

## **Kings and Prophets 15-10-22**

This is Thursday, the 22nd of October, 2015, and every year when this particular time rolls around I am grateful to God for the opportunities that He has given to me individually and to our family and to our church over the years. October 23rd, 1983 was very easily a day that some of us could have not lived beyond, and so I always pause to reflect. Everybody has anniversaries in their lives that are meaningful in both positive, negative, and just sobering and reflective ways, and that's a particular one for me.

I knew many better men than myself that did not live past that day, and by the grace of God I did. That's probably enough on that subject. We will continue tonight.

Our study in Kings and Prophets will be resuming in 2 Chronicles chapter 33, 2 Chronicles chapter 33. This will be the continuation of our look at the king of the southern kingdom who follows his grandfather Ahaz and his father Hezekiah, King Manasseh. Let's take a moment to dedicate our time and focus our concentration before our heavenly father as we go to him in prayer.

Father, thank you for your many blessings, the provision that you make, the protection that you provide, the opportunities that you grant to us each day, the renewal of your mercies, the extension of your forgiveness and your fatherly care over us, all because of the wonderful work of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Savior, our Redeemer, and the means by which we even dare to approach before your throne. We thank you for the opportunity to spend this time together looking at the truth of your word, searching for the guidance and the motivation and the divine enablement that come from it, and we pray that as we together look at this portion of your word that God the Holy Spirit will minister it to each heart. We pray it in Jesus' name, Amen.

Let's take a look. We looked mostly at the Kings account last time. Tonight we'll look from Chronicles.

We were in 2 Kings chapter 21 last time. Some of the material here is parallel to Kings. Other is supplementary.

Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king and he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem. What do we know about those first 12 years of his life? The traditional understanding has been, and it was my understanding until recently, that after King Hezekiah had his brush with death and the reversal of God's pronouncement of your time is up, that roughly three years after that time Manasseh was born. We know from a more careful study of God's word that Manasseh was actually born about seven years before those events and about five years into the second phase of Hezekiah's ministry he becomes co-regent.

So the final 10 years of Hezekiah's life are an overlap and a training period for his son Manasseh. It's interesting because there was a similar overlap with Hezekiah and his own

father in sort of a reverse sense. Hezekiah's father Ahaz was exceedingly wicked, but for the last 13 years of his reign Hezekiah overlapped with Ahaz.

And that training and coaching and co-reigning period did not instill in Hezekiah his father's evil values. In the same way Hezekiah who is a king compared to David in the early years of his reign isn't able to pass along his positive values in the decade that he overlaps with his own son. And as you look at the kingship in southern kingdom in Judah, this has been a pattern.

Even Ahaz, Manasseh's grandfather himself had a co-regency with his father. So this has been an established pattern and we shouldn't find it unusual that Manasseh actually becomes sole ruler at the death of Hezekiah around the age of 22 or 23. But he was old enough to see the failure of faith when Hezekiah tries to buy off the Assyrians.

He had previously tried to form a coalition to oppose them and throw off their yoke and that did not succeed. But we find tonight as we move into the reign of Manasseh that the stark contrast that was marked at the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, day one we saw the tremendous renovation that he did in the temple, the restoration of worship, celebration of the Passover and so on. Well, it's an anti-revival.

It's a, what's the opposite of revival? Unvival? Devival? Yeah. I like that. It's a devival.

And so Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king. He reigns 55 years in Jerusalem but he did evil in the sight of the Lord according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. You remember this from last time.

He rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah, his father, had broken down. Now, and as you go forward we see, you remember this from last week, he rebuilds these idolatrous shrines, he raised up the altars for the bales, he made wooden images, he worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them, he built altars in the house of the Lord which the Lord had said in Jerusalem, shall my name be forever. We talked about what the name of God represents.

It is His presence, it is His reputation, it is His covenant relationship to His people. All of those things are in His name. It's like when you sign your name to a contract, your name means something.

You have agreed to terms and it is backed up by your integrity. You bring to that agreement your credit, your credibility, your history, what is known of you. And we today reflect our understanding of what name means.

