

# 2 Chronicles 33 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

- 2 Chronicles 33:1
- 2 Chronicles 33:2
- 2 Chronicles 33:3
- 2 Chronicles 33:4
- 2 Chronicles 33:5
- 2 Chronicles 33:6
- 2 Chronicles 33:7
- 2 Chronicles 33:8
- 2 Chronicles 33:9
- 2 Chronicles 33:10
- 2 Chronicles 33:11
- 2 Chronicles 33:12
- 2 Chronicles 33:13
- 2 Chronicles 33:14
- 2 Chronicles 33:15
- 2 Chronicles 33:16
- 2 Chronicles 33:17
- 2 Chronicles 33:18
- 2 Chronicles 33:19
- 2 Chronicles 33:20
- 2 Chronicles 33:21
- 2 Chronicles 33:22
- 2 Chronicles 33:23
- 2 Chronicles 33:24
- 2 Chronicles 33:25

SECOND CHRONICLES The Kingdom of Israel From Splendor to Disaster				
<b>Splendor</b>			<b>Disaster</b>	
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36	
Kingdom United			Kingdom Divided 2Chr 10:1-19	Rulers of the Southern Kingdom of Judah After the Split
Inaugural 2Chr 1:1-17	Solomon's Temple 2Chr 2:1- 7:22	Solomon's Glory 2Chr 8:1- 9:31	The Exile of Judah 2Chr 36:17-23	
Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple	
~40 Years			~393 Years	
Temple Destroyed				

## TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES

1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

**SEE ALSO:**

[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)

[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

**NOTE: THESE COMMENTS ARE OFFERED IN AN "AS IS" FORMAT - IF I HAVE TIME IN THE FUTURE, THEY WILL BE UPDATED.**

**[CLICK 2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES**

**2 Chronicles 33:1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem.**

- Manasseh (KJV): 2Ch 32:33 2Ki 21:1-18 1Ch 3:13 Mt 1:10, Manasses
- twelve (KJV): 2Ch 34:1,2 Ec 10:16 Isa 3:4,12
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

**Parallel Passage:**

2 Kings 21:1-18 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hephzibah. 2 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. 4 He built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem I will put My name." 5 For he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 He made his son pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and used divination, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD provoking Him to anger. 7 Then he set the carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever. 8 "And I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers, if only they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them." 9 But they did not listen, and Manasseh seduced them to do evil more than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel. 10 Now the LORD spoke through His servants the prophets, saying, 11 "Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, having done wickedly more than all the Amorites did who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols; 12 therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am bringing such calamity on Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. 13 'I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. 14 'I will abandon the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies, and they will become as plunder and spoil to all

their enemies; 15 because they have done evil in My sight, and have been provoking Me to anger since the day their fathers came from Egypt, even to this day.” 16 Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; besides his sin with which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD. 17 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh and all that he did and his sin which he committed, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? 18 And Manasseh slept with his fathers and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza, and Amon his son became king in his place.

**PAUL APPLE - BIG IDEA:** EVEN THE WORST SINNER, IF HE HUMBLY REPENTS, IS NOT BEYOND THE MERCY OF GOD

#### INTRODUCTION:

**Raymond Dillard:** Though the Chronicler was heavily dependent on Kings for his account of Manasseh (2Ch 33:1–10 // 2 Kgs 21:1–10), the two accounts contrast sharply in their overall assessment of his reign. In the deuteronomic history Manasseh is the nadir of the kings of Judah and is the leading cause of a now irreversible exile, whereas in Chronicles he becomes repentant and a religious reformer. Though agreeing regarding his apostasy, the two historians come to opposite moral judgments.

**John Olley:** Kings and Chronicles were written for different audiences, and their authors selected their material accordingly. In the Chronicler's Manasseh account, hearers are encouraged to find a foretaste of their own situation, as they have been in exile because of rejection of God's words through the prophets (2Ch 33:10–11a; 36:15–17). Even in the darkest situation, as people “humble themselves” and cry to God in repentance, hope of full restoration (even including kingship; 2Ch 33:13) is still possible; building and security go together with “serv[ing] the Lord the God of Israel” (2Ch 33:16).

**Martin Selman:** Manasseh's conversion helps to explain a longstanding problem in Kings, namely, why the exile did not fall in Manasseh's reign if his sins were really so serious. God's judgment had clearly been at least delayed, though if God's basic decision could not be overturned by Josiah's extensive reformation, Manasseh's more limited changes (cf. 2Ch 33:17) were not likely to be any more successful.

**Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem.**

**Spurgeon** - Yet who could have had a better father than Manasseh had? He was given to Hezekiah during those fifteen years which God graciously added to that good king's life. Manasseh was, therefore, doubtless carefully trained, and looked upon as being one who would maintain God's worship, and the honour of his father's name. But grace does not run in the blood; and the best of parents may have the worst of children. Thus Manasseh, though he was the son of Hezekiah, “did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,” —It often happens that, when the sons of good men become bad, they are among the worst of men. They who pervert a good example generally run headlong to destruction.

**Spurgeon - 12 years old** - He was, therefore, born after the time when Hezekiah was raised up from the bed of sickness. That prolongation of life was not all mercy: I am not sure that we should be so eager for such an extension of earthly existence either for ourselves or for others. Had Hezekiah been able to foresee what would be the abominations of the first part of Manasseh's reign, should he come to the throne of Judah, methinks that the godly king might have been content to die at once rather than live any longer to become the father of such a sinner, and one who would prove to be such an enemy of the true faith. “Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign.” It was too early for a youth to reign over any nation. It is a great temptation, and a serious peril, when an individual has too much power before he reaches his manhood. It would have been far better for Manasseh if his accession to the throne had been postponed for a good while. You who are very young, and are entrusted with wealth and position, may God keep you from going wrong! It will need great grace to preserve you in the right path.

**Spurgeon** - Manasseh's was a long reign, a varied reign, and at first a wicked reign of the very worst kind. Sometimes men are spared notwithstanding their sin. Manasseh's was one of the longest reigns on record: “He reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem.”

**Raymond Dillard:** Manasseh ruled longer than any other king of Judah. Many find in this fact the key to the Chronicler's treatment of this king. In light of his theology of immediate retribution, Manasseh would have represented something of a problem: how is it that this king who represented the pinnacle of evil also enjoyed the divine blessing of long life? The Chronicler's account of Manasseh's punishment, repentance, and reform removes the narrative from being a problem and makes it instead a dramatic confirmation of the validity of retribution theology and the efficacy of repentance.

**John Olley:** For all kings after Hezekiah he omits the queen mother.

**Believer's Study Bible** - Following the death of Hezekiah, true religion in Judah not only declined; it was replaced by gross idolatry under the long kingship of Manasseh (vv. 3-20; cf. 2 Kin. 21:1-18). The chronicler asserts that Manasseh's captivity and affliction (vv. 11, 12) were the direct result of his activities.

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## Matthew Henry Notes: Chapter: 33

In this chapter we have the history of the reign,

I. Of Manasseh, who reigned long.

1. His wretched apostasy from God, and revolt to idolatry and all wickedness (2Ch 33:1-10).
2. His happy return to God in his affliction; his repentance (2Ch 33:11-13), his reformation (2Ch 33:15-17), and prosperity (2Ch 33:14), with the conclusion of his reign (2Ch 33:18-20).

