'm going to say something more about that in a moment. The second is clearly a religious assimilation problem. He's seen something that is attractive, more attractive than Yahweh's altar, more attractive than the worship of the Lord, and he's importing that right into the temple.

That's obviously something that is despicable in God's sight. Ahaz will also shut the doors of the temple, which says something as well about his feelings for the worship of the Lord. But now, back to this alliance.

When we study the book of Isaiah, Lord willing, next week, we're going to come across a very interesting prophecy in chapter 7. It's going to be Isaiah's prophecy to

Ahaz in the face of this alliance between the northern kingdom and Syria and in the context of Ahaz's wrongful appeal to Assyria for help. So, jot all that down because Isaiah is going to rebuke Ahaz for having done that. And we're going to pick up on that prophecy in chapter 7 and watch it in its political context.

So, this is another one of those places where you don't forget what you've studied because if you forget what you've studied, you're like a woman who remembers that proverb. He gives birth to a child and goes out and buries it. Right. I'll just keep reminding you of that rabbinic proverb.

It's such a wonderful one. So, hang on to this for our study of Isaiah. Let's carry on.

We want to pick up under Hezekiah and spend some time here. After Ahaz, you have a real change, and I'm going to pick up with 2 Chronicles if you are following in your text. Hezekiah is a remarkably good king.

In 2 Chronicles 28, verse 24, it says what I just indicated to you. Ahaz shut the doors of the Lord's temple and set up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem. In every town in Judah, he built high places to burn sacrifices to other gods.

And by the way, 2 Kings will also tell us that Ahaz is one of these kings who passed his children through the fire, whatever ugly kind of thing that means. So Hezekiah's got some work to do. The first thing he does is effect some religious reforms.

Let's keep reading in 2 Chronicles 29, verse 3. In the first month of the year of his reign, right away, first month, first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the Lord and repaired them, brought in the priests and the Levites, and he says, get rid of all the defilement here. Now, I'm not going to turn to 2 Kings 18, but in 2 Kings 18, it says he took out the bronze serpent. Let's remind ourselves: what was the bronze serpent, and what was it doing in the temple? Does anybody remember? Sarah, go ahead.

Yeah, interestingly enough, they've had this thing ever since their wilderness wanderings, apparently, because if you remember Numbers chapter 21 after the people had been grumbling, and Moses said to Moses, I'm sorry, the Lord said to Moses, set up a serpent on a pole and the people that look to it will be healed from the snake bites that had been afflicting them. And he did indeed do that. It appears that over the centuries, because we're talking about wilderness wanderings, perhaps as early as 1400 BC, now we're down around 700 BC.

Over the centuries, this thing had been kept as a religious artifact, if you will. But perhaps it had also turned into an idolatrous object, and therefore, what Hezekiah will do will be to grind it to pieces. By the way, just as an aside, there are scholars who suggest Hezekiah may have had another reason for grinding this thing to pieces.

The serpent represented Egypt. And maybe at this point in time, it wasn't all that good to have an object that clearly represented something about Egypt in their temple context as well. So, there's always that option.

At any rate, he's gotten rid of all that idolatrous stuff, cleans up the temple, and we have a long, long discussion in chapter 29 about the cleansing of the temple. Notice that he's also going to celebrate the Passover. This is chapter 30, and again, let me read you a little bit about what's going on here.

Hezekiah not only addresses people in his kingdom, but he also sends messengers up north. That's really a remarkable thing to do because that's an area that had been off and on at enmity with Judah, and yet notice, wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh. Those are two tribes up there.

They decided to celebrate Passover in the second month because they hadn't had time to clean things up. Verse 5, they decided to send a proclamation throughout Israel from Beersheba. Where's Beersheba? Vaguely.

East, west, north, south. Yeah, it's south, right? Beersheba's down south. If you go just about straight west from the bottom end of the Dead Sea, Beersheba's right out there.

Sending messengers all the way from Beersheba to Dan. Where's Dan? All the way up north in an area that has subsequently been taken off into captivity. At any rate, at the king's command, in verse 6, couriers went through all Israel and Judah, and they said, people of Israel, return to the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that he may return to you who are left, who've escaped from the king of Assyria.

