

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 2 Kings 21

We are almost coming to an end to this awesome book.

We are going to be looking at a new king today – we are going to be studying the life of King Manasseh – a wicked king – who turned his back and the back of a nation against God.

However, even in the life of Manasseh, we will see God's amazing grace, mercy and longsuffering towards His people and we will see many applications that we can learn from his life.

Let's pray...

[2Ki 21:1-26 NKJV] 1 Manasseh [was] twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned **fifty-five years** in Jerusalem. His mother's name [was] Hephzibah. 2 And **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.

For the past couple of weeks, we have been looking at the life of King Hezekiah.

A king who brought reforms to Judah – he got rid of all the idolatry, he got rid of all the high places, rebuilt the temple, reinstated temple services and placed his trust in the Lord –

And the Lord brought deliverance to Judah.

He was a good king for a nation to have.

However, toward the end of his life, Isaiah, the prophet brought a word from the Lord – and said, “Hezekiah, its time – get your house in order – your time on earth is coming to an end”

Hezekiah cried out and the Lord not only extended his life by 15 years, He also gave Hezekiah confirmation by rolling back the sun dial 40 minutes.

And as we saw at the end of our study last week – Hezekiah wasted those fifteen years that the Lord had given him.

He became prideful and lost sight of the Lord.

Many theologians believe that the reason that he cried out was because he didn't have an heir to the throne – and during those 15 years, Manasseh was born.

The name Manasseh in Hebrew means, “causing to forget” – you might remember that in the book of Genesis – Joseph names one of his sons, Manasseh – This was because God made Joseph forget all the previous pain and trial in his life.

And fittingly, the actions of Manasseh, will contribute to the nation of Judah forgetting the goodness of God.

Manasseh is considered the most evil king that Judah ever had.

He had a godly father, he had access to the prophet Isaiah, he had seen the work that the Lord had done in the life of his father and in Judah – yet he still chose to rebel.

Church, good parenting has a tendency to turn out good kids, but it is not a guarantee.

We tend to think that bad children are products of dysfunctional families, the problem is that there is no such thing as a “perfect” or “functional” family.

We all come from families that simply have varying degrees of dysfunction.

All of us have sinned and continue to sin

All of us make mistakes

So there is no perfect family -

And there is no better example of this – than the Garden of Eden.

Could there be a better “Father” than God? No

Yet Adam and Eve rebelled against God.

So Manasseh made the decision to rebel against God.

Not only was he the most evil king that Judah ever had – he also reined longer than any other king. 55 years.

Manasseh did so much damage to the kingdom of Judah – that the scriptures tell us in both 2 Kings 23 and 2 Kings 24 – that the reforms of King Josiah (we will study him next week – he was another very good king) – the reforms of Josiah were not enough to quench God’s wrath – they simply delayed it.

In other words, Manasseh’s actions were the straw that broke the camel’s back.

Now, as we go through this study, I want you to ask yourself, “Why would God allow Manasseh to reign so long?”

So let’s see what he did.

3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. 4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name." 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

All the reforms that Hezekiah had put in place – not only did Manasseh undo them; he caused Judah to dabble in other forms of idol worship.

Here, he is being compared to Ahab – Ahab was the most wicked king of Israel – Manasseh went even further than king Ahab.

Judah began to worship everything.

And the sad thing is that Manasseh was even erecting some of the idols inside the temple of the LORD.

6 Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke [Him] to anger.

He sacrificed his children to Moloch –

I explained to you a few weeks ago that Moloch was one of the pagan gods of the Ammonites – he was the god of prosperity.

So people would burn their children alive as they sacrificed their sons to Moloch.

Turn with me to Mark 9

[Mar 9:43-44 NKJV] 43 "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched-- 44 "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.'

Here in Mark 9 –

Jesus is correcting His disciples who had the misconception of the kingdom of heaven as just a reward and not in terms of sacrifice.

And three times He uses the word “hell”

The word hell – is the Hebrew word, Gehenna.

This is an actual place outside Jerusalem

This is the Valley of Hinnom – it is at the valley of Hinnom where the people in Judah had erected the statue of Molech – and where all the child sacrifices took place.

The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah refer to this.

When the Jews return from the 70 years in captivity – they no longer worshipped Molech – and turned the Valley of Hinnom into a city dump where waste and animal carcasses were burned around the clock.

So Jesus provides them with an illustration that they were very familiar with – knowing the history of Gehenna and what goes on there -

So getting back to Manasseh –

He is sacrificing his children and he is also doing other things that were forbidden by the LORD.

Practicing witchcraft – reading his horoscope every morning to see whether he was going to have a good day or not –

That is all forbidden by the LORD.

Astrology is a form of idolatry – it is the belief that the stars and the heavenly bodies dictate what goes on here on earth.

Instead of worshipping the Creator – it is worshipping the created.

And the reason that all these things are forbidden is that they lead us away from the LORD.

It gets worse -

7 He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8 "and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers--only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them."

Manasseh sets the wooden image (Asherah pole) that he had made in verse 3 and puts it inside the temple.

Asherah was the god of fertility – so in order to appease Asherah, prostitution was common in its worship.

So Manasseh is defiling the temple of the LORD.

