

### ***“And his mother’s name was . . .”***

For all but two of the kings of Judah we have the statement, “and his mother’s name was . . .”. Old Testament kings tended to take a multiplicity of wives and have many children, and kings to whom this applied could not possibly have given proper instruction and discipline to all their children. Hence how a son turned out would have depended very much on how his mother brought him up, though the presence or absence of godly prophets, priests and princes at the court would also have been a factor.

For each king of Judah we have the Divine assessment of his character, good or bad, although some of those pronounced to be good went somewhat astray in later years, and Manasseh, who for much of his reign was evil, eventually repented and turned to God. Here are some comments, based upon the various occurrences of the phrase:

- The two best kings, Hezekiah and Josiah, both had wicked fathers, indicating that their mothers, Abijah and Jedidah, must have brought them up in right ways.
- Manasseh, noted initially for his wickedness, had a righteous father in Hezekiah, perhaps indicating failure on the part of his mother Hephzibah.
- Asa, a king assessed as good, had a wicked father and an idolatrous mother, so there must have been some other good influence in his upbringing.
- For Ahaz, a wicked king with a father and grandfather assessed as good overall, no mother is given and we do not know what influenced him so badly.
- For one king, Joash, we are told that his godly aunt and uncle brought him up, and when his uncle’s influence was lost at death he went astray.

We have here evidence of a variety of influences and responses. Though individuals are influenced for good or ill by their parents primarily, and by others as well, in the end all who come into contact with Divine things have the free will to choose for themselves which way to go, and are responsible to God for their decisions.

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