II. Of Amon, who reigned very wickedly (2Ch 33:21-23), and soon ended his days unhappily (2Ch 33:24, 25).

2Ch 33:1-10

We have here an account of the great wickedness of Manasseh. It is the same almost word for word with that which we had 2 Ki. 21:1-9, and took a melancholy view of. It is no such pleasing subject that we should delight to dwell upon it again. This foolish young prince, in contradiction to the good example and good education his father gave him, abandoned himself to all impiety, transcribed the abominations of the heathen (2Ch 33:2), ruined the established religion, unravelled his father's glorious reformation (2Ch 33:3), profaned the house of God with his idolatry (2Ch 33:4, 5), dedicated his children to Moloch, and made the devil's lying oracles his guides and his counsellors, 2Ch 33:6. In contempt of the choice God had made of Sion to be his rest for ever and Israel to be his covenant-people (v2Ch 33:8), and the fair terms he stood upon with God, he embraced other gods, profaned God's chosen temple, and debauched his chosen people. He made them to err, and do worse than the heathen (2Ch 33:9); for, if the unclean spirit returns, he brings with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. That which aggravated the sin of Manasseh was that God spoke to him and his people by the prophets, but they would not hearken, 2Ch 33:10. We may here admire the grace of God in speaking to them, and their obstinacy in turning a deaf ear to him, that either their badness did not quite turn away his goodness, but still he waited to be gracious, or that his goodness did not turn them from their badness, but still they hated to be reformed. Now from this let us learn,

1. That it is no new thing, but a very sad thing, for the children of godly parents to turn aside from that good way of God in which they have been trained. Parents may give many good things to their children, but they cannot give them grace.
2. Corruptions in worship are such diseases of the church as it is very apt to relapse into again even when they seem to be cured.
3. The god of this world has strangely blinded men's minds, and has a wonderful power over those that are led captive by him; else he could not draw them from God, their best friend, to depend upon their sworn enemy.

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### QUESTION - [Who was King Manasseh in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - The story of King Manasseh is told in 2 Kings 21:1–18 and 2 Chronicles 32:33–33:20, and he is also mentioned briefly in Jeremiah 15:4. Manasseh was king of the southern kingdom of Judah and the son of the godly king Hezekiah. Hezekiah had undertaken reforms in Judah to rid the land of idolatry. Manasseh, a wicked king, reversed these reforms and did much worse. The first five verses of 2 Kings 21 are a frank and stunning account of Manasseh's apostasy:

"Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. . . . He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, following the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to [Baal](#) and made an [Asherah pole](#), as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. He built altars in the temple of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, 'In Jerusalem I will put my Name.' In the two courts of the temple of the Lord, he built altars to all the starry hosts. He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced divination, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger." Although we are not given the specifics, Manasseh was also a treacherous king, killing innocent people: "Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end" (2 Kings 21:16). He was pronounced by God to be more wicked than the Amorites who had lived in Canaan before they were displaced by Israel in an act of God's judgment (2 Kings 21:11; see also 2 Chronicles 33:9).

Not only did Manasseh sin personally, but as king he led Judah in forsaking the LORD and worshiping idols. Such was the extent of their sin that God declared He would wipe out Jerusalem as He had the northern kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 21:13–15). Jeremiah 15:4 notes that it was the sin of Judah, initiated by Manasseh, that brought the judgment that [Jeremiah](#) proclaimed (the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the exile of the people). According to Jewish tradition, it was King Manasseh who murdered the [prophet Isaiah](#).

Second Chronicles 33 adds more information not recorded in 2 Kings. God reached out to Manasseh and the people (presumably through prophets), but they would not listen. So God sent the [Assyrians](#) who captured Manasseh and took him away to exile (2 Chronicles 33:11). While in exile, “In his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. And when he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God” (2 Chronicles 33:12–13). The apocryphal book the “[Prayer of Manasseh](#)” claims to record Manasseh’s prayer of repentance, but it is highly unlikely that the contents of the Prayer of Manasseh accurately represent Manasseh’s prayer.

The repentant Manasseh was restored to his kingdom and started to rebuild Judah militarily (2 Chronicles 33:14), and he also began to institute religious reforms. “He got rid of the foreign gods and removed the image from the temple of the Lord, as well as all the altars he had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the city. Then he restored the altar of the Lord and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the Lord, the God of Israel” (2 Chronicles 33:15–16).

Even though Manasseh had a personal conversion, he was never able to lead Judah out of the sin that he had previously led them into. They did not follow him in his reforms. The people continued in their idolatry (2 Chronicles 33:17), and, when Manasseh died, his son Amon “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” (2 Chronicles 33:22–23).

Manasseh is a tragic figure in Scripture. Although he repented of his sin, he was unable to undo the damage he had done to the nation or to his own son who followed him. Manasseh demonstrates that, while any sin may be forgiven when we repent, forgiveness does not necessarily remove the [natural consequences](#) that flow from disobedience. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### **QUESTION - [Why is idol worship such a powerful temptation?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Ultimately, the answer to this question is “sin.” It is the sin nature of man that causes us to [worship modern idols, all of which are](#), in reality, forms of self-worship. The temptation to worship ourselves in various ways is a powerful temptation indeed. In fact, it is so powerful that only those who belong to Christ and have the Holy Spirit within them can possibly hope to resist the temptation of modern idolatry. Even then, resisting the worship of idols is a lifelong battle that is part of the Christian life (Ephesians 6:11; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3).

When we hear the word *idol*, we often think of statues and objects reminiscent of those worshiped by pagans in ancient cultures. However, the idols of the 21st century often bear no resemblance to the artifacts used thousands of years ago. Today, many have replaced the “golden calf” with an insatiable drive for money or prestige or “success” in the eyes of the world. Some pursue the high regard of others as their ultimate goal. Some seek after comfort or a myriad of other passionate, yet empty, pursuits. Sadly, our societies often admire those serving such idols. In the end, however, it doesn’t matter what empty pleasure we chase after or what idol or which false god we bow down to; the result is the same—separation from the one true God.

Understanding contemporary idols can help us to understand why they prove to be such a powerful temptation. An idol can be anything we place ahead of God in our lives, anything that takes God’s place in our hearts, such as possessions, careers, relationships, hobbies, sports, entertainment, goals, greed, addictions to alcohol/drugs/gambling/pornography, etc. Some of the things we idolize are clearly sinful. But many of the things we idolize can be very good, such as relationships or careers. Yet Scripture tells us that, whatever we do, we are to “do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31) and that we are to serve God only (Deuteronomy 6:13; Luke 16:13). Unfortunately, God is often shoved out of the way as we zealously pursue our idols. Worse yet, the significant amount of time we often spend in these idolatrous pursuits leaves us with little or no time to spend with the Lord.

We sometimes also turn to idols seeking solace from the hardships of life and the turmoil present in our world. Addictive behaviors such as drug or alcohol use, or even something like excessive reading or television viewing, may be used as a means of temporarily “escaping” a difficult situation or the rigors of daily life. The psalmist, however, tells us that those who place their trust in this behavior will, essentially, become spiritually useless (Psalm 115:8). We need to place our trust in the Lord “who will keep [us] from all harm” (Psalm 121:7) and who has promised to supply all of our needs when we trust in Him. We also need to remember the words of Paul, who teaches us not to be anxious about anything, but rather to pray about everything so the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, can guard our hearts and our minds (Philippians 4:6–7).

