

2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33:

Manasseh – Amon

Lesson 5

Key Verse

Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

—Galatians 5:7

Key Verse Thought: Read the Key Verse. Have you ever run in a race? How well did you run? What helped you to run your best? (i.e.: keep the goal in sight, not look to the left or the right, make sure there are no obstacles in your path, be healthy by eating good foods as opposed to junk food, be sure and be hydrated by drinking enough water, etc.) There are many things to consider if you want to run a race well. This verse is talking about a different kind of race – living a Christian life that is pleasing to God. Can you think of any things that cause you not to live a life pleasing to God? (i.e.: choosing to lie, choosing to disobey authorities, choosing the wrong friends, not reading your Bible, not attending church, etc.) In this lesson, we will look at a king who made many bad choices – primarily to disobey God’s commands (the truths in God’s Word).

Emphasis: Christians are not to let anything hinder us from obeying God and living a life pleasing to Him. We are to learn to lay aside any sin that does not allow us to “run the race well” (live a life pleasing to God).

Lesson Summary: In this lesson, we will continue in our study of the kings of Judah. If you remember, we ended with King Hezekiah, the thirteenth king of Judah, but only the seventh good king. Especially remember that he was the best king who ruled over Judah. “*And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did*” (2 Kings 18:3). Because he obeyed God’s commands, God blessed him and caused him to prosper. We also looked at two prophets who spoke to God’s people during this timeframe: Isaiah and Micah. Both of them spoke God’s Words during the reign of King Hezekiah, and there were many great reformations during his reign, leading the people back to God.

Remember that King Hezekiah was sick unto death. When he prayed, God extended his life by fifteen years. During those fifteen years, a son was born to him. His name was Manasseh. He was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for fifty-five years. Read what kind of a king he was. “*And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD ...*” (2 Kings 21:2). We will learn just how bad of a king he became.

Manasseh was a very wicked king, undoing all of the good that his father, King Hezekiah, had implemented. He became king when he was twelve years old and reigned for fifty-five years. King Manasseh forsook the commandments of the Lord and served idols instead. Not only that, but he sacrificed his sons to the false god, Molech. He made the people of Judah to do more wickedness than the heathen that God had cast out and destroyed before them. During his wicked reign, God allowed him to be taken bound as a prisoner into Babylon. While Manasseh was there, he sought God, humbled himself, and prayed. God heard his prayer. God allowed Manasseh to return home as king. Once home, Manasseh revealed that he truly knew God by the many reforms he made. When he died, his son, Amon, became king.

Suggested Bible Reading to Prepare for This Lesson

- Monday: 2 Kings 20
- Tuesday: 2 Kings 21
- Wednesday: 2 Chronicles 32
- Thursday: 2 Chronicles 33
- Friday: Proverbs 1
- Saturday: Proverbs 2

2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33:

Manasseh – Amon

1. King Manasseh (2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20)
 - Did evil in the sight of the Lord like the abominations of the heathen
 - King Manasseh's wicked reign
 - Wouldn't hear God's warnings; God allowed him to be taken captive into Babylon
 - Manasseh's repentance and restoration
2. King Amon (2 Kings 21:19-23; 2 Chronicles 33:21-25)
 - Did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord
 - King Amon reigned two years, becoming more wicked than his father.

Note: In our last few lessons, we have studied two different prophets: Isaiah and Micah. Remember a few of the main things they said to God's people. Isaiah went when God called, speaking to the kings in their courts. Recall that in the book of Isaiah, Jesus was revealed as our Saviour. Micah called for the people to hear and to listen (act upon what they heard). He left the people with the words that not only would they be restored to their land one day, but he also left them with a hope that God would cast away man's sins – as far as the deepest sea.

Remember a few things of the last two kings we studied: King Ahaz was a very bad king, and his son, King Hezekiah, was a very good king. These were kings' numbers twelve and thirteen of the nation Judah. King Ahaz was so wicked and so disregarded God's commands that he, "... walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen ..." (2 Kings 16:3). However, we also learned just how good of a king his son, Hezekiah, was. "5. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him. 6. For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses" (2 Kings 18:5-6).

