

Hall of Faith: Isaiah

2 Kings 21:16 ❖ Hebrews 11:37b

“Manasseh reigned longer than any other King of Israel or Judah - some 55 years. He became in his day a fanatical idolater, restoring the high places and the worship of Baal. Paganism was rife, wizards filled the land, and even a statue of Moloch, an idol on which parents offered their children as burnt offerings, was erected. Manasseh’s wickedness did not go unrebuked by the prophets, but he retaliated against them with fierce persecution. According to Josephus, the Jewish historian, daily executions of prophets occurred (Antiquities X.3.1).”

(“A Popular Survey of the Old Testament,” Norman Geisler, 147)

Manasseh’s Sin

England’s Queen Mary had Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer **executed** on March 21, 1556.

2 Kings 21 relates the “**detestable**” practices of Manasseh, the longest reigning King of the Hebrew people. “The **evil** he did in the eyes of the Lord” (v. 2) included:

reversing the religious reforms of his father;
erecting **altars** to the pagan god Baal;
putting an Asherah pole in the **temple**;
worshipping the **stars**;
sacrificing his own **son**;
practicing **sorcery** and divination.

“The Lord said through His **prophets**: ‘Manasseh King of Judah has done **more** evil than the Amorites who preceded him and has **led** Judah into sin with his **idols**’” (vv. 10-11).

“Moreover, Manasseh also shed so much **innocent** blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end” (v. 16). According to the Mishnah (circa 200 A.D.) and other ancient sources, **Isaiah** was one of the “prophets who was **sawed** in two” (Hebrews 11:37b) by King Manasseh.

Throughout history, no matter how **wicked** a ruler was, most stopped short of killing **priests** and **prophets**. But stand by for the rest of Manasseh’s story ...

Isaiah’s Ministry

- **Voluntold:** Isaiah was commissioned a prophet during a vision he had of God’s **throne** room. He saw seraphs flying and heard them singing, “**Holy, Holy, Holy ...**” When the Lord said, “Whom shall I send?” Isaiah said, “Send **me!**” (Isaiah 6)
- **Prophecy of Jesus’ Birth:** “For to us a **child** is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty **God**, Everlasting **Father**, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).
- **Endurance of God’s Word:** “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God **stands** forever” (Isaiah 40:7).
- **Source of Our Strength:** “Even youths grow **tired** and **weary** and young men stumble and fall; but those who **hope** in the Lord will renew their strength. They will **soar** on wings like **eagles**; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isaiah 40:30-31).
- **Jesus’ Crucifixion Prophesied:** “He was **pierced** for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5).
- **Jesus’ Resurrection Prophesied:** “After the suffering of His soul, He will see the light of **life** and be satisfied” (Isaiah 53:11).
- **Heaven on Earth:** “The Sovereign Lord **says**, ‘I will create **new** heavens and a **new** earth. The **former** things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind’” (Isaiah 65:17).

Isaiah’s Legacy

- 1) King Manasseh and his subjects were **punished** for their sins, but eventually he **repented** (2 Chronicles 33:10-20).
- 2) “O Lord, You are our Father. We are the **clay**, You are the **potter**” (Isaiah 64:8).
- 3) “Come now, let us reason together,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like **scarlet**, they shall be **white** as snow; though they are **red** as crimson, they shall be like **wool**” (Isaiah 1:18).