



Week 11: MANASSEH
Trusted. Obedient. Prophetic.
Winter 2023 w/Wednesday Night Crew

SL#2 PRAYER

SL#3 SCRIPTURE

He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 2 Chr 33:6b

SL#4

9 So 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. 10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. 2 Chr 33:9-10

SL#5

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. 2 Chr 33:11-13

OVERVIEW:

1. Manasseh's timeline [narrow focus]
2. Manasseh's name: The son of Hezekiah-why did he choose that name? [Widening the focus]
3. The box we have people in: [Do we have a cap on the price of Jesus' forgiveness? 'where Jesus has no cap?']
 - The box we keep people in & why do we want to keep them there?
 - What does that reveal about our understanding of God?
 - What does that reveal about our understanding of His restoration?
 - What is our process for capturing our thoughts & relating to others as God would have us?
4. Read Mother Teresa quote
5. Read Isaiah 55:6-9

1. Manasseh's timeline:

Date	Age	Event	Notes:
		Assyrian exile	2 Kings 16:20-17:6, 23-23:36; 2 Chron 28:27-36:5; isa 20:1-6; 22:9-25; 36:1-38:8, 21-39:8; Jer 1:1-19; 7:1-15; 13:1-11; 17:19-18:12; 19:1-20:6; 26:1-24, 18-19; Micah 3:9-12; nah 3:8-10; Zeph 1:1
		Decline of Judah	2 Kings 16:20; 18:1-4, 13-23:36; 2 Chron 28:27-36:5; Isa 22:9-11; 36:1-38:8, 21-39:8; Jer 1:1-19; 7:1-15; 13:1-11; 17:19-18:12; 19:1-20:6; 26:1-24; Micah 3:9-12; Nah 3:8-10; Zeph 1:1
698		Manasseh is born	
687bc	12	Coregency with Hezekiah	



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686		Hezekiah dies, Manasseh succeeds the throne & becomes sole regent	<p>2 Kings 20:21–21:1; 2 Chron 32:33–33:1</p> <p><u>*Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, was only twelve years old when he succeeded his father to the throne of Judea. In no way did he resemble his father whose piety and faith were not equaled by any other king who followed him. The young ruler, born of a late marriage, was immediately surrounded by the clique of court-notables who, during Hezekiah's reign, had gone into hiding. Manasseh's weak character and susceptibility to idolatry made him a willing tool in the ruthless and selfish hands of these men [Chabad.org]</u></p> <p><u>*Manasseh became king of Judah during hard times. Though Jerusalem did not fall to the Assyrians during Hezekiah's rebellion (2 Kgs 18–19; Isa 36–37; 2 Chr 32:1–22), this victory was mitigated by the "crushing burden imposed upon Judah as a result of the conflict" (Rainey and Notley, <i>The Sacred Bridge</i>, 246). During the revolt, Sennacherib claimed to have destroyed 46 walled and fortified towns and deported a huge portion of the populace as captives (Rassam Cylinder, lines 52–60; Grayson & Novotny, <i>Royal Inscriptions</i>, 65–66). The newly conquered lands were distributed to the kings of Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza, with heavy tributes. Sennacherib describes receiving a long list of gifts and payments from Hezekiah along with a promise of allegiance. These military, political, and economic losses resulted in Manasseh beginning his rule during a period of Assyrian dominance (Nelson, "Realpolitik in Judah (687–609 BC.)", 181).</u></p>
			<p>In the first few decades of his rule, Manasseh served as a loyal Assyrian vassal. Esarhaddon claims to have enlisted the support of twenty-two kings, including Manasseh, in the construction of a new armory (Nin. A. v 54–vi 1; Leichty, <i>Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon</i>, 23–24). Ashurbanipal lists Manasseh among the kings who supported his military effort against Egypt in 667 BC (Prism E 10, 13–21; Prism C II 37–67; Borger, <i>Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk</i>).</p>
		Manasseh commits idolatry	<p>2 Kings 21:3–16; 2 Chron 33:3–10</p> <p>Religious practices under Manasseh are denounced in the Deuteronomistic History (2 Kgs 21:2–7), as well as in other prophetic texts. This account depicts a flagrant rejection of the Deuteronomic law as shown by the comprehensive list of Manasseh's sins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He followed practices of the nations (Deut 18:9). • He rebuilt shrines destroyed by Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:3–4). • He built altars to Baal (Jer 11:13).



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He placed image of Asherah in the temple (Deut 16:21). • He worshiped the host of heaven (Deut 4:19; 17:3; Jer 8:2; 19:13; Zeph 1:5). • He burned his son as an offering (Deut 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kgs 17:17; 23:10; Jer 7:31; 32:35). • He practiced illicit forms of divination: soothsaying (Isa 2:6), consulting false prophets (Jer 14:14; Ezek 12:24; 13:6, 9, 23; 21:26, 28), and necromancy (Deut 18:11; Isa 8:19; 19:3). <p>This catalog of transgressions is so comprehensive and offensive that it effectively would make Manasseh the sinful king <i>par excellence</i> (Würthwein, <i>Die Bücher der Könige</i>, 1:441; Evans, “Naram-Sin and Jeroboam”, 123–24). Not only did Manasseh violate the prescribed manner of worship in Deuteronomy, but he led Judah to sin in the process and kindled the anger of God against the nation (2 Kgs 21:9, 11; Blanco Wißmann, «<i>Er tat das Rechte ...</i>», 161–73). Manasseh stands out as a ruler of the worst kind.</p>
		<p><u>Illicit religious practices under Manasseh would have originated in the local customs of Canaanite religion</u>, rather than an Assyrian system of belief imposed on vassal states (Cogan and Tadmor, <i>II Kings</i>, 272). There is no evidence of forced worship in Assyrian annals, nor were vassal states prevented from practicing their forms of worship (Cogan, <i>Imperialism and Religion</i>, 42–64). In the case of Judah, local syncretistic practices could have flourished based on influences from Phoenicia and the south due to trade and political ties. <u>The worship of Baal, Asherah, and the host of heaven are best explained as expressions of local religiosity</u> (McKay, <i>Religion in Judah</i>, 22).</p> <p><u>Manasseh could have made concessions to tribal leadership and local kinship groups because of his weakened royal position following the Assyrian takeover</u> (Lehmann, “Survival and Reconstruction”, 305; Ahlström, <i>Royal Administration</i>, 80). It is also possible that the popularity of Hezekiah’s reforms suffered due to their perceived ineffectiveness in bringing Assyrian downfall (contra Isa 10:12–19; Cogan and Tadmor, <i>II Kings</i>, 273). The brief mention of Uzza as Manasseh and Amon’s place of burial is not entirely clear, but could suggest a link with the Arabian astral god Al-‘Uzzah (Gray, <i>I & II Kings</i>, 710–11; McKay, <i>Religion in Judah</i>, 24–25).</p>
		<p>Manasseh is accused of burning his son as an offering (2 Kgs 21:6; 2 Chr 33:6), though the historicity of human sacrifice in ancient Israel and its presence in Yahwistic religious practice is</p>