All right? Don't be like your fathers. Don't be stiff-necked. If you return to the Lord, then your brothers and your children will be shown compassion.

He will turn his face to you. Now, if you continue to read the text, one of the things that happens is a lot of people say, oh yeah, right, and they mock him. But it also goes on to say that some people of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun tribes up north kind of decide to buck the scorn that's heaped upon them.

They humbled themselves, it says, and went to Jerusalem. And in Judah, the hand of God was on the people to give them unity of mind as they celebrate Passover. And they have a large celebration of Passover.

Now, by the way, what was the reason for a second-month provision to celebrate Passover? It's in the Torah. He's not just doing this randomly. It's in the Torah.

Do you remember why they were allowed to have that stipulation? Sarah? Yeah, if they hadn't been clean or if they'd done a journey. That was also one of the stipulations in Numbers 9. Well, here you're dealing with these people who have traveled perhaps long distances. They've been working hard to get the temple clean.

Not everybody's clean, and yet you have Hezekiah praying on behalf of them. May the Lord who is good, I'm in chapter 30, verse 18, halfway through it. May the Lord who is good pardon everyone who sets his heart on seeking God, even if he's not clean according to the rules of the sanctuary.

And the Lord heard Hezekiah and healed the people. So God's mercy and compassion come through in that particular context. Well, at the same time, and again, you can get some of the details of how this is all working out from reading the Old Testament parallel stuff.

But at the same time, Hezekiah has, well, chutzpah is the best word for it. What's chutzpah? It's a great Yiddish word. You take Dr. Wilson's Modern Jewish Culture, you'll learn a little more about chutzpah.

But it's a worthy word to learn now, too. Does anybody know what chutzpah is? If you've grown up in a Jewish neighborhood, you know. Go ahead, Chelsea.

Is it gumption? Gumption. Yeah, that's a word my grandmother would have used. How many of you know what gumption means? Some of us.

All right. It's sort of a brazen arrogance, which is probably a little stronger than gumption. But I like gumption.

It's a good word, right? But chutzpah is, well, brazen arrogance is the best way to translate it, you know? Just the audacity to do something that maybe seems really unrealistic and, in some cases, perhaps not terribly wise, but nevertheless, you go ahead and do it anyway. Here's Hezekiah. Again, just think, tiny little Judah, and he's rebelling against the king of Assyria.

That's a pretty astonishing thing to do when you think of the geopolitics of this. And again, 2 Kings 18 gives us some details on the years and how this unfolds. Well, as a result, along comes Sennacherib.

And it's kind of interesting to read the conjunction between the end of Chapter 31 of 2 Chronicles and the beginning of Chapter 32. Let me simply read it for you. Here's the end of Chapter 31.

Just been talking about all the revival and the reform and so forth, it says, this is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah, doing what was good and right and faithful before

the Lord, his God. In everything that he undertook in the service of God's temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought God, and he worked wholeheartedly, and so he prospered. And you'd like that to be the end of the story, but here's how Chapter 32 starts.

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. You know, just if I may make a lesson that I hope is not too much of a stretch.

Just because we are good and faithful and serve God with all of our hearts, we oughtn't expect things to go easily and smoothly. In fact, those are probably the times when Satan's going to attack the most to try and take us down. And in some ways, you've got that same kind of thing happening here.

Hezekiah had done what was right, and yet he was going to face a crisis in terms of politics and his very existence. Now, we're going to see how this works out because he's got prayer that he goes and engages in the prophet Isaiah, and he's going to go into the temple and pray as well, and God will deliver him in a miraculous way. But it's not an easy deliverance, and of course, a lot of work goes into it as well.

Well, at any rate, here's just a quick look at what's happening with Sennacherib's invasion on our handy-dandy map. Here's Jerusalem in red, right up there. Hard to see.

Take my word for it, that says Jerusalem. The white oval is Lachish. As you've read through this historical stuff, I wish I could sort of just transport you all into a geography class consistently.

