

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS  
LESSON 12B  
THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS  
CHAPTER 21**

**INTRODUCTION**

Hezekiah reigned for twenty-nine years before he died (18:2). His son, Manasseh succeeded him as King of Judah. Manasseh turned out to be the worst king Judah ever had. Moreover, his reign was the longest for he reigned for fifty-five years, and it was the darkest era in the history of the Southern Kingdom. It was darkest in that it culminated in the irrevocable judgement of the most High God against His own people, Israel (or Judah as the northern kingdom has already been destroyed by the Assyrians).

A good king does not guarantee a good successor. Hezekiah was a good king but his son Manasseh was the worst. It was as if the lights were switched off in Israel. Over a span of one reign Israel plunged from light to total darkness. The long reign of Manasseh means long years of corruption and idolatry. Israel soaked herself in sin and idolatry and all the sins that come with idol worship. These were described for us in this chapter. Generations of good work

could be levelled to the ground over night by one bad king. Manasseh was such a king.

Yet we see the mercies and grace of God in the midst of spiritual darkness and decline. Manasseh was converted and became a new man in Christ while he was in prison. He tried to turn things around after he returned as king of Israel but to no avail. The spiritual damage done in Israel was irreversible. The proverbial saying of "too little too late" summarised Manasseh's late spiritual reform. Whatever economic and political gains he made were of no consequence compared to the failure Manasseh brought to Israel. In the evening years of his life, reflection on his life brought only heartache and pain, knowing that all he had to show was the judgement of God on Israel (Judah) for it would soon be destroyed by the Babylonians. What a sad end to a long and promising career or to be more poignant LIFE!

**OUTLINE**

1. Manasseh's wicked reign in Judah (vv.1-9);
2. The LORD'S judgement upon Manasseh and Judah (vv.10-18);
3. Amon, Manasseh's son acceded to the throne after the death of his father and his wicked reign (vv. 19-26).

## COMMENTARY

### Manasseh's Wicked Reign – 21-1-9

Manasseh acceded to the throne of his father Hezekiah. He was twelve years old when he became the King of Judah. He was therefore born in the last fifteen years when the LORD extended the life of his father. It is shocking to learn that Manasseh was a bad king. He did evil in the sight of the LORD. God used this singular phrase to summarise his life just like He did for all the kings before Manasseh. He was the worst king that Judah ever had. Compounded with that wicked reign, it was also the longest. The damage done was more serious and long lasting. He reigned for more than half a century – fifty five years! He could be compared with Ahab, King of Israel who was arguably the worst of all the northern kings.

Manasseh reversed all the religious reforms which were done by his father. He built again the high places which Hezekiah, his father, had destroyed. He erected again the altars dedicated to Baal and Asherah (grove). He worshipped *all the host of heaven* — the sun, the moon, and the stars like the pagans did. He offered sacrifices to them. He even built these altars in the two courts of the Temple ground in Jerusalem. This was serious. It was a blatant rebellion against the LORD who had decreed that Jerusalem was where He had put His name and where He would be worshipped. In addition to all these sins, he gave his sons as human sacrifices by passing them through the fire as offering to the gods. He

practised divination and fortune-telling, necromancy and witchcraft. He made a female god and placed it in the Temple.

These practices were all forbidden by the Law which the LORD gave to Moses. These are pagan and occult practices and they were introduced and re-introduced to the Judeans. The elders, leaders and the priests were either ignorant or indifferent or were put to death for opposing the king. That brings out another category of sin which Manasseh did against the LORD. He *shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another* (v.16). This was a systematic annihilation of God's people and the innocent. What is reported here is that Manasseh was guilty of mass murder. This could mean that the elders, leaders and priests who opposed him were put to death. The streets of Jerusalem were stained red from one end to the other with the blood of the innocent. It was the darkest day for Judeans who loved the LORD. Manasseh encouraged the Judeans to commit all these abominable acts against one another and the LORD God of their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Manasseh had provoked the LORD God to anger.

### The LORD'S Judgement upon Manasseh and Judah – 21:10-18

The LORD spoke through his servants, the prophets. God used the word "abomination" to describe Judah's sins. The LORD hates sin and Manasseh's utter disregard for the Law of God and his rebellion stirred the

wrath of God and the pronouncement of His judgement.

The basis for God's judgement upon Judah was the sins of Manasseh who also led the people to sin. The Judeans did even worse than the Amorites in their abominable acts. The Amorites were one of the original people who lived in Canaan before the Israelites entered the Promised Land. The usage of the name "Amorites" stands for the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan. The LORD God declared that He would bring catastrophic disaster upon Judah. God used three metaphors to describe His judgement upon Judah. The destruction would be heard by others to the extent that anyone who heard it *both his ears shall tingle* — the news would make their ears to quiver or shake with fear (v.12). Another metaphor that God used was "the plummet" or a measuring line (v.13). This is used even today by surveyors and builders to test the straightness of, say, a wall. God would test Judah for her spirituality. A third metaphor which God used to describe His judgement was *will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth his dish* (21:13b). Judah will be thoroughly judged by the LORD when the Babylonians come. Then Judah was to be left out for some time. When a dish is wiped dry, it is usually put away for the time being (seventy long years in exile).

