

## TEACHING HINTS

This section embraces teaching material for the various grades in the School.

## For Teachers of Bible Classes

Read the parallel passage in 2 Kgs., ch. 21. The history of the times should be carefully studied. Recall the reformation of Hezekiah, and the reaction that set in under Manasseh. Bring out the relation of Judah to Assyria, and the influence of foreign manners on Manasseh. (See Exposition.) Discuss:

1. *Manasseh's return to heathen worship and customs.* In what did this consist? Baal worship, human sacrifices, worship of the heavenly bodies, a return to the popular Canaanite paganism. The extent of the reaction may be seen in the fact that prophets were slain who opposed it (see Jer. 2 : 30). Elicit the reasons for this : (a) Manasseh was young and therefore easily influenced by evil counselors and companions. (b) The reforms of Hezekiah were repugnant to many. (c) The influence of Assyria in the time of peace. Emphasize how easy it is to fall when the old sin has not been entirely rooted out.

2. *His desecration of the temple.* This stands as an example of extreme impiety, and suggests the extremes possible when sin becomes dominant. Judah is a striking New Testament case.

3. *The divine warning.* 2 Kgs. 21 : 10-16 gives additional information. This casts a lurid light on Manasseh's guilt, and foreshadows the coming captivity of Judah. Point out how faithfully and frequently God warns before executing His judgments among men and nations.

4. *The return to God under affliction.* This section is very instructive, as showing God's method in dealing with the sinner. Bring out the following points. (a) The use of Assyria as God's instrument. (b) The punishment was very severe. (c) It led to repentance. (d) It further led to restoration and reforms. (See vs. 15-17.)

Dwell on the place of affliction in leading to repentance. There are many examples such as David, Job, and the Israelites in captivity. The individual who sins must bear his responsibility, and God's method will search out the guilty. He has many

ways of approach, and affliction is one of these. The only real repentance forsakes sin ; any other kind is only self-deception.

## For Teachers of the Senior Scholars

Whose son was Manasseh ? We expect great things of a boy with such a father. In the higher sense he was not the son of his father. How can we account for his going astray ? His youth and inexperience during the first years of his reign and his evil associates help us to understand Manasseh. It was fashionable to be like the cultured but corrupt Assyrians, who were the dominant people of that age.

1. *Manasseh's Wickedness*, vs. 2-9. Get the class to point out the different stages in the development of his evil life. He went from bad to worse. (1) He introduced idolatry (v. 3) ; (2) he profaned the house of the Lord (vs. 4, 5) ; (3) he practised the horrible heathen rites of child sacrifice (v. 6) ; (4) he introduced heathen rites of different kinds (v. 6) ; (5) he placed a carved image of the goddess Asherah in the house of God, v. 7. Note the summing up of all the wickedness that he did (see v. 9). This is a black picture. The tendency of evil when unchecked is to develop in this way. It grows by what it feeds on. Make this part of the Lesson an earnest warning against entering upon any evil course of life.

2. *God's Patience*, v. 10. How did God speak to Manasseh ? Did the voice of God come to him in the memory of his father's teaching, or in the dissatisfaction which a life of this kind brought him ? God speaks in both these ways. Dwell upon God's great love in trying to make something good out of the poorest life, in refusing to give the sinner up. (See Ezek. 33 : 11, and 2 Pet. 3 : 9.) Note how dense and deaf Manasseh and his people were. Has human nature altogether recovered from this fatal indisposition to listen to God's voice ?

3. *Manasseh's Penitence*, vs. 11-13. How was it brought about ? Dwell upon the different methods God has of accomplishing His purposes. If we will not listen to His voice in His Word and in the heart and in the experiences of life, He sometimes tries

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## For Teachers

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