Most of the invasions, if they don't come through the north to get to the northern part of Israel, are going to swing down the coastal plain. Do you remember our coastal plain area? Easy travel, flat, military invasions, and commercial traffic always go on these major routes in the coastal plain. That's what Sennacherib has done.

So, he's come down the coastal plain on this highway right here, and he's parked himself in Lachish. He's not the only one to do that. Other invaders have done it as well because these are the gateways, these valleys, right like so.

These are the gateways up into the hill country. And when Sennacherib is in Lachish, he is ready to march right on up here, and as a matter of fact, that's precisely what he does. He sends his commanders, and they're going to speak to the people on the walls of Jerusalem.

So, it's looking tough right now. In fact, it's looking very difficult at this point for Hezekiah. Sennacherib will actually go back and brag about this.

The Sennacherib prison is where he says, and again, this is in your Old Testament parallels, it's where he says I had Hezekiah trapped like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem. Now, he makes you think that that was the end of Hezekiah, but of course, we know from the biblical text that it works otherwise. He also shows us a depiction of the storming, his armies storming the site of Lachish.

Now, interestingly enough, when you go to the British Museum, and those of you who will study in Oxford, and I hope a lot of you will, there is a whole room in the British Museum that's devoted specifically to this material that was taken off a wall in a room in Sennacherib's palace. And you can walk all the way around the room. It's probably about the size of the first seven rows here.

All the way around the room are the reliefs that were taken off the wall of Sennacherib's palace, and it shows the storming of Lachish. So here you've got defenders up here, Jewish defenders, Israelite defenders, sorry, siege ladders going up there, people down here chipping away to try and get through the wall, and all sorts of brutality. That's just one section of it.

As you do the archaeology at Lachish, by the way, and we don't have time to do this, but there are still remnants of the Assyrian siege ramp that they found there as well. At any rate, that's Sennacherib's attempt. Here's an artist's reconstruction of what it might have looked like.

Finally, here you have Sennacherib again presenting all the tribute brought from the people of Lachish, who were taken by him to Sennacherib in his transportable throne, and everybody's coming in subservience. Well, let's see what happened in terms of how God provided for this beleaguered people and Hezekiah as king. First of all, in fact, I better get my text here.

Hezekiah has his priorities and his ideas in terms of how to deal with things straight. He prays earnestly. He goes into the temple.

He lays out this whole matter before the Lord in prayer. All right? So, he's doing that, first of all. He also appeals, as I said a moment ago, to the key prophet of this time, and that is Isaiah.

And Isaiah is going to say to him, don't worry. These people are going to be gone. Chapter 19 of 2 Kings, this is the word the Lord, and this is Isaiah speaking, this is the word the Lord has spoken against Sennacherib.

The virgin daughter of Zion despises you and mocks you. The daughter of Jerusalem tosses her head as you flee. He then goes on to talk about how God is indeed going to deliver Jerusalem.

Okay? So those are some of the things that are happening. Hezekiah prays. Hezekiah draws on the resources of his prophet Isaiah.

Likewise, Isaiah will convey messages to the Lord. But Hezekiah does some other things as well. All right? He's going to defend his city.

And he does it in some very specific ways. If you remember our tiny little city of David, and I'm going to show you a map in a moment, the source of water for the city of David was a spring, one spring called the Gihon Spring. It had huge towers on either side of it, obviously to protect it.

Hezekiah is going to build an outer wall. He's also going to build another wall on the western slope of Jerusalem to protect his refugees who have been coming down from the north and settling there. And then, of course, his major, major enterprise is a little tunnel in chapter 20 of 2 Kings.

As for all the other events of Hezekiah's reign, all his achievements, and how he made a pool and the tunnel by which he brought water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? So, Hezekiah is very carefully working to provide for his people, both in terms of prayer and Isaiah's work on this and on their behalf, as well as his engineering. And I'll show you some more photographs in a moment of this. As you read Old Testament parallels, I hate to keep coming back to Old Testament parallels, but there's fascinating stuff in there.

You've got the Siloam inscription. It's a wonderful inscription that was found in Hezekiah's tunnel. It describes how these two groups of people, picking with axes at bedrock, right, this is going through bedrock, and it's a third of a mile long, chipping and somehow managing to meet each other in the middle. And that particular inscription describes how that happened.

