

- Recap of last week: Hezekiah was a good king in the Southern Kingdom of Judea. (2 Chronicles 29:1-2 and 2 Kings 18:1-3) He purifies the temple, opens it to worship again, and gets people to start observing the Passover feast again. He even prays to God to forgive the people for not doing it right since they were out of practice. (2 Kings 18 and 19, 2 Chronicles 29 and 30) He organizes the priests for different tasks. He is very thorough and everything he does in this task pleases God. (2 Chronicles 31) He consults the prophet Isaiah who conveys God's message that he will turn back the first Syrian threat. (2 Kings 19, 2 Chronicles 32) He adds 15 years to his life by praying to God. (2 Kings 20: 1-11) (2 Chronicles 32:24-26). Isaiah tells him he makes a mistake by showing off his wealth to envoys from Babylon. (2 Kings 20: 12-19) (2 Chronicles 32:27-31). He dies, and his son Manasseh reigns in his place. (2 Kings 20: 20-21) (2 Chronicles 32:32-33).
- King Manasseh was only 12 years old when he took the throne, and he reigned 55 years before he died. (2 Kings 21: 1) (2 Chronicles 33:1).
- He was not a good King. He immediately rebuilt all the altars his father Hezekiah had torn down. (2 Kings 21: 2-5) (2 Chronicles 32:2-5).
- He also practiced child sacrifice (offered up his own children in the Valley of Hinnom), and led the people astray. (2 Kings 21:6-9) (2 Chronicles 33:6-9).
- The Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna) is famous as a metaphor for the Jewish people. Eventually it will be a trash dump where people burn their garbage so it was always on fire. Jesus will equate it with hell so the Jewish people will understand how bad hell is, he says it will be like living in Gehenna. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gehenna>)
- Leading people astray is particularly bad. God doesn't want any of us to sin, but to influence others to sin is even worse because so many people can be influenced by our actions. Those with such influence will be held to a higher standard. Consider what James has to say about teachers for example. (James 3:1)
- We also have a responsibility to not follow people who are doing the wrong things. The people of Israel were influenced by their King, but if people in authority ask us to do things that aren't right, we have a responsibility to God to make the right choice. Stick to the right thing even if people are influencing you to follow other priorities. (Galatians 1:6-9)
- God uses prophets to tell Manasseh that God is going to rain down destruction on Jerusalem but he still does not change his ways. (2 Kings 21:10-16)
- Because Manasseh doesn't change, he is taken captive by the Babylonians. Then he repents. God is impressed with his repentance and returns him to His Kingdom. He makes the most of his second chance, tearing down all the altars to other Gods. (2 Chronicles 33:10-18)
- No matter how we have lived in our lives, if we truly repent and ask God's forgiveness, He will forgive us and give us that second chance. It is up to us to take advantage of that like Manasseh did. Remember that God is patient toward us, wanting us to repent. (2 Peter 3:9)

- Manasseh dies and his son Amon takes over. Amon only reigns two years. He is such a bad King that his own servants put him to death and his son Josiah is made King instead. (2 Kings 21:17-26) (2 Chronicles 33:19-25)
- Josiah was only eight when he became King, and he was King for 31 years before he died. (2 Kings 22:1) (2 Chronicles 34:1)
- Josiah was a good king. In the eighth year of his reign, he tore down idols. In the twelfth year of his reign, he went all over Judah destroying more idols. In the eighteenth year of his reign, he orders the temple cleaned up again and the money found there to be paid to workman. In the process, they find a Book of the Law which contains grave warnings about idol worship. (2 Kings 22:2-20) (2 Chronicles 34:2-32)

Questions

1. How old was Manasseh when he became King? How old was he when he died?
2. Was he a good King or bad King?
3. What did Manasseh do again which his father had just undone?
4. What did Manasseh do with his own children?
5. Why should people like teachers be held to a higher standard?
6. What responsibility to we have when people influence us to make the wrong choice?
7. What happens to Manasseh when he doesn't listen to God's warning?
8. What does Manasseh do when he is taken captive?
9. Can God give us a second chance like Manasseh got?
10. Who is King after Manasseh? How long does he reign? What happens to him?
11. Who is Josiah? How old was he when he became King and when he died?
12. What does Josiah do when he is 16? 20? 26?