

Here is one of the loveliest and encouraging parts of Scripture! If ever there was a wicked king, it was this man. Yet he found mercy and was a saved man despite the awful things that he did.

Manasseh was only **12 years old** when he began to reign! Of course he would have had **advisors** – and I am not sure how far that went – what ‘authority/power did an under-age king actually have? Could he demand what he wanted for breakfast, never mind, politically?

Over-all, it seems that the **general** testimony of his reign was that *“he did what was **evil** in the sight of the **Lord**”* – his conversion coming late in his reign, but not too late to **prove it was genuine!**

Notice it was evil because he followed *“the **abominations** of the **nations** which the Lord drove out before the people of Israel”*[2]! For him, despite his godly father, the cue was to keep looking at the nations around him – he had to be like **them**. They were the ‘leaders’ and ‘examples’ he wanted to follow. He therefore **respected** them and they were, his ‘gods’. What we **admire** and **seek** is our ‘god’!

Notice too, that although the writer tells us all that his father Hezekiah had done in the way of **reforming** the nation by demolishing the high places of worship and driving out the false gods, etc, this work was attributed to *“the **Lord**...”*[2]. The author sees God as the real and ultimate Doer of all that happens! –

HIS PARTICULAR EVILS

The **first** was that he *“**rebuilt** the high places which his father Hezekiah had **demolished**”*[3]. He **diametrically reversed** what was right and good – after having lived under them! It is one thing to **initiate** and ‘try, experiment’ and ‘test’ a way of life, it is another thing to **reject** a way of life having enjoyed its blessings and then to **reverse** the principles! Manasseh would have **enjoyed** the fruit of all the **blessings** of chapter 30 (his father’s reforms) and how the whole land **rejoiced!** So in **spite of that** Manasseh **chose** to **reject** and **reverse** the reforms his father had made.

APP What is particularly sad about our own sins as a nation, is that we too **have had** spiritual blessings at the Reformation. We are not a pagan country but a country that has enjoyed the blessing of God! And what is happening now in the many changes in the law is that it is a **rejection** of the past reforms. When a child does something dangerous or wicked for the **first** time, you **explain** to him the wrongness of it! He was **ignorant** of its wrong. When he does it the 2nd time, you punish him because he has sinned **against knowledge** (he was **not** ignorant but **disobedient**)! There's a difference. Our nation knows the Bible and has chosen to **reject** its authority.

Then **secondly**, he introduced sins **against the sanctuary!** *“he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had broken down... the carved image of the idol that he had made, he set in the house of God”*[3-7] Ie, he sinned against ‘holy things’. It was bad enough to make an idol, which itself was a direct breach of God’s command, but to put it in **God’s temple** was provoking/aggravating the sin. It was adding **insult to injury!** He was trying to be as **provocative** as possible! He was trying his hardest to be as **insulting** as possible!

Then **thirdly**, *“He burned his sons as an offering”*[6]! Can you think of anything **more perverted**? Offering someone else to suffer – and the more that person suffered the better the sacrifice! And that someone else your **own innocent child!** Imagine **watching** your child **wriggle squirm** in agony in fire! False gods are cruel! People complain about the commands of the only living and true God – but you know false gods **demand far worse things!** Satan is a hard master! If the other nations did it, then Manasseh wanted to be up there in the same league! **APP** There is no end to what such people will do in order to be **seen** to be one of the party members. Europe!!

Then **fourthly**, he **led** the nation **astray!** He was the **cause**, he was the **reason** Judah went from bad to worse. *“Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed”*[9]! To sin for one self is bad enough, but to be **responsible** for **making others** sin too, is **worse!** **APP** To be in a position of ‘leading’ others is a **great responsibility!** That is,

parents, teachers, elders, managers, employers, etc, involves **accountability!** To ‘lead’ is to **use your position** to **influence** in the slightest degree those under you! As parents we **are** supposed to use our position to influence our **covenant privileges!** It’s the way God has chosen to further His cause **Psalm 78!!**

Finally, perhaps the greatest of all – “*the **Lord spoke** to Manasseh and his people but they **paid no attention**”[10]! This seems to be something ‘special’! It doesn’t tell us **how** God spoke to him. But that doesn’t matter. The Word of God doesn’t lie - God spoke to Manasseh. Probably thru prophets. This happened **often!** We read in this book “*Yet He sent prophets among them to bring them back to the Lord. They **testified** against them, **they would not pay attention**” [24:19]! + Jer put it this way: “*From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have **persistently** sent all My **servants** the prophets to them day after day. Yet they **did not listen to Me**”[Jer 7:25,26] **APP** God still speaks to people today!***

MANASSEH’S REPENTANCE

God sent **judgment** to Manasseh! “*Therefore the Lord **brought upon them**...the king of Assyria, who **captured** Manasseh with **hooks and bound** him with **chains**”[11]! Judgment **can** be a **good** thing! It is very often **designed** to bring repentance! The whole book of **Judges** is about the **cycle** of Israel repenting > blessing > sinning > judgment + repenting > blessing > sinning > judgment repeatedly!*

I am sure this was **not** the **first** time Manasseh experienced judgment for his sins! Perhaps some of the ways God ‘spoke’ to him was by judgment! “*And when he was in **distress** he **entreated** the favour of the his God and **humbled himself greatly** before the God of his fathers”[12]! That is marvellous! That this man who blatantly provoked God, is now **seeking His favour!** Amazing! So, **what** made the **difference** this time? The **Holy Spirit!** It’s always the Holy Spirit that makes a person truly repentant!*

Note: there is **no true repentance** without **distress** over our sins!
Many Xn counsellors today say to unbelievers who have no

understanding of the gospel, 'Let Jesus into your heart'! But that is not a Biblical phrase! What is needed is **repentance** for our sins! Christ's said "*The kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel*"[Mar 1:15]. John Baptist as the **precursor** to Jesus "**Repent and bring forth fruit for repentance**"[Mat 3:8] Jesus "*I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance*"[Mat 9:13]

When the Philippian Jailer was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, he was **already filled** with remorse and distress over his sins! It was **because** he was repentant that he was **desperate** for something else – although he was **not** have been able **articulate** what that was. What he was needing, was – Christ!!

People are not called to **repentance** today as they should. "**Except you repent you (disciples) shall all likewise perish**"! We need to repent **daily** – for we sin daily! A Xn that does not repent daily is not looking at His Saviour daily in the eyes! Peter: "*I am a sinful man*"!

Now we come to a **beautiful** passage - when Manasseh prayed to God, "*God was moved by his entreaty*" [**twice** mentioned 13 & 19]! Imagine that in heaven – God 'moved' by our earnest prayer! What **encouragement!** We can move God by our prayers! We know God can be "*moved to jealousy*"[Deu 32:21] but he can also, like His dear Son, be "*moved with compassion*"[Mar 1:41]! The **reason** God is not moved with compassion more, is that **we** have not repented!

Manasseh's repentance was **real/genuine/sincere!** How do we know he truly repented? The **proof** of the pudding "*he took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the Lord*"[15] + "*he also restored the altar of the Lord...he commanded Judah to serve the Lord*"[16]. A **changed life!** That is **always** the true test. **Ninevites!** "*When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil way, God relented*" and "*did not*" bring the judgment on them![Jon 3:10] God **completely/totally forgave** Manasseh! 100% forgiveness - never to be remembered again! **APP** What God can **compare** to this God? Friends, the 'gods' of this world, do **not** have mercy and love like this God. Go out and face 2010 having **this** God as your God! A God who **forgives** and **forgets** and **encourages** you!