At any rate, the Assyrian forces are taken care of. It says, The angel of the Lord, chapter 19, 2 Kings, went out and put to death 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning, they were all dead bodies there.

So, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh, and interestingly enough, what happened to him? Another little vignette on the gruesome, brutal nature of kingdoms back then. His sons assassinate him.

It's not a happy ending for Sennacherib. Well, I've already indicated some of the lessons in terms of Hezekiah here. His faithful lifestyle.

The fact that he very carefully took advantage of all the resources in every possible avenue and worked really hard. We're going to see the same patterns, by the way,

when we pick up our biblical character named Nehemiah a little bit later on. Just a couple of things to look at in terms of where this is all taking place.

It might be a little hard to see that from the back of the room, but here we've got a map of the city of David. That's this whole thing right here. The Gihon Spring is right there.

Hezekiah's tunnel, which didn't exist until Hezekiah actually began this thing, starts here and starts here. Well, it ends there, but chipping away and chipping away from this end, they meet in the middle. Again, it's remarkable.

I note for you that it is a third of a mile long, if you can imagine doing that. Engineers still are trying to figure out how Hezekiah's people managed to do this. This is 8th century BC.

Maybe the suggestion is that maybe they were following some sort of a natural fissure in the limestone. That's entirely possible. But at any rate, it brought the water all the way down like to a pool that would have been inside the walls and therefore protected so people could access it.

One other thing about that pool, by the way, it not only brings the water from the obvious spring area. The Assyrians would probably know where that is. They'd try and camouflage it.

But they're bringing water inside the pool here. But it also does something for people who are living up on this hill. By this time, Jerusalem had expanded.

It was no longer just this little city of David. In fact, Hezekiah is going to build a wall that's going to encircle this whole section here. The deal is that there have been so many people coming from the north, probably as refugees from the northern kingdom, based on what Assyria was doing up there.

Lots of people are coming south. They're living in a fairly unprotected western hill of Jerusalem. Hezekiah builds a wall around them.

And this pool helps them too because instead of, think of your water-gathering techniques, if you lived up here and the only source of water you had was over here, you'd be going down into this valley, up over that hill, and down into that valley again. With the water down here, you just go down into one valley and then schlep it back home. It's just a nicer way of making water accessible for an expanding Jerusalem population at this point.

So, Hezekiah is doing some really good stuff. A couple pictures. Two things.

Here's his wall, one of the walls. It's not the only one, but this is part of the wall that's been discovered on that western slope that I was just pointing out to you, that section that he enclosed, probably to protect the people who had increased the size of Jerusalem and were living up there. This wall, by the way, was apparently, and they figured this out from all the debris at the bottom, that high at this point.

You can see the size of those people standing there, so that gives you a little bit of an idea of the thickness of this wall. Interestingly enough, in Isaiah chapter 22, we won't look at it now, but in Isaiah chapter 22, verses 9 through 11, Isaiah says, "'You tore down houses to build a wall.'" Then he goes on to say some other things about it and actually rebukes the people for doing this. The you, by the way, is not singular there.

It's plural, talking about all the Israelites. "'Tore down houses.'" Apparently, there were house foundations under here, but they were sort of like in a whole prospect of eminent domain, and they took them over to build this public works defense thing. Here we have Hezekiah's Tunnel.

One tiny look at it. In some places, by the way, this is fairly short. Some of us have to stoop to get through it.

In other places, it's quite tall because obviously after their high, sorry, after they met in the middle, then they had to make the floor at an even level so the water would flow from the spring here all the way down to the pool there. And therefore, as they lowered that grade, by the time you get towards the end of the tunnel, some places it's 12 to 16 feet high. The story of the discovery of this tunnel in the 1800s is a fascinating story.

I wish I had time to tell you. Obviously, you know, we go through it now carrying flashlights. The people who went through it then didn't have such things.

They had candles that, of course, blew out fairly quickly. And it was so full of silt, and the water was so high that in some places, you read these first-person account narratives, the guys going through had to hold their breath because waiting for the next air pocket because where the ceiling of it was low, it was water rushing all the way through. And here they are rushing through on it as well on little board things.

