

Jeremiah 15:1–4 / Hebrews 6:1–9 — *What Manasseh Did in Jerusalem (22 Feb 2026)*

1. God was utterly provoked. Not today, but long ago—in the days of the prophet Jeremiah. He says, “**Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people**” (Jer. 15:1). In other words, He had completely turned away. All that remained for Judah was exile—being driven out.
2. The stated reason is given in verse 4: it was because of Manasseh—“**what Manasseh son of Hezekiah king of Judah did in Jerusalem.**” Because of that, God resolved “**to make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth**” and scatter them among the nations. And once that resolve has been made, it will not be easily reversed.
3. When suffering or misfortune strikes our lives, we often say, “Heaven must be angry.” People say it even when the weather turns bad. And so, time and again, people have held rituals—like rain ceremonies—hoping to change God’s mind, if only somehow they could.
4. Here, at least, the Lord names the cause: “because of Manasseh.” So, with a certain grim hope, we should look into what exactly he did. Manasseh was king of Judah, so we need to open the Books of Kings. In 2 Kings 21 we read: “**Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother’s name was Hephzibah.**”
5. And right after that, his deeds are listed. We hardly need to guess—everything points to wickedness, since this is what provoked God’s wrath. Looking more closely: first, he set up altars to idols in Solomon’s temple. Then he practised divination and sorcery. And to promote such things, he relied on mediums and spiritists.
6. Yet one thing must be made clear. None of this would change God’s resolve. Tearing down the pagan altars now would not undo it. Promising never again to practise divination in the temple would not prevent exile. Even if the mediums and spiritists were driven out, the Lord’s anger would not simply melt away.
7. We call such a situation “spilt water.” There is no sacrifice left here to make atonement. And yet human beings instinctively search for a way out. Scripture, however, speaks differently: “**only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God**” (Heb. 10:27). Nothing else remains.
8. Returning to 2 Kings 21, we are told that Manasseh reigned fifty-five years. Then, almost curiously, the text records his mother’s name: “**His mother’s name was Hephzibah.**” This is not an ordinary name. It is a name spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “**You shall be called Hephzibah... for the Lord will take delight in you**” (Isa. 62:4).

9. In other words, the writer of Kings wants us to notice this: Manasseh was the son of “Hephzibah”—a name meaning “My delight is in her.” He was also the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah. The lineage is emphasised deliberately.
10. Why mention his father? Why remind us that he was king of Judah? And why, especially, record a mother’s name we might otherwise overlook? To underline how great Manasseh’s wickedness was. The son of one called “the Lord’s delight” committed such evil! From such a blessed house came such corruption. And so the text declares: this cannot simply be excused.
11. If we think just one step further, we realise something. Had some unknown individual practised idolatry, told fortunes, or summoned shamans, it would hardly have caused such an uproar. But the one who committed these evils was the son of the one called “the Lord’s delight.” That is the shock. It is not merely wrongdoing; it is betrayal. It is the collapse of trust.
12. Idolatry is sin. Bringing a medium into the temple to practise divination is sin. Yet has not the Church long said, “Still, if there is repentance, is that not enough?” Did not the prophet Isaiah proclaim, **“Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool”**?
13. But when it is Manasseh, the son of Hephzibah, who does such things, it becomes a different matter. If Judas Iscariot had done it—well, that is precisely the point. It is not merely the scarlet colour of the sin that explains God’s severity. It is the identity of the sinner.
14. Is that not so? If Gentiles, living among the nations, worship Allah or live as atheists, it does not mean they are thereby stripped of every opportunity for salvation. If someone died in war without ever hearing the name of Jesus, would that alone seal an irreversible doom? The weight of the judgment here lies in this: he was the son of Hephzibah.
15. The name “Manasseh” itself is telling. It was the name of Joseph’s son—the child born after Joseph had been sold into Egypt, risen to power, and married Asenath. The name meant that God had made him forget his hardship and all his father’s house. It was a confession that both his exaltation and his healing from past trauma were acts of divine grace.
16. Yet this Manasseh—bearing such a name, and as we see from his mother’s name, the son of one in whom the Lord delights—became king in the promised land of Canaan, over Judah, and committed idolatry. By way of analogy, it is as though a believer who

has been saved and brought into the kingdom of God were to practise fortune-telling within the church.

17. Therefore, God does not overlook such betrayal by one who belongs to Him. As it is written in the Ten Commandments, He visits the iniquity of those who hate Him to the third and fourth generation. He sent them into Babylonian exile and disciplined them for seventy years. Hence, even if we were now to search out our sinful deeds, tear down idols, or perform religious rites with great zeal, that period would not thereby be shortened.
18. Think carefully. Idolatry is sin—but sin against whom? Some place statues upon their altars, even setting up images of Mary. Others prepare a shrine in a corner of their home, burning incense and bowing morning and evening. Some hold rituals so that a son may gain admission to university; others consult horoscopes before marriage.
19. When the world does such things, we may not regard it as especially serious. But it becomes gravely sinful when a Christian does the same. When it is one of our own children. For them, perhaps, there may yet remain an opportunity for repentance. But for us—who have already repented and become Christians—idolatry is doubly appalling.
20. Who was it that brought a shaman into Solomon’s temple to practise divination? It was Manasseh, the son of Hephzibah. In church terms, it is as though those who call themselves Christians build a church, call a minister, and then stand before him asking for blessings of prosperity or for predictions about what the future holds.
21. This is what is called the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel it is written, **“Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”** (Mark 3:29).
22. Look at Hebrews. In 6:4 onwards, it says: **“For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come...”** Of whom is this speaking? Of Manasseh, the son of Hephzibah. Of those who are citizens of the heavenly kingdom—Christians, the saints.
23. Yet it says that such people have fallen away. That the holy ones have returned again to idolatry, brought back the diviners, and gone once more to consult omens. Of such it says, in v.6, that they **“cannot be restored again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.”**

24. How, then, does God regard it when a believer practises divination or pursues blessings of prosperity? It is as though Christ were being crucified all over again. We must consider how fearful this is. We who have been chosen in the love of God, forgiven through the merit of Christ, and renewed by the Holy Spirit—set apart as holy, as saints—if we then chase after worldly blessings? It is like a dog returning to its vomit.
25. Verse 7 says that **land which drinks in the rain that often falls on it and produces a crop useful to those for whom it is cultivated receives a blessing from God**. But v. 8 continues: **“If it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.”** If the fruit of Manasseh, son of Hephzibah, is thorns and thistles—if idolatry, divination, and the summoning of shamans for blessing are the fruit of a Christian—what, then, will the end be?
26. Let me read from Hebrews 10: **“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgement and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? Think how much worse the punishment will be.”**
27. God does not regret having once called us His children. Yet He warns us, through the case of Manasseh, against betraying that Father under the pretence of trusting in His grace. Idolatry is an act of trampling on the Son of God. It is to treat the blood of the covenant, received even at the Lord’s Table, as something unclean. It is to dishonour one’s own Father; it is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Therefore divination, fortune-telling, or the pursuit of blessing cannot be treated as a harmless pastime.