

(14) Manasseh

BIBLICAL RECORD:

- 2 Kings 21:1-18
- 2 Chronicles 33:1-20
- 1st reference: 2 Kings 20:21
- Last reference: Jeremiah 15:4
- Mentioned 24 times in the Bible

POSITION:

- 14th King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah
- 1st king in the Southern Kingdom to take office after the Northern Kingdom was taken into Assyrian Captivity in 722 B.C.

REIGN:

- 55 years
- 699-543 B.C.

CHARACTER:

- Among the Worst

DEATH:

- **2 Kings 21:18** – “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.”

FAMILY:

- Father was Hezekiah
- Mother was Hephzibah
- Wife was Meshullemeth, daughter of Haruz. She was from Jothbah
- Son was Amon

RULER(s) IN THE NORTHERN KINGDOM:

- The Northern Kingdom had ended some 23 years before he became king in Judah. It ended in 722 B.C. during the 6th year in the 28 year reign of Hezekiah.

PROPHET(s):

- Nahum to Assyria

OBSERVATIONS:

- Longest reign of any of the Jewish kings in either kingdom.
- Tradition says he killed Isaiah by placing him inside a hollow tree and sawing him asunder. **Hebrews 11:37** – “They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated”

FACTS:

- Began to reign at age 12
- Died at age 67
- Manasseh did much evil;

- Did evil in the eyes of the Lord. 2 Kings 21:2
- Rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed. 2 Kings 21:3
- Erected altars to Baal. 2 Kings 21:3
- Made an Asherah pole. 2 Kings 21:3
- Bowed down and worshiped the starry host. 2 Kings 21:3
- Built idolatrous altars in the Temple of the Lord. 2 Kings 21:4
- In both courts of the Temple he built altars to all the starry hosts. 2 Kings 21:5
- Sacrificed his son in the fire in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom. 2 Chronicles 33:6
- Practiced sorcery. 2 Kings 21:6
- Practiced divination. 2 Kings 21:6
- Practiced witchcraft. 2 Chronicles 33:6
- Consulted mediums and spiritists. 2 Kings 21:6
- Put the carved Asherah pole in the Temple of the Lord. 2 Kings 21:7
- Did more evil than the Amorites who preceded him. 2 Kings 21:11 Note: “. . . Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed before the Israelites.” 2 Kings 21:9
- Led Judah into sin with his idols. 2 Kings 21:11
- “Shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end.” 2 Kings 21:16
- God’s response through the prophets. 2 Kings 21:10-15
 - The King of Assyria put Manasseh in bronze shackles, a hook in his nose, and took him to Babylon (2 Chronicles 33:11). Note: There is an ancient monument showing King Esar-haddon leading two captives with hooks or rings through their lips, and it bears this inscription: “I transported (from Syria) into Assyria men and women innumerable . . . I counted among the vassals of my realm twelve kings of Syria, beyond the mountains, Balon, King of Tyre, Manasseh, King of Judah.” Question: The Assyrian capital was Nineveh, so how could the Assyrian king take him to Babylon?
 - The Assyrian Empire was in power at that time.
 - Babylon and the Babylonians were under Assyrian domination.
 - In repopulating the land that had formerly belonged to the 10 tribes prior to being taken into Assyrian captivity, the Bible says in 2 Kings 17:24 – “The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cutha, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took over Samaria and lived in their towns.”
 - 626 B.C. – 96 years after Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Babylon rebelled against Assyria,
 - 612 B.C. – 16 years later, Babylon overthrew Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria. Note: This takes place about 150 years after Nineveh had been spared from the destruction, having repented at the preaching of Jonah in about 762 B.C.
 - 605 B.C. – 7 years later, the armies of Babylon defeated the armies of Egypt at Carchemish, thus positioning itself as a world empire.
 - Until that happened, the Assyrians dominated Babylon and the Babylonians.

- In Babylon, Manasseh humbled himself before the Lord, and what a difference it made. 2 Chronicles 33:12-13
 - The Lord brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. 2 Chronicles 33:13
 - “Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God.” 2 Chronicles 33:13
 - Rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, and made it higher. 2 Chronicles 33:14
 - Got rid of the foreign gods. 2 Chronicles 33:15
 - Removed the altars and images from the Temple and Jerusalem, and threw them out of the city. 2 Chronicles 33:15
 - Told the people of Judah to serve the Lord, the God of Israel. 2 Chronicles 33:17 – “The people, however, continued to sacrifice at the high places, but only to the Lord.”

LESSONS FROM HIS LIFE & REIGN:

- Even the worst among us can change . . . Look at Manasseh in Babylon. 2 Kings 33:12-13
- When one changes, one can not always change the people that have already been changed by him.
- Fervent prayer can make a difference.
 - 2 Chronicles 33:13 – “And when he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so He brought him back to Jerusalem and to His kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God.”
 - James 5:16 – “. . . The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”
- Clint Eastwood movie, The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Manasseh lived the bad and the ugly before he lived the good. Leave the bad and live for God before it is too late to change.
- When it comes to our lives, God knows it all. 2 Chronicles 33:18-19 – “The other events of Manasseh's reign, including his prayer to his God and the words the seers spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, are written in the annals of the kings of Israel. His prayer and how God was moved by his entreaty, as well as all his sins and unfaithfulness, and the sites where he built high places and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself — all are written in the records of the seers.”

KEY PASSAGE(s):

- 2 Chronicles 33:10 – “The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention.”
- 2 Chronicles 33:12-13 – “In his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of His fathers. And when he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea . . .”