

The Birth of Manasseh

King Manasseh was quite possibly the most wicked ruler that Judah ever had. He reigned for 55 years and did much evil in the sight of the Lord:

2 Kings 21:1: “Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Hephzibah.

2 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.”

The wickedness of this man was truly horrifying. For example, *he offered his own children as burnt offerings*:

II Kings 21:6: “**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:”

Not only did he perform human sacrifice, but he also polluted the Temple by putting an idol in it. Manasseh didn't stop

there, though. The king also murdered a great many innocent people:

II Kings 21:16: “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”

Manasseh's wickedness was so great that God was still angry about it decades later – long after the king had died. In fact, the king's sin led directly to the destruction of Judah itself. God destroyed the land of Judah as an act of vengeance against the great sins of this wicked king:

II Kings 24:2: “And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, **and sent them against Judah to destroy it**, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets.

3 Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, **for the sins of Manasseh**, according to all that he did;

4 And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon.”

So, then, we see that Manasseh was an incredibly wicked man. There is a lot that can be said about that, but what I want to focus on is the fact that he became king when he was 12 years old:

2 Kings 21:1: “Manasseh was **twelve years old**

when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah.

Manasseh's father was Hezekiah, and Manasseh began reigning right after his father died. Hezekiah was a good king who feared the Lord. At the end of Hezekiah's life he fell sick, and the prophet Isaiah told him that he was going to die. When Hezekiah heard this he cried out to God and asked the Lord to spare him:

2 Kings 20:1: "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; **for thou shalt die**, and not live.

2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and **prayed unto the Lord**, saying,

3 I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore."

God heard Hezekiah's prayer and granted his request:

2 Kings 20:4: "And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying,

5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, **I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee:** on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord.

6 And **I will add unto thy days fifteen years;** and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend

this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake."

God extended Hezekiah's life by 15 years. This is important, because Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to reign. That means *Manasseh was born during those 15 extra years that God gave Hezekiah.*

If Hezekiah had died during his sickness then Manasseh would never have been born. II Kings 24:3 tells us that the reason God destroyed Judah and deported the Jews who lived there was because of the sins of Manasseh. If Manasseh had never existed then history might have turned out very differently. The extra 15 years of life that Hezekiah asked for – and received – led to the destruction of Judah and the deportation of those who lived there. That one request led to the destruction of his entire nation.

There are many times when we pray for something and God tells us "no". When God does that we tend to get upset about it – especially when we are praying for something that is good and wholesome. All Hezekiah wanted was another fifteen years of life. What could possibly be wrong with that? There was nothing sinful or wicked about it – but the consequences of that request were dire.

It is not a bad thing to pray; in fact, the Bible commands it. We *should* cast all our cares upon the Lord, because He does care for us. We should make our requests known to God. But we need to remember that God knows far more than we do. We may think that our prayer is entirely innocent and harmless, but – like the prayer of Hezekiah – it may have dire consequences that we can't possibly see. When God tells us "no" we should trust Him. He really does know what is best.