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		<p>contentious. There are very few mentions of human sacrifice in the biblical account, and they are universally negative; it is an exemplar of detestable Canaanite religious practice (Deut 12:31; 18:10; Lev 18:21; 20:2–5; 2 Kgs 3:27; 16:3; 17:17, 31; 21:6; 23:10; Jer 7:31; 19:5; 32:35). Biblical texts tend to associate these offerings with Molech (Lev 18:21; 20:2–5; 1 Kgs 11:7; 2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 32:35) and the Valley of Ben-Hinnom (2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 7:31–32; 19:6; 32:35; see also Barrick, <i>King and the Cemeteries</i>, 81–103), and Ahaz and Manasseh are the only kings accused of burning their sons as sacrifices (2 Kgs 16:3; 21:6). <u>The nature of the practice is not manifestly clear, though it is most likely linked to a kind of necromantic divination during situations of extreme crisis.</u></p> <p>Debate over the issue revolves around whether Israelite forms of the practice could have been derived from Phoenician offerings to Melqart of Tyre (Heider, <i>Cult of Molek</i>, 403–5; “Molech”, 585) or if child sacrifice could have been an indigenous practice that infrequently appeared in religious practice in ancient Judah (Stavrakopoulou, <i>King Manasseh and Child Sacrifice</i>, 283–99). Although Manasseh is linked to child sacrifice in the biblical tradition, the precise nature and origins of the practice are subject to debate (see also Day, <i>Molech</i>; Lewis, <i>Cults of the Dead</i>).</p>
		<p>Manasseh cultivated friendly relations with several surrounding kingdoms during his reign. He is said to have instituted the worship of Baal and Asherah “as Ahab king of Israel had done” (2 Kgs 21:3). Ahab erected an altar to Baal and made an Asherah pole as a result of an alliance between Israel and Tyre (1 Kgs 16:32–33). Manasseh may be following Ahab’s lead politically and commercially as well as religiously (Katzenstein, <i>The History of Tyre</i>, 263–64; “Phoenician Deities”, 190–1; McKay, <i>Religion in Judah</i>, 20–27).</p>
		<p>Judah immediately follows Tyre in the list of kingdoms in an alliance that Esarhaddon called “the twenty-two kings of Ḫatti [Syria-Palestine], the seacoast, and the midst of the sea” (Nin. A. v 54–73a; Leichty, <i>Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon</i>, 23). The establishment of Canaanite cults under Manasseh may simply reflect the friendly relations between the neighboring kingdoms (on the archaeology of reforms, see Fried, “The High Places”, 444–50). Manasseh also was linked to southern Palestine through Meshullemeth, daughter of Haruz of Jotbah (2 Kgs 21:19; Lehmann, “Survival and Reconstruction”, 303; Niemann, “Choosing Brides”, 230–31). Jotbah is known from the wilderness</p>



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		<p>wanderings, which links Meshullemeth with Edom and Arabia (McKay, <i>Religion in Judah</i>, 24; Num 33:33; Deut 10:7). The garden of Uzza, named as Manasseh and Amon’s burial place, could have associations with an Arabian deity and may have been a religious location in honor of Meshullemeth (McKay, <i>Religion in Judah</i>, 24–25; Gray, <i>I & II Kings</i>, 710; in contrast, see Schmidt, <i>Israel’s Beneficent Dead</i>, 252–54). Political ties to the south would have assisted Manasseh’s agricultural development in the Negev and southern wilderness (Finkelstein, “Archaeology”, 176–81).</p>
	<p>Economic stability</p>	<p>Judah’s serious loss of territory after Hezekiah’s rebellion had terrible economic consequences. Sennacherib reassigned the Shephelah and western territories to neighboring kingdoms (Finkelstein, “Archaeology,” 178). <u>In spite of these setbacks, Manasseh appears to have successfully shifted agricultural production to the Beersheba Valley</u> (Thareani-Sussely, “ ‘Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh’ Reconsidered”, 75). <u>Archaeological evidence suggests stable economic growth and expansion under Manasseh</u> (Knauf, “Glorious Days”, 166–73; Grabbe, “Kingdom of Judah,” 101–4; Ahlström, <i>Royal Administration</i>, 76–81).</p>
	<p>Manasseh is deported to Babylonia by the king of Assyria</p>	<p>The fulfilment of the prophecy through Isaiah:</p> <p>Isaiah: 39 At that time, Babylon’s King Merodach-baladan, Baladan’s son, sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been ill and had recovered. ² Hezekiah was pleased, and he showed them his treasury—the silver and the gold, the spices and fine oil—and everything in his armory, all that was found in his storerooms. There wasn’t a thing in his house or in all his realm that Hezekiah didn’t show them.</p> <p>³ Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, “What did these men say? Where did they come from?”</p> <p>Hezekiah replied, “They came to me from a distant land, from Babylon.”</p> <p>⁴ So Isaiah said, “What did they see in your house?”</p> <p>Hezekiah said, “They saw everything in my house. There was nothing in my storerooms that I didn’t show them.”</p> <p>⁵ Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of heavenly forces: ⁶ Days are coming when all that is in your house, which your ancestors have stored up until this day, will be carried to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. ⁷ Some of your sons, your own descendants whom you fathered, will be taken to become eunuchs in the king of Babylon’s palace.”</p>



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			<p>⁸ Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The LORD’s word that you delivered is good,” since he thought, That means there will be peace and security in my lifetime.</p> <p>The king’s response has often been criticized. He said, “The word of the Lord which you have spoken is good!... Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?” But in view of the constant threat from Assyria, word that the nation would one day fall to a world power that did not yet exist must have seemed good news indeed!”</p> <p>Scripture then immediately takes us into Isaiah 40, Comfort to God’s people--</p>
		Manasseh repents & is restored to Jerusalem and rules for another 33 years	Manasseh prayed to Yahweh, who responded by returning him to Jerusalem in peace. 2 Chr 33:10–13
		Manasseh implements reforms in Judah	2 Chron 33:11–17
642		Manasseh dies, Amon becomes king, only reigning for 2 years	Manasseh becomes the longest reigning king of Judah 2 Kings 19:37–21:18; 2 Chron 32:21, 33–33:20; Isa 37:38; Nah 3:8–10

Points to note during his reign:

- After Hezekiah’s death, Manasseh reinstated banned religious practices (2 Kgs 21:3), but ruled with apparent peace and stability during a difficult chapter of Judah’s history.
- The accounts of his reign connect him directly with the chain of events leading to the fall of Judah (Long, *2 Kings*, 248).
- Manasseh secured economic recovery for Judah after the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BC,
- Manasseh is presented as the worst of all the kings of Judah 2 Kings 21:4-16 (Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 426).
- The responsibility for the doom proclaimed against Jerusalem is placed on him. Jeremiah 15:3-4 **3 “And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction,” says the LORD: “the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4 I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.**
- Second Kings depicts Manasseh’s misdeeds as a foil for Josiah’s righteous behavior (Knoppers, *Two Nations Under One God*, 2:171–96; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 271–73).
- In the account of Josiah’s religious reforms, Manasseh is singled out as having provoked God’s anger and judgment (2 Kgs 23:12).