"And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead" (2 Kings 20:21).

1. King Manasseh

When King Hezekiah died, his son Manasseh became king. "*Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem ...*" (2 Kings 21:1). We can read that Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king. Notice that this means that he was born to King Hezekiah during the fifteen-year extension that Hezekiah prayed for and God added to his life. However, read on to see what kind of a king he became. "*And he did **that** which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel*" (2 Kings 21:2). He wasn't even compared back to the other kings, but the heathen that God had told them to utterly destroy out of the land when they conquered it (remember the book of Joshua?). They had become like the heathen nations that God had removed away from them. (**Heathen** means "*non-Israeli; uncircumcised nations; considered wicked, idolatrous, abominable; the Israelites were warned not to imitate them.*")

What did King Manasseh do that displeased God so?

See 2 Kings 21:3-7:

- “3. For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed;
- and he reared up altars for Baal,
- and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel;
- and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.
- 4. And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I 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. And he made his son pass through the fire,
- and observed times,
- and used enchantments,
- and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards:
- he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *him* to anger.
- 7. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:”

King Manasseh undid much of the good that his father King Hezekiah had done. King Hezekiah had destroyed all of the high places of false worship. Manasseh built up places of false worship like the ones King Ahab of Israel had done. Moreover, he went on further and worshiped “all the host of heaven, and served them” (2 Kings 21:3).

Remember what God had already taught them.

2. If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, 3. And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded ... 5. Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, *even* that man or that

woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. 7b. ... So thou shalt put the evil away from among you. (Deuteronomy 17:2-3, 5, 7b)

No one, not even the king, was to worship the host of heaven. Also, remember back to Israel's (the Northern Kingdom's) history for a minute. One of the reasons listed in 2 Kings chapter seventeen that declared why God had allowed them to be carried captive to Assyria was, "And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal" (2 Kings 17:16). The last king of Israel, Hoshea, led the people to worship all the host of heaven. That means that they made gods out of the sun, moon and stars. That king, along with Israel, had been carried captive many years before Manasseh even became king – and God had listed the reasons why he had allowed that to happen. Manasseh should have known that was forbidden.

Not only did he make up new, false gods and worshiped them, but he perverted the worship of the one true God. The temple was to be hallowed; for it was the place where God had placed his name. (Remember: "And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" 1 Kings 9:3.) It was only for the worship of God – yet King Manasseh built false altars there.

He also made his son "pass through the fire" as his grandfather before him had done (remember wicked King Ahaz: "... and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel" 2 Kings 16:3b.) If you remember, God had specifically told them not to do this (sacrifice a son to the false god, Molech). "And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 18:21).

Another thing that displeased God – he "observed times." **Observed times** means "to practice magic." He "used enchantments." **Used enchantments** means "to hiss; to whisper a magical spell; to practice sorcery." Both of these things had been outlawed in the Law. "... Neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times" (Leviticus 19:26).

Finally we see "and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards" added to this list of things done by King Manasseh that displeased God. **Familiar spirits** means "one who deals with the occult; a necromancer as one who calls up spirits from the abyss to foretell future events

(remember the famous “witch of Endor” in 1 Samuel 28:7 that King Saul visited); also means conjuring up a ghost.” **Wizards** means “sorcerer, magician, wizard, or a prophesying spirit; it is possible this is also the masculine counter part to ‘familiar spirits.’” The accounting is close to the same in 2 Chronicles 33:1-7, but there is an addition: “... and used witchcraft ...” (2 Chronicles 33:6).

See again, what God had told the people not to do:

11. There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, 11. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.
(Deuteronomy 18:10-11)

Notice that King Manasseh did the things that God had commanded them **not** to do. Remember again, back to Israel’s history for a minute. See another reason why God allowed them to be carried captive to Assyria listed in 2 Kings 17: “*And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger*” (2 Kings 17:17).

