



## Engaging in some foolish bible parallelomania: america's Manasseh 2 kings 21

### Introduction

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Those not familiar with current American Evangelical political thought might be unaware of a new, detailed theology concerning the former American president and 2024 GOP presidential candidate. In this theology, evangelicals have drawn a parallel between the ancient Persian Emperor, Cyrus, and the wicked man whose name I refuse to utter or write. Just as God used Cyrus, a godless man, to restore Judah to its ancestral home in the promised land, the theory goes, God is using the wicked New York playboy turned politician to lead American Christians back to their rightful place of dominance over American culture and government

This is not the place to examine all that is wrong with this theology or the questionable historical claim that founders of America intended Christianity to dominate American culture or government. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that Jesus, whose kingdom was not of this world, never intended his disciples to participate in flawed and immoral human governments, let alone control them.

It is perhaps foolishness to draw parallels between Biblical and modern American characters. That said, God, Himself, is not above using what is foolish to accomplish good.

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God

by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.<sup>1</sup>

I have suggested elsewhere that if there is a parallel to be found between a Biblical character and the unnamed American scoundrel, it is most likely the Antichrist of Revelation 13.<sup>2</sup> This is especially so if he is reelected. American Christians would be well advised to forget about Cyrus as a Biblical parallel with the New York playboy and give serious thought to the beast of Revelation 13.

But, in this homily, I will engage in my own bit of foolishness and participate in a little Biblical parallelomania. In doing so, I will utilize a different Biblical character as a parallel to the godless New York playboy turned politician. That character is Judah's king Manasseh. If nothing else, this homily promises to be a fun and informative romp through the Old Testament. Who knows but what in the course of our foolishness and fun, we might learn a thing or two that can serve as a warning about our current trajectory and mad state of rebellion against God.

a call to leave the world to serve and evangelize

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God saw Israel's suffering under the heavy hand of Egyptian servitude. He delivered the Israelites from their servitude. This is the central story of the Old Testament and allows its authors to draw out the Book's central theological insight: God is an emancipator of the weak and powerless.

It was not, however, only out of a divine hatred for captivity, violence, and oppression that God delivered Israel. He delivered an oppressed people so that He might create a people, a nation, that rejected captivity, violence, and oppression—a nation that would be the mirror opposite of Egypt. In creating such a nation, God hoped to provide an example, a beacon for all the world. With this beacon shining in a darkened world, God hoped to change the world.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 1.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See my homily on Revelation 13, entitled, "My Confessions and the Beast."

Israel, then, was God's servant and messenger to the world; His exemplar of a better world.

Isaiah speaks often of Israel's call.

“All nations will come streaming to it;  
many peoples will come, saying:  
Come! Let's go up to Yahweh's mountain;  
to the temple of the God of Ya'qōb.  
He will teach us his ways,  
and we shall walk in his paths.  
For Torah will come out of Şîyôn,  
and the word of Yahweh from Y<sup>e</sup>rûšālāyim.”<sup>3</sup>

“Just look at My servant, whom I take hold of,  
My chosen, in whom I was pleased.  
I placed My spirit upon him  
that he should generate justice among the nations...  
I, Yahweh, called you, as is right,  
and will empower you and watch over you  
and present you as a promise to peoples  
and an example to nations,  
to open eyes that are blind,  
to lead captives out of prison;  
from imprisonment those who abide in darkness.”<sup>4</sup>

Because of the law of God that Israel lived and taught, God hoped that the nations would

“retool their swords into plow blades  
and their spears into pruning instruments.

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<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 2.<sup>2-3</sup>, author's translation

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 42.<sup>1, 6-7</sup>, author's translation

One nation will no longer lift the sword against another,  
nor will they any longer train for warfare.”<sup>5</sup>

The Psalmist, too, knows and speaks of Israel’s call as servant and evangelist to the world.

“’ēlohîm! May you show us grace, and bless us!  
May you lighten us with your presence  
that how you conduct yourself might be known throughout the earth;  
made known to all peoples the victory you can bring.  
That the nations might acknowledge you,  
all peoples yield to you;  
that hosts of people might raise a shout of joy  
when you govern the nations justly,  
when you supply direction to the peoples of the earth;  
that the nations might acknowledge you,  
every people yield to you.  
Earth will then yield its bounty.  
’ēlohîm, our God, will bless us.  
’ēlohîm will bless us  
because every corner of the earth reveres him.”<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, Israel rejected its call and refused to make any effort to fulfill its call.

“He won’t call out, or lift  
or make his voice heard in public.  
He doesn’t so much as trample a crushed blade of grass,  
or an already sputtering wick  
to faithfully generate justice.

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<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 2.<sup>4</sup>, author’s translation

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 67.<sup>1-6</sup>, author’s translation

He was not to grow feint or discouraged  
until he establish justice on earth;  
for the ends of the earth await his instruction.”<sup>7</sup>

Israel not only failed to be a light to the world, but it set a bad example in the world by mirroring such rogue states as Egypt, Babylon, and Sodom.

“Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom;  
give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.”<sup>8</sup>

Israel, in fact, became worse than any other rogue nation, being less faithful to the one and only true God than they had been to all their false gods.

“For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see;  
and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently,  
and see if there be such a thing.

<sup>11</sup>Hath a nation changed their gods,  
which are yet no gods?

but my people have changed their glory  
for that which doth not profit.”<sup>9</sup>

“As I live, saith the Lord God, Sodom thy sister hath not done, she nor her daughters, as thou hast done, thou and thy daughters.”<sup>10</sup>

“Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 42.<sup>2-4</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 1.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Jeremiah 2.<sup>10-11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ezekiel 16.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>11</sup> 2 Kings 21.<sup>9</sup>

This last quote brings us, finally, to Manasseh.

Manasseh, final nail in Judah's coffin

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Israel's rebellion against God and its refusal to act as God's servant in the world began right from the start and continued year after year, decade after decade, century after century. Acting in the role of mediator, Jeremiah offered a confession for the nation that it stubbornly refused to make for itself.

“We have sinned against the LORD our God,  
we and our fathers,  
*from our youth even unto this day,*  
and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.”<sup>12</sup>

Still, for hundreds of years, God stuck with the nation. God's longsuffering patience with Israel is a remarkable testimony to the largess of His character. The rebellion continued until the nation's final days, as the chroniclers of 2 Kings witness.

“They have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, *since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.*”<sup>13</sup>

This final notice comes during the reign of King Manasseh. As we have already observed,

“Manasseh seduced them [Judah's citizens] to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.”

Here, we are reminded of King Mosiah's observation,

“For behold, how much iniquity doth one wicked king cause to be committed, yea, and

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<sup>12</sup> Jeremiah 3.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>13</sup> 2 Kings 21.<sup>15</sup>

what great destruction!”<sup>14</sup>

Manasseh’s wickedness, greater than any Israelite or Jewish king before him, and his people’s wickedness, equal to that of any nation before them, is catalogued in 2 Kings 21. It is a cornucopia of transgressive behavior. And, after hundreds of years of national rebellion, Manasseh’s wickedness and concerted efforts to destroy and reverse centuries of established norms is finally simply too much for God. His patience finally runs out.

“And the Lord spake by his servants the prophets, saying, ‘Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies...’”<sup>15</sup>

When the text finally gets around to recording Judah’s final collapse, we read,

“And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets. Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, *for the sins of Manasseh*, according to all that he did; and also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Mosiah 29.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> 2 Kings 21.<sup>10-14</sup>

<sup>16</sup> 2 Kings 24.<sup>2-4</sup>. We do not accept that God pushed the destruction button on his divine console. Such language is rhetorical. Nevertheless, God knows the consequence of all human behavior, and always warns of them

the man i refuse to name is more Manasseh than cyrus

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As we mentioned in the introduction, in a vain attempt to justify their support for a wicked man, American Christians developed a theology that views Persia's wicked Cyrus and America's wicked 2024 GOP candidate for president in parallel. In this theology, God works through both men to accomplish some good, however ignorant of God and His works the men proved to be.

Of course, I offer a wholehearted and full-throated, "Amen," to American Christians' evaluation concerning the wicked nature of the man I have variously called, "Caligula," "tRUMP," "Legion," "The Beast," and "Antichrist." While all power elites in American and world history have been and are flawed in common and predictable ways, this man, whose name I refuse to utter or write, is uniquely, bottomlessly, and perhaps paranormally wicked. Hence all excuses of supporting him because "they are all the same," flounder on the brutal reality of this man's unparalleled, unbounded, and bottomless wickedness.

Here, I add yet another name to his list of shameful monikers: Manasseh. If we are to look outside of Revelation 13 for Biblical characters who might be seen in some manner parallel to the vile American man, it seems to us that Manasseh, king of Judah is better than Cyrus, king of Persia.

Most agree, even many of his supports, that, the American playboy turned politician is a deeply flawed man. America's Manasseh is wicked beyond words. Like Manasseh of old, he has transgressed every sacred norm. Like Manasseh of old, this depraved American version of Manasseh has seduced American citizens to engage in vile wickedness. His acolytes love the man for his transgressive behavior and speech. At no time do they cheer him more than when he is at his most vulgar. The more vulgar he becomes, the more their love for him grows, bearing witness to the previously concealed vulgarity of his hordes.

America's Manasseh has indicated that if elected, those deems his enemies—his enemies becoming "enemies of the state," as he *becomes* the state—can expect harassment,



prosecution, and death.<sup>17</sup> If elected, it is very possible, indeed, likely, that he will oversee the shedding of innocent blood just as the Manasseh of old.