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- Other aspects of the biblical record are more positive. His long reign and peaceful death would usually be interpreted as signs of divine favor.
- Chronicles recounts Manasseh's sinful behavior, but preserves an account of repentance. After the king of Assyria—possibly Ashurbanipal—bound him and deported him to Babylon, Manasseh prayed to Yahweh, who responded by returning him to Jerusalem in peace (2 Chr 33:10–13; see Rainey, “Manasseh, King of Judah”, 159–60). His prayer is reimagined in the pseudepigraphal Prayer of Manasseh, written during the first century AD (see 2 Chr 33:19). Chronicles also describes a series of building projects and religious reforms instituted by Manasseh (2 Chr 33:14–17). In these texts, Manasseh is the apostate king who later humbled himself and repented.

2. **MANASSEH'S NAME:** The son of Hezekiah-why did he choose that name? [Widened view]

Year:

Joseph 1750 BC

Manasseh, Joseph's son 1704 BC

Manasseh, Hezekiah's son 704 BC

Why name him Manasseh? 1000 years later...

There was one other manasseh:

MANASSEH, SON OF JOSEPH (מְנַשֶּׁשֶׁת), *menashsheh*, Μανασσή Μανασσής Μαννασσή, *Manassē Manassēs Mannassē*). Firstborn son of Joseph, older brother of Ephraim, and ancestor of the tribe of Manasseh.

Etymology

The name “Manasseh,” chosen by Joseph, plays on the Hebrew word meaning “to forget”: **“God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house”** (Gen 41:51 ESV). At this point in Joseph's story, his brothers had not yet come to Egypt and his visions had not been fulfilled. Manasseh's mother was Aseneth (Gen 41:50), daughter of Potiphera, the chief priest of the Egyptian city of On (Heliopolis).

Recalling:

- Hezekiah's dad, King Ahaz, bad king.
- Hezekiah spent his early reign instituting reforms for Judah to bring her back into right relationship with God after the destruction his father caused.
- Hezekiah had no heir when he faced his illness.
- He was miraculously healed & given 15 more years.
- 3 years after his healing, he & Hephzibah are blessed with a baby boy & he chooses to name him Manasseh: **“God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house”**
 - We know that naming holds incredible significance in this culture.
 - Is this Hezekiah's faith?

4/12/23 SL#1 ISAIAH

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- A practical, spoken every day expression of hope in God for his son & the nation every time he's called for dinner?
- Is this "forgetting what lies behind & pressing forward"?
- Is this a pre-Jesus understanding of salvation-God wiping away the old, creating new creation and walking in the freedom & hope He gives of new life, forgiveness, restoration?

3. The Box We Keep People In:

The box we keep people in & why do we want to keep them there?

- What does that reveal about our understanding of God?
- What does that reveal about our understanding of restoration?
- What is our process for capturing our thoughts & relating to others as God would have us?

Serious damage & repentance. Which do i focus on? How would i be inclined to treat them?

Reductionist? BLACK & WHITE THINKING—YOU'RE ALL BAD.

The Father looks at a life, sees repentance and chooses to only see through the cleansing blood of Jesus to this now His new son or daughter, cleansed of all unrighteousness.

What do we see?

What keeps us from living in His view?

Do we apply the benefits of His salvation unevenly?

We see our sin as not so bad and see the sin of others as **unforgettable**?

Imagine with me, when we get to heaven, overwhelmed with gratefulness that we are called a son or daughter of God...

and Manasseh meets us at the gate...

who do we see?

Do we see another child of God?

Or the one who committed heinous atrocities?

What if Paul met us at the gate?

Do we see a child of God?

Or one who imprisoned & murdered Christians?

The thief on the cross?

A child of God?

Or one who had no time to live righteously to **'earn' Christ's forgiveness?**

The faces of our abusers? Who do we see?

Our shock & surprise & indignation? Self-righteousness? Incredulity?

Who, what person, when we greet them at the gate, would have the same thoughts of us?

How seriously do we take the profoundness of what Jesus accomplished on the cross and extends to us at salvation for ourselves & for others?

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Do we have a cap on the price of Jesus' forgiveness? Where He has no cap.
Is this a contortion of what we think justice is? MY THOUGHTS ARE HIGHER THAN YOUR THOUGHTS.

How are we choosing to relate to those Jesus has forgiven?
Forgiveness isn't trustworthiness-that takes experience in time.



SL#6

4. "Mother Teresa's Anyway Poem"

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self centered;
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;
Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;
Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;
Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;
Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;
Do good anyway.

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Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
 Give the world the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and your God;
 It was never between you and them anyway.

Inscribed on the wall of Mother Teresa's children's home in Calcutta.”
 — Mother Teresa

SL#7

5. Isaiah 55: 6-9

6 Seek the LORD while He may be found,
 Call upon Him while He is near.
 7 Let the wicked forsake his way,
 And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
 Let him return to the LORD,
 And He will have mercy on him;
 And to our God,
 For He will abundantly pardon.

8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
 Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.
 9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
 So are My ways higher than your ways,
 And My thoughts than your thoughts.

NOTES:

MANASSEH, KING OF JUDAH (מַנַּשֶׁה, *menaseh*; Μανασσῆς, *Manassēs*), King of Judah. Son of Hezekiah who reigned ca. 687–642 BC; the longest-tenured king of Judah. Manasseh secured economic recovery for Judah after the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 BC, but he is blamed for the fall of Judah due to corrupt religious practices and social injustices.

Overview



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Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah and Hephzibah, and began his rule at the age of 12. Considering Manasseh's age and his father's illness (2 Kgs 20:1), it is likely he had a coregency with Hezekiah. After Hezekiah's death, Manasseh reinstated banned religious practices (2 Kgs 21:3), but ruled with apparent peace and stability during a difficult chapter of Judah's history. The accounts of his reign connect him directly with the chain of events leading to the fall of Judah (Long, *2 Kings*, 248).

~~Second Kings 21:4–16 presents Manasseh as the worst of all the kings of Judah (Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 426). Jeremiah 15:4 likewise places on him the responsibility for the doom proclaimed against Jerusalem. Second Kings depicts Manasseh's misdeeds as a foil for Josiah's righteous behavior (Knoppers, *Two Nations Under One God*, 2:171–96; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 271–73). In the account of Josiah's religious reforms, Manasseh is singled out as having provoked God's anger and judgment (2 Kgs 23:12). Literary connections between 2 Kgs 21:3–16 and 2 Kgs 23 reinforce that Manasseh—the “mirror image” to Josiah—is both a historical king and a paradigmatic example in the theology of the Deuteronomistic History (Smelik, *Converting the Past* 154; Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen*, 155–67; Eynikel, “The Portrait of Manasseh”).~~

Other aspects of the biblical record are more positive. His long reign and peaceful death would usually be interpreted as signs of divine favor. Chronicles recounts Manasseh's sinful behavior, but preserves an account of repentance. After the king of Assyria—possibly Ashurbanipal—bound him and deported him to Babylon, Manasseh prayed to Yahweh, who responded by returning him to Jerusalem in peace (2 Chr 33:10–13; see Rainey, “Manasseh, King of Judah”, 159–60). His prayer is reimagined in the pseudepigraphal Prayer of Manasseh, written during the first century AD (see 2 Chr 33:19). Chronicles also describes a series of building projects and religious reforms instituted by Manasseh (2 Chr 33:14–17). In these texts, Manasseh is the apostate king who later humbled himself and repented.

