

# KING MANASSEH

2 Kings 21:1-18; 24:2-4; 2 Chronicles 33:1-17

## STRUCTURE

**Key-person:** King Manasseh of Judah

**Key-location:** Jerusalem

### Key-repetitions:

- King Manasseh did evil: he rebuilt sex-and-religion shrines (2 Kin 21:3); he erected images to Baal (2 Kin 21:3); he put the image of Asherah into the temple (2 Kin 21:3, 7); he consulted astrologists and worshiped the stars (2 Kin 21:3); he practiced black magic (2 Kin 21:6); he asked fortune-tellers for advice (2 Kin 21:6); he held seances (2 Kin 21:6); he sacrificed his son (2 Kin 21:6); he killed innocent people; (2 Kin 21:16); he caused the people to sin (2 Kin 21:9).
- The Lord promised: to bring catastrophe (2 Kin 21:12); to wipe out Jerusalem (2 Kin 21:13).
- Assyria's cruelty to Manasseh: imprisoned him; put a hook in his nose; bound him with shackles; took him to Babylon (2 Chr 33:11).
- Manasseh's acts of repentance: sought the Lord (2 Chr 33:12); humbled himself (2 Chr 33:12); prayed (2 Chr 33:15).
- After repenting, Manasseh's good deeds: knew that the Lord is God (2 Chr 33:13); removed idols from the temple (2 Chr 33:15); repaired the Lord's altar and offered sacrifices to thank God and to ask his blessings (2 Chr 33:16); ordered everyone in Judah to worship the Lord God (2 Chr 33:16).

### Key-attitudes:

- Manasseh's arrogance.
- The Lord's anger at Manasseh.
- Manasseh's humility after his repentance.
- The Lord's compassion to forgive the repentant Manasseh.

### Initial-situation:

Assyrians conquered Israel when Hezekiah was king of Judah. Hezekiah was king twenty-nine years and he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He kept to the standards of his ancestor David. He removed local fertility shrines and cut down sex-and-religion Asherah poles. Hezekiah trusted in the Lord God and obeyed the commands the Lord had given Moses. The Lord gave Hezekiah success in everything he did (2 Kin 18:1-8).

### Initial-problem:

King Hezekiah died and his son Manasseh succeeded him as king.

**Final-situation:**

Years after Manasseh died, the Babylonians attacked Judah and took the people of Judah captive to Babylon. God placed the blame squarely on Manasseh.

**BIBLE STORY**

King Hezekiah died and his son Manasseh succeeded him as king. Manasseh ruled Judah fifty-five years. Manasseh did evil. King Manasseh rebuilt the sex-and-religion shrines his father Hezekiah had destroyed. Manasseh erected images to the sex god Baal and put the image of the prostitute goddess Asherah into the temple of the Lord God. Manasseh consulted astrologists and worshiped the stars. Manasseh practiced black magic, asked fortune-tellers for advice, and held seances to consult spirits from the underworld. He sacrificed his own son in the fire. Manasseh provoked the Lord to anger. Manasseh killed many innocent people. King Manasseh forced the people to worship idols. Manasseh was guilty of causing the people of Judah to sin and disobey the Lord. He refused to protect innocent people (2 Kin 21:1-9, 16-17; 2 Chr 33:1-7).

The Lord spoke through the prophets, “King Manasseh has led Judah to sin with his idols. I will bring catastrophe on Jerusalem and Judah. I will wipe out Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down” (2 Kin 21:10-15).

Manasseh and his people ignored the Lord’s word. So the Lord directed the army of Assyria to invade Judah and capture King Manasseh. Assyria took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with shackles, and took him to Babylon. Manasseh was a prisoner and he sought the Lord his God; he humbled himself before the God of his ancestors. Manasseh prayed, and the Lord listened to Manasseh’s prayer. God brought Manasseh back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God (2 Chr 33:10-13).

King Manasseh removed the idols of foreign gods from the temple. Manasseh repaired the Lord’s altar and offered sacrifices to thank God and to ask his blessings. Manasseh ordered that everyone in Judah worship the Lord God of Israel (2 Chr 33:14-17).

