

2 Chronicles Chapter 33

Verses 1-2

See 2 Kings 21:1-10 and the notes on 2 Kings 21:1-2.

2 Chronicles 33:1 "Manasseh [was] twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem:"

So that he was born three years after Hezekiah's recovery from his sickness, and in the seventeenth year of his reign.

"And he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem":

Among which must be reckoned the time of his captivity in Babylon": His reign was the longest of any of the kings of Judah.

We mentioned in the lesson just before this, that Hezekiah, one of the kings who tried to please God, was the father of this very evil king.

Manasseh was very young when he took over as king.

He reigned until he was 67 years old.

2 Chronicles 33:2 "But did [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel."

Was guilty of idolatry.

"Like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel":

The old Canaanites.

He committed idolatry in imitation of them, and as the Phoenicians now did before the children of Israel.

To say that Manasseh was evil was an understatement of the facts.

Historical books say that Isaiah was sawn asunder by the orders of this evil king.

He chose the heathen false gods over the One True God.

2 Chronicles 33:3 "For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them."

For the “Baalim” and “groves” (see the notes on Judges 2:11-15 and 3:6-7).

The wickedness of Manasseh, the son of the godly “Hezekiah”, emphasizes the need for parents to communicate personal godliness to their children.

Children must make their own personal choice for God and not depend simply on their parents’ relationship to God.

It seemed that all of the good his father Hezekiah had done, he turned around into something very evil.

He restored the evil worship of Ashteroth and Baalim.

He worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, instead of worshipping the One who created them.

He was worshipping things he could see with his physical eyes.

I have said before, anything that you can see with physical eyes is not God.

God is a Spirit.

2 Chronicles 33:4 "Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever."

In the Holy Place, as distinct from the courts in the next verse.

And these were sacred to the idols of the Gentiles.

"Whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever":

In the temple there, devoted to his service, called by his name, and where his name was called upon (see Deut. 12:5).

And to erect altars to idols here must be very abominable to him.

2 Chronicles 33:5 "And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD."

Sun, moon, and stars.

"In the two courts of the house of the LORD":

In the court of the priests, and in the court of the people.

And all this must be supposed to be done, not as soon as he began to reign, but when he was grown up to man's estate, and had children, as the next verse shows.

Unless it can be thought that those nobles in Judah, who liked not the reformation made by Hezekiah, took the advantage of his youth, and advised him to these idolatries.

This is even worse than building the high places.

Now they had brought these evil false gods into the temple in Jerusalem, which had been built as a place of fellowship with the True God.

The host of heaven indicates they were observers of the times of the horoscope.

2 Chronicles 33:6 "And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."

“Valley of the son of Hinnom”:

This valley to the south and east of the temple was where the worship of Molech involved burning children to death (Psalm 106:37).

This was forbidden in (Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut. 18:10).

Such horrible practices appeared in Israel from the time of Ahaz (compare 28:3).

For the Molech sacrifices “in the valley of the son of Hinnom” (see the notes on 2 Kings 16:3-4; 2 Chron. 28:3).

This is speaking of sacrificing children to the false god Molech.

All of the things mentioned in the verses above, were strictly forbidden of God.

They were things the Ammonites and the Moabites had been doing.

Judah, under the rule of Manasseh, began to practice the evils of the heathens.

Observers of times is speaking of the horoscope signs.

This particular sin is still prevalent in our society today.

Palm reading, hypnotism, tarot cards, and many other things are directly associated with these things.

All of the things mentioned in the Scripture above, are forbidden in the Levitical law.

Verses 7-8

Manasseh became the thirteenth legitimate king of Judah and led the people back into idolatry, even putting idols “in the house of God of which” Solomon had dedicated (chapter 7).

2 Chronicles 33:7 "And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:"

Which was either an image that had been placed in a grove planted by him, and now removed into the house or temple of the LORD.

Or, as some think, this was a representation of a grove, a carved grove of gold or silver, in the midst of which an image was placed in the temple.

"Of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son":

That is, of which house or temple.

"In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever":

See 1 Kings 8:29; note on 2 Kings 21:3.

This carved image of a false god had come into the temple; which God had accepted from His people as His earthly abode.

God had accepted it at the dedication ceremony, when Solomon prayed before the altar.

This is the very worst thing they could have done.

God will not let this continue.

2 Chronicles 33:8 "Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses."

Or suffer them to be carried captive into another land, as in the times of the judges.

That is, on the following condition.

"So that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them":

By obedience to which they had the tenure of the land of Canaan (Isa. 1:19).

