



LESSON 18 JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED

Israel	Judah
Jeroboam 931–910	Rehoboam 931–913
Nadab 910–909	Abijah 913–911
Baasha 909–886	Asa 911–870
Elah 886–885	
Zimri 885	
Omri 885–874	
Ahab 874–853	Jehoshaphat 873–848
Ahaziah 853–852	
Joram 852–841	Jehoram 848–841
Jehu 841–814	Ahaziah 841
	Athaliah 841–835
Jehoahaz 814–798	Joash 835–796
Jehoash 798–782	Amaziah 796–767
Jeroboam II 793–753	Uzziah 792–740
Zechariah 753	
Shallum 752	
Menahem 752–742	Jotham 750–731
Pekahiah 742–740	
Pekah 752–732	Ahaz 735–715
Hoshea 732–722	Hezekiah 729–686
	Manasseh 696–642
	Amon 642–640
	Josiah 640–609
	Jehoahaz 609
	Jehoiakim 608–598
	Jehoiachin 598–597
	Zedekiah 597–586

When the Lord first brought Abraham to Canaan He promised, “to your descendants I will give this land” (Genesis 12.7). Years later the Lord revealed that Abraham’s descendants wouldn’t inherit the land for several generations because “the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete” (Genesis 15.16). God’s giving the land to Israel was both His way of blessing His people AND bringing judgment on the nations who had forsaken Him.

Significantly, the Lord warned Israel that they must not defile themselves with any of the Canaanites’ idolatrous practices, lest the land “spew them out” (Leviticus 18.24-28). Sadly, the history of Israel was littered with occurrences of their turning from God and defiling themselves with the pagan and idolatrous practices which the Lord loathed. But during the days of Manasseh their iniquity reached a tipping point; they were worse than the nations which they had supplanted, thus God’s judgment was coming!

Manasseh’s Iniquity (2Chronicles 33.1-9; 2Kings 21.1-9)

Hezekiah’s son, Manasseh, reigned longer than any other king of Israel. Once again we have a situation where a young king served

as co-regent with his father for several years before assuming sole rule over the kingdom. Hezekiah’s illness may have prompted him to install his young son as co-regent, but we cannot know for sure. What the text does tell us is that Manasseh did not share in his father’s zeal and devotion for the Lord! The text gives great attention to the thoroughness of his apostasy:

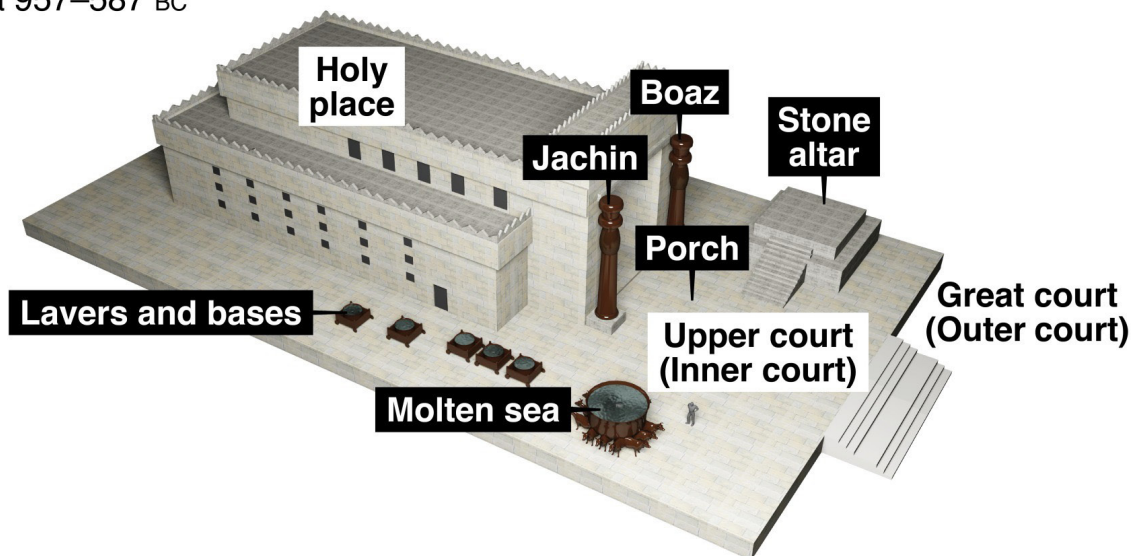
- » He rebuilt the very high places his father had destroyed (2Chronicles 33.3;

see 31.1).