He made a name for Himself. One of my favorite all-time albums is a Roger Miller album and he's sitting on the front of, remember the old vinyl albums, you had a lot of space for artwork, and Roger Miller is sitting in sort of a wood shop and he's carving out wooden letters and most of them are up saying Roger Miller and the name of the album is Making a Name for Myself and he's finishing up these letters. By the way, if you haven't heard the songs on that, the ones in my family I know have, but that's of his more subtle humor albums and more refined and

thoughtful music, that's the best that he ever did.

It's beyond Chuggalug and Dang Me and that, it's a very enjoyable album. Suffice it to say, name means more than just appellation. It means more than just nom de plume or nom de guerre or nom de whatever it is you're doing.

It carries a lot of freight and God said, I will put my name in Jerusalem, I put my name at the temple. The implements from the shovels to the vessels were marked Holy to the Lord, Holy to Yahweh and they were stamped with his name and it was unique in all the world. The planet is far bigger than even they could possibly imagine at the time, but of all of the places in the world, God chose to put his name there.

Where is God's name today? Where has God chosen to put his name? In the church, but specifically in you, in me. We are holy ground. We are the place of the burning bush.

We are the smoking Mount Sinai. We are the cross. We are the empty tomb.

We are the representatives, the living embodiment. Remember what the Bible says about the Lord Jesus. He is the fullness of Deity in bodily form.

Well, guess what the bodily form is today? You, me, we are the fullness of Deity. We are carrying and we bear and represent the name capital N Hashem. They would say in Hebrew.

It's H-E-M, the name. So, my name will be there forever. He built these altars in the house of the Lord.

He caused his son to pass through the fire in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, Ge-Hinnom, Ge-Henna gets its name starting at this point. He practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery and consulted mediums and spiritists. What's the big evil in witchcraft? Why is it so evil? I was thinking about this and discussing a little bit this morning.

If you look around today at what passes for news and what passes for information, what we are told about any given situation in the world, in the economy, in politics, in high places in government, who wrote what email and knew what when, did the president know and when did he know it? I mean, we are going back 40 years now, some of the same concerns and investigations and so on, but it ultimately boils down to the difference between truth and falsehood. God is truth. God's word is truth.

God's name represents everything that is true about origination, about the sustaining of reality and everything that we know and everything that we are. It is all sustained by his word, by his truth. Today, there is all kinds of managed information and manipulated facts and factoids and charts and graphs and statistics and releases by bureaus and governmental agencies and so on.

And we say, well, I know from my research that this is actually false. This person is saying a

thing and it's a misrepresentation. It's not the truth or it is a version of the truth that is misleading and is designed to manipulate and to conceal and to further an agenda.

It's not really the open, honest, light of day truth. We say, well, it's false and we would prefer truth to falsehood. But what's the problem with falsehood? When he goes to soothsayers and uses witchcraft, that's not God.

Therefore, it's not truth. It's going to be error. What do you think is going to happen to Manasseh as he listens to the advice of these false prophets and these false seers, these false sources of inside information? Why would somebody go to someone who says sooth? What does soothsayer mean? For sooth.

What is sooth? It's the old English word for truth. A truth-sayer. I'm going to go find a truth-sayer, a sooth-sayer.

That's why we say, I, you know, plight you my truth. It's another old reference to the truth. I pledge you my truth, my integrity.

My name is behind this set of promises I'm making as we stand here about to be united in marriage. Here's the problem. It's not just that a thing is false, that it is not true.

We get a report that unemployment is at 4.9%. The truth is, unemployment is at 24.9%. Let's say. It's way up there from what they're reporting. The truth is that they are selective in what they choose to count, just like the cost of living increases.

Well, if we count beef and potatoes in the cost of living and their prices have risen, we don't want to report how much the cost of living has risen. So, we're not going to use beef and potatoes anymore. We're going to use pork and corn because those have not risen as much.

And our rationale is, well, when these prices for beef and potatoes rise, people won't buy the beef and potatoes. They'll be buying pork and corn. So, we should use those as the basis for the statistics.

Wink, wink, nudge, nudge. And when the price of pork and corn goes up too much, well, people will really be buying soybean weenies and barley. So, we're going to base the cost of living on the rise in those because those haven't risen much.

And they'll give some pabulum excuse, some prevarication. Here's the problem with falsehood, with what the soothsayers and the witchcraft people were doing. It isn't just that it's not true.

