

Who was King Amon in the Bible?

Second Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33 tell us about King Amon of Judah. He was an evil king, the son of Manasseh and father of Josiah. Amon was twenty-two years old when he began to rule and was king for only two years (642-640 BC) before he was assassinated.

The Bible has harsh words for the evil king Amon. Second Chronicles 33:22-23 says, “He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done. Amon worshiped and offered sacrifices to all the idols Manasseh had made. But unlike his father Manasseh, he did not humble himself before the Lord; Amon increased his guilt” (2 Chronicles 33:22-23). Second Kings 21:22 says, “He forsook the Lord, the God of his ancestors, and did not walk in obedience to him.”

The prophet Zephaniah wrote against the sins of Jerusalem that had been established during the reign of Amon. He cites Baal-worship (Zephaniah 1:4), star-worship (verse 5), and Molech-worship (verse 5). He goes on to say, “Her prophets are unprincipled; they are treacherous people. Her priests profane the sanctuary and do violence to the law” (Zephaniah 3:4).

Amon's father, Manasseh, was responsible for rebuilding the pagan high places that Hezekiah had torn down. “Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed before the Israelites” (2 Chronicles 33:9). God spoke to Manasseh and the people, but they did not listen. So God sent the Assyrians to attack Judah. When Manasseh was captured by the Assyrians and brought to Babylon, he called out to God. God had grace on Manasseh and returned him to Jerusalem. In response, Manasseh removed the foreign gods and idols from the temple and restored the altar of the Lord there. The people still sacrificed on the high places,

yet only to God. Manasseh himself repented and attempted to restore righteousness to his kingdom. Unfortunately, his son did not carry on that reform. Amon did evil in God's sight, and his own servants killed him.

The people of Judah struck down those who had conspired against King Amon. They installed Amon's eight-year-old son, Josiah, as king. Josiah was responsible for widespread reform in Judah. It was during Josiah's reign that the temple was repaired and Hilkiah, the high priest, found the Book of the Law. Josiah had it read aloud and tore his clothes at the hearing. Josiah understood the depth of the sin of the people and God's righteous anger against them. Through a prophetess, Huldah, God promised disaster for Judah, but He also demonstrated grace. He told Josiah this: "Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people—that they would become a curse and be laid waste—and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I also have heard you, declares the Lord. Therefore I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place" (2 Kings 22:19-20). Josiah proceeded to have the Book of the Covenant read to the people and to renew the covenant between the people and God.

It is interesting to see that Amon followed in the evil ways of his father, failing to humble himself as his father had eventually done, yet he had a godly son. Each of us is accountable to God. We are not destined to walk in the footsteps of our ancestors' examples, whether good or bad. The story of Amon serves as a warning to us as well as an encouragement. Judah would eventually receive God's punishment because of what they had done in Manasseh's days (2 Kings 23:26-27), but, during Josiah's reign, they walked in God's ways. Josiah was not bound to repeat his father's mistakes. Rather, "Neither

before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses” (2 Kings 23:25).