

## The End of a Nation -2/26/23

### The Rule of Manasseh

**TEXT – 2 Kings 20:21** *And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.*

**INTRO – Israel was divided after the death of Solomon. There northern kingdom was ruled by Jeroboam and the southern kingdom of Judah by Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. There were 19 kings over the northern kingdom, called Israel and 19 kings and one queen over the southern kingdom called Judah. In the northern kingdom every king was evil. In the southern kingdom there were 8 good kings, two of which did evil in their final days. The northern kingdom was taken captive by Assyria in 725 BC. Hezekiah was king in Judah when the northern kingdom was taken and Isaiah was God’s prophet during this time. 2 Ki 21:1 Manasseh was twelve years old, &c.—Born three years after his father Hezekiah’s recovery. His reign was the longest of any king in either kingdom. There was no prophet during his reign. Tradition tells us that Isaiah was sawn in two by Manasseh; Heb 11:37. “Sawn asunder” Micah died also at the beginning of Manasseh’s rule.**

### I. THE SINS OF A NATION

**The rebellious spirit of the princes was present 100 years before Manasseh was king.**

**2 Chronicles 24:17-19** *Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. 18 And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. 19 Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.*

How could the good Hezekiah should have had such a son as Manasseh? but the young prince was evidently under the power of that reactionary party which, during Hezekiah’s reign, had been kept in check only by the strong influence of Isaiah. Hezekiah’s revival was mostly superficial.

On becoming king, Manasseh reintroduced the worst forms of idolatry which had disgraced the nations of Canaan. It was the height of evil to place an Asherah pole (Ashtoreth) and child sacrifice to Baal such as Ahab made.

**2 Kings 23:13** *And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.*

The sodomites were removed from the country under Asa, and his son

Jehoshaphat removed the remnant. However, 100 years later they were allowed to return because under Josiah who began his reign 18 years after the death of Manasseh. **2 Kings 23:7** *And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.*

That which began with King Ahab continued and influenced Judah as well as Israel.

**1Ki 16:32**, in the very precincts of the Temple, and to patronize the Chaldean astrologers who poured into the country from Babylon.

**Ezekiel 8:1-18 3** *And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy*

*6 He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations. 7 And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall. 8 Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. 9 And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. 10 So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.*

*17,18 Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.* Protests were raised against these abominations by Hosea, Joel, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Isaiah; but in vain. Nothing could stop these wicked rites, and their doom became inevitable. The Babylonian captivity was inevitable.

### II. MANASSEH’S EVIL INFLUENCE

**Jeremiah 15:4** *And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.*

**2 Kings 23:26** *Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.*

The interesting thing about Josiah and Manasseh is that their spiritual lives were exactly opposite each other. Manasseh began his reign in sin but ended it in humble repentance, while Josiah sought the Lord early in his life but ended his reign in disobedience.

#### **A. Manasseh's rebellion 2 Ki 21:1-9**

Historians have calculated that Manasseh ruled jointly with godly Hezekiah for at least ten years. Manasseh was a wicked man, worse than any before him or after him and reigned fifty-five years. How could such a wicked man be the son of such a good man?

No sooner was Hezekiah off the scene than Manasseh's true character was revealed. He built up what Hezekiah had torn down, and tore down what Hezekiah had built up. Instead of imitating godly Hezekiah, Manasseh followed the ways of King Ahab. Manasseh even carried his idolatry right into the courts of the temple. He rebelled against his godly father's example and against the Law of the Lord.

#### **B. His removal (2Ki 21:10-15)**

**2 Chronicles 33:1-9** *Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem:*

God sent his prophets to warn the king, but the king would not listen. God announced to the nation that judgment and captivity were coming. Judah had witnessed God's judgment on Samaria, but that had not brought the people to repentance. God promised to treat the house of David the way he treated the house of Ahab (2Ki 21:13). The Assyrian captains took Manasseh to Babylon where he was put into prison.

### **III. THE REPENTANCE OF MANESSEH (2Ch 33:12)**

**2 Ch 33:10-13** *And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people but they would not hearken. Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.*

**How typical this is of many people:** "When he was in affliction he besought the Lord." God in His grace forgave the evil king and permitted him to return to his throne. God works on behalf of those who sincerely humble themselves and pray.

### **IV. MANESSEH'S REFORMATION 2Ch 33:13-20; 2Ki 21:17-26**

Manasseh's repentance was not a shallow "fox-hole" conversion, for once back on the throne, he immediately began to repair the damage he had done. He fortified Jerusalem against the enemy; he removed the idols and the strange altars; and he sought to lead the nation back to the Lord. Of course, it was impossible to undo all the damage he had done. Sad to say, God gave Manasseh the longest reign of any Hebrew king, yet he accomplished almost nothing. In fact, even his repentance did not stay God's hand of judgment; it was Manasseh's sins that moved God to send the nation into captivity

**His wickedness was too great and his repentance was too late!**

**2 Kings 23:26-27** *Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. 27 And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.*

**CONCL** - King Manasseh had every opportunity to live a godly life and serve the Lord and his people with faithfulness. His father was perhaps Judah's greatest king (except for David); the prophet Isaiah was ministering in his day; yet Manasseh failed to find the Lord until the close of his life. His son Amon was not affected by his father's late conversion; he imitated his father's sins, not his righteous acts. He lasted but two years, then was slain in a conspiracy and buried near his father.