Fascinating stories. Don't have time to tell them. Anyway, that's Hezekiah's defense.

All right. We need to move on. Yeah, I'm sorry.

Go ahead. Can I just ask if there is a water source within the city? Is that, like, the point of it? Yeah, the point of it. The water source, the Gihon Spring, as early as the Middle Bronze Period, which brings us way back into the early 2nd millennium B.C., had two huge towers guarding the spring.

But nevertheless, that's the obvious water source. And so here they're going to bring it and channel it all the way into the city so that people don't have to go down and get that. You've asked a great question, and if we had a whole hour to talk about Jerusalem archaeology, I could do a lot more with this because there's a series of channels and pools that predate this.

But this particular one is pretty clearly from Hezekiah, and it's bringing the stuff down to another pool that's really very much inside the city. But yeah, it's a lot more complicated, in all honesty, than I've made it sound. So good question.

Take, well, take anything. Come to Israel with us. We'll walk through the tunnel.

All right. At any rate, after Hezekiah comes Manasseh. Here's the interesting thing, or one of the many interesting things.

Do you remember Hezekiah's prayer when he got ill? And Isaiah said you're going to die. And Hezekiah turns his face to the wall, and he prays to the Lord, and Isaiah comes back and says, you get to have 15 more years. Did you ever put the mathematics together on that? Manasseh was born during those last 15 years because when Hezekiah died, Manasseh became king, and he was 12 years old when he became king.

It's fascinating because Manasseh is a hideous king. Manasseh sheds volumes of innocent blood, and unfortunately, he reigns 55 years. If you've got your text, I'm going to be in 2 Kings 21 for just a moment or two to give a little bit of a sense of what an awful downturn things took.

You know, we have the blessing of our presidents turning over every 8 years. Think of 55 years of someone like Manasseh. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

Verse 3, rebuilt the high places. His father, Hezekiah, was destroyed and built altars in the temple of the Lord.

And they weren't altars for God, believe me. Built altars to the starry hosts and sacrificed his own son in the fire.

Practiced sorcery divination. Verse 7, took the carved Asherah pole he had made and put it in the temple. Manasseh did more evil than the Amorites who preceded him.

So, it just goes down and down and down and down. Verse 16 is probably the worst one. Manasseh shed so much innocent blood that it filled Jerusalem from end to end.

By the way, we don't know this for sure from the canonical text, but there's some extra-canonical literature that is descriptive of Isaiah being martyred under Manasseh. In fact, Isaiah being sawn in two. Does that remind you of anything? In New Testament, maybe? This is a text called The Martyrdom of Isaiah where we read all that.

It tells about how awful Manasseh was. The prayer of Manasseh is in that as well. But just for a quick detour, in our catalog of the faithful folk, in Hebrews chapter 11, we have a very interesting statement.

We've been here before, right? We've talked about the judges, and we've talked about the prophets. After mentioning the prophets, at the end of verse 32, then the writer of Hebrews talks about those who administered justice, gained what was promised, shut the mouths of lions, that's Daniel, quenched the fury of flames, escaped the edge of the sword, whose weakness was turned to strength, verse 35, women received back their dead raised to life again, that's Elijah, Elisha. Others were tortured and refused to be released, verse 36, some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. That's Jeremiah.

They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were put to death by the sword.

So pretty clearly the writer of the book of Hebrews has in mind this Jewish tradition that we have actually in a text to the effect that Isaiah met his end that way. Isaiah prophesied a long time, but he lived past the end of Hezekiah's good reign and then saw the reign of terror under Manasseh. At any rate, as I indicate to you, very terribly low spiritual ebb, shed innocent blood, just ugly stuff going on here.

Interestingly enough, I'm going back to 2 Chronicles at this point, so give me a moment to get there. The king of Assyria takes him captive, keeping in mind that Assyria is always there as a looming horrible force. Verse 11 of 2 Chronicles 33, the Lord brought against them the army commanders and the king of Assyria, took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles, and took him to Babylon.