But it gets worse.

9 But they paid no attention, and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

So, not only had Manasseh done evil in the sight of the LORD – the people of Judah had followed their king and they rebelled against God also.

We see here that Manasseh seduced them.

Notice that it doesn't say Manasseh compelled them or forced them – he simply seduced them.

He told them what they wanted to hear.

Church, there will be individuals in our lives that will want to influence or seduce us into going against God's will.

There will be Manasseh's

Who will tempt us into compromise -

Who will lead us into false teaching –

Think about what the people of Judah were seduced into – sacrificing their children for the sake of prosperity.

Abortion is ok because the government said it is ok.

So since 1973 – we have 63 million abortions performed and counting because the government said it was ok.

You see church, prosperity and seduction will cause the greatest of people to do the worst of things.

How do we prevent ourselves from being seduced?

By taking a stand in the truth and not giving an ear to the Manasseh's in our life.

Be careful who we associate with – “bad company corrupt good character”
and test what they say with the Word of God.

We are also told that their wickedness was worse than all the ites that lived in Canaan before God brought them into the Promised Land.

Now, think about his.

Hezekiah had brought major reforms to Judah only years earlier.

He had ended idolatry

He had put an end to the alternate form of worship that was taking place

Why were the people so quick in not only returning back to what they were doing before but it appears that now they had fallen away further from the LORD?

Here is the thing church.

All the reforms that the Hezekiah had made – they were all changes that occurred on the outside – but there was no change in the heart.

It is like the individual who says, I am going to be a better Christian by going to church every Sunday, by carrying around a bible and by not partying every Friday night –

What's missing –

There is no change in the heart of the individual.

That is what happened to the people of Judah.

They changed their ways outwardly, but inwardly – they were still the same.

And given the opportunity to live the way they wanted – they jumped on the opportunity.

10 And the LORD spoke by His servants the prophets, saying, 11 "Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who [were] before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols), 12 "therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Behold, [I] am bringing [such] calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. 13 'And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; I will wipe Jerusalem as [one]

wipes a dish, wiping [it] and turning [it] upside down. 14 'So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, 15 'because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.' "

Here we see God pronouncing judgement upon His rebellious people.

I had you make a note of the phrase "both his ears will tingle"

The word tingle – it is not the same word that refers to the tingle one gets when one uses Head and Shoulders –

It is the word for shutter / tremble

This is in reference to the impending judgment that was coming.

Also, I had you make a note of the measuring line of Samaria –

And what God is saying is that He is going to use the same standard or the same level that He used to judge the Northern Kingdom- Israel – He is going to use it on the Southern Kingdom.

If the northern kingdom didn't get away with it, neither would the southern kingdom.

16 Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin,

in doing evil in the sight of the LORD. 17 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh-- all that he did, and the sin that he committed--[are] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 18 So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

The shedding of blood that is mentioned here in verse 16 – is in reference to the damage that Manasseh did to Judah.

Not only in returning to idolatry but also in encouraging idolatry among his people.

Jewish tradition also tells us that it was Manasseh who had the prophet Isaiah killed.

And Hebrews 11:37 described the death of Isaiah as he was sawn in half.

Verse 19 – we are going to come back to Manasseh – let's see how Amon turned out.

19 Amon [was] twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name [was] Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. 20 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. 21 So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked; and he served the idols that his father had served, and worshiped them. 22 He forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD. 23 Then the servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. 24 But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired

against King Amon. Then the people of the land made **his son Josiah** king in his place. 25 Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, [are] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 26 And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place.

So we see Amon – he was a wicked king and we see that his reign only lasted two years and the only good thing that came from Amon was that we will see Josiah – a good king, bring reform to Judah next week.

Turn your bibles with me to 2 Chronicles 33

[2Ch 33:10-13 NKJV] 10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. 11 Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze [fetters], and carried him off to Babylon. 12 Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. **Then Manasseh knew that the LORD [was] God.**

I asked a question of the beginning of the study – why would God allow a wicked king to rule for 55 years?

I believe He did it for two reasons –

1. He wanted the people of Judah to realize that they were still in a state of rebellion – that their hearts still yearned for idolatry.
2. God allowed Manasseh to reign for 55 years because that is how long it took him to repent.

This church, is God's grace.

This is His longsuffering – that He is not willing that any should perish.

Well, what about all the wickedness he did and the damage he did to Judah?

He repented and God forgave him.

Not only did God forgive him – he restored him back to the throne.

Church, we may feel that we have committed the worst sin that has ever been done – yet, God offers us His complete forgiveness.

(1 Jn 1:9 NKJV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Even Manasseh was forgiven by God.

In the gospels, we have the account of Jesus hanging on the cross and being mocked by the two thieves that were crucified next to Him.

And after hearing Jesus pray for those that mocked Him from below, one of the thieves had a change of heart, and he told Jesus “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

Did Jesus say, sorry dude – you should have done this 20 years ago. No

The scriptures say - Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

The same grace that God showed Manasseh, He shows us.

And neither Manasseh, the thief on the cross or anyone in this room – has done anything to deserve that grace.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, “I am a sinner.”

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 'May the LORD bless you and protect you. 25 May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. 26 May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'



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