The Context of Manasseh's Reign

~~Manasseh became king of Judah during hard times. Though Jerusalem did not fall to the Assyrians during Hezekiah's rebellion (2 Kgs 18–19; Isa 36–37; 2 Chr 32:1–22), this victory was mitigated by the “crushing burden imposed upon Judah as a result of the conflict” (Rainey and Notley, *The Sacred Bridge*, 246). During the revolt, Sennacherib claimed to have destroyed 46 walled and fortified towns and deported a huge portion of the populace as captives (Rassam Cylinder, lines 52–60; Grayson & Novotny, *Royal Inscriptions*, 65–66). The newly conquered lands were distributed to the kings of Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza, with heavy tributes. Sennacherib describes receiving a long list of gifts and payments from Hezekiah along with a promise of allegiance. These military, political, and economic losses resulted in Manasseh beginning his rule during a period of Assyrian dominance (Nelson, “*Realpolitik* in Judah (687–609 BC.)”, 181).~~

Politics under Manasseh

Relations with Assyria

In the first few decades of his rule, Manasseh served as a loyal Assyrian vassal. Esarhaddon claims to have enlisted the support of twenty-two kings, including Manasseh, in the construction of a new armory (Nin. A. v 54–vi 1; Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 23–24). Ashurbanipal lists Manasseh among the kings who supported his military effort against Egypt in 667 BC (Prism E 10, 13–21; Prism C II 37–67; Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk*).

Relations with Other Nations



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Manasseh cultivated friendly relations with several surrounding kingdoms during his reign. He is said to have instituted the worship of Baal and Asherah “as Ahab king of Israel had done” (2 Kgs 21:3). Ahab erected an altar to Baal and made an Asherah pole as a result of an alliance between Israel and Tyre (1 Kgs 16:32–33). Manasseh may be following Ahab’s lead politically and commercially as well as religiously (Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, 263–64; “Phoenician Deities”, 190–1; McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 20–27).

Judah immediately follows Tyre in the list of kingdoms in an alliance that Esarhaddon called “the twenty-two kings of Hatti [Syria-Palestine], the seacoast, and the midst of the sea” (Nin. A. v 54–73a; Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 23). The establishment of Canaanite cults under Manasseh may simply reflect the friendly relations between the neighboring kingdoms (on the archaeology of reforms, see Fried, “The High Places”, 444–50). Manasseh also was linked to southern Palestine through Meshullemeth, daughter of Haruz of Jotbah (2 Kgs 21:19; Lehmann, “Survival and Reconstruction”, 303; Niemann, “Choosing Brides”, 230–31). Jotbah is known from the wilderness wanderings, which links Meshullemeth with Edom and Arabia (McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 24; Num 33:33; Deut 10:7). The garden of Uzza, named as Manasseh and Amon’s burial place, could have associations with an Arabian deity and may have been a religious location in honor of Meshullemeth (McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 24–25; Gray, *I & II Kings*, 710; in contrast, see Schmidt, *Israel’s Beneficent Dead*, 252–54). Political ties to the south would have assisted Manasseh’s agricultural development in the Negev and southern wilderness (Finkelstein, “Archaeology”, 176–81).

Manasseh’s Deportation

While aspects of Manasseh’s reign can be corroborated with other historical sources, the account of Manasseh’s deportation in 2 Chr 33:10–13 is problematic. The building projects listed in 2 Chr 33:14–17 have long been considered to reflect real historical practice, and it is possible that they lend credibility to the deportation account (Rainey and Notley, *The Sacred Bridge*, 250).

One theory regarding the deportation is that Manasseh and the Phoenician kingdoms may have supported the rebellion of Shamash-shum-ukin against his brother Ashurbanipal in the mid-seventh century BC (Rassam Cylinder III 96–106; Borger, *Beiträge zum Inschriftenwerk*). After putting down the rebellion, Ashurbanipal interrogated the kings who supported it. Manasseh was able to convince Ashurbanipal of his trustworthiness, and was reinstated as king (Rainey, “Manasseh, King of Judah”, 159–60; McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 25–26).

Though this is a plausible reconstruction, it remains hypothetical since there is no parallel account in Assyrian records. It is also difficult to explain why the episode would be omitted from Kings, especially since such a punishment would validate its negative assessment of Manasseh. Alternatively, the story could be a literary device that uses Manasseh as a theological paradigm for repentance and return from exile (Ben Zvi, “Prelude to a Reconstruction”, 39–41; Stavrakopoulou, *King Manasseh and Child Sacrifice*, 113). Given the weakness of Judah, which necessitated a submissive stance toward Assyria, the immense danger of rebelling so close to the Assyrian border, and the political and economic advantages Judah gained through its alliance with Phoenicia, the historical evidence does not fully square with the account (Evans, “Judah’s Foreign Policy,” 167). An absence of archaeological change during Manasseh’s reign further signals continuity in his station as loyal Assyrian vassal (Fried, “The High Places”, 444–50).

Religion under Manasseh

Condemnation of Religion under Manasseh



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Religious practices under Manasseh are denounced in the Deuteronomistic History (2 Kgs 21:2–7), as well as in other prophetic texts. This account depicts a flagrant rejection of the Deuteronomic law as shown by the comprehensive list of Manasseh's sins:

- He followed practices of the nations (Deut 18:9).
- He rebuilt shrines destroyed by Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:3–4).
- He built altars to Baal (Jer 11:13).
- He placed image of Asherah in the temple (Deut 16:21).
- He worshiped the host of heaven (Deut 4:19; 17:3; Jer 8:2; 19:13; Zeph 1:5).
- He burned his son as an offering (Deut 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kgs 17:17; 23:10; Jer 7:31; 32:35).
- He practiced illicit forms of divination: soothsaying (Isa 2:6), consulting false prophets (Jer 14:14; Ezek 12:24; 13:6, 9, 23; 21:26, 28), and necromancy (Deut 18:11; Isa 8:19; 19:3).

This catalog of transgressions is so comprehensive and offensive that it effectively would make Manasseh the sinful king *par excellence* (Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige*, 1:441; Evans, “Naram-Sin and Jeroboam”, 123–24). Not only did Manasseh violate the prescribed manner of worship in Deuteronomy, but he led Judah to sin in the process and kindled the anger of God against the nation (2 Kgs 21:9, 11; Blanco Wißmann, «*Er tat das Rechte ...*», 161–73). Manasseh stands out as a ruler of the worst kind.

Sources of Religion under Manasseh

Illicit religious practices under Manasseh would have originated in the local customs of Canaanite religion, rather than an Assyrian system of belief imposed on vassal states (Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 272). There is no evidence of forced worship in Assyrian annals, nor were vassal states prevented from practicing their forms of worship (Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 42–64). In the case of Judah, local syncretistic practices could have flourished based on influences from Phoenicia and the south due to trade and political ties. The worship of Baal, Asherah, and the host of heaven are best explained as expressions of local religiosity (McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 22).