- » He erected altars to Baal and made Asherah poles to worship the two chief Canaanite fertility gods (2Chronicles 33.3). He even placed one of the Asherah poles in the Temple itself (2Kings 21.7).
- » He worshipped the “host of heaven” (2Chronicles 33.3). Note that he named his son “Amon” likely after Egyptian god of the sun.
- » He built altars to various “gods” in the Temple of Jehovah, where His name was to dwell forever (2Chronicles 33.4, see 2Chronicles 7.16). Particular note is given to the fact that Manasseh constructed altars to the host of heaven in the outer courts (vs. 5; see 2Chronicles 4.9).
- » He sacrificed his sons to Molech in the valley of Ben-hinnom, just as Ahaz had done (vs. 6; 2Chronicles 28.2).
- » He relied on witchcraft and mediums to discern the future (vs. 6; see Deuteronomy 18).

Solomon's Temple

Circa 957–587 BC



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2Chronicles 33.7-8 refer back to God's promise when Solomon dedicated the Temple (see 2Chronicles 7.14-15; 2Kings 9.3-5). The Temple was to be a place where Israel could worship the Lord and turn to Him in their times of need. Furthermore, Israel would be secure in the land “if only they will observe to do all that I have commanded them...” (vs. 8). But Manasseh had turned the Lord's Temple into an idolatrous site and led the people “to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the sons of Israel” (vs. 9). Disaster loomed.

God Pronounces Judgment (2Kings 21.9-15)

The Chronicler simply states that “the Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention” (2Chronicles 33.10). The writer of Kings goes into greater detail, informing us that Judah’s iniquity could be tolerated no longer. Just as the Lord had judged Ahab and all of Israel, now He would execute judgment on the remnant of Judah (vs. 13). God declared this judgment and He would not relent. Even though Manasseh’s grandson, Josiah, would be a faithful servant of the Lord, Judah would still be punished (see Jeremiah 15.1-4). We should recall yet again that by this time the people had departed from the Lord and did not faithfully serve Jehovah even when there were faithful kings. God’s judgment wasn’t just the result of wicked kings, but due to the apostasy of His people.

Manasseh’s Punishment & Repentance (2Chronicles 33.10-20)

Judgment was coming on Judah and Jerusalem, but not yet. However, the Lord did punish Manasseh, sending him into captivity. “The Assyrian monarch responsible was, clearly, Ashurbanipal (668–627), son and successor to Esarhaddon. The reference to Babylon as Manasseh’s destination provides a helpful chronological clue, since Ashurbanipal did not bring Babylon under his control until 648. Manasseh could not have been taken there earlier. More information may be gained from Ashurbanipal’s annals, which recount an invasion of Egypt in 667 in which he eventually took the city of Thebes with material assistance from Manasseh. The Assyrian text shows that Manasseh was a vassal of Ashurbanipal as early as 667. His removal to Babylon in 648 or shortly thereafter suggests that Manasseh had violated his arrangement with Ashurbanipal.” (Eugene Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, page 447).

Remarkably, Manasseh sincerely repented! The Lord’s mercy and grace are evident as He heard his prayer, was moved by the king’s plea and restored him to the throne. Interestingly, Manasseh serves as a pattern for what would happen to the people. The people would go into captivity because of their iniquity, but if and when they returned to the Lord, He would hear and restore them (see Deuteronomy 30.1-5).

Amon’s Iniquity (2Kings 21.19-26; 2Chronicles 33.21-25)

Manasseh’s repentance may have resulted in his salvation, but it did not promote change in the people or even in his own family. Amon’s brief two year reign was marked by apostasy and ended in violence. Interestingly, as Judah’s kings became more like the kings of Israel we see that they suffered the same demise as those of Israel where political assassination had been commonplace. We are not told what motivation the conspirators, perhaps they were

loyal to Jehovah or maybe they wished to break from Assyria (Judah would have remained a vassal state to Assyria at this time). Regardless, further bloodshed followed as the conspirators were killed and the people made Josiah, the eight year old son of Amon, the next king of Judah.