

# SECOND KINGS

## Chapter 21

### *Manasseh King of Judah*

Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother's name was Hephzibah. <sup>2</sup> He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. <sup>3</sup> He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. <sup>4</sup> He built altars in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put my Name." <sup>5</sup> In both courts of the temple of the LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts. <sup>6</sup> He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced sorcery and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger. <sup>7</sup> He took the carved Asherah pole he had made and put it in the temple, of which the LORD had said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my Name forever. <sup>8</sup> I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their forefathers, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them." <sup>9</sup> But the people did not listen. Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites. <sup>10</sup> The LORD said through his servants the prophets: <sup>11</sup> "Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins. He has done more evil than the Amorites who preceded him and has led Judah into sin with his idols. <sup>12</sup> Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle. <sup>13</sup> I will stretch out over Jerusalem the measuring line used against Samaria and the plumb line used against the house of Ahab. I will wipe out Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. <sup>14</sup> I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance and hand them over to their enemies. They will be looted and plundered by all their foes, <sup>15</sup> because they have done evil in my eyes and have provoked me to anger from the day their forefathers came out of Egypt until this day." <sup>16</sup> Moreover, Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end—besides the sin that he had caused Judah to commit, so that they did evil in the eyes of the LORD. <sup>17</sup> As for the other events of Manasseh's reign, and all he did, including the sin he committed, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? <sup>18</sup> Manasseh rested with his fathers and was buried in his palace garden, the garden of Uzza. And Amon his son succeeded him as king.

**21:1** *twelve years old.* Manasseh was born after Hezekiah's serious illness (see 20:6) (CSB)

Hezekiah enjoyed a comparatively long reign, so it seems odd that he would not have an older successor. No further information is given. (TLSB)

*fifty-five years.* 697–642 B.C., including a ten-year co-regency (697–686) with his father Hezekiah. This was the longest reign of any king in either Israel or Judah. (CSB)

**21:2** Hezekiah hoped in vain for a successor who, by wholehearted devotion to God, might save Jerusalem from the doom pronounced upon it by Isaiah (20:16–19). The 55-year rule of his son Manasseh was longer and more wicked than that of any king of Judah. Nevertheless, a little more than half a century was to elapse before divine judgment engulfed the city (2Ch 33:10–13). (TLSB)

*detestable practices.* Manasseh reversed the religious policies of his father Hezekiah (see 18:3–5) and reverted to those of Ahaz (see 16:3). (CSB)

*nations whom the LORD drove out.* Canaanites. See notes, Jsh 3:10; 23:9.

**21:3–6** Manasseh’s “despicable practices” (v 2) ran the whole gamut from baalized worship of the Lord on “the high places” to unabashed adoption of the fertility idols of Canaan and the veneration of the heavenly bodies, imported by the Assyrians. (TLSB)

**21:3** *high places ... Hezekiah had destroyed.* See note on 18:4; see also 2Ch 31:1. (CSB)

*Asherah pole.* See 1Ki 14:15, 23; 15:13; 16:33. (CSB)

Could describe an image of the goddess, a wooden pole that symbolized the goddess, or a place sacred to her, such as a tree or grove. (TLSB)

*as Ahab.* Manasseh was the Ahab of Judah (see 1Ki 16:30–33). (CSB)

*bowed down to all the starry hosts.* See note on 17:16. (CSB)

**21:4** *In Jerusalem I will put my Name.* See 1Ki 8:20, 29; 9:3. (CSB)

**21:6** *sacrificed his own son.* See note on 16:3; see also 17:17. (CSB)

*practiced sorcery and divination.* See notes on 16:15; 17:17. (CSB)

*consulted mediums and spiritists.* See Lev 19:31; Dt 18:11; 1Sa 28:3, 7–9 and notes. (CSB)

**21:7** *carved Asherah pole.* See note on 1Ki 14:15. (CSB)

*David.* See 2Sa 7:13. (CSB)

*Solomon.* See 1Ki 9:3. (CSB)

*chosen out of all the tribes.* See 1Ki 11:13, 32, 36. (CSB)

*put My name.* Cf Dt 12:5. Tragically, Manasseh despised God's graciousness by putting an idol in the very place God had put His name for Israel. (TLSB)

**21:9** *nations the LORD had destroyed.* See 1Ki 14:24; Dt 12:29–31; 31:3. (CSB)

Either hyperbole or a reference to additional gods and deities that the Canaanites had not known. Cf 17:30–31. (TLSB)

**21:1–9** Ironically, faithful Hezekiah leaves his throne to the worst king in Judah's history, Manasseh, who had 55 years to thoroughly corrupt the people. Make parenthood and family among your highest priorities, by which you may serve not only this generation, but generations to come. The Lord makes you and your family the object of His love and mercy in giving His one and only Son for you. • By Your grace, O heavenly Father, bless and keep my family in the one true faith unto life everlasting. Amen. (TLSB)

**21:10** *his servants the prophets.* See 2Ch 33:10, 18. (CSB)

**21:11** *more evil than the Amorites.* See note on 1Ki 21:26. (CSB)

Pre-Israelite inhabitants of the Promised Land. Sometimes used as a general term for the various racial groups of Canaan (cf Gn 15:16, 21). (TLSB)