There is another form of idolatry prevalent today. Its growth is fostered by cultures that continue to drift away from sound biblical teaching, just as the apostle Paul warned us, “For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:3). In these pluralistic, liberal times, many cultures have, to a large degree, redefined God. We have forsaken the God revealed to us in Scripture and have recast Him to comply with our own inclinations and desires—a “kinder and gentler” god who is infinitely more tolerant than the One revealed in Scripture. One who is less demanding and less judgmental and who will tolerate many lifestyles without placing guilt on anyone’s shoulders. As this idolatry is propagated by churches around the world, many congregants believe

they are worshipping the one, true God. However, these made-over gods are created by man, and to worship them is to worship idols. worshipping a god of one's own making is particularly tempting for many whose habits and lifestyles and drives and desires are not in harmony with Scripture.

The things of this world will never fully satisfy the human heart. They were never meant to. The sinful things deceive us and ultimately lead only to death (Romans 6:23). The good things of this world are gifts from God, meant to be enjoyed with a thankful heart, in submission to Him and for His glory. But when the gift replaces the Giver or the created replaces the Creator in our lives, we have fallen into idolatry. And no idol can infuse our lives with meaning or worth or give us eternal hope. As Solomon beautifully conveys in the book of Ecclesiastes, apart from a right relationship with God, life is futile. We were created in God's image (Genesis 1:27) and designed to worship and glorify Him as He alone is worthy of our worship. God has placed "eternity in man's heart" (Ecclesiastes 3:11), and a relationship with Jesus Christ is the only way to fulfill this longing for eternal life. All of our idolatrous pursuits will leave us empty, unsatisfied, and, ultimately, on the broad road that most people take, the one that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

## **2 Chronicles 33:2 He did evil in the sight of the LORD according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel.**

- like unto (KJV): 2Ch 28:3 36:14 Lev 18:24-30 20:22,23 De 12:31 18:9,14 2Ki 17:11,15 21:2,9 Ezr 9:14 Ps 106:35-40 Eze 11:12

### **He did evil in the sight of the LORD according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel.**

**Raymond Dillard:** Note the three occurrences of the phrase reporting that Manasseh "did evil" early in the paragraphs beginning with 2Ch 33:2, 6, 9; repetition of such phrases is common on paragraph boundaries. . . This verse is verbatim 2 Kgs 21:2, but functions somewhat differently in the earlier narrative. In Kings Manasseh's reign accounts for the exile; the abominations for which Yahweh drove the Canaanites from the land would eventually be the same reasons for which Israel was driven out (Deut 18:12; 2 Kgs 17:8, 16–20). This relationship between the deeds and exile of the Canaanites and the deeds and exile of Israel is somewhat muted in Chronicles and becomes the personal experience of the king rather than the nation.

**Spurgeon** -The Lord drove out the Canaanites for the very sins that Manasseh committed. If we follow in the sins of others, we must not wonder if we share in their doom. It is a sad thing, however, when the child of such a father as Hezekiah does evil in the sight of the Lord, "like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom Jehovah had cast out before the children of Israel."

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### **James Smith - MANASSEH'S CONVERSION 2 Ch 33:1–13**

1. He was Honoured. Son of a godly man.
2. He Sinned. "Did evil in sight of the Lord" (v. 2).
3. He was Warned. "Lord spake to Manasseh" (v. 10).
4. He was Humbled. "Bound with fetters" (v. 11).
5. He Prayed (v. 12).
6. He was Saved. "The Lord heard his supplication and brought him ... into his kingdom" (v. 13).

## **2 Chronicles 33:3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he also erected altars for the Baals and made Asherim, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.**

- he built again (KJV): Heb. he returned and built, Ec 2:19 9:18
- which Hezekiah (KJV): 2Ch 30:14 31:1 32:12 2Ki 18:4 21:3
- he reared (KJV): 2Ch 28:2-4 Judges 2:11-13
- made groves (KJV): De 16:21 1Ki 14:23 Jer 17:2
- the host (KJV): De 4:19 17:3 2Ki 23:5,6,11 Jer 8:2 19:13 Zep 1:5 Ac 7:42

### **Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 4:19 "And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the LORD your

God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

## **ASTRAL WORSHIP**

This is not simple "star gazing!"

**For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he also erected altars for the Baals and made Asherim, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.**

**Spurgeon** - One form of idolatry was not enough for him; he must have all forms of it, even rearing altars to Baal, and making the stars also to be his gods. These high places were at first built for the worship of God, the true God; but then the law of Jehovah was that there should be only one altar, namely, that at Jerusalem. This was not Popery, but Ritualism; it was adding something to the simple worship of God, and therefore it was wrong. He who goes a little way in sin will soon go a long way. It is always a mercy to stop where you ought to stop, and not begin going down. Hezekiah had broken down the high places, and his son Manasseh rebuilt them. He not only worshipped them, but he served them; he threw his whole strength into the propagation of this form of idolatry. They who build altars to God, contrary to the Lord's law, will soon have false gods. First, men set up images to remind them of the true God; and then they go off to the worship of the idols, or false gods. Oh, that we may have grace to make no similitude of the Lord, and to set up nothing contrary to the simple teaching of the Word of God!

**Andrew Hill:** The specific catalog of abominations promoted by Manasseh as "alternative religion" for the kingdom of Judah invites comparison with the Mosaic prohibitions against false worship (Deut. 16:21 – 17:7; 18:9-13). Among the taboos borrowed wholesale from Canaanite culture are idolatry associated with the fertility cult deities Asherah and Baal, astral worship, infanticide, and the occult (2 Chron. 33:3-6). According to 2 Kings 17:7-13, 16-20, these are the very sins that incited God's wrath against the northern kingdom of Israel and brought about the Assyrian exile. Note too how centuries earlier the theocratic kingdom of Israel under Joshua's leadership waged war against the indigenous populations of Canaan as divine judgment for the same list of abominations (Lev. 18:24-28). The narrative in 2 Kings 24:3-4 ascribes blame directly to King Manasseh for the Babylonian exile of the southern kingdom. Like matter reaching an irreversible energy state of critical mass in the science of physics, the course charted by the political and religious policies of Manasseh lead irrevocably to the Exile.

**2 Chronicles 33:4 He built altars in the house of the LORD of which the LORD had said, "My name shall be in Jerusalem forever."**

- he built (KJV): 2Ch 33:15 34:3,4 2Ki 21:4,5 Jer 7:30
- In Jerusalem (KJV): 2Ch 6:6 7:16 32:19 De 12:11 1Ki 8:29 9:3

**He built altars in the house of the LORD of which the LORD had said, "My name shall be in Jerusalem forever"**

**Spurgeon** - Manasseh was worse than an ordinary idolater, for he polluted the very place which was dedicated to the service of the only living and true God.

**Spurgeon** - There was plenty of room elsewhere for them if Manasseh wanted them; but; nothing would do for him but that in the house of God itself must be built altars for the worship of the sun and all the host of stars.

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

- in the two (KJV): 2Ch 4:9 Jer 32:34,35 Eze 8:7-18

**For he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.**

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**New Manners and Customs on Astral Worship** - Astral worship was common in the Middle East at that time, and was forbidden by God. In the last part of our text-verse, God clearly tells His people that He created the stars for the benefit of all the earth, and not as a means to determine a person's destiny or as a power controlling that destiny. Astral worship is the most ancient and widely spread form of idolatry, and frequent allusions are made to it in the Scriptures. Some believe that many of the precepts in the Mosaic law were directed against astral worship in its various corrupt forms. Our text-verse is an illustration of this. Besides direct reference

to this superstition in this and in other passages, occasional allusion to it may be found elsewhere. The expression "host of heaven" refers to the sun, moon, and stars, as so designated in Genesis 2:1—"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them" (KJV). When the Jews fell into idolatry they worshiped these, and in conjunction often worshiped Baal: "And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal" (2 Kings 17:16, KJV—see also verse 21:3).