After reading what King Manasseh led the people to do, and remembering what God had told his people, read what God’s Word tells us about Judah and King Manasseh. “*But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel*” (2 Kings 21:9). King Manasseh had brought the people of Judah to a deplorable state. We have learned of good kings compared back to King David, bad kings compared to the kings of Israel, but Manasseh was compared back to the heathen that God had cast out and destroyed. “*So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel*” (2 Chronicles 33:9). Can you understand what King Manasseh had led the people to do? We now find that they had become more evil, or worse, than the heathen nations (**heathen** means “*non-Israeli; uncircumcised nations; those without the knowledge of God considered wicked, idolatrous, abominable; the Israelites were warned not to imitate them*”).

God had promised to leave His people in the Promised Land, if only they would obey Him. “Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them” (2 Kings 21:8). But, had the people obeyed God?

Because King Manasseh and Judah were doing wrong according to God’s Word, God sent His prophets to speak to them. Read Second Kings chapter twenty-one to find out what God’s prophets told the people. See especially:

11. Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, *and* hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which *were* before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: 12. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I *am* bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. 13. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as *a man* wipeth a dish, wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down. 14. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; 15. Because they have done *that which was* evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day. 16. Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD. (2 Kings 21:11-16)

Because King Manasseh had done those abominable things (**abominable things** means “*evil doctrines and practices, which are moral defilements*”), God would bring evil upon Judah – so that all who would hear, “**both his ears shall tingle**” (that means that “*they will take notice and have great fear for what God would do to His people that disobeyed His words*”). God would allow the city to be overturned (“**and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping *it*, and**

turning *it upside down*”) and they would be delivered into the hand of their enemy. “*Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger ...*” (2 Kings 21:15).

Remember what we have learned: when God’s people sinned, he sent his prophets to warn them and call them to repentance. “*And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken*” (2 Chronicles 33:10). When God’s people refuse to listen, he discipline’s them – hoping they will return to Him. “*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*” (2 Chronicles 33:11). Because of Manasseh’s complete disregard of God’s Word, disobeying every part his father had reinstituted in Judah, God allowed him to be taken captive into the enemy land.

How did Manasseh respond to God’s discipline?

12. And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13. 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. (2 Chronicles 33:12-13)

King Manasseh was taken prisoner, and it was while he was a prisoner that he “*besought*” and “*humbled himself greatly*” before God. Once he reached that state, he was able to pray – and God heard him. Notice: **intreated** means “*God heard his prayer*” and **supplication** means “*grace; mercy; compassion; a cry for mercy.*” God forgave Manasseh and returned him home as king. It was not until this time that Manasseh *knew* God. See the difference in Manasseh’s life after he knew God:

2 Chronicles 33:14-16:

- “14. 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.
- 15. 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.
- 16. 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.”

God allowed Manasseh to return to Jerusalem as king. At this point in King Manasseh’s life, there was a change not recorded in Second Kings, but only in Second Chronicles. Can you see the difference in Manasseh once he *knows* God? Not only did he repair and reinforce the wall around Jerusalem, but also he took away the strange gods and idols – and cast them out. He repaired the altar of the Lord and sacrificed – commanding Judah to serve the Lord God. Moreover, the people sacrificed “*yet unto the LORD their God only.*” There was so much more good that Manasseh did, but it is summed up in these closing verses.

18. 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.
 19. 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. (2 Chronicles 33:18-19)

“And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead” (2 Kings 21:18).

A Deeper Path: We have already studied Proverbs, but today we will look at a few of the Proverbs that King Manasseh should have known – for his great-great (several times over) grandfather (Solomon) had written these down for all future generations from which they were to learn; including King Manasseh.

“1. My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: 2. For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee” (Proverbs 3:1-2). After reading about

King Manasseh, we learned that he did not remember God's Law, nor did he keep God's commandments. Although King Manasseh had a long reign, would you say that it was a peaceful one? (Remember, he was carried captive to a foreign land by an enemy king!)