"According to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses":

The words are not taken from any single passage, but express the general sense of numerous passages.

As for example: (Deut. 4:25-27; 30:15-19; Psalm 89:28-32; 1 Kings 9:4-9).

The blessings that God had promised His people, had been conditional from the beginning.

He would bless them, as long as they obeyed him and kept His commandments.

When they did not, there would be abundant curses fall upon them.

2 Chronicles 33:9 "So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, [and] to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel."

To not harken to the voice of God in his law by Moses, and were not obedient to it.

"And to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel":

He set up more idols, and drew the people into more and greater idolatries, than the old Canaanites.

And these were the more aggravated by having a law given to them.

And prophets sent to instruct them in it.

And by the benefits and blessings bestowed upon them by the lawgiver, which laid them under greater obligations to him (see Jer. 2:11).

Manasseh was so evil himself, that he caused the people to sin with him.

God had destroyed the heathen for doing even less evil than this.

An evil ruler causes his subjects to be evil as well.

Verses 10-11

Manasseh's capture and exile to "Babylon" foreshadowed the capture and exile of Judah.

Manasseh was brought in chains to Babylon, just as Jehoiakim would be later (36:6).

2 Chronicles 33:10 "And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken."

By his servants the prophets (see 2 Kings 21:10), where what was said to them is recorded.

"But they would not hearken":

To what was said.

To reproofs, admonitions, and exhortations to repent and reform.

God loved them, even though they had done these terrible things.

They did not take the warning he sent however.

They were so proud; they would not humble themselves before God.

Verses 11-17

God's retribution was swift.

Manasseh apparently repented, but the spiritual damage was not easily reversed.

2 Chronicles 33:11 "Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon."

"King of Assyria":

Most likely Ashurbanipal (ca. 669 – 633 B.C.).

Between 652 and 648 B.C., Babylon rebelled against Assyria.

The city of Babylon was defeated temporarily, but Assyria may have felt Manasseh supported Babylon's rebellion, so he was taken to trial in Babylon.

(See the note on 2 Kings 21:17).

This is very plain that the captains of the Assyrians took him and turned him over to the Babylonians.

Verses 12-13

“Manasseh”:

This king was very wicked and idolatrous, a murderer of his children, and a desecrater of the temple.

God graciously forgave this “chief of sinners” (compare 1 Tim. 1:15), when he repented.

He did what he could to reverse the effect of his life (verses 15-17).

Although the people worshiped God and not idols, they were doing it in the wrong place and wrong way.

God had commanded them to offer sacrifices only in certain places (Deut. chapters 12, 13, 14), to keep them from corrupting the prescribed forms and to protect them from pagan religious influence.

Disobedience to God’s requirements in this matter surely contributed to the decline under the next king, Amon (verses 21-25), whose corruption his successor, Josiah, had to eliminate (See the verses 34:3-7).

During his time of captivity, Manasseh turned back to God.

Manasseh’s hope in exile in Babylon was the same hope for those who would return from Judah’s exile in Babylon.

Humility always accompanies true confession and repentance and brings the hope of restoration.

2 Chronicles 33:12 "And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,"

In prison.

However, in fetters; according to the Targum.

The Chaldeans made an instrument of brass with holes in it, and put him in it.

And fire about it.

Something like the brazen bull of Perillus.

And the above Arabian writer calls it a tower of brass.

"He besought the LORD his God":

By prayer and supplication.

"And humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers":

Confessing his sins, expressing great sorrow and repentance for them.

2 Chronicles 33:13 "And prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he [was] God."

To have mercy on him, and forgive him his sins.

"And he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication":

And granted his request, showed favor to him, and forgave him his sins.

"And brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom":

So wrought upon the heart of the king of Assyria, as to give him his liberty, and restore him to his dominions.

It is very probable his captivity was not long.

For, being soon brought by his affliction to a sense and confession of his sins, by the overruling providence of God, he was quickly released.

"Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God":

And not the idols he had served.

That he was a Holy God, and hated sin, and a just God in afflicting him for it.

And gracious and merciful in forgiving his sins, and bringing him out of his troubles.

It appears from this, that suddenly Manasseh remembered the God of his father and prayed to him for forgiveness and help.

God heard his prayer and restores him as king of Judah.

Manasseh had killed many of the prophets probably, because they told him what he was doing was wrong.

It is such a wonderful thing to see the forgiveness of God in action as this.

Because God answered the prayer of Manasseh, he believed.

2 Chronicles 33:14 "Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah."

Which perhaps had been broken down by the Assyrian army, when it came and took him.