The LORD declared that He would forsake *the remnant* of His inheritance. The remnant here must be understood to refer to Judah for Judah was then the remnant after the

Northern Kingdom was taken away by the Assyrians. The remnant does not mean the chosen nation of Israel as one people. God is always faithful to His covenant promises to the forefathers of Israel and will not forsake His nation. This judgement was fulfilled less than a century later in 586 B.C., when the Babylonians paid a third visit to Judah. This time they came to plunder and destroy Jerusalem for the last time and to take the Judeans captive to Babylon permanently.

Manasseh is one king whose life must continue to be explained from 2 Chronicles 33. He was taken captive by the Assyrians. While he was in prison, he was converted and became a Christian. 2 Chronicles 33:11-13 says, "*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.*"

After he returned to Jerusalem, now as a newborn again believer in Christ, he wanted to undo all the damage he did as an ungodly king. 2 Chronicles 33:14-17 describes vividly the futility of what he tried to undo, "*Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of*

*Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah. And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. **Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the LORD their God only.***”  
[Emphasis added]

The final commentary of Manasseh from the Word of God in 2 Chron. 33 is far better than what we find in 2 Kings 21. 2 Chronicles 33:18-20, “*Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. His prayer also, and how God was intreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers. So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.*”

#### **Amon’s Wicked Reign – 21:19-26**

Manasseh’s son, Amon acceded to his father’s throne. He was

twenty-two years old when he began to rule over Judah. He had been brought up under the wicked and evil rule of his father since he was born. But after his father’s conversion and return, Amon like the rest of Judah, was not changed or impacted by Manasseh’s futile reforms. It is therefore no surprise that he followed the evil footsteps of his father. Indeed, he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD as his father Manasseh did. He was as idolatrous as his father. He worshipped and served the idols as his father did. He turned his back upon the LORD and lived his life as he pleased. Nothing much is said about him. He ruled only for two years. His own servants assassinated him in his very own house. Then the Judeans killed the assassins and made Josiah, his son, to be King of Judah. Amon was buried in the same cemetery as his father in the garden of Uzza. The next chapter describes the reign of Josiah. It was more illustrious than Hezekiah. Just as Manasseh his grandfather was evil, Josiah was godly. He is considered probably the best king Judah ever had after King David. While Hezekiah brought about administrative and religious reforms to the land, Josiah held up the Word of God.

#### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

Manasseh’s wicked reign lasted fifty-five years and his son’s (Amon’s) reign added another two years. One wonders why God did not end Manasseh’s reign much earlier. One comforting truth that we can learn

about God here is that God does not delight in sending judgement. He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

He sends His prophets and preachers repeatedly to warn and to call sinners to repent. But when sinners harden their heart and their sinful ways reach a full measure, God would most certainly judge. Another truth we learn is that there is a limit to God's patience. God delays His judgement for the purpose that the sinner will repent. It does not mean that God is unwilling to judge. Man should not trifle with God.

We also learn that salvation is of the LORD. No man is beyond salvation even a king as wicked and idolatrous as Manasseh. The LORD will save whom He chooses and His grace is irresistible. Once it impacts the sinner's heart, His life will be transformed to the uttermost.

Sins also have their consequences. We may have been transformed by the power of God but that does not mean that the consequences of our previous sins are erased. Judah was still bound for destruction by the Babylonians even though the king who brought about that judgement was saved personally. It is beyond our understanding and is best to accept it as God's sovereign will. His ways are higher than ours. AMEN

### DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### Daily Readings

**MONDAY:** 2 Kings 21:1-9; Deuteronomy 18:10-14.

**TUESDAY:** 2 Kings 21:10-18; Psalm 106:34-40.

**WEDNESDAY:** 2 Kings 21:19-26; Acts 7:51.

**THURSDAY:** 2 Kings 21:1-26

**FRIDAY:** 2 Kings 21:1-26.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Where did the Bible say that it was wrong to offer human sacrifices? Is it wrong to offer human sacrifices to the one living and true God if He demands it? Explain your answer with biblical support.

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2. How do you seduce someone into sin? Share some examples of such seduction from Scriptures or real life.

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wanted to undo all the damage he has done in his lifetime?

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3. How could God save Manasseh who was so wicked and evil and he being the worst of all the kings of Judah?

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6. What have you learned most about God from this chapter?

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4. Why was the reign under Manasseh the darkest era in Judah?

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5. Why did God not allow Manasseh to reform Judah after the king realised his errors and sincerely