Manasseh could have made concessions to tribal leadership and local kinship groups because of his weakened royal position following the Assyrian takeover (Lehmann, “Survival and Reconstruction”, 305; Ahlström, *Royal Administration*, 80). It is also possible that the popularity of Hezekiah's reforms suffered due to their perceived ineffectiveness in bringing Assyrian downfall (contra Isa 10:12–19; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 273). The brief mention of Uzza as Manasseh and Amon's place of burial is not entirely clear, but could suggest a link with the Arabian astral god Al-'Uzzah (Gray, *I & II Kings*, 710–11; McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 24–25).

Manasseh and Child Sacrifice

Manasseh is accused of burning his son as an offering (2 Kgs 21:6; 2 Chr 33:6), though the historicity of human sacrifice in ancient Israel and its presence in Yahwistic religious practice is contentious. There are very few mentions of human sacrifice in the biblical account, and they are universally negative; it is an exemplar of detestable Canaanite religious practice (Deut 12:31; 18:10; Lev 18:21; 20:2–5; 2 Kgs 3:27; 16:3; 17:17, 31; 21:6; 23:10; Jer 7:31; 19:5; 32:35). Biblical texts tend to associate these offerings with Molech (Lev 18:21; 20:2–5; 1 Kgs 11:7; 2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 32:35) and the Valley of Ben-Hinnom (2 Kgs 23:10; Jer 7:31–32; 19:6; 32:35; see also Barrick, *King and the Cemeteries*, 81–103), and Ahaz and Manasseh are the only kings accused of burning their



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sons as sacrifices (2 Kgs 16:3; 21:6). The nature of the practice is not manifestly clear, though it is most likely linked to a kind of necromantic divination during situations of extreme crisis.

Debate over the issue revolves around whether Israelite forms of the practice could have been derived from Phoenician offerings to Melqart of Tyre (Heider, *Cult of Molek*, 403–5; “Molech”, 585) or if child sacrifice could have been an indigenous practice that infrequently appeared in religious practice in ancient Judah (Stavrakopoulou, *King Manasseh and Child Sacrifice*, 283–99). Although Manasseh is linked to child sacrifice in the biblical tradition, the precise nature and origins of the practice are subject to debate (see also Day, *Molech*; Lewis, *Cults of the Dead*).

The Economy under Manasseh

Judah’s serious loss of territory after Hezekiah’s rebellion had terrible economic consequences. Sennacherib reassigned the Shephelah and western territories to neighboring kingdoms (Finkelstein, “Archaeology,” 178). In spite of these setbacks, Manasseh appears to have successfully shifted agricultural production to the Beersheba Valley (Thareani-Sussely, “‘Archaeology of the Days of Manasseh’ Reconsidered”, 75). Archaeological evidence suggests stable economic growth and expansion under Manasseh (Knauf, “Glorious Days”, 166–73; Grabbe, “Kingdom of Judah,” 101–4; Ahlström, *Royal Administration*, 76–81).

Though direct evidence does not exist, the combination of the Chronicler’s account of Manasseh’s building projects and the general situation of recovery could be evidence that the Siloam Tunnel and the palace at Ramat Rahel were both achievements of Manasseh (2 Chr 33:14; Knauf, “Hezekiah or Manasseh?”; Finkelstein, “Archaeology”). Although his legacy in Kings and Chronicles is negative, it is likely Manasseh preserved the Judean state from collapse.

Manasseh’s Role in the Fall of Judah

Although the Chronicler suggests that Manasseh later repented, the sins of the king are ultimately cited as the reason for Yahweh’s judgment of Judah (2 Kgs 23:12, 26; 24:3). The message of Jeremiah cites the sins of Judah and the monarchy as the causes of the impending judgment (Jer 15:4). As Manasseh and Ahab are already linked in Kings, Manasseh’s shedding of innocent blood could refer to Ahab’s persecution of the prophets as portrayed in the story of Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kgs 21:1–29; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 270). Not only is this an instance of the persecution of the innocent, but it is also a rejection of Yahweh’s word.

Finally, the blame given to Manasseh for the exile is an important structural element in the literary development of the Deuteronomistic History. Noth originally suggested that the books of Joshua through Kings constituted a single work, written during the Babylonian exile around 550 BC. Prefixed to the beginning of this work was a shortened form of Deuteronomy, which deeply influenced the linguistic style and theological perspective of the history.

Cross revised this picture by suggesting that there were two editions of the Deuteronomistic History (Dtr1 and Dtr2). Dtr1 focused on two main themes: the destruction of Samaria due to the sins of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 13:34), and the promise given to David and Yahweh’s election of Jerusalem (2 Sam 7). Dtr2 focuses on the destruction and defeat that was a part of Yahweh’s judgment against Jerusalem, manifested in the conquest and deportation by the Babylonians. Manasseh is to Judah as Jeroboam is to Israel—the one who sealed Judah’s fate (Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 289; see more recently Blanco Wißmann, «*Er tat das Rechte ...*», 161–73). Cross’ suggestion has been met with a number of modifications and counter-suggestions, but it remains one of the most influential theories regarding the redactional development of the Deuteronomistic History (van



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Keulen, *Manasseh through the Eyes of the Deuteronomists*, 14–51; Hutton, *Transjordanian Palimpsest*, 79–156).

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4/12/23 SL#1 ISAIAH

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WILLIAM L. KELLY

MANASSEH, SON OF JOSEPH (מְנַשֶּׁה), *menashsheh*, Μανασσή Μανασσής Μαννασσή, *Manassē Manassēs Mannassē*). Firstborn son of Joseph, older brother of Ephraim, and ancestor of the tribe of Manasseh.

Etymology

The name “Manasseh,” chosen by Joseph, plays on the Hebrew word meaning “to forget”: “God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s house” (Gen 41:51 ESV). At this point in Joseph’s story, his brothers had not yet come to Egypt and his visions had not been fulfilled. Manasseh’s mother was Aseneth (Gen 41:50), daughter of Potiphera, the chief priest of the Egyptian city of On (Heliopolis).

Manasseh in the Bible

Aside from passing references, Genesis is the only book that speaks of Manasseh himself, and it says very little about him. His most notable moment in the narrative comes when he loses his birthright to his younger brother (Gen 48:1–20). Joseph brings his twin sons to their grandfather, Jacob, who is on his deathbed. Jacob says the boys will be treated as his own, and he calls them close in order to bless them. But as Jacob gives the blessing, he crosses his hands, so that his right hand rests on Ephraim, the younger twin (Gen 48:14). Although Joseph objects and tries to switch his father’s hands, Jacob insists, stating that Ephraim shall be greater and have more descendants (Gen 48:17–19). Thus, the motif of the birthright passing to a younger brother continues, as firstborn heirs Ishmael, Esau, and Reuben all had their places usurped by younger brothers (Brett, *Identity*, 90). With Manasseh and Ephraim, however, the switch appears to be intentional rather than driven by circumstances.