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**Walton** - astral worship in the ancient Near East. The celestial gods (sun god, moon god and Venus particularly; in Babylonia, Shamash, Sin and Ishtar respectively) were primary in most ancient religions. Controlling calendar and time, seasons and weather, they were viewed as the most powerful of the gods. They provided signs by which omens were read, and they looked down on all. Yahweh has now warned the Israelites against fertility worship (Deut. 4:3), magic and manipulation (idolatry, Deut. 4:16–18), and omens and linking deities to cosmic phenomena (Deut. 4:19), all the major characteristics of the pagan polytheism of the ancient world. (Note on Dt 4)

The worship of the celestial bodies (sun, moon, planets, stars) was common throughout the ancient Near East. One of the principal gods of Assyria and Babylonia was a sun god (Shamash), and a moon god (Thoth in Egypt; Sin in Mesopotamia; Yarah in Canaanite religion) was widely worshiped. During most of their history the Israelites would have been familiar with and heavily influenced by Assyrian culture and religion (see Deut. 4:19; 2 Kings 21:1–7; 2 Kings 23:4–5). These forbidden practices continued to be a source of condemnation during the Neo-Babylonian period, as Israelites burned incense on altars placed on the roofs of their houses to the "starry hosts" (Jeremiah 19:13). Because worship of the elements of nature diminished Yahweh's position as the sole power in creation, they were outlawed. However, the popular nature of this type of worship continues to appear in prophetic literature and in Job (see Job 31:26–28; Job 38:7). For additional information see comment on •Deut. 4. (Note on Dt 17:3)

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**2 Chronicles 33:6 He made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom; and he practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger.**

- caused (KJV): 2Ch 28:3 Lev 18:21 20:2 De 12:31 18:10 2Ki 21:6 23:10 Jer 7:31,32 Eze 23:37,39
- he observed (KJV): Lev 19:26 20:6 De 18:10-14 1Sa 15:23 2Ki 17:17 Isa 47:9-12 Ga 5:20
- dealt (KJV): 2Ki 21:6 23:24 1Ch 10:13 Isa 8:19 19:3

**He made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom; and he practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger.**

**Spurgeon** - Perhaps he gave some of them actually to be burned in honour of his false gods; or if not some of his children were made to pass through the fire and were thus dedicated to the idol deities.

**Spurgeon** - All which is imitated, nowadays, by certain persons who try to break through the veil which parts us from the spiritual world. Manasseh did this on a large scale.

**Morris** - This valley had been so identified since at least the time of Joshua (Joshua 15:8), and it is probable that the original "son of Hinnom" was a Jebusite who offered his valley for the pagan sacrificial rituals of the Canaanites (see note on 2 Chronicles 28:3). **wrought much evil.** Manasseh departed so far from the godly practices of his father, entering deeply into every form of Satanic doctrine and practice and leading his people to participate in them (even "worse than the heathen" 2 Chronicles 33:9), that the only divine remedy was eventual judgment and exile (2 Kings 21:12-16).

**Spurgeon** - You cannot imagine, I think, a worse character than this Manasseh was. He seems to have raked the foulest kennels of superstition to find all manner of abominations. Like false-hearted Saul, he had dealings with a familiar spirit, he had entered into a covenant with Satan himself, and made a league with hell, and yet, marvel of grace! this very Manasseh was saved, and is now singing the new song before the throne of God in glory.

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**HINNOM, VALLEY OF [ISBE]** - hin'-om (ge hinnom, Josh 15:8; 18:16; "valley of the son of Hinnom" (ge bhen hinnom), Josh 15:8; 18:16; 2 Ch 28:3; 33:6; Jer 7:31 f; 19:2,6; 32:35; "valley of the children (sons) of Hinnom" (ge bhene hinnom), 2 Ki 23:10; or simply "the valley," literally, the "hollow" or "ravine" (ha-gay'), 2 Ch 26:9; Neh 2:13,15; 3:13; Jer 31:40 and, perhaps also, Jer 2:23 (the above references are in the Hebrew text; there are some variations in the Septuagint)): The meaning of "Hinnom" is unknown; the expressions ben Hinnom and bene Hinnom would suggest that it is a proper name; in Jer 7:32; 19:6 it is altered by the prophet to "valley of slaughter," and therefore some have thought the original name must have had a pleasing meaning.



## 1. Bible References and History:

It was near the walls of Jerusalem, "by the entry of the gate Harsith" (Jer 19:2); the Valley Gate opened into it (Neh 2:13; 3:13). The boundary between Judah and Benjamin ran along it (Josh 15:8; 18:16). It was the scene of idolatrous practices in the days of Ahaz (2 Ch 28:3) and of Manasseh, who "made his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom" (2 Ch 33:6), but Josiah in the course of his reforms "defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children (margin "son") of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech" (2 Ki 23:10). It was on account of these evil practices that Jeremiah (7:32; 19:6) announced the change of name. Into this valley dead bodies were probably cast to be consumed by the dogs, as is done in the Wady er-Rababi today, and fires were here kept burning to consume the rubbish of the city. Such associations led to the Ge-Hinnom (New Testament "Gehenna") becoming the "type of Hell" (Milton, Paradise Lost, i, 405).

- See [GEHENNA](#).

## 2. Situation:

The Valley of Hinnom has been located by different writers in each of the three great valleys of Jerusalem. In favor of the eastern or Kidron valley we have the facts that Eusebius and Jerome (Onom) place "Gehennom" under the eastern wall of Jerusalem and the Moslem geographical writers, Muqaddasi and Nasir-i-khusran, call the Kidron valley Wady Jahamum. The Jewish writer Kimchi also identifies the Valley of Jehoshaphat (i.e. the Kidron) with Hinnom. These ideas are probably due to the identification of the eastern valley, on account of its propinquity to the Temple, as the scene of the last judgment--the "Valley of Jehoshaphat" of Joel 3:2--and the consequent transference there of the scene of the punishment of the wicked, Gehenna, after the ancient geographical position of the Valley of Hinnom, had long been lost. In selecting sacred sites, from the 4th Christian century onward, no critical topographical acumen has been displayed until quite modern times. There are three amply sufficient arguments against this view: (1) the Kidron valley is always called a nachal and not a gay' (see KIDRON); (2) the "Gate of the Gai" clearly did not lie to the East of the city; (3) En-rogel, which lay at the beginning of the Valley of Hinnom and to its East (Josh 15:8; 18:16) cannot be the "Virgin's fount," the ancient Gihon (2 Sam 17:17).

Several distinguished modern writers have sought to identify the Tyropeon Valley (el Wad) with Hinnom, but as the Tyropeon was incorporated within the city walls before the days of Manasseh (see JERUSALEM), it is practically impossible that it could have been the scene of the sacrifice of children--a ritual which must have occurred beyond the city's limits (2 Ki 23:10, etc.).