Vitringa thinks this is the wall of the pool of Siloah (Neh. 3:15).

Which seems to be the first and oldest wall, as Josephus.

For that turning to the north bent towards the pool of Siloam.

A wall which was running from south of the temple and Ophel (being west of the Kidron Valley), southeast/northwest reaching to the Fish Gate, northwest of the temple.

"On the west side of Gihon":

On the west side of the city, towards Gihon.

For that was to the west of it (2 Chron. 32:30).

"In the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate":

Through which the fish were brought from Joppa, and where, according to the Targum, they were sold.

"And compassed about Ophel":

The eastern part of Mount Zion.

Some say it was the Holy of Holies (2 Chron. 27:3).

"And raised it up a very great height":

Built the wall very high there.

"And put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah":

This he did to put his kingdom in a posture of defense, should it be attacked by the Assyrian army again.

He was restored as king of Judah, and began to rebuild the city wall.

He even restored the army of Judah.

2 Chronicles 33:15 "And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast [them] out of the city."

Which he had set there (2 Chron. 33:7).

"And all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem":

See 2 Chron. 33:4.

"And cast them out of the city":

Perhaps into the brook Kidron.

All this he did to show the sincerity of his repentance for his idolatry, and his abhorrence of it.

He went back and tried to make amends for all of the false worship he had established.

He tore down the places of idol worship, and removed the evil idols in the house of the LORD.

It appears he had truly repented for his sins.

2 Chronicles 33:16 "And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel."

Which was fallen to ruin, being neglected and disused in his times of idolatry.

Or, according to the Keri, or marginal reading, and so the Targum, "he built it"; which perhaps he had before pulled down and destroyed.

"And sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings":

To the LORD, for bringing him out of captivity, and restoring him to his kingdom.

And especially for converting him from his idolatries, giving him repentance for them, and forgiveness of sins.

"And commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel":

And him only.

Another instance of the truth of his repentance, in endeavoring to reform those whom he had misled.

And restore the true worship of God among them, and bring them back to that.

These were both voluntary offerings.

He had completely turned around, and commanded Judah to do the same.

2 Chronicles 33:17 "Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, [yet] unto the LORD their God only."

Not in those that were built for idols, at least did not sacrifice to them.

While the people did worship God, they did not do so as they had been instructed (Deuteronomy 12:13-14).

It appears that Manasseh's earlier sin still had lingering consequences.

For it follows:

"Yet unto the LORD their God only":

The Targum is, "to the name of the Word of the LORD their God."

Their worship of the LORD was mixed with false worship, because they used the high places, instead of the temple in Jerusalem for worship.

Verses 18-20

See 2 Kings 21:17-18.

2 Chronicles 33:18 "Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they [are written] in the book of the kings of Israel."

As for other "acts" (verses 13-16), became the basis for the later Jewish apocryphal book, The Prayer of Manasseh.

The reference here could be speaking of the book of (2 Kings chapter 21).

The seers, spoken of here are possibly speaking of the prophets, who had warned Manasseh of his evil ways.

2 Chronicles 33:19 "His prayer also, and [how God] was entreated of him, and all his sins, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they [are] written among the sayings of the seers."

“The sayings of the seers”:

There are at least a dozen books cited in Scripture that are not part of our Bible.

Including the Book of Jasher (Joshua 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18);

The Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41);

The Prophecy of Abijah the Shilonite, the Visions of Iddo the Seer, the Book of Nathan the Prophet (9:29);

The Book of Gad the Seer (1 Chron. 29:29);

The Book of Shemaiah the Prophet (12:15);

The Acts of Uzziah (26:22);

The Sayings of the Seers (33:19);

Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:9),

And the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16);

The Book of Enoch (Jude 14);

An epistle of John (3 John 9);

And probably other accounts of Jesus’ life (Luke 1:1-2).

These are sometimes erroneously referred to as the “lost books of Scripture.”

There is no indication that any of these nonbiblical books were inspired.

The doctrine of preservation argues that inspired books providentially survived, implying that the lost books were not inspired.

They many have recorded interesting background to the inspired record of God, but they were not Scripture.

Christians do not need to be concerned about missing portions of their Bible, since Scripture is complete with 66 books (Joshua 10:13; Gal. 6:16).

There seemed to be records kept by the prophets of that day.

Perhaps this is speaking of those records.

Many of the historians had a great deal to say about this.

Whether the prophets had written down his sins or not, God was keeping records.

God knows everything that Manasseh did, and He also knows everything you and I have done.

Someday all of the records will be opened.

