

Bible Stories

JUDAH

2 Chronicles 36:11-16

March 25, 2023

After an additional 15 years, Hezekiah died and Manasseh, his 12-year-old son, became king.

Manasseh – Reigned 55 years (697-643 BC) = **EVIL**

- **2 Chronicles 33:9** - Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites.

According to **2 Kings 21:2-7**, Manasseh:

- Rebuilt the high places and altars for Baal and the Asherim.
- Built altars and worshipped the Hosts of Heaven.
- Built altars in both courts of the Temple and put a carved Asherah pole in the Temple.
- Sacrificed his own sons in the fire to Molech.
- Practiced sorcery and divination and consulted mediums and spiritists.

Yahweh sent Assyria against Manasseh - they captured him and took him to Babylon.

- **Ellen White {PK 382}**: This affliction brought the king to his senses; "he sought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him: and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God." **2 Chronicles 33:11-13**. But this repentance, remarkable though it was, came too late to save the kingdom from the corrupting influence of years of idolatrous practices. Many had stumbled and fallen, never again to rise.

Manasseh was restored as king and reigned again in Judah. He eventually died and his son, Amon, became king.

Amon – Reigned 2 years (643-641 BC) = **EVIL**

He did not humble himself before God – his servants murdered him – then the people killed the servants and made Amon's 8-year-old son, Josiah, king.

Josiah – Reigned 31 Years (641-609 BC) = **RIGHT**

- He restored the worship of God.
- He sought Yahweh.
- He purged Judah and Jerusalem of the high places and the Asherim. He destroyed the altars of Baal as well as all carved and molten images. He burned the bones of the priests. He did the same in the land of Israel – fulfilling the young prophets declaration to Jeroboam 300 years before, "**A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.**" – 1 Kings 13:2-3.
- He purged and repaired the Temple and celebrated Passover. "**The Passover had not been observed like this in Israel since the days of the prophet Samuel; and none of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah...**" - 2 Chronicles 35:18

While repairing the Temple, Hilkiyah, the priest, found the Book of the Law {**Deuteronomy**} and read it to the king. Josiah became very distressed and instructed Hilkiyah to inquire of the Lord - Hilkiyah went to Huldah, the **prophetess**:

- **2 Chronicles 34:23-28** - ...This is what the LORD says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people -- all the curses written in the book that has been read in the presence of the king of Judah. Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and provoked me to anger by all that their hands have made, my anger will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched. Tell the king of Judah ... Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before God when you heard what he spoke against this place and its people, and because you humbled yourself before me and tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the LORD. Now I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place and on those who live here.

Years later, Pharaoh Necho was headed for Carchemish to fight the Assyrians. Josiah decided to join the fight and met Necho on the plain of Megiddo. Necho sent Josiah a note: *"I don't have a problem with you. Stop for your own sake and don't interfere with God, who is with me, so that He may not destroy you."* – 2 Chronicles 25:21

Josiah did not heed the warning. He disguised himself and engaged Necho's army. An enemy archer shot him and he died.

- **2 Kings 23:25** - Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did -- with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses.

His son, Jehoahaz, was made king.

Jehoahaz – Reign 3 months (609 BC) = **EVIL**

Pharaoh Necho removed him from power and placed another of Josiah's sons, Eliakim, on the throne and changed his name to Jehoiakim.

Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt, where he died.

Jehoiakim – Reign 11 years (609-598 BC) = **EVIL**

Babylon defeated Egypt and for 3 years, Jehoiakim was a vassal king to Nebuchadnezzar.

Jehoiakim revolted against Babylon – (1st siege – Daniel will be taken to Babylon at this time)

Jehoiakim died and his son, Jehoiachin, became king.

Jehoiachin – Reign 3 months and 10 days (598-597 BC) = **EVIL**

(He is considered to be the last legitimate king of Judah)

Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem (2nd siege).

- **2 Kings 24:12** - Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his attendants, his nobles and his officials all surrendered to him. In the eighth year of the reign of the king of Babylon, he took Jehoiachin prisoner.

Nebuchadnezzar placed Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, on the throne and changed his name to Zedekiah.

In the 37th year of Jehoiachin's exile, Amel-Marduk, king of Babylon, released him from prison. He was treated kindly, given a seat of honor and a regular allowance and he ate at the king's table for the rest of his life.

Zedekiah – Reign 11 years (597-586 BC) = **EVIL**

He would not humble himself.

- **2 Chronicles 36:14-16** - Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the LORD, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem. ¹⁵ **The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.**

He promised to be loyal to Nebuchadnezzar but rebelled – against the advice of Jeremiah.

3rd siege of Jerusalem – lasted 18-30 months depending on which scholar you ask.

Fall of Judah

- **2 Kings 25:8-10** - On the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, an official of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ⁹ He set fire to the temple of the LORD, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building, he burned down. ¹⁰ The whole Babylonian army, under the commander of the imperial guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem.
- **2 Chronicles 36:19-21** - **They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem**; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there. ²⁰ **He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.** ²¹ The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, **until the seventy years were completed** in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.

What do we do with this story?

Influence ----- Don't think for a moment that you have no influence. Manasseh, through his own actions, led Judah into the most awful and degrading sins and even though he repented and tried to undo what he had done, it was too late. The seeds he had sown had already taken root – again, with devastating results.

While it is true that we are not responsible for someone else's choices, we are responsible for how we use our influence and for the choices we make that may well influence someone else's choices.

Judah had every opportunity to learn the lessons Israel had refused to learn.

God sent Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Joel and Ezekiel (from Babylon) to warn them of the coming judgments.

They had PLENTY of time to repent and return to their covenant relationship with God, but they too, refused to listen.

- **Ellen White {PK 20.1}** - The Lord had through Moses set before His people the result of unfaithfulness. By refusing to keep His covenant, they would cut themselves off from the life of God, and His blessing could not come upon them. At times these warnings were heeded, and rich blessings were bestowed upon the Jewish nation and through them upon surrounding peoples. But more often in their history they forgot God and lost sight of their high privilege as His representatives. They robbed Him of the service He required of them, and they robbed their fellow men of religious guidance and a holy example. They desired to appropriate to themselves the fruits of the vineyard over which they had been made stewards. Their covetousness and greed caused them to be despised even by the heathen. Thus, the Gentile world was given occasion to misinterpret the character of God and the laws of His kingdom.

And yet..... Yahweh's love and faithfulness remained.

- **Ezra 1:1-3** - In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to accomplish the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah, Yahweh stirred the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia and he sent a message to all of his kingdom and also put the message in writing: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: Yahweh, the God of the heavens, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth. And he himself has appointed me to build a house for him in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever among you who is from all of his people, may his God be with him and may he go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and may he build the house of Yahweh, the God of Israel. He is the God who is in Jerusalem.