In the same way that truth reflects the glory of God, truth serves God. Jesus said, you will know the truth, and the truth will have supernatural power to release your shackles, to take away the power of sin that binds, that limits, that leads to death. The wages of sin is death, but the truth will set you free.

Truth serves the interest and the purposes of God, and it bears his stamp. It reflects his image.

It carries his name.

Falsehood isn't just wrong and bad because it's not true. Falsehood is wrong and bad because it is used in the service of, it spreads and promotes evil. You say, well, they asked me if I really emailed that report that they didn't get, and I say that I did when I really didn't, and I resend it because I don't want to be seen as late.

So I'll say I sent it, and I don't know what happened to it. It's a small thing. It doesn't really matter.

It's not true. It's false, but it's a harmless falsehood. They'll assume, they'll believe me when I say it must have gotten lost in the email system, and when I resend it, and they get it, and it's all well, but I've gained a benefit because now I'm not besmirched as somebody who forgot or who was late finishing the report and had to tell a, quote, little white lie.

The falsehood will cover this faux pas on my part, and it'll actually be good. It will further my purposes and my goals. It will keep my reputation where I want it to be, and so the falsehood is not a bad thing.

Hear me and think about Manasseh. Falsehood of any kind. Falsehood of any nature.

Now, I'm not talking about the dinner didn't turn out so good. Well, what did you think? Honey, it's great. Thank you for making it.

It's fine. I'm not talking about the courtesies that we pay to one another. That's not falsehood.

That's grace. This is falsehood. This is falsehood that partakes of the lie, and it is a means of spreading malignant, corrupting, corrosive, denigrating, destructive evil.

Evil thrives on falsehood. Why did Eve partake of the fruit? She believed the lie. Hath God not said? Yes, he did say that, but you left something out.

It's not complete. It's not entire. It doesn't paint the whole picture, and now I'm going to add to it a fiction.

Well, God will just be jealous if you end up being as smart as he is. Eve looks at the fruit now in the light of this false propaganda and says, it's desirable to make me wise. It's desirable for my agenda.

It's desirable to further my goals, to elevate me, to keep my name intact, to improve me, to give me a bargaining chip with Adam or whatever it is that was in her mind. But falsehood is under the picture. Falsehood of any kind, government statistics, a dodge to avoid responsibility, falsehood in the classroom, reconstructing history with falsehood, minimizing the role of Christian values in our heritage and in our culture, minimizing the evils of racism, minimizing the genuine bad things that have happened in our history is also evil.

Truth is good, and truth serves good and serves God. It may be harsh. God's word is truth, right? And it is profitable for what? Doctrine.

That's okay. Reproof. Correction.

We don't like reproof, and we don't like correction. It hurts. It stings.

It's embarrassing. I feel ashamed. Shame and blame, we can't have that.

Shame and blame are out. Anything that partakes of shame and blame. This is why kids don't get grades in school anymore.

Well, I might be embarrassed. I got a C, and he got a B, and now I feel inferior. Oh, well, we can't have that.

So, you know, can't post grades. You know, back in 1906 when I was a boy, they posted your grades with your name right on the door, and you could go up there. Sam Hall, 73, C-.

Billy Spears, 92, A-. George Carter, 88, B+. Sam, 73, C-.

Well, it's truth. Truth is good. Truth serves God.

Any kind of falsehood, any kind of concealing of the truth, hiding the truth, locking away the truth serves falsehood, and falsehood is a tool of evil. Now, this seems like a, what do you call it, a self-evident truth. There's a name for that that I can't think of.

A master, being a master of the obvious, but there's a name for it. It's a, yeah, it's a truism, but there's another one. It'll come to me when I don't need it anymore.

But it seems self-evident, but think about this. We just, tautology is what I was trying to think of, that it's just circular reasoning. Well, of course, falsehood is evil, and evil is false, but think about this.

The amount of falsehood that we justify, that we rationalize, and we say, what's the harm? Internal thoughts that we have, and it comforts us to speculate that things are a certain way when there is a portion of our conscience, and God, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God are a still small voice saying, you know, it's probably really not their fault, but I just feel better making it all their fault, in my mind. It may never come out my mouth. But we comfort ourselves with convenient falsehoods.