Beyond repetition of the biblical material, Manasseh is not mentioned in extrabiblical sources. The *Book of Jubilees* omits Jacob’s adoption of Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen 48).

Textual Issues

Westermann and others suggest that Gen 48 represents the Priestly redactor’s account of the reunion between Joseph and Jacob at Jacob’s deathbed. This accounts for the apparent tension with the deathbed scene that follows in Gen 49 (Westermann, *Genesis* 37–50, 185). Another interpretation, which Douglas supports, takes Gen 48 as a special ceremony to override any potential claim that Joseph’s sons had been disinherited after he was sold into slavery (Douglas, *Jacob*, 32–33).

The Bible contains conflicting records of Manasseh’s descendants, with Numbers naming only one son (Num 26:29) and 1 Chronicles naming two or three, depending on the translation (1 Chr 7:14–15).

Tribe of Manasseh



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The tribe of Manasseh is mentioned frequently in accounts of Israel's wilderness wanderings, conquest, and settlement in the promised land. In Joshua 14–17, Judah, Manasseh, and Ephraim are allotted considerable portions of land. It is difficult to identify the areas inhabited by Manasseh, as the descriptions are often vague (e.g., Josh 17:7–10). The tribe's land allotment is the only one described as straddling the Jordan.

The tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim often are identified jointly as the tribe of Joseph (e.g., Josh 17:14). The conquest and settlement stories portray Joseph as a large tribe, but one that never was able to fully carry out Moses' command in the conquest. It is possible to view Manasseh's lack of importance in light of the birthright's reversal in Gen 48. In this way, the narrative functions to explain Ephraim's continued political significance in contrast to the fortunes of Manasseh, which had lost power and influence.

The revolt against Rehoboam and the northern kingdom's secession (1 Kgs 12:1–20) implicitly included the tribe of Manasseh. After defeating the northern kingdom, the Assyrians took captives from Manasseh as well as other tribes. The biblical narrative makes no further reference to the tribe as an entity after this, but Ezekiel's eschatological visions include Manasseh's return along with the other northern tribes (Ezek 48:4–5). Additionally, a list of Israel's tribes in Revelation includes Manasseh (Rev 7:6).

Related Articles

For further details on the tribe of Manasseh, see these articles: Manasseh, Tribe of; Israel, Tribes of. For further details on Manasseh's territory, see this article: Manasseh, Western Territory of.

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JONATHAN S. WRIGHT¹

Events

Assyrian Exile

~~2 Kings 16:20–17:6, 23–23:36; 2 Chron 28:27–36:5; Isa 20:1–6; 22:9–25; 36:1–38:8, 21–39:8; Jer 1:1–19; 7:1–15; 13:1–11; 17:19–18:12; 19:1–20:6; 26:1–24, 18–19; Micah 3:9–12; Nah 3:8–10; Zeph 1:1~~

Decline of Judah

~~2 Kings 16:20; 18:1–4, 13–23:36; 2 Chron 28:27–36:5; Isa 22:9–11; 36:1–38:8, 21–39:8; Jer 1:1–19; 7:1–15; 13:1–11; 17:19–18:12; 19:1–20:6; 26:1–24; Micah 3:9–12; Nah 3:8–10; Zeph 1:1~~

Reign of Manasseh in Judah

~~2 Kings 19:37–21:18; 2 Chron 32:21, 33–33:20; Isa 37:38; Nah 3:8–10~~

Manasseh Succeeds Hezekiah

~~2 Kings 20:21–21:1; 2 Chron 32:33–33:1~~

Manasseh Commits Idolatry

~~2 Kings 21:3–16; 2 Chron 33:3–10~~

¹ William L. Kelly, "[Manasseh, King of Judah,](#)" ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).



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~~Manasseh Repents and Reforms Judah~~

~~2 Chron 33:11–17~~

~~Manasseh Repents~~

~~2 Chron 33:11–13~~

~~Manasseh Reforms Judah~~

~~2 Chron 33:14–17~~

~~Manasseh King of Judah Dies~~

~~2 Kings 21:18; 2 Chron 33:20~~

Manasseh the King of Judah

Manasseh, the son of **Hezekiah**, was the king of Judah 687–642 BCE, having ascended the throne at the age of twelve. Although the Bible says he reigned for fifty-five years (2 Kings 21:1), historical records and other biblical references make it clear that his reign was actually forty-five years long, the longest of any king of Judah. He devoted a considerable amount of his attention to the promotion of idolatry in Judah, building shrines and altars to the **Baals** all over his land.

Manasseh's father Hezekiah had made great strides in reforming Judaism, purging idolatry, and restoring the proper temple practice. This was not particularly pleasing to the common people, however, who were comfortable in their idolatrous ways. They even attributed **Sennacherib's** invasion of Judah to Hezekiah's attempts to abolish the "old" ways. There was a popular reaction when Hezekiah died, and the boy Manasseh apparently fell under the influence of those pro-Assyrians who stood to profit from undoing Hezekiah's reforms.

Although his father had successfully resisted the advance of the Assyrians, Manasseh allied with them, subjected Judah as a vassal state, and assisted the Assyrians in their wars on Egypt. When **Ashurbanipal** conquered Egypt he listed twenty-two vassal kings who assisted him, and among them was Manasseh.

Manasseh promoted not only Assyrian idolatry but also that of several other neighboring nations. His abominations included human sacrifice and necromancy, consulting the spirits of the dead. He also introduced magic and divination. In short, he thoroughly corrupted Judaism by melding it with every conceivable local cult practice. In addition to this he slaughtered the prophets and faithful priests, shedding "so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end" (2 Kings 21:16). He was constantly warned by the prophets that he was courting disaster for himself and for Judah, but it appears that instead of heeding the message he killed the messengers, despite the fact that a prophet was considered sacrosanct.

Manasseh was finally defeated and humiliated for his apostasy. Despite his vassalage to them, the Assyrians attacked Jerusalem and took him hostage, put him in bronze chains, and led him back to Babylon (then under Assyrian control) with a hook in his nose (2 Chron. 33:11ff.). While he was there he repented and prayed fervently for forgiveness, and Yahweh relented, ended his punishment, and brought him back to Jerusalem.

While the Chronicler reports that Manasseh repented and returned to God, there is no mention of this in the Second Book of Kings, and it is questioned by most scholars. At that time the Assyrian empire was crumbling, and the seeds of the Neo-Babylonian empire were being sown. It is possible that Manasseh earned his freedom by playing some part in the Babylonian rebellion against the Assyrians in 652 BCE. While there are no Babylonian records of the capture and release of Manasseh, the Bible's claim is quite credible because there are records that **Neco I** of Egypt was also taken hostage and later returned to his kingdom.



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In 648 BCE, the rebels captured Babylon and established it as their capital. Thereafter Manasseh frequently traveled there. Babylonia did not become a world power until twenty-five years later under Nabopolassar (**Nebuchadnezzar II's** father), but it had already gained superiority over the Assyrian empire, which was being torn apart by corruption, weak leadership, and civil wars. There is little question that Manasseh helped the Babylonians seize and hold power. Ironically, sixty years later Babylonia would conquer Judah, destroy Jerusalem, and carry the Jews into exile.

