

## December 28

**Scriptures:** Read 2 Kings 21

**Key Verse:** “So I will foresake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies... because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked me to anger...”. (2 Kings 21:14-15)

### Overview

After Hezekiah’s death, his son Manasseh became king at the age of twelve. It is tragic that although Manasseh had a righteous father, he was the most wicked king of Judah. Hezekiah must not have spent much time instructing his young son in the ways of the Lord. This illustrates the importance of parents being a godly influence on their children, taking time to teach them the word of God. Manasseh’s mother, Hephzibah, who likely had the most influence on him, must not have served and honoured the Lord God as had her husband. Hezekiah should have been more careful in the type of wife he chose, just as the priests had been instructed by Moses regarding the type of woman they could marry (Leviticus 21:7, 13-15). A mother always has great influence on her children.

Manasseh was so evil that he was compared to Ahab of Israel (21:3). He had the longest reign of any Israelite king (fifty-five years), but sadly used his time and authority to once again promote idolatry as had his grandfather, Ahaz (16:2-3). He undid all that his father Hezekiah had done in his campaign of reformation (21:3). He was even more wicked than the Amorites whom God had expelled from the land for their wickedness (21:11). He practiced witchcraft and profaned the Temple with pagan altars and idols; he even sacrificed his own son to a pagan god, as his grandfather had done (21:6; 16:3).

During his reign, Manasseh “seduced” the people to sin (21:9). All the while, God was sending prophets to warn them, but their warnings went unheeded. We read that Manassah “shed very much innocent blood” (21:16). He probably put to death anyone who openly opposed his vile ways, including the prophets of God. Tradition says that Isaiah, who had been a source of strength for Hezekiah, was a martyr under his son Manasseh’s persecution of the faithful worshippers of God (cf. Hebrews 11:37).

After extreme provocation, the Lord sent a prophet to proclaim his judgment upon Judah, the remnant of his inheritance. They were called the remnant because God had already cast out the people of the Northern Kingdom by the hand of the Assyrians (17:5-6). Now sin would lead Judah to suffer the same fate. However, God mercifully gave Judah more time to repent. However, as we read in the Book of Chronicles, He brought judgment upon Manasseh. Finally, because of divine punishment in the form of his captivity, Manasseh repented before his death (2 Chronicles 33:11-19). If God could forgive and restore this most wicked king, we can be confident He is willing to forgive anyone who comes to Him with a sincere and repentant heart.

Manasseh’s son Amon fortunately had a short reign, for he did evil, just as his father had done. A group of conspirators killed him in an attempt to put another on the throne, but God was not

through with the Davidic dynasty; therefore, the people arose and made Amon's eight-year-old son Josiah king over Judah.

### **Prayer**

Thank You, Lord, that You are merciful. We think of our own family members. Please draw them all to Yourself. We pray that not one will ever turn away from You. Help us to instruct them in Your ways. Amen.