We construct our day, and we pave our path with falsehoods. We try to get others to go along and get along, and we try to improve our standing and maintain what we think is, in reality, most of the time, everybody knows that you're putting on, you're exaggerating, you're not in the path of solid truth. But we like to think that we have inflated things and made them better with these falsehoods, and we think, well, at worst, okay, I'm exposed as an exaggerator, I'm exposed as someone who tried to make an excuse and it didn't really fly.

What's the harm? The harm is much greater than we imagine because it is like saying, well, I've got 48 men in this platoon. I've got four squads of 12 guys and a couple of NCOs. Only one of them is actually a sleeper agent and a traitorous plant.

What's the harm? I've got 47 other guys that will do my bidding, and I don't think this guy can get too far out of line. I don't know who he is. I just know from some source that there's a plant in the midst.

Now we're going to go have classified briefings. Now we're going to go practice a secret operation that we're all going to be involved in. But I'm just going to tolerate the presence of this traitorous false agent.

Well, you would never do that knowingly, but we do it knowingly in our thought life. I think it is easy for us to underestimate the power of falsehood. Our warfare is not against flesh and blood.

It's principalities. It is powers. It is rulers of the darkness of this age.

If they're invisible, then how do they exert their influence? How do they apply their leverage? Where is it? If they're invisible, they're not knocking things over, making me trip down the stairs. They're not shooting out one of my tires and making me have to change a flat in the rain in traffic. Where is their rulers of the darkness, the powers up in the air someplace? What's the harm? They're helpless.

They're invisible. They're immaterial. Where is their leverage? Where is their power? It is entirely through falsehood.

That's how they work. They promote and they work through tainted truth, which is falsehood. The prediction of the end time is they will believe the lie.

And that's what's happening today. Christianity has been co-opted by the lie. And we think, well, how did it come to such a pass? It seems like not that long ago people were going to church on Easter Sunday with little hats and Bibles and high heels and singing the old hymns.

And now all of a sudden it's just tattoos and jute necklaces and praise music and oh my gosh. What happened? I'll tell you what has happened to Christianity. It is the inroads of falsehood, innocuous falsehood, harmless falsehood.

Okay, so it's not quite right. Manasseh is just the end result. This is when it kind of turns overt.

It takes the cover off and you see what is really going on. Manasseh has been there with his father, overlapped for his whole life before he became king. He's not sole king until 22 years of age.

And his father only reigned for 29, right? So Manasseh has seen most of his father's reign. And he has convinced himself that this stuff doesn't play. It's not right.

He sees his father strip the gold off the doors of the temple. He sees him buy off. He sees him quail.

He sees him not really believe that God can do what he says. He sees him cultivate this rebellious coalition when the prophet Isaiah has told him don't do that. And he did it anyway.

So the conclusion of all of this is we have to become more alert and more diligent and more intolerant about falsehood. Because it will sit under the surface like Manasseh did under the reign of Hezekiah and it will just fester. And it will change the weight of argument in our mind so that the little machine that does our calculations and arrives at our conclusions, well, I should do this.

I should decide this way. And what we call our conscience that says, yeah, that's a good move. That's going to be best.

This is the way to proceed that will gain the most advantage. That is going to be tilted. It's going to be off.

It's like a bad rule. It's like a bad level. It's like a faulty reference.

And we won't know it's faulty. How did it get faulty? We have admitted and tolerated and allowed the presence of falsehood, innocuous falsehood, unrelated falsehood. Falsehood that doesn't seem to make a difference.

Oh, well, I told them that. It's not really so. I said I did it, but I really didn't.

I'll do it and catch it up and it'll be okay. These little small compromises that we make with falsehood breaks the machine because it's not just that untruth. It is the power of evil that comes with it.

It's not just the little piece of uranium. It's the radioactivity that comes with it. It's not just the harmless piece of metal.

It's the sharp edge on one side of that metal. The power of darkness is leveraged into our lives with every falsehood that we tolerate, every concept that we don't analyze. If we do not watch and pray, if we are not alert, if we do not test the spirits and see if they are of God, we let our guard down and falsehood enters.

The most harmless falsehoods. I personally think that this is one of the inroads that is being made in education for our children because simple mathematics, simple physics, simple biology, non-controversial, forget origins. Let's just talk about how things work.