## 3. Wady er-Rababi:

The clearest geographical fact is found in Josh 15:8; 18:16, where we find that the boundary of Judah and Benjamin passed from En-rogel "by the valley of the son of Hinnom"; if the modern Bir Eyyub is En-rogel, as is certainly most probable, then the Wady er-Rababi, known traditionally as Hinnom, is correctly so called. It is possible that the name extended to the wide open land formed by the junction of the three valleys; indeed, some would place Tophet at this spot, but there is no need to extend the name beyond the actual gorge. The Wady er-Rababi commences in a shallow, open valley due West of the Jaffa Gate, in the center of which lies the Birket Mamilla; near the Jaffa Gate it turns South for about 1/3 of a mile, its course being dammed here to form a large pool, the Birket es Sultan. Below this it gradually curves to the East and rapidly descends between sides of bare rocky scarps, much steeper in ancient times. A little before the valley joins the wide Kidron valley lies the traditional site of [HAKELDAMA](#) (which see). **E. W. G.**

### Masterman

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**TOPHET** - = Topheth, from Heb. toph "a drum," because the cries of children here sacrificed by the priests of Moloch were drowned by the noise of such an instrument; or from taph or toph, meaning "to burn," and hence a place of burning, the name of a particular part in the valley of Hinnom. "Fire being the most destructive of all elements, is chosen by the sacred writers to symbolize the agency by which God punishes or destroys the wicked. We are not to assume from prophetic figures that material fire is the precise agent to be used. It was not the agency employed in the destruction of Sennacherib, mentioned in Isa. 30:33...**Tophet properly begins where the Vale of Hinnom bends round to the east, having the cliffs of Zion on the north, and the Hill of Evil Counsel on the south.** It terminates at Beer 'Ayub, where it joins the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The cliffs on the southern side especially abound in ancient tombs. Here the dead carcasses of beasts and every offal and abomination were cast, and left to be either devoured by that worm that never died or consumed by that fire that was never quenched." Thus Tophet came to represent the place of punishment.

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**QUESTION** - [What is the significance of Topheth in the Bible?](#) (a 'high place' in the valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem)

**ANSWER** - The word *Topheth*, alternatively spelled *Tophet*, is thought by some to originate from the Aramaic word *taphya*, which meant "hearth, fireplace or roaster." Others link it to the word *toph* ("drum"), leading to the idea that drums were used in the pagan

worship rituals associated with Tophet. What is certain is that Topheth was not a cozy fireplace for Israelites to keep warm. Its first mention is in 2 Kings 23:10 when [King Josiah](#) “defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech” (ESV). Topheth was a place where the Israelites committed the despicable act of child sacrifice, a practice God strictly condemned (Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 12:31). King Josiah’s reforms included “defiling” Topheth, making it unusable as a gathering place.

Unfortunately, the Israelites had disregarded God’s command and sacrificed their children to the god [Molech](#) at Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom, at the south end of Jerusalem. Kings like Ahaz and Manasseh are examples of rulers who indulged in this abhorrent practice (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6). Prophets such as Jeremiah and Isaiah confronted the Israelites about their child sacrifice, suggesting that the practice continued even after the steps Josiah took to end such atrocities.

Jeremiah 7:31–32 records the prophet’s declaration, “They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire—something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer call it Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room.”

The prophet Isaiah also had things to say about child sacrifice: “You who burn with lust among the oaks and under every green tree, who slaughter your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks? Among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion; they, they, are your lot; to them you have poured out a drink offering, you have brought a grain offering. Shall I relent for these things?” (Isaiah 57:5–6). And in Isaiah 30:33, the prophet makes a metaphorical reference to Topheth in pronouncing judgment on the king of Assyria: “Topheth has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of burning sulfur, sets it ablaze.”

There is evidence of child sacrifice being practiced in many cultures around the world. Some cases were documented in Greco-Roman sources like Plutarch and [Tertullian](#), and archaeologists continue to uncover sites of ritualistic mass murder of children ([www.cbsnews.com/news/biggest-child-sacrifice-evidence-archaeologists-national-geographic-peru-chimu/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/biggest-child-sacrifice-evidence-archaeologists-national-geographic-peru-chimu/), accessed 8/9/23). But child sacrifice is not just an outrage of ancient times. The practice is still alive in places like Uganda ([www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15255357](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15255357), accessed 8/9/23) and India ([www.theguardian.com/world/2006/mar/05/india.theobserver](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/mar/05/india.theobserver), accessed 8/9/23). One can also see the connection between abortion and child sacrifice as many unborn babies around the world are killed daily.

Topheth symbolizes the extent of the Israelites’ rebellion, which ultimately led to their exile. God dealt with the Canaanites for engaging in similar practices (Leviticus 18:24–25), and He did not spare the Israelites. God must judge such a horrendous action as child sacrifice..

After Josiah’s reforms, Topheth became a landfill of sorts—a vile place of burning garbage, raw sewage, and the rotting flesh of the bodies of executed criminals. The Valley of Hinnom, also called [Gehenna](#), had a wicked reputation and was utterly unclean. It thus became an apt illustration of the horrors of hell. Jesus mentioned the fiery valley in His warning against divine judgment in Mark 9:47: “If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell [lit., *Gehenna*].”

Topheth reminds us of human depravity and the appropriateness of God’s justice. Praise the Lord for the beauty of the gospel, which saves us from Topheth. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Chronicles 33:7 Then he put the carved image of 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 from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever;**

- he set a carved image (KJV): The Targumist says, "He set up an image, the likeness of himself, in the house of the sanctuary." In the parallel passage it is, "a graven image of the grove," or rather, Asherah or Astarte. Manasseh, as Bp. Patrick observes, seems to have studied to find out what God had forbidden in his law, that he might practice it: a most prodigious change from the height of piety in his father’s time, into the sink of impiety in this!
- in the house (KJV): 2Ki 21:7,8 23:6
- God had said (KJV): 2Ch 33:4 1Ki 8:29 Ps 132:13,14
- which I have (KJV): 2Ch 6:6 1Ki 8:44,48 11:13,32 Ps 78:68

**Then he put the carved image of 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 from all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever** - This idol survived Manasseh post-humbling purge and ended up in the hands of his son who sacrificed to it (2Ch 33:22).

**THOUGHT** - Fathers be aware that sins you commit and things you use to commit them may be passed down. I know of situations where father's lewd magazines led their sons into similar sins! Of course today with internet such images are everywhere. Only a foolish or naive parent would let their child have a phone with full, unmonitored internet access!

**Raymond Dillard:** The "carved image" (v 7) is specifically an image of Asherah in 2 Kgs 21:7.

**Andrew Hill:** The king leads the people astray by breaking the first commandment (2 Chron. 33:7; cf. Ex. 20:3-4). The carved image he erects in God's temple symbolizes his rejection of God's rule at both the personal and the national level. King Manasseh's arrogance breeds the evil of idolatry and poisons his subjects with the sin of idolatry (1 Sam. 15:23; cf. Ex. 20:3-4).

**Spurgeon** - You see, dear friends, that he was not only a monster in iniquity himself, but he led a whole nation astray. Some people who, under the gracious rule of his father Hezekiah, had kept the passover in so joyous a manner, now, under this false son of so good a father, turned aside.

**2 Chronicles 33:8 and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers, if only they will observe to do all that I have commanded them according to all the law, the statutes and the ordinances given through Moses."**

- will I (KJV): 2Sa 7:10 1Ch 17:9
- so that they (KJV): 2Ch 7:17-22 De 28:1-14 30:15-20 Isa 1:19,20 Eze 33:25,26
- to do all (KJV): De 4:40 5:1,31-33 6:1 8:1 27:26 Lu 1:6 Ga 3:10-13
- by the hand (KJV): Lev 8:36 10:11

**and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers, if only they will observe to do all that I have commanded them according to all the law, the statutes and the ordinances given through Moses**

**2 Chronicles 33:9 Thus Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel.**

- made Judah (KJV): 1Ki 14:16 15:26 2Ki 21:16 23:26 24:3,4 Pr 29:12 Mic 6:16
- to do worse (KJV): 2Ch 33:2 2Ki 21:9-11 Eze 16:45-47
- the heathen (KJV): Lev 18:24 De 2:21 Jos 24:8 2Ki 17:8-11

### **AN UNBELIEVABLE ALLEGATION GREATER EVIL THAN THE CANAANITES!**

**Thus Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel.**

**2 Chronicles 33:10 The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. 11Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon.**

- 2Ch 36:15,16 Ne 9:29,30 Jer 25:4-7 44:4,5 Zec 1:4 Ac 7:51,52

**The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention.**

**Spurgeon** - This was all that was necessary to fill up the measure of his guilt. He and his people were warned of God, but they would not hearken.

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**James Smith - MANASSEH'S CONVERSION 2 Ch 33:10-13**

"He that finds his Heaven must lose his sins."—Cowper.

Some lives are virtually blighted and ruined before they are born, because of hereditary tendencies. Manasseh had everything in his favour, being the son of a godly father, yet, in point of principle, he was a moral wreck. How much his mother or his counsellors were to blame for this it is difficult to say, but he proved himself to be an enemy to his father and to his God. We note his—

**I. Rebellion.** To all who feared the Lord, his reign was the “reign of terror.” There was an utter disregard to his father’s godly example. “He built again the high places which his father had broken down” (2Ch 33:3). But not only so, he was possessed with such an evil spirit that he would have his own will and way, to the dishonour and defiance of God, by setting up his own idol in the House of God (2Ch 33:7). The essence of rebellion against the Lord is: Not Thy will, but mine be done. The Dagon of self is often set up in the temple of God. It is said that Sir John Sloane had the heartless sayings of his unnatural son pasted together, framed and glazed, and hung up on the wall, with these words printed underneath: “Death-blows given to his mother, by George Sloane.” Is not every sin a death-blow given by the sinner to the grace and mercy of God?

**II. Warning.** “The Lord spake unto Manasseh, and to his people, but they would not hearken” (2Ch 33:10). In some way or other God made the young king to know that he was living a life at enmity with Him. If he had no special message sent by the prophet Isaiah, whom he probably caused to be sawn asunder, he had the commandments and ordinances given by the hand of Moses (2Ch 33:8). In mercy, God warns before He strikes in judgment. The warning may come through some providential earthquake, or by the still small voice of conscience, or, perhaps, through the lips of some heaven-sent messenger. Not to “hearken” is to continue an unholy warfare against the Almighty.

**III. Defeat.** “They took Manasseh among the thorns (hooks), and bound him with fetters” (2Ch 33:11). Because he denied the Lord, the Lord brought the host of Assyria against him. National backsliding brought national defeat. This is an established principle in the government of God, as the book of Judges, and all past history, clearly teach. As it is nationally, so is it individually. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Defeat and bondage like ravenous wolves, will, sooner or later, overtake the God-defying sinner. The Lord has many an unexpected way of “hooking” His enemies. He hooked Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus, with the light of truth. Manasseh was hooked with the irons of affliction and reproach (Psa. 107:10, 11). What is man that he should boast himself against God? At any moment He may thrust in His hook of authority, and hurl back the rebel into everlasting doom.

**IV. Surrender.** “When he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before God” (2Ch 33:12). While in his affliction and solitary confinement, his guilty past, in all its ghastliness, stares him in the face. He sees that the forces against him are overwhelming, and yields himself a prisoner unto God. Never did an enemy sue for peace more earnestly than did the subdued Manasseh. His repentance was real—he humbled himself and sought the Lord. Before, he sought to slay the truth of God by resisting it; but the truth has conquered. A drunken sailor was once brought to his knees by a Christian worker tenderly saying to him, “Jack, you had a mother.” Sometimes memory, as well as patience, has its perfect work. There can be no real repentance that does not lead to God. A man might tremble, as Felix did, or be as deeply convicted as Agrippa, and yet never repent. Feeling sorry for sin, and resolving to do better in the future, is not the repentance that brings life. If our bitterness of soul does not constrain us to seek the forgiveness of God, and to yield ourselves to Him, it is a repentance that needs to be repented of. The evidence of the prodigal’s repentance was that “he came to his father” (Luke 15).

**V. Victory.** “The Lord heard his supplications, and brought him again to Jerusalem, into his kingdom” (2Ch 33:13). He comes back a new man to live a new life. Old things have passed away; all things have become new. His was a great deliverance, as all God’s deliverances are. He was emancipated from a wicked self and a terrible past by being made a new creation through the grace of God. He only now begins to live; his past life has brought forth nothing but failure and shame. Manasseh is the Saul of the Old Testament. God can save the worst of sinners, but only by the way of repentance and faith. Although this is an example of the grace of God, there is no encouragement to continue in sin, that grace may abound. If one dying thief was saved, that is no proof that other dying thieves will. Although one Blondin crossed the Niagara on a rope, that is no guarantee that anybody could do it. God hath commanded all men to repent and believe the Gospel. “Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, He was God” (2 Chron. 33:13). He knew Him now because he had experienced His saving and restoring power.

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**Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#) - 2 Ch 33:10–17—Why is the repentance of Manasseh recorded here, but no mention is made of it in 2 Kings?**

**PROBLEM:** According to this text, upon his return, Manasseh repented of his earlier sin and reinstated the worship of the Lord in Judah. However, the record of the career of Manasseh as found in 2 Kings 21 does not mention this glorious repentance. Why?

**SOLUTION:** Apparently the author of 2 Kings did not record the repentance of Manasseh because of the lack of influence it had upon the steady decline of the nation. The Book of 2 Kings concentrates primarily upon the actions of the covenant people of God as a whole. The repentance and reforms of Manasseh did relatively little to turn the nation around from its path to judgment, while his sinful leadership early in his reign did much more damage to the nation. Even in the 2 Chronicles passage we find this statement:

“Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the Lord their God” (2 Chron. 33:17). Even though the people dedicated their sacrifices to the Lord, they were still committing sin, because sacrifices were to be made at the temple, not upon high places which were originally altars to false gods. Despite the efforts of Manasseh, the people would not totally dedicate themselves to the Lord.

**2 Chronicles 33:11 Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon.**

- the Lord (KJV): De 28:36 Job 36:8
- the captains (KJV): Isa 10:8 36:9
- of the king (KJV): Heb. which were the king's, Ne 9:32,37 Isa 5:26-30 7:18-20
- among the thorns (KJV): The word {bachochim} may possibly here signify with fetters or chains, as the kindred word {chachim} denotes, Eze 19:4, 9. The Syriac and Arabic have alive, probably reading {bechayim}. 1Sa 13:6 La 3:7
- bound him (KJV): 2Ki 23:33 25:6 Job 36:8-11 Ps 107:10-14
- fetters (KJV): or, chains

**Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze chains and took him to Babylon.**

**Henry Morris** - Manasseh's name has been found by archaeologists as listed among the kings who had been placed in servitude to the king of Assyria.

**Spurgeon** - Since words were not sufficient, and God intended to save him, he came to blows: **Wherefore** —They very likely chastened him with thorns, for the kings of Babylon were very cruel; and it may be that, when his back was lacerated by thorny scourges, he was put in prison with heavy fetters upon him. If you will not learn anywhere else, you will have to be taught among thorns, and in chains, and in exile. There are some men who will never go to heaven except through a sea of affliction and trial. Oh, for wisdom to yield to almighty grace at once!