We could go on. I have no doubt that many books will be written over the next many years and decades cataloguing the wickedness of America's Manasseh and the wonder that such wickedness could attract such numbers of admirers. There is no telling what wickedness he and his wicked hordes might do if given the unchecked power after which he and they lust.

## Conclusion

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As bottomless as is the man's wickedness, and as wondrous as is the attraction of so many millions of American to him and his wickedness, *what should give us greatest pause is the possible divine response to America's Manasseh and his torrent of wickedness. We remember God's response to Judah's Manasseh.*

“Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies...”

Now, let me be clear. I reject a violent God and the idea that He caused or causes societal or national collapse such as the Old Testament authors credited Him. But I do believe in a God who knows and warns about attitudes and behaviors that necessarily bring societal and national collapse. And I do believe in societal collapse under the weight of national wickedness that reflects rebellion against God and His wise counsel and warnings. I do believe that America's Manasseh could bring about the end of America just as Judah's

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<sup>17</sup> Liz Cheney is the vile man's latest target of violent rhetoric as he threatens her with a firing squad. There is no reason, zero, to disbelieve the man's intentions to persecute, arrest, and kill those who oppose him.

Manasseh brought an end to Judah.

To some, of course, this sounds like hysteria and hyperbole. Every nation in history has considered itself exceptional, essential, and inevitable. Every nation, when faced with warnings of its demise, has responded with the same false reasoning and vain and arrogant boasts as those spoken by Laman and Lemuel when they heard the inspired warning of national catastrophe and collapse.

“And we know that the people who were in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and all his commandments, according to the law of Moses; wherefore, we know that they are a righteous people; and our father hath judged them...”<sup>18</sup>

“Neither did they believe that Jerusalem, that great city, could be destroyed.”<sup>19</sup>

We hear much the same propaganda and false security among the Book of Mormon peoples of wicked king Noah.

“And now, O king, what great evil hast thou done, or what great sins have thy people committed, that we should be condemned of God or judged of this man? And now, O king, behold, we are guiltless, and thou, O king, hast not sinned; therefore, this man has lied concerning you, and he has prophesied in vain. And behold, we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies; yea, and thou hast prospered in the land, and thou shalt also prosper.”<sup>20</sup>

Let America beware of such false, vain, arrogant, and destructive bluster.

Perhaps God intended America, like ancient Israel, to be a light to the world. I don't know.

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<sup>18</sup> 1 Nephi 17.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> 1 Nephi 2.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Mosiah 12.<sup>13-15</sup>

But if so, the nation has often stumbled in its call just as ancient Israel. Like ancient Israel, it has at times been the worst of nations. In its love affair with its American Manasseh, it is reaching the nadir of wickedness.

God has been incredibly patient with America and its mad state of rebellion against Him. We should all be concerned that if America's Manasseh is reelected—a greater offense than the reign of Judah's Manasseh, as, unlike the people then, we have free voice in his selection and rule—God's undeserved patience will finally come to an end, and He leave us to suffer the natural consequences of our wicked choices and behavior. Perhaps America's Manasseh will be the one to break the hourglass and allow the sands of time to finally run out on the great American experiment.

I, for one, will not be found playing advocate for a wicked and vulgar nation. America's Manasseh and the America he leads to wickedness and perversion will deserve every bit of the hell it suffers. One hopes it is not too late, and that the day for repentance has not passed. But one sees reasons to fear that Isaiah's insight into Israel's mad state of rebellion against God might very well apply to America in 2024.

“And He said, “Go, and say this to the people:

‘Listen carefully! But you won't pay attention.

Understand rightly! But you won't even consider.

Pronounce this people's heart impenetrable,

their ears deaf,

and their eyes blind

lest they see with their eyes,

hear with their ears,

understand with their heart,

return, and be healed.””

“Then I asked, ‘How long, my Lord?’  
He answered,  
‘Until cities are desolate without inhabitant,  
houses are without a single occupant,  
the land is ruined, a desolate waste,  
and YHWH has removed everyone—  
the desolation being tremendous throughout the land.’”<sup>21</sup>

## benediction

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“Lord, how long shall the wicked,  
how long shall the wicked triumph?”<sup>22</sup>

“O Lord God, how long wilt thou suffer that such wickedness and infidelity shall be among  
this people?

O Lord, wilt thou give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities.  
For I am infirm, and such wickedness among this people doth pain my soul.  
O Lord, my heart is exceedingly sorrowful;  
wilt thou comfort my soul in Christ.

O Lord, wilt thou grant unto me that I may have strength,  
that I may suffer with patience these afflictions which shall come upon me,  
because of the iniquity of this people.”<sup>23</sup>

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

*(edition: November 1, 2024)*

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<sup>21</sup> Isaiah 6. <sup>9-12</sup>, author’s translation

<sup>22</sup> Psalm 94.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Alma 31.<sup>30-31</sup>