

From Evil to Good

The Story of King Manasseh

by Bryan Gibson

King Manasseh of Judah was about as evil as a man could be. He built altars and images for all kinds of false gods, and even placed some of them in the temple (2 Kings 21:3-7). He “made his son pass through the fire, practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums” (2 Kings 21:6). He “shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other” (2 Kings 21:16). His evil was even greater because of the influence he had on his people—“Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel” (2 Kings 21:9). King Manasseh made a mess of his life, and he dragged a lot of people down with him. In fact, Manasseh was largely responsible for the Babylonian captivity that His people suffered (Jeremiah 15:4).

Thankfully, the story doesn’t end there. To punish Manasseh, God sent “the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon” (2 Chronicles 33:11). Talk about a wake-up call! “Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD His God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God” (2 Chronicles 33:12-13). Despite all the evil Manasseh had done, when he repented, God forgave him and restored him to his kingdom. Manasseh then spent the rest of his life serving the Lord (2 Chronicles 33:14-17).

It’s a sad story, but it does have a happy ending. Here are a few things Manasseh might like to say to us—if he were here today.

Don’t live like I did—before I came to my senses. I hurt myself, as well as a lot of other people. Yes, I was forgiven, and yes, I was restored to my kingdom, but I still had to live with the consequences of my actions. I served the Lord faithfully in my later years, but think about how much good I could have done if I had started much earlier.

If you have given yourself over to sin like I did, quit! You don’t have to stay in that same rut. Even if you’re just dabbling in sin, stop. You may not get the same kind of wake-up call I got (dragged off with nose hooks), so consider this your wake-up call—this very article. I made a drastic change in my life, and so can you.

God’s grace is a marvelous thing indeed. No matter what you’ve done, no matter how many people you’ve hurt, no matter how many times you’ve provoked Him to anger, He is willing to forgive. Yes, I humbled myself before Him, and yes, I repented, but I still didn’t deserve what He gave me. You don’t deserve it either, but you would be foolish not to take it. Repent of your sins, and seek His forgiveness—today!