Thank goodness, our sins have been erased, if we have accepted Jesus as our Savior.

2 Chronicles 33:20 "So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead."

That is, in the garden of his house (see note on 2 Kings 21:18).

There; to which may be added, that the Jews in later times buried in a garden.

Though it was the custom of the ancients, both Greeks and Romans, to bury the dead in their own houses.

This is possibly speaking of a burial plot in the garden of his own home.

He had possibly, prepared the place. Amon would be an evil king.

Verses 21-25

The reign of Amon (ca. 642 – 640 B.C.; compare 2 Kings 21:19-26; and also see the notes on 2 Kings 21:19-24).

2 Chronicles 33:21 "Amon [was] two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem."

"Amon was two and twenty years old when he began to reign":

Being born in the forty fifth of his father's life, and in the thirty third of his reign.

"And reigned two years in Jerusalem":

Which, as Abarbanel observes, was the usual time the sons of wicked kings reigned.

And instances in the son of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab (1 Kings 15:25).

Amon was born relatively late in Manasseh's life.

He would have been 45, when Ammon was born.

The oldest son usually becomes king.

If Manasseh had other sons, he had probably sacrificed them in the fire to Molech.

It appears this evil son of Manasseh reigned 2 years.

Verses 22-23

Apparently, "Amon" did not learn from his father, Manasseh.

As the fourteenth legitimate king of Judah, he "humbled not himself".

Since Manasseh humbled himself, his reign was lengthened.

Since Amon did not, his reign was cut short.

2 Chronicles 33:22 "But he did [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them;"

Committed idolatry.

"As did Manasseh his father":

He imitated him in that, but not in his repentance and humiliation (2 Chron. 33:23).

For Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them": Baal, Ashtoreth, and all the host of heaven.

And all the carved images his father made, which it seems he only removed, but did not break in pieces.

He probably began worshipping these false gods, when Manasseh set them up in Jerusalem.

When Manasseh repented of his sins and returned to God, it seems Amon did not repent of his sins.

He continued to worship false gods.

2 Chronicles 33:23 "And humbled not himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more."

"And humbled not himself":

As David, Solomon, etc.

He fell, like his father, but did not rise again like him.

It is not so much sin, as impenitence in sin, that ruins men.

Not so much that they have offended, as that they do not humble themselves for, and forsake their offences.

Not the disease, but the neglect of the remedy.

"But Amon trespassed more and more":

Prescribed by him in his law for the worship of him.

His father had made this same mistake, but he had repented.

Amon was too proud.

He did not repent nor turn from his wicked ways.

His sins became more and more instead of less.

2 Chronicles 33:24 "And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house."

Some of his domestic servants, and perhaps his courtiers.

Not on account of his idolatry, but for some ill usage of them.

"And slew the king in his own house":

Which they had an opportunity to do, being his servants.

(See the note on 2 Kings 21:23).

They actually slew him in his own bed.

2 Chronicles 33:25 "But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead."

On occasion of his death, there seems to have been an insurrection of the people in a body, to avenge the death of their king.

Who might be beloved on account of his idolatry, so depraved was the nation.

Or it may be only to avenge his death because he was their king, whose life these men ought not to have taken away.

And the rather this may be thought to be the reason by what follows.

"And the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead":

Who had been prophesied of by name above three hundred years before (see 1 Kings 13:2).

Josiah would be more like Hezekiah.

He did right in the sight of the LORD.

He had his father's murderers killed.

2 Chronicles Chapter 33 Questions

1. How old was Manasseh, when he began to reign?
2. How many years did he reign?
3. He did that which was _____ in the sight of the LORD.
4. What prophet do historians say he had sawn asunder?
5. What did he do in direct opposition to what Hezekiah had done?
6. What did he put in the courts of the house of the LORD?
7. What terrible thing did he do in the valley of Hinnom?
8. What false god was this?
9. The _____ and Moabites had been following these practices.
10. What are some of these evils, that are present in our society today?
11. What did he put in the house of the LORD?
12. How could Judah have been blessed of God?
13. Who did Manasseh cause to sin?
14. Who captured Manasseh?

15. Where did they take him?
16. When did he seek the LORD?
17. Did God forgive him?
18. What did he do, as soon as he returned to Jerusalem?
19. What kind of offerings did he make unto the LORD?
20. Who were the seers in verse 18?
21. Where is the rest of this about Manasseh recorded?
22. Where did they bury Manasseh?
23. Who reigned in his stead?
24. What type king was Amon?
25. How was he killed?
26. Josiah would be more like _____.