Everybody can agree on that. Science is good. It's how things work.

Airplanes fly. Microwaves cook. Novocaine deadens nerves.

Man, I love that stuff. Disinfectants disinfect. Antibiotics kill biotics.

These things are good. But when you taint those truths, simple natural truths, when you taint them with philosophical falsehood, when you have to put them in a wrapper of secular atheist materialism, when you have to accompany, it's a piggyback. It's like a bad bill through Congress.

We're going to save the puppies, but there's an appendix to the bill that says we're going to fund abortions. Save the puppies, save the puppies, but there's this little poison pill buried down inside it. We're going to feed the poor, and we're going to take away all your guns.

It's hidden. It's an accompanying evil. Well, this is what's happening to the truths, wonderful, beneficial observations about the way God made the universe.

They are being accompanied by falsehood, and the power of evil radiates out of that, rots, corrodes, corrupts. It's insidious. It works its way into places you would have never thought, and that's the power of evil.

This is Manasseh in the world today. God is there, but I'm going to build altars to other gods. Let's have a party of gods.

He didn't take God's altar away, did he? God's altar is still there. The church hasn't taken the altar of God out of churches. What has it done? It has added churches.

I drove past a church with a big sign out there. They are teaching at the church yoga. Everybody says, oh, yoga.

Well, isn't that just where you fold your knees the wrong way and get kind of an abstract look on your face? No, yoga is Eastern mysticism. It's inherent. You do these things and incite your paw and empty your id, and I don't know what all you do in yoga, but whatever it is you do, that is the accompanying poison pill with the exercise, with the stretches, with the, oh, but isn't it good for your muscles? And, oh, yeah, if the guy wants to talk a little Eastern mysticism and, you know, say your mantra or whatever it is, that's just a way to relax.

It's just a way to control your breathing. It's a way to enhance. No, it is evil.

It is falsehood. You name one godly biblical character that would sit down for a yoga class. Name one.

I dare you. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada. You think he ever went to yoga? No.

He didn't need it to wield his javelin. Hear me now. Falsehood seems innocuous in so many places.

Oh, they misreported that. Oh, I misreported it. I misconstrued it.

I misrepresented it. It's harmless. It is not harmless.

Every falsehood, you are going to end up being King Manasseh, putting other altars in God's courtyard, compromising, polluting, and corrupting God's name. Corrupting and polluting the place that God has chosen for His name, which is us. It is all the same as if you started pouring pig blood on the altar to tolerate falsehood within ourselves.

We need to be honest to a fault. Remember when Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their taking of oaths and trying to enhance the truth by swearing by the gold of the altar and the throne in heaven and one thing and another. And He said, you are corrupt, you are vile, because you are trying to pass falsehoods off as true with your oaths.

Let your yea be yea and your nay be yea. If you say yes, it had better be yes. If you say no, it had better be no.

Falsehood of any kind, falsehood is never innocuous. Don't be fooled into thinking that it is. It is about as innocuous as Eve picking that piece of fruit.

It conveys, it makes an opening. You are canceling the password on that account and allowing any old buddy to log in. They are now inside.

They can exploit, they can leverage, they can manipulate. You saw where some high-level government agency and its director got hacked by a 13-year-old kid. You know how they do that? Falsehood.

They'll call up and pretend to be someone else. Oh, what's the harm? He just wants to do some system maintenance. I did see a glitch on my screen last week, which was this guy planting something.

I've got a problem on my computer. Now he's calling up saying, I can fix that problem. Did you just experience a problem on your computer? Oh, yes, I did.

And this guy did some little harmless thing. Well, give me your password and I'll get in. Well, he gives the password, and under false pretenses, he's into the entire system that the whole company runs on.

Hackers don't have to crack 256-bit encryption. They just have to crack one stupid person, one inattentive person. Don't be stupid and don't be inattentive spiritually.

Find the falsehood and root it out. This falsehood is used. Manasseh starts it.

He sets it up. He legitimizes it. He treats it on an equal footing with God's altar by putting those altars in the courtyard.

And then what does it say that he did? He seduced the people to sin. He sets it up and makes it look legitimate. And they say, well, this is from the king.

This is God's anointed. So it must be okay. He seduced the people.