Many years after Manasseh had died, the Babylonians attacked Judah and ultimately took the people of Judah captive to Babylon. God placed the blame squarely on Manasseh. God sent Babylon against Judah to destroy it because of Manasseh’s sins, including the innocent blood that Manasseh had shed. Manasseh filled Jerusalem with innocent blood. The Lord refused to pardon him (2 Kin 24:2-4).

**GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS**

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story?                  | 5. How did the characters face their problems?                                       |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems?  |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story?                  | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face?                     | 8. What does the story tell about God?   |

## SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What evil things did Manasseh do that provoked God to anger?
2. What evil things do people do today that provoke God to anger?
3. How did God get Manasseh's attention so that he turned from idols and began to serve God?
4. Why would God forgive and begin to use a person as wicked as Manasseh?
5. Why is God willing to forgive the worst of sinners?
6. Are there sins that God wants to forgive, but you don't think he should forgive?
7. After Manasseh returned to God, why wasn't he able to erase the results of his past sinful acts?
8. Why can't the consequences of confessed sins be forgiven?

## LIFE-LESSONS

1. **A righteous parent does not always produce righteous children.** King Hezekiah had been a great reformer, doing his best to remove sinful activities in Judah. Hezekiah died and his son Manasseh became king and brought back idolatry and immorality in the nation (2 Chr 33:3-7).
2. **Sin provokes God to anger.** Manasseh did much evil, provoking the Lord to anger (2 Kin 21:6).
3. **Confessed sins are forgiven; however, consequences of disobeying God cannot be erased.** Manasseh tried in vain to undo the effects of his evil and idolatry (2 Chr 33:17). When Judah was conquered and Jerusalem destroyed, the blame was squarely placed on the consequences of Manasseh's sins (2 Kin 24:2-4).
4. **God's love, grace, and mercy are big enough for any sinner. The most evil people have the potential to change their hearts and, in turn, change their lives.** Manasseh was the most evil, wicked, and depraved king in all of Judah's history (2 Kin 21:15-16). But when Manasseh was a prisoner in Babylon, he understood that the stars couldn't help him and his idols couldn't save him. He humbled himself and sought God. God forgave Manasseh and restored him to power (2 Chr 33:12-13). Manasseh turned from his evil ways and began to do the Lord's will (2 Chr 33:15-16). If anyone believes in Christ, that person becomes new. The old life is finished (2 Cor 5:17-21). As with Saul of Tarsus, the Lord delights to take the worst of sinners and turn them into the best of saints as a trophy of his grace (1 Tim 1:15-16).
5. **The person who influences others to do wrong, may discover that the perverseness of sin makes it impossible to undo the bad example and wrong influence.** Manasseh was "successful" in getting people to follow a path of corruption, wrongdoing, and accepting false gods. Manasseh humbled himself,

repented, and changed his ways; but he was unable to lead the nation to turn from his former evil influence. Manasseh could not erase the influence his sins had on other people (2 Chr 33:17).

6. **A time can come when God stops speaking to a sinner with words, but starts speaking with blows. The sinner who does not respond to God’s love may respond to God’s blows.** A time came when God stopped speaking to Manasseh with the words of the prophets and started speaking with blows from his enemy’s army. The enemy captured Manasseh, put a hook in his nose, tied him to chains, and took him to Babylon (2 Chr 33:11-13).

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

**Chant:**

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

<b>All</b>	
“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18 NIV).	
<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>
If <b><u>anyone</u></b>	Any person
Is <b><u>in</u></b> Christ	Is <b><u>grafted</u></b> into Christ
The <b><u>new</u></b> creation has come.	That person is a new <b><u>creation</u></b>
The <b><u>old</u></b> has gone	Previous moral and spiritual condition has <b><u>passed away</u></b>
the <b><u>new</u></b> is here!	The fresh and new has <b><u>come!</u></b>
All this is from God	All these things are from God the Father.
who reconciled us to himself	Brought us into harmony with himself
through Christ .	Jesus Christ reconciled us to God the Father.
<b>All</b>	
“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come; the old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18 NIV).	