After his return to Jerusalem, Manasseh rebuilt its walls (2 Chron. 33:14) and those of the several other fortified cities of Judah. Since all the fortified cities had been captured by the Assyrians, it may be assumed that he was able to retake them, or perhaps they were restored to him by the Babylonians as a reward for his help in the rebellion. There are no surviving records to tell us what really happened. He also rebuilt the army.

We can only assume who the enemy was. The Assyrians were no longer a threat, the Babylonians appeared to be at least neutral toward Judah and in any case were not yet strong enough to be a threat. We may deduce, then, that the potential enemy was Egypt, which had regained its independence in 652. Assyria and Babylonia may have assisted Manasseh in his rearming in order to create a military buffer between Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Manasseh continued to rule Judah for about ten more years after his return from Babylon. He died in 642 BCE and was succeeded by his son **Amon**, whose short reign was marked by a continuation of his father's policy of idolatry and collaboration with the Mesopotamians.

It is possible that Manasseh really did repent while he was in captivity, but if so his repentance was short-lived. The reforms reported by the Chronicler have no historical records to confirm them, and they are completely inconsistent with his past behavior and his condemnation in the Second Book of Kings (21:11ff.). They may have been reported to justify such an unexplainably long reign for such a wicked king. The reforms are also inconsistent with the accounts of the reforms by Manasseh's righteous grandson Josiah, in which he removed the pagan shrines and temples that had been built by Manasseh and Amon (2 Kings 23:4ff.).²

B. The reign of Manasseh (21:1–18). Manasseh succeeds his father, Hezekiah, and rules for fifty- five years. The first eleven are as co-regent with his father. He is one of Israel's most evil kings. He practices sorcery and witch craft, burns his sons in idol worship, and brings idols within the Jerusalem temple itself. It is probable that Isaiah is one of the prophets killed at his order.

The whole people's eager plunge into evil brings judgment. All of Judah will soon be led captive, as was Israel.³

TRUTH-IN-ACTION through **2 KINGS**

² Richard R. Losch, *All the People in the Bible: An A–Z Guide to the Saints, Scoundrels, and Other Characters in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 271–273.

³ Jack W. Hayford, Thomas Nelson Publishers, *Hayford's Bible Handbook* (Nashville, TN; Atlanta, GA; London; Vancouver: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995).

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Truth 2 Kings Teaches

Action 2 Kings Invites

Steps to Holiness

Holiness among God's people brings Him honor. Unholiness dishonors Him. Holiness has two equally important dimensions. We are set apart to God and separated from the world. Just as God cannot be glorified by those who are not fully His, neither can He be glorified by those who are of the world. Therefore, we must live in the world, but we must not live as being of the world. Be careful that a negative focus on external behavior does not blind us to the true nature of unholiness and allow us to be seduced by the world.

Steps to Dynamic Devotion

Hear again the recurring theme of how God wants our hearts to be fully devoted to Him. Even zeal with an undevoted heart does not please Him.

Key Lessons in Faith

Faith is, in essence, taking God at His Word and His Word at face value. God has limitless supply of resources for all who trust in and obey Him. Fearing that we will not have enough in times of need insults the God who has revealed Himself as Yahweh-Yireh, The-Lord-Our-Provider.

Keys to Wise Living

The God who is our wisdom and gives freely of His wisdom to those who trust in Him is careful to teach us His ways. He who is wise will never turn from the clear counsel of wisdom in God's Word.

5:19–27 *Do not covet* the world's reward for your ministry. *Be wary* lest it become an occasion for sin and judgment for you.

11:18 *Know* that true repentance involves rooting out anything that distracts from your worship of God. *Eliminate* any vestige of idolatry from your own life.

17:7–15 *Understand* that God judges His people severely when they persist in the world's ways and standards rather than His. *Reject* any areas where world-mindedness has taken root in you.

21:6 *Do not practice* abortion! *Reject* and *flee from* the occult!

10:28–31 *Be zealous* for God with your whole heart. *Dedicate* your life to Him and to His purposes.

4:1–7 *Believe* that God is able to supply your needs, even when you have no idea how. *Know* that God promises to keep His people alive in famine. This applies spiritually, too: God's spiritual resources for you are limitless, even during times of spiritual drought.

4:43, 44 *Choose to believe* that you will always have enough resources to do the will of God.

4:39–41 *Know the source* of any teaching you receive or pass on to others. *Always judge teachings* according to God's Word.

18:5–7 *Follow the Lord*, and He will grant you spiritual success.

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Keys to Relating to Authority
Relating properly to God's delegated authority is a key to spiritual prosperity.

2:1–15 *Be loyal* to those to whom the Lord assigns you. *Understand* that the Lord will reward such loyalty.

2:23–25 *Avoid mocking or criticizing* those God anoints for leadership and ministry. *Understand* that God watches over them to protect them.

Lessons for Leaders

God places great value upon the leaders He places among His people and wants them to be effective and fruitful in their ministry. Effective leadership flows out of God's anointing. This is also true for those who serve with you under your care. Those in leadership must be careful not to take credit for something that has resulted from God's working in their ministry.

2:9 Leaders, *believe* that God has a greater anointing for your ministry. *Do not settle* for mediocre effectiveness in your ministry.

12:13–16 Leaders, *trust* the Holy Spirit's working in those who serve with you.

18:4 Leaders, *reject praise and honor* God for works He accomplishes through your ministry. *Teach* those you serve to do the same.

4

Going back:

Hezekiah names his son, Manasseh-after the first born son of Joseph. What is the significance of that?

⁵⁰ Before the years of famine arrived, Asenath the daughter of Potiphara, priest of Heliopolis, gave birth to two sons for Joseph. ⁵¹ Joseph named the oldest son Manasseh, "because," he said, "God has helped me forget all of my troubles and everyone in my father's household." ⁵² He named the second Ephraim, "because," he said, "God has given me children in the land where I've been treated harshly." ⁵

Year:

Joseph 1750 BC

Manasseh, Joseph's son 1704 BC

Manasseh, Hezekiah's son 704 BC

⁴ Jack W. Hayford, Thomas Nelson Publishers, [Hayford's Bible Handbook](#) (Nashville, TN; Atlanta, GA; London; Vancouver: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995).

⁵ [Common English Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Common English Bible, 2011), Ge 41:50–52.



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Why name him Manasseh? 1000 years later...

MANASSEH, SON OF JOSEPH (מְנַשֶּׁה), *menashsheh*, Μανασσή Μανασσής Μαννασσή, *Manassē Manassēs Mannassē*). Firstborn son of Joseph, older brother of Ephraim, and ancestor of the tribe of Manasseh.

Etymology

The name “Manasseh,” chosen by Joseph, plays on the Hebrew word meaning “to forget”: “God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father’s house” (Gen 41:51 ESV). At this point in Joseph’s story, his brothers had not yet come to Egypt and his visions had not been fulfilled. Manasseh’s mother was Aseneth (Gen 41:50), daughter of Potiphera, the chief priest of the Egyptian city of On (Heliopolis).

Manasseh in the Bible

Aside from passing references, Genesis is the only book that speaks of Manasseh himself, and it says very little about him. His most notable moment in the narrative comes when he loses his birthright to his younger brother (Gen 48:1–20). Joseph brings his twin sons to their grandfather, Jacob, who is on his deathbed. Jacob says the boys will be treated as his own, and he calls them close in order to bless them. But as Jacob gives the blessing, he crosses his hands, so that his right hand rests on Ephraim, the younger twin (Gen 48:14). Although Joseph objects and tries to switch his father’s hands, Jacob insists, stating that Ephraim shall be greater and have more descendants (Gen 48:17–19). Thus, the motif of the birthright passing to a younger brother continues, as firstborn heirs Ishmael, Esau, and Reuben all had their places usurped by younger brothers (Brett, *Identity*, 90). With Manasseh and Ephraim, however, the switch appears to be intentional rather than driven by circumstances.

Beyond repetition of the biblical material, Manasseh is not mentioned in extrabiblical sources. The *Book of Jubilees* omits Jacob’s adoption of Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen 48).

Textual Issues

Westermann and others suggest that Gen 48 represents the Priestly redactor’s account of the reunion between Joseph and Jacob at Jacob’s deathbed. This accounts for the apparent tension with the deathbed scene that follows in Gen 49 (Westermann, *Genesis 37–50*, 185). Another interpretation, which Douglas supports, takes Gen 48 as a special ceremony to override any potential claim that Joseph’s sons had been disinherited after he was sold into slavery (Douglas, *Jacob*, 32–33).

The Bible contains conflicting records of Manasseh’s descendants, with Numbers naming only one son (Num 26:29) and 1 Chronicles naming two or three, depending on the translation (1 Chr 7:14–15).

Tribe of Manasseh

The tribe of Manasseh is mentioned frequently in accounts of Israel’s wilderness wanderings, conquest, and settlement in the promised land. In Joshua 14–17, Judah, Manasseh, and Ephraim are allotted considerable portions of land. It is difficult to identify the areas inhabited by Manasseh, as the descriptions are often vague (e.g., Josh 17:7–10). The tribe’s land allotment is the only one described as straddling the Jordan.

The tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim often are identified jointly as the tribe of Joseph (e.g., Josh 17:14). The conquest and settlement stories portray Joseph as a large tribe, but one that never was able to fully carry out Moses’ command in the conquest. It is possible to view Manasseh’s lack of importance in light of the



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birthright's reversal in Gen 48. In this way, the narrative functions to explain Ephraim's continued political significance in contrast to the fortunes of Manasseh, which had lost power and influence.

The revolt against Rehoboam and the northern kingdom's secession (1 Kgs 12:1–20) implicitly included the tribe of Manasseh. After defeating the northern kingdom, the Assyrians took captives from Manasseh as well as other tribes. The biblical narrative makes no further reference to the tribe as an entity after this, but Ezekiel's eschatological visions include Manasseh's return along with the other northern tribes (Ezek 48:4–5). Additionally, a list of Israel's tribes in Revelation includes Manasseh (Rev 7:6).

Related Articles

For further details on the tribe of Manasseh, see these articles: [Manasseh, Tribe of](#); [Israel, Tribes of](#). For further details on Manasseh's territory, see this article: [Manasseh, Western Territory of](#).

Selected Resources for Further Study

Assis, Elie. "How Long are You Slack to go to Possess the Land" (Jos. XVIII 3): Ideal Description and Reality in the Distribution Descriptions in Joshua XIII-XIX." *Vetus Testamentum* 53 (2003): 1–25.

Brett, Mark G. *Genesis: Procreation and the Politics of Identity*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Douglas, Mary. *Jacob's Tears: The Priestly Work of Reconciliation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 12–36*. Translated by J. J. Scullion S. J. London: SPCK, 1986.⁶

Kings Manasseh and Amon

By Jacob Isaacs

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Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, was only twelve years old when he succeeded his father to the throne of Judea. In no way did he resemble his father whose piety and faith were not equaled by any other king who followed him. The young ruler, born of a late marriage, was immediately surrounded by the clique of court-notables who, during Hezekiah's reign, had gone into hiding. Manasseh's weak character and susceptibility to idolatry made him a willing tool in the ruthless and selfish hands of these men. Despite the ceaseless efforts and admonitions of the greatest prophets of all times, Isaiah and others, the people of Judea followed in the evil steps of their king. The temples and altars of the idol-worshippers which had been destroyed under Hezekiah were reconstructed. Even into the Holy Temple they brought idols, and some of the basic concepts of Jewish thought and tradition were falsified and distorted. A complete reversal to idolatry as it had been practised under King Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, threw Judea into turmoil of immorality and lawlessness. The believers in the one and only G-d were persecuted, and even the sacred person of the prophet Isaiah was not spared. When he came out sharply against the evil ways of King Manasseh and his notables, Isaiah was murdered.

⁶ Jonathon S. Wright, "[Manasseh, Son of Joseph](#)," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

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Manasseh suppressed the study of the Torah because he knew that as long as the spiritual structure of the tradition stood firm, his throne was not safe. Again and again G-d sent his prophets to warn the king of the coming punishment, but the warnings were given in vain. Manasseh, who unfortunately ruled longer than most Jewish kings, sank lower and lower into the most repulsive cults and witchcraft of the heathen peoples. With him he pulled down the whole spiritual structure which his father had set up for the people; and even though the king personally repented in his later years, he was never able to make amends for the damage he had done in the first decades of his evil rule.

Manasseh's Punishment

The word of the prophets soon came true. Assyria's mighty armies punished and subdued Babylon, Egypt, Kush, and other nations of Asia Minor. However, they did not molest the land of Judah, which in those days had shown its sympathies for the Assyrian empire. But they took King Manasseh and put him in irons and led him into captivity to Babylonia. There they made him endure the most horrible sufferings and accorded him the most shameful treatment. In his despair, and after unsuccessfully calling upon his idols, Manasseh repented sincerely. Even though he had sunk to the lowest possible level, his prayers of repentance were heard and his inhuman tortures were stopped. He was sent back to Jerusalem where he ruled for another thirty-three years, giving full recognition and praise to the One and Only G-d. But despite his sincere efforts to restore the faith of the people to the genuine spirit of the traditional belief, he was unable to lead the Jewish nation back to the path of righteousness from which, under his influence, they had gone astray.

King Amon

Manasseh was succeeded by his son Amon who was not better than his father when he took over the kingdom of Judea.

The land was plunged deeper and deeper into the slough of immorality and idolatry. But fortunately King Amon's rule was short. After two years he was assassinated by his own servants. The people avenged his death; they slew the murderers and declared Josiah, Amon's son, King of Judah.

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Our People, originally published in 1946, was the first Jewish history book for the English speaking reader. Read today, it still provides a comprehensive outline of Jewish history, and also a view of the telling of history as it evolved over the last century.

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/464026/jewish/Kings-Manasseh-and-Amon.htm

2 Kings 21:

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. 3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a wooden image,[fn] as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he worshiped all the host of heaven[fn] 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. 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. 7 He even set a carved image of Asherah[fn] 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." 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.

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.' "

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.