So it tells us in verse 9, Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel. God told Abraham, your descendants are going to sojourn in the land and they're going to have to put up with it because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And for the iniquity of the Amorites, God sent Joshua and flaming hail from the sky and purged that land.

Manasseh leads them to new depths of sin that are beyond the Amorites that were in the land when Joshua and the children of Israel crossed the Jordan. First went to Jericho and Ai. They are worse.

The people of God, the place where God has his name is capital city, is worse than the worst Canaanites that Joshua and his people ever encountered. How did he do it? How did he seduce them? Falsehood. Falsehood.

Soothsayers that aren't saying sooth. We have to treat falsehood in our lives like the nuclear, radioactive, dangerous material that it is. Be honest.

Take your lumps. If you goofed, homologeo. God is faithful and just to forgive.

Everybody else can fall in line. We forgive as we are forgiven, right? And we are forgiven as we forgive. But I cannot overemphasize what Manasseh's example represents.

Real quickly here, look at verse 10. The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. The word of God came as a warning, as a rebuke, as a correction, as an instruction in righteousness, and it was not heeded.

What do you think is going to happen now that we, together, have looked at this passage, have seen this truth, have seen the danger of falsehood, and if we go and straightway forget what we saw in the mirror, as James puts it? What do you think is going to happen? Well, here's what happened to Manasseh. The Lord brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria. Their fear, the thing they've been opposing, the thing they've been trying to avoid, the very thing they've been doing everything possible and using all of their human ingenuity and all of their false gods and false strategies and false alliances to overcome, God brings it against them and overcomes them with it.

And they become slaves of the very thing they thought they were getting away from. Took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon. The old king James says, took him in thorns.

But these are painful bonds. And where does he go? To Babylon. Babylon isn't even the power that it is going to be yet.

But this is a foreshadowing. This is an anticipation. This is a prophetic taste.

He takes the king to Babylon. What is that a picture of? What's going to happen in 605 and in 598 and in 586 B.C.? Judah as an entire kingdom, Ezekiel and Daniel and Hananiah and Mishael and all the rest of them, are going to be taken to Babylon. This, God says, look, let me show you now.

You see the man gathering sticks on the Sabbath? Look at what happens to him. You see Achan taking of the forbidden things, violating God's command? This is what's going to happen at the judgment, the final judgment, the last judgment. I will show you now what is coming later in spades, in writ large.

Manasseh is a picture prophecy for Judah. You see this king reversing the course of his father and going into the realm of evil and falsehood? This is your fate. Having painted this picture, then God relents.

And you remember, this is shades of Hezekiah. Put your affairs in order, you're going to die. Your example of lack of faith is devastating.

He repents, he relents, God gives him more life. Manasseh is going to do the same thing. When he was in affliction, he implored the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the Lord God of his fathers, prayed to him, and God received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom.

What's going to happen when Judah goes into captivity in Babylon for 70 years? And they entreat the Lord, and they repent, and guys like Ezra and Nehemiah make appeal. God will send them back to their kingdom. After this, he, Manasseh, built a wall outside the city of David on the west side of Gihon.

The west side of Gihon. The spring Gihon is on that valley between the Mount of Olives and Mount Zion. And it's, remember, his father Hezekiah had made the tunnel so that the water of the spring Gihon could be brought into the city.

And so now, if there's a wall to the west of Gihon, it means it's between the spring Gihon and the rest of the wall. So he's greatly fortifying. Now that they can get the water and don't have to have a wall, it was not possible, if you look at the geography, to build a wall that would encompass the spring.

It couldn't be defensible. So to defend the city, they've got to put the wall up higher, but that would have cut them off from the water until Hezekiah did the tunnel. So now he can greatly enlarge and expand this wall.

So he builds this wall to the west of the spring Gihon in the valley, as far as the entrance to the fish gate, and enclosed Ophel. And he raised it to a very great height. He put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah.

He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the Lord and all the altars that he

had built in the mount of the house of the Lord. So, in a way, Manasseh becomes an amalgamation of his grandfather, who built all of the stuff, and his father, who tore it all down. He builds it up like granddad Ahaz, and now he's tearing it all down like his father Hezekiah.