Now, here's the neat part. If you've read this, I hope it struck you as more than just Bible-ese, because it should. In Manasseh's distress, he sought the favor of the Lord his God, and he humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers to get that in the face of what we've just read about this man.

When he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea, and the Lord brought him back to Jerusalem, and Manasseh knew that the Lord was God. If you haven't woken up yet this morning, please wake up for just a minute and hear what I have to say to you. It's probably the most important thing you're going to

hear the entire semester because often you and I and people your age and everybody says, God can't ever forgive me.

I've been too awful. I've done too much, and that's just too grievous for him. I can't forgive myself.

I'm sure he doesn't forgive me. You've heard that litany. If you haven't said it, I'm sure you know people who've said it.

Manasseh is our person to keep in mind. He's our paradigmatic person to keep in mind, because if God can forgive Manasseh for shedding just who knows how much innocent blood, filling the streets of Jerusalem, the text in 2 Kings says, then my bet is that he can forgive you and me for the things that are so truly displeasing to him. And yet if we come in repentance, the forgiveness is there.

And that's the lesson from Manasseh. Again, if you need to go back to sleep now, do. But get that lesson.

It's a tremendously important one, and it'll have an impact not only for you, I trust, but for people with whom you might be talking over your next years of living. At any rate, Manasseh is indeed repentant. Now, if you're thinking, and if you've read carefully, you're going to say, yes, but, because it's right.

2 Chronicles 33:13 is the verse I just read for you. But if we go back to 2 Kings 24, and I want you to do that with me, there are consequences. Yes, the Lord brings Manasseh back.

Manasseh knows the Lord is God, and he tries to effect some change in the last couple of years of his life, apparently. But if you look at chapter 24, verse 4, and I'll start with verse 3, these things happened to Judah according to the Lord's command in order to remove them, Judah, from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all he had done, including the shedding of innocent blood. For he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord was not willing to forgive.

Okay, and you're thinking, yes, but there's a contradiction here. I'm going to suggest, no, there's not. The Lord forgave Manasseh personally because Manasseh repented, but there were covenant consequences.

Okay, there are covenant consequences, and therefore, that's why we have the people going into exile. God forgives, but he doesn't always remove the consequences for what happens and what we do. Okay, that's our evil of Manasseh.

We need to keep charging right along here. Got a few more people to go through. Josiah.

The two major reformers, as you think through this divided kingdom period, are Hezekiah on the one hand, Josiah on the other. Both of them will celebrate Passover. Why? Why is Passover the celebration of a reformed, repentant, reviving people? What does Passover celebrate? Deliverance? Redemption? Big thing.

God's deliverance. God's redemption. God's removing people from the bondage of, in this case, Egypt in the first Passover, but the bondage of sin here as well.

One of the first things that happens with Josiah is fascinating. I'll stay in Kings. chapter 22.

He's a little eight-year-old when he becomes king. Isn't that interesting? And then it says, in the 18th year of his reign, so you do your mathematics, and he's just a tiny bit older than you all. That's pretty impressive.

He says, go to Hilkiah, the high priest. Have him get ready for the money that's brought into the temple. We're going to clean the place up.

And what do they do? Well, they find the book of the Torah—verse 8 of chapter 22. I have found the book of the Torah in the temple of the Lord.

Fascinating. Hilkiah is the priest who finds it. What do they do? They take it to somebody named Huldah.

Let's keep reading. Hilkiah, the priest, I'm in 22:14, went to speak to the prophetess Huldah. She lived in Jerusalem in the second district, and she interprets this for him.

She says, here's what's going on. Now you're thinking to yourself, how could they lose the book of the Torah? Well, it's not hard if you've got Manasseh for 55 years doing the kinds of things he was doing, and the temple becoming as polluted and profane as it had become. So, in cleaning it out, here it is, the thing they were supposed to be living by.

They hadn't known it, and they need the prophetess Huldah to interpret it. Just a word on Huldah, by the way. Interestingly enough, they didn't take it to Jeremiah, who is a living, active, breathing prophet at this point in time.

It's not like there weren't any other prophets around, but they take it to Huldah, and she says, there are consequences for Torah disobedience. Reading those curses and blessings for the covenant. Well, at any rate, Josiah is going to indeed renew the covenant because he's so overwhelmed with the importance of this.