**Believer's Study Bible** - Assyrian annals indicate that Esarhaddon (681-669 B.C.) assembled at Nineveh all the kings of the "westland" to secure Ashurbanipal's succession. Manasseh is listed among the 22 kings of the "Hatti-country" who were in vassalage to Esarhaddon.

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#### **Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 33:11-20**

We have seen Manasseh by his wickedness undoing the good that his father had done; here we have him by repentance undoing the evil that he himself had done. It is strange that this was not so much as mentioned in the book of Kings, nor does any thing appear there to the contrary but that he persisted and perished in his sin. But perhaps the reason was because the design of that history was to show the wickedness of the nation which brought destruction upon them; and this repentance of Manasseh and the benefit of it, being personal only and not national, is overlooked there; yet here it is fully related, and a memorable instance it is of the riches of God's pardoning mercy and the power of his renewing grace. Here is,

##### **I. The occasion of Manasseh's repentance, and that was his affliction.**

In his distress he did not (like king Ahaz) trespass yet more against God, but humbled himself and returned to God. Sanctified afflictions often prove happy means of conversion. What his distress was we are told, 2Ch 33:11. God brought a foreign enemy upon him; the king of Babylon, that courted his father who faithfully served God, invaded him now that he had treacherously departed from God. He is here called king of Assyria, because he had made himself master of Assyria, which he would the more easily do for the defeat of Sennacherib's army, and its destruction before Jerusalem. He aimed at the treasures which the ambassadors had seen, and all those precious things; but God sent him to chastise a sinful people, and subdue a straying prince. The captain took Manasseh among the thorns, in some bush or other, perhaps in his garden, where he had hid himself. Or it is spoken figuratively: he was perplexed in his counsels and embarrassed in his affairs. He was, as we say, in the briars, and knew not which way to extricate himself, and so became an easy prey to the Assyrian captains, who no doubt plundered his house and took away what they pleased, as Isaiah had foretold, 2 Ki. 20:17, 18. What was Hezekiah's pride was their prey. They bound Manasseh, who had been held before with the cords of his own iniquity, and carried him prisoner to Babylon. About what time of his reign this was we are not told; the Jews say it was in his twenty-second year.

## II. The expressions of his repentance (2Ch 33:12, 13):

When he was in affliction he had time to bethink himself and reason enough too. He saw what he had brought himself to by his sin. He found the gods he had served unable to help him. He knew that repentance was the only way of restoring his affairs; and therefore to him he returned from whom he had revolted.

**1. He was convinced the Jehovah is the only living and true God:** Then he knew (that is, he believed and considered) that the Lord he was God. He might have known it at a less expense if he would have given due attention and credit to the word written and preached: but it was better to pay thus dearly for the knowledge of God than to perish in ignorance and unbelief. Had he been a prince in the palace of Babylon, it is probable he would have been confirmed in his idolatry; but, being a captive in the prisons of Babylon, he was convinced of it and reclaimed from it.

**2. He applied to him as his God now, renouncing all others,** and resolving to cleave to him only, the God of his fathers, and a God on covenant with him.

**3. He humbled himself greatly before him,** was truly sorry for his sins, ashamed of them, and afraid of the wrath of God. It becomes sinners to humble themselves before the face of that God whom they have offended. It becomes sufferers to humble themselves under the hand of that God who corrects them, and to accept the punishment of their iniquity. Our hearts should be humbled under humbling providences; then we accommodate ourselves to them, and answer God's end in them.

**4. He prayed to him for the pardon of sin and the return of his favour.** Prayer is the relief of penitents, the relief of the afflicted. That is a good prayer, and very pertinent in this case, which we find among the apocryphal books, entitled, The prayer of Manasses, king of Judah, when he was holden captive in Babylon. Whether it was his or no is uncertain; if it was, in it he gives glory to God as the God of their fathers and their righteous seed, as the Creator of the world, a God whose anger is insupportable, and yet his merciful promise unmeasurable. He pleads that God has promised repentance and forgiveness to those that have sinned, and has appointed repentance unto sinners, that they may be saved, not unto the just, as to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but to me (says he) that am a sinner; for I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea: so he confesses his sin largely, and aggravates it. He prays, Forgive me, O Lord! forgive me, and destroy me not; he pleads, Thou art the God of those that repent, etc., and concludes, Therefore I will praise thee for ever, etc.

## III. God's gracious acceptance of his repentance:

God was entreated of him, and heard his supplication. Though affliction drive us to God, he will not therefore reject us if in sincerity we seek him, for afflictions are sent on purpose to bring us to him. As a token of God's favour to him, he made a way for his escape. Afflictions are continued no longer than till they have done their work. When Manasseh is brought back to his God and to his duty he shall soon be brought back to his kingdom. See how ready God is to accept and welcome returning sinners, and how swift to show mercy. Let not great sinners despair, when Manasseh himself, upon his repentance, found favour with God; in him God showed forth a pattern of long-suffering, as 1 Tim. 1:16; Isa. 1:18.

## IV. The fruits meet for repentance which he brought forth after his return to his own land, 2Ch 33:15, 16.

**1. He turned from his sins.** He took away the strange gods, the images of them, and that idol (whatever it was) which he had set up with so much solemnity in the house of the Lord, as if it had been master of that house. He cast out all the idolatrous altars that were in the mount of the house and in Jerusalem, as detestable things. Now (we hope) he loathed them as much as ever he had loved them, and said to them, Get you hence, Isa. 30:22. "What have I to do any more with idols? I have had enough of them."

**2. He returned to his duty;** for he repaired the altar of the Lord, which had either been abused and broken down by some of the idolatrous priests, or, at least, neglected and gone out of repair. He sacrificed thereon peace-offerings to implore God's favour, and thank-offerings to praise him for his deliverance. Nay, he now used his power to reform his people, as before he had abused it to corrupt them: He commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel. Note, Those that truly repent of their sins will not only return to God themselves, but will do all they can to recover those that have by their example been seduced and drawn away from God; else they do not thoroughly (as they ought) undo what they have done amiss, nor make the plaster as wide as the wound. We find that he prevailed to bring them off from their false gods, but not from their high places, 2Ch 33:17. They still sacrificed in them, yet to the Lord their God only; Manasseh could not carry the reformation so far as he had carried the corruption. It is an easy thing to debauch men's manners, but not so easy to reform them again.

## V. His prosperity, in some measure, after his repentance.

He might plainly see it was sin that ruined him; for, when he returned to God in a way of duty, God returned to him in a way of mercy: and then he built a wall about the city of David (2Ch 33:14), for by sin he had unwallled it and exposed it to the enemy. He also put captains of war in the fenced cities for the security of his country. Josephus says that all the rest of his time he was so changed for the better that he was looked upon as a very happy man.

**Lastly, Here is the conclusion of his history.** The heads of those things for a full narrative of which we are referred to the other writings that were then extant are more than of any of the kings, 2Ch 33:18, 19. A particular account, it seems, was kept,

**1. Of all his sin, and his trespass, the high places he built, the groves and images he set up, before he was humbled.** Probably this was taken from his own confession which he made of his sin when God gave him repentance, and which he left upon record, in a book entitled, The words of the seers. To those seers that spoke to him (2Ch 33:18) to reprove him for his sin he sent his confession when he repented, to be inserted in their memoirs, as a token of his gratitude to them for their kindness in reproving him. Thus it becomes penitents to take shame to themselves, to give thanks to their reprovers, and warning to others.