All in one. But when does he do this? After he is chastised by being sent away from his kingdom, in bonds and fetters, to Babylon, and then God delivers him and he returns. This chastises him and he gets rid of the idolatry.

What's going to happen in Judah? What's going to happen for the remainder of the time, all the way down to the time of Christ? Is there going to be any more idolatry? It cures them. The Babylonian captivity forever purges. And it's like a hyphrocator.

It's like a thing that burns stuff out. What do you call that when you burn out something? Like your tonsils. It cauterizes it out.

And they never do that again. Do you see Manasseh's picture prophecy? Now we're going to see there are a couple of other prophets that are operating around this time, Nahum and Habakkuk. This is the tail end of the ministry of Micah, tail end of the ministry of Isaiah, Hosea.

All of those prophets are in and around this time. But the most powerful prophecy is the picture prophecy of Manasseh himself. We tend to think, oh, Manasseh, horribly wicked king, son passing through the fire and the rest of it.

But he's a picture both of the worst that happens in the southern kingdom and the reforms that are going to come out of God's enforced exile and captivity. But he tells them ahead of time. There is always grace before judgment.

There is warning before discipline. So we, being smart and looking at this, remember our new memory verse? All these things were written for our instruction? That we through patience and the comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Let's hope that we become alert, that we find and purge falsehood and its power and its inroads and its influence out of our lives so that we don't have to live out this example.

We learn from it and we avoid it. We trod the path of blessing, the narrow road that goes through the straight gate that leads to life. Falsehood of any kind.

It can be scientific falsehood. It can be philosophical. It can be economical.

It can be falsehood of any kind. We have to find it and reject it, get rid of it. If you've got sin in the camp, God will not hear.

Our iniquities will separate between us and our God and our sins will hide His face. And we suddenly find things unraveling. We find that we're wasting the time God gives us.

We're wasting opportunities. We're ineffective. We are fruitless.

We are going to be that branch that is going to get pruned because it is not bearing fruit. Why go through all of that? It makes no sense. But falsehood makes you think things are good when they're not.

I'll give you my last little example here. I was reading about computers that you can attach to your computerized car. Now, if you've got a fairly new car and it runs on a computer, you can go to the diagnostic port and you can hook up an auxiliary computer and you can tweak the settings of your car.

You can play with the fuel-air mixture and at what point the sensors that report temperature and air inflow and all the rest of it, you can play with the mix and you can get more horsepower or more economy or more whatever you want. And they make these. And you think, wow, this is great.

And so somebody hooked up one of these to their car and they said, I can't believe it. I was getting like 13 miles to the gallon. Now I'm getting 29 miles to the gallon.

I really just can't believe that. Well, he started keeping records on paper and found out that what had happened is this little tuning computer that he had added was giving him some economy, but it was also fooling the car's computer. And the car thought it was getting 29 miles to the gallon and that's what it was reporting because it was operating on information that was modified by the tuning computer.

The tuning computer fooled the engine into more performance and stuff by feeding it falsehoods so that it would do things. Well, the car's computer read the falsehoods, took them for truth and said, hey, you're getting almost 30 miles to the gallon. He did get an improvement.

It was only two to three miles per gallon, not 13 miles to the gallon. But it's so important for us to live in the realm of truth. Let's know the facts.

And when we know the truth, not only does it liberate us and set us free, but it frees God to use us, to shine the light of His glory through us, to make meaningful inroads against evil in and through us. But we have to be in the realm of truth. If you make Jerusalem where God has chosen to place His name, a place of false altars and false gods and false sayers of sooth, how long is God going to stick around? It's going to be the vision of Ezekiel and the glory of God is going to depart somewhere else.

That's our challenge. That's our warning. This is Manasseh being sent to Babylon for us.

Let's heed that picture and let God be the God of truth in us and through us and let the light of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ shine. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word. Thank You for how powerfully it convicts us and shows us in the light what is true and what is false.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will continue to illuminate our hearts and our thoughts with

the light of Your Word so that we can identify and eliminate those things that beset us and entangle us and keep us from running with patience the race that You have set before us. We pray that as a result, both individually and as a group, as a fellowship of believers, the light of Your grace and Your glory will shine in us and through us and the Lord Jesus will be glorified. We pray it in His name.

Amen.