He orders Hilkiah, the high priest, I'm now in 23:4, to remove from the temple all the junk that was there. And he not only cleans up the temple, he cleans up the countryside as well. And if we keep looking through verse 6, Josiah brought all the priests from the towns of Judah and desecrated high places, from Geba to Beersheba.

Now, one of the things this tells you, by the way, is that I'm always thinking geographically, so you'll have to forgive me. Geography is so important. Before we said Dan to Beersheba, remember that? About 20 minutes ago? That was when the northern kingdom was still there.

Now, it's from Geba to Beersheba. Geba is probably about, at the maximum, eight miles north of Jerusalem. So, we've shrunk.

And yet, they're desecrating high places from Geba to Beersheba. He desecrated the Topheth in the valley of Ben Hinnom, which is where they'd been sacrificing children through the fire, passing children to the fire to Molech. And then, interestingly enough, it says, even the altar at Bethel, verse 15, the high place made by Jeroboam, son of Nebat, which caused Israel to sin, even that altar and high place he demolished.

Now, here's the interesting thing. Verse 16, Josiah looked around, and when he saw the tombs that were there on the hillside, he had bones removed from them and burned on the altar in accordance with the word of the Lord. Do you remember something about this before I finish reading that verse? Any vague recollections of the division in the kingdom and something that happened right after the division in the kingdom? I'll refresh your memories.

It's just a little clue in terms of the quiz. Sorry, test that's coming up a week from Friday. I think that's the date.

Right away, when the kingdom splits, Jeroboam, son of Nebat, sets up this false worship. Remember that? An altar, he's himself offering sacrifices. Priests that aren't Levites are doing this.

It's an eighth-month festival instead of a seventh-month festival. Basically, it is a parody, without much truth, of what the people have been told to do in terms of worship. A man of God from Judah, unnamed prophet, comes up to Bethel and he pronounces a proclamation against it.

Do you remember? He says, on you, O altar, a man named Josiah of the house of David is going to burn the bones of these priests. We read it in 1 Kings 12, or was it 11, or was it 13? I never remember my chapters. I think it's 13.

At any rate, you can excise that, Ted, I've heard from that. Go back and review it, because now you're seeing some 300 and some years later that this is indeed what's happening, and 2 Kings is referring back to this whole process. Now, we need to move right along.

Purges the temple, precincts Jerusalem, the land, fulfillment of the prophecy made at Bethel, and he celebrates Passover, as I said, celebrating the redemption, the restoration, the deliverance from sin, recognizing the profound spiritual importance of Passover, Josiah will celebrate Passover, and it basically says there was no Passover celebrated like that before ever. It was such a profound revival. So, in the long run, we have verse 25 of chapter 23: never before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned the Lord as he did with all his heart, all his soul, all his strength.

Does that sound like Deuteronomy? You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength. Josiah's following in that pattern. He dies at the hand of Pharaoh Necho, tragically enough, and then we have the last kings of Judah.

A very fast descent after Josiah, in keeping with the covenant, as I read for you earlier. The people had been disobedient for so long, God keeps his covenant, and he'll bring them into exile. Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Babylon will invade in several different waves, and I'm going to review these when we start talking about the various prophets, notably Jeremiah and Ezekiel, particularly.

First invasion by Babylon, 597. A guy named Jehoiachin becomes king for a while, and by the way, Babylon is now setting up puppet kings. These aren't real free kings.

They're set up puppets, first by Egypt, then by Babylon. Zedekiah, and finally, you have Nebuchadnezzar coming in, destroying the temple, they're taken in exile to Babylon, and one last thing that we need to read, and then I'll let you go for the day. Right at the end of 2 Chronicles, these last kings are all compressed into one chapter, chapter 36, 2 Chronicles, that's it.

And then it says, the land had its rest. Chapter 36, verse 21, the land enjoyed its Sabbath rests, all the time of its desolation it rested until the 70 years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord, spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, which we're going to look at next week. Okay, time to stop.

See you on Friday when we pick up the whole idea, the concept of prophets, prophecy, prophetism,