"He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known" (Proverbs 10:9). To walk **uprightly** means "*with integrity or innocence.*" **Perverteth** means *to distort; to turn from the right; to corrupt.*" Notice that even today, we can read about King Manasseh and the terrible wrongs he did – and that he led Judah to do. He did not walk uprightly, and we today, still read of the many wicked things he did.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). As we saw in King Manasseh's life, he did what he wanted (the way that seemed right to him). Notice: not only did he offer his son as a sacrifice to a false god (see 2 Kings 16:3), but he shed much innocent blood. "**Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another ...**" (2 Kings 21:16). He brought much death to Judah.

We could list many more Proverbs here. See if you can think of any more! Add them to the list.

Manasseh began as a very wicked king, but we saw a change of his heart – once he recognized God's hand in his life. He sought the Lord, humbled himself, and then he prayed. "29. But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find *him*, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. 30. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, *even* in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; 31. (For the LORD thy God *is* a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them" (Deuteronomy 4:29-31).

Also, read Isaiah 55:6-7: "6. Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." God had mercy upon Manasseh!

2. King Amon

As we read about Manasseh's son, notice something:

19. Amon *was* twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem ... 20. And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did. 21. And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: 22. And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD. (2 Kings 21:19-22)

He lived just as his father had. He did not heed the warnings of the prophets God had sent to warn his father. Warnings about the destruction that was to come because of the great abominations his father had committed. Instead, he walked in the ways of his father, and did not walk in the way of the Lord.

See something interesting recorded in 2 Chronicles 33:23: “*And humbled not himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more.*” Even though his father humbled himself, and God gave him back his kingdom, Manasseh’s son, Amon, did not humble himself before the Lord. Instead, he became worse.

Although we do not read much about his kingdom, see that he only reigned for two years when there arose a conspiracy against him. “*And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house*” (2 Kings 21:23). King Amon was only twenty-four years old when he died. The people then killed all of those conspirators, and, “*... the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead*” (2 Kings 21:24b).

2 Kings 21 at a Glance:

Chapter 21: Tells of bad King Manasseh’s reign; lists Manasseh’s abominations; a warning of judgment for sin; when Manasseh died his son, Amon, became king; Amon’s servants conspired, killed him, and Josiah became king

2 Chronicles 33 at a Glance:

Chapter 33: Manasseh became king at twelve; did evil like the heathen and made Judah to do worse than the heathen God had destroyed; refused to hear God until God allowed him to be carried to Babylon – then he truly repented before God and removed the idols from Jerusalem; Amon became king and his servants killed him; Josiah made king

Reinforcement: As we learned about good King Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, in this lesson, we found he was nothing like his father. Something important we should learn from this lesson is that it is up to each individual just how they will live their life. We took note of a few Proverbs that revealed to us that Manasseh did not remember the Law of his father, nor did he obey the commands of his father (see Proverbs 3:1-2). This is something important each and every person must understand; it is important to remember God's laws and obey them.

Something else we must know: “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). When King Manasseh chose to displease God and allow sin to rule his life, God allowed the enemy to come in and take him captive to a foreign country. He became the enemy king's servant – until he humbled himself before God, and God allowed him to return home.

What can we do, to live a better life than King Manasseh who not only disregarded his earthly father, but his heavenly Father? “1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Hebrews 12:1-3). Remember all of the people who have successfully run the race set before them, knowing they are in heaven today. We have to eliminate the sin that encumbers us. In addition, it is important to “run with patience the race that is set before us” (living a life pleasing to Jesus). Knowing Jesus was able to complete what God asked of him, one cannot become “wearied and faint in your minds.”

Closing: It would be good to close with a short prayer reinforcing today's lesson. Always include any prayer requests you may have. *Today, pray that we will run the race God has placed before us well. Pray that we will lay any sin aside that keeps us from running that race and pleasing God.*