**21:12** *ears of everyone who hears of it will tingle.* See Jer 19:3. (CSB)

**21:13** *measuring line ... plumb line.* Instruments normally associated with construction are used here as symbols of destruction (see Isa 34:11; Am 7:7–9, 17). (CSB)

Instruments used in erecting buildings to make them conform to predetermined specifications. Judah will discover that its fate will correspond with measured exactness to the words of threat here uttered (24:3–4). (TLSB)

*Samaria ... Ahab.* End of Ahab's dynasty and destruction of Samaria were warnings that the Lord's condemnation of apostasy should not be ignored. (TLSB)

**21:14** *I will forsake.* In the sense of giving over to judgment (see Jer 12:7), not in the sense of abrogation of the covenant (see 1Sa 12:22; Isa 43:1–7). (CSB)

*remnant of my inheritance.* Upon the destruction of the northern kingdom, Judah had become the remnant of the Lord's inheritance (see 1Ki 8:51; Dt 4:20; 1Sa 10:1; Ps 28:9; see also note on 2Ki 19:4). (CSB)

**21:15** The history of Israel was a history of covenant breaking. With the reign of Manasseh the cup of God's wrath overflowed, and the judgment of exile from the land of promise (see note on 17:7) became inevitable (see 24:1–4). (CSB)

**21:16** *innocent blood.* A reference to godly people and perhaps even prophets who were martyred for opposition to Manasseh's evil practices (see vv. 10–11). According to a Jewish tradition (not otherwise substantiated) Isaiah was sawed in two during Manasseh's reign (cf. Heb 11:37). (CSB)

Like Jezebel, Manasseh persecuted the prophets; like Ahab, he stooped to judicial murder whenever a citizen stood in his way (1Ki 18:4; 21). (TLSB)

**21:17** *other events of Manasseh's reign.* See 2Ch 33:12–19. (CSB)

*annals of the kings of Judah.* See note on 1Ki 14:29. (CSB)

**21:18** *rested with his fathers.* See note on 1Ki 1:21. (CSB)

*Uzza.* Probably a shortened form of Uzziah (see 14:21–22 and 15:1–7, Azariah; 2Ch 26, Uzziah). (CSB)

I.e., summer house; part of Manasseh's palace outside Jerusalem. (TLSB)

**21:10–18** During Manasseh's reign, the Lord determines to do away with the kingdom of Judah. He does not yet reveal how this will happen. Today, rather than test God's patience, make daily repentance part of your life. For such repentance to be faithful and not just routine, cling to the teachings of God's Word, which shows you your sins and the ways of God's heritage. The Lord will prosper you in His way and regard you as His dear child. • Merciful Father, You are our shield and portion. Preserve Your heritage, we pray. Amen. (TLSB)

### ***Amon King of Judah***

<sup>19</sup> **Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. His mother's name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz; she was from Jotbah. <sup>20</sup> He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. <sup>21</sup> He walked in all the ways of his father; he worshiped the idols his father had worshiped, and bowed down to them. <sup>22</sup> He forsook the LORD, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD. <sup>23</sup> Amon's officials conspired against him and assassinated the king in his palace. <sup>24</sup> Then the people of the land killed all who had plotted against King Amon, and they made Josiah his son king in his place. <sup>25</sup> As for the other events of Amon's reign, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? <sup>26</sup> He was buried in his grave in the garden of Uzza. And Josiah his son succeeded him as king.**

**21:19** *two years.* 642–640 B.C. (CSB)

*Jotbah.* Some identify it with the Jotbathah of Nu 33:33–34 and Dt 10:7, near Ezion Geber. Others, including the church father Jerome, have located it in Judah. (CSB)

**21:20** *did evil.* Amon did not share in the change of heart that characterized his father Manasseh in the last days of his life (see 2Ch 33:12–19). He must have restored the idolatrous practices that Manasseh abolished because these were again in existence in the time of Josiah (see 23:5–7, 12). (CSB)

Amon continued his father’s policies. (TLSB)

**21:23–24** Amon was assassinated after reigning only two years. However, his servants or courtiers did not succeed in seizing the throne. “The people of the land” slew the conspirators and perpetuated David’s house by making “Josiah his son king in his place.” (TLSB)

**21:23** *conspired against him.* Whether this palace revolt was motivated by religious or political considerations is not known. (CSB)

**21:24** *people of the land.* The citizenry in general (see 11:14, 18; 14:21; 23:30). (CSB)

*killed all who had plotted against King Amon.* It is not clear whether this counterinsurgency was motivated simply by loyalty to the house of David or by other factors. (CSB)

Countercoup. (TLSB)

**21:25** *annals of the kings of Judah.* See note on 1Ki 14:29. (CSB)

**21:26** *Uzza.* See note on v. 18. (CSB)

For some reason, Amon and his father were not buried “in the city of David” with their predecessors but in a private, unidentified tomb. This may reflect the people’s condemnation of their rule (cf v 24). (TLSB)

**21:19–26** King Amon rejects God’s ways and walks in the ways of evil King Manasseh, his father. Today, do not simply accept the antics of evil rulers, but also do not read this passage as a blessing for overthrowing your government! Pray for your leaders and look for legitimate ways to condemn their errors (e.g., elections; protest) in order to establish justice in your land. Your just and gracious Ruler in heaven oversees all things. He will bless and keep you according to the grace of His beloved Son. • Dearest Jesus, faithful Son, bless the people of our land with justice and peace. Amen. (TLSB)