

MANASSEH'S SINS

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In Jeremiah 15:1-3, God foretold the coming destruction of Jerusalem and the people of Judah: "Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy." Moses and Samuel served as the first and last judges of Israel, and were also prophets. They both made pleas to the Lord for rebellious generations of Israelites, and they were heard (Exod 32:9-14; Num 14:11-20; 1 Sam 7:5-14). Yet God said He would not even listen to Moses and Samuel on behalf of the people in Jeremiah's time. Why was God's mind so set to bring about their destruction? Jeremiah 15:4 says, "And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, *because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.*"

The sins of Manasseh

Manasseh, King of Judah, had done "that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel" (2 Kgs 21:2). In fact, Manasseh had seduced the nation of Israel "to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel" (2 Kgs 21:9; see also 2 Chr 33:1-10). Manasseh had "built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. And he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made" in the house of the Lord (2 Kgs 21:3-7). Because of all of this wickedness,

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(continued)

God said by His prophets that He would “wipe Jerusalem as a man wipes a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down” (2 Kgs 21:10-15).

The greatest of Manasseh's sins

Manasseh also had “caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom,” (2 Chr 33:6), and “shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Kgs 21:16). It was especially for this reason that God was determined to destroy Judah. Even though Manasseh himself repented (2 Chr 33:11-13,23), and did what he could do to get the people whom he had led into sin to repent (2 Chr 33:15-19), and even though Manasseh's grandson Josiah destroyed all the remnants of this wickedness (2 Kgs 23:1-25), God did not forget what Judah had done under Manasseh. “Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal” (2 Kgs 23:26). It had not even entered God's mind that His people would commit such horrible deeds as they did when Manasseh was king of Judah (Jer 7:31; 19:5; 32:35; Ezek 16:20-21). God refused to pardon the shedding of this innocent blood (2 Kgs 21:10-16; 23:26-27; 24:3-4; Jer 2:34; 15:4; 19:2-7).

God's view of unborn children

God has made all men in His image (Gen 1:26-27; Jas 3:9). Therefore, killing anyone made in God's image is a serious sin (Gen 9:6). According to the teachings of the scriptures, this includes the killing of unborn children (i.e. abortion). A baby in the womb has been given a spirit by God and is thus in His image (Eccl 11:5). God clearly considers the unborn child on an equal plane with any other person (Exod 21:22-25). Therefore, abortion is murder. Further, killing children (whether in the womb or out) is shedding innocent blood (Psa 106:37-38). Shedding innocent blood is an abomination to God (Prov 6:16-17). King Manasseh shed innocent blood and God would not pardon it.