**2. Of the words of the seers that spoke to him in the name of the Lord**(2Ch 33:10, 18), the reproofs they gave him for his sin and their exhortations to repentance. Note, Sinners ought to consider, that, how little notice soever they take of them, an account is kept of the words of the seers that speak to them from God to admonish them of their sins, warn them of their danger, and call them to their duty, which will be produced against them in the great day.

**3. Of his prayer to God** (this is twice mentioned as a remarkable thing) and how God was entreated of him. This was written for the generations to come, that the people that should be created might praise the Lord for his readiness to receive returning prodigals. Notice is taken of the place of his burial, not in the sepulchres of the kings, but in his own house; he was buried privately, and nothing of that honour was done him at his death that was done to his father. Penitents may recover their comfort sooner than their credit.

**2 Chronicles 33:12 When he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.**

- And when (KJV): 2Ch 28:22 Lev 26:39-42 De 4:30,31 Jer 31:18-20 Ho 5:15 Mic 6:9 Lu 15:16-18
- he besought (KJV): 2Ch 33:18,19 Ps 50:15 Ac 9:11
- the Lord (KJV): 2Ch 28:5
- humbled (KJV): 2Ch 33:19,23 32:26 Ex 10:3 Lu 18:14,15 Jas 4:10 1Pe 5:5,6

### **ONE OF THE MORE DRAMATIC TURNAROUNDS IN THE BIBLE!**

**When he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers-** As Morris says "too little, too late!"

**Henry Morris** - Manasseh's repentance and attempted restoration of true religion, while it may have resulted in his own personal salvation, was too little and too late as far as the people as a whole were concerned. His son Amon led them right back into paganism and even the later revivals sponsored by Josiah could not permanently bring the people back to God.

**Spurgeon** - There surely can be no person in this assembly who can say that he has sinned worse than Manasseh did. He seems to have gone as far as any human being could go; and yet, you see, when he humbled himself before the Lord, and lifted up his heart in supplication, God forgave his sin, and restored him to his former position in Jerusalem. He had set up Baal and Ashtaroah; but now he knows who is the true God, and he bows before Jehovah.

**J C Ryle** - When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God ... and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication. Have you ever noticed the great clock of St. Paul's? At midday, in the roar of business, how few hear it but those who are close to it! But when the work of the day is over, and silence reigns in London, then it may be heard for miles around. That is just like the conscience of an impenitent man. While in health and strength, he will not hear it; but the day will come when he must retire from the world, and look death in the face; and then the clock of conscience—the solemn clock—will sound in his ears, and, if he has not

repented, will bring wretchedness and misery to his soul.

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## **Doing Something Right**

In his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly. 2 Chronicles 33:12

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Chronicles 33:10-16

The letter from "Jason," an inmate, surprised my wife and me. We "foster" puppies to become service dogs to assist people with disabilities. One such puppy had graduated to the next training phase, which was run by prisoners who've been taught how to train the dogs. Jason's letter to us expressed sorrow for his past, but then he said, "Snickers is the seventeenth dog I've trained, and she is the best one. When I see her looking up at me, I feel like I'm finally doing something right."

Jason isn't the only one with regrets. We all have them. Manasseh, king of Judah, had plenty. Second Chronicles 33 outlines some of his atrocities: building sexually explicit altars to pagan gods (v. 3), practicing witchcraft, and sacrificing his own children (v. 6). He led the entire nation down this sordid path (v. 9).

"The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention" (v. 10). Eventually, God got his attention. The Assyrians invaded, "put a hook in his nose . . . and took him to Babylon" (v. 11). Next, Manasseh finally did something right. "He sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly" (v. 12). God heard him and restored him as king. Manasseh replaced the pagan practices with worship of the one true God (vv. 15-16).

Do your regrets threaten to consume you? It's not too late. God hears our humble prayer of repentance. By: Tim Gustafson (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

What regrets do you have? How might you honor God by letting Him redeem them and use you to serve Him?

Thank You, Father, that You're always ready to hear my honest prayers.

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## **A FRESH START**

When he was in affliction, he ... humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. -2 Chronicles 33:12

A young man was driving an old worn-out car on a desolate road in a downpour when the engine died. As he coasted to the side of the road, another car stopped and the driver got out and asked what was wrong. The stranger opened the hood, tinkered with something, and signaled the driver to turn the ignition key. When the car started, the amazed driver shouted, "Thanks, I was afraid the engine had failed for the last time."

The rescuer replied, "Every car has at least one more start in it if you can get a spark. The same principle applies to people. Someday you will have occasion to apply this knowledge. Remember, as long as a single spark of life remains, it's not too late for anyone to make a fresh start."

Thirty years later, this once-stranded driver is a chaplain in a large prison. He testifies that those words about a fresh start have come back to him again and again.

Just as God gave Manasseh a new start when he repented (2 Chronicles 33:12-13), this chaplain has seen God work miracles with hardened men.

If your life is in disarray, don't despair. Through repentance and faith you can begin again. "As long as a spark remains, it's not too late to make a fresh start." - H V Lugt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

We're thankful, Lord, that when we fall  
We can begin anew  
If humbly we confess our sin,  
Then turn and follow You.  
- Sper

**It's never too late to make a fresh start with God**



**2 Chronicles 33:13 When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.**

- he was entreated (KJV): 1Ch 5:20 Ezr 8:23 Job 22:23,27 33:16-30 Ps 32:3-5 86:5 Isa 55:6-9 Jer 29:12,13 Mt 7:7,8 Lu 23:42,43 Joh 4:10
- brought him (KJV): Ezr 7:27 Pr 16:7 21:1 Mt 6:33
- knew (KJV): De 29:6 Ps 9:16 46:10 Jer 24:7 Da 4:25,34,35 Joh 17:3 Heb 8:11

**When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God**

**Believer's Study Bible** - The "Prayer of Manasseh," one of the 14 books of the O.T. Apocrypha, is based entirely on these four verses (cf. 2Ch 33:18, 19).

**Andrew Hill:** The expression "the Lord was moved" (2Ch 33:13) is unusual and marks a theological distinctive of the God of the Bible. Unlike the deaf Baals after which the Israelites continually strayed, the God of Israel is not only approachable, but he listens to prayer and is capable of responding with empathy toward those in dire need (Ex. 22:27; 2 Chron. 30:9; cf. 1 Kings 18:26; Isa. 44:18; Hab. 2:18). The stark contrast between God who listens to the plea of Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:13) and the people who pay no attention to God (2Ch 33:10) would not be lost on the Chronicler's audience. The episode foreshadows the hallmark attribute of Jesus Christ as the great high priest, who is moved to grant mercy because he sympathizes with human weakness, having experienced it himself (Heb. 4:14-16).

**Poole:** He was convinced by his own experience of God's power, justice, and goodness, that Jehovah alone was the true God, and not those idols which he had worshipped, by which he had received great hurt, and no good.

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**QUESTION - [What is the Prayer of Manasseh?](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Prayer of Manasseh is a part of the Apocrypha. It is a short work, containing just 15 verses. It purports to be a prayer by [King Manasseh](#) of Judah (697-642 B.C.), but it was pseudonymously written as early as the second century or just before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. 2 Chronicles 33:19 says that Manasseh prayed but does not record the prayer itself referring the reader to what was "written in the records of the seers."

King Manasseh, the thirteenth king of Judah, was one of the most wicked and idolatrous kings in biblical history (2 Kings 21:1-18). He was captured by the Assyrians and imprisoned in Babylon. There, he prayed for mercy and repented of his sin of idolatry (2 Chronicles 33:1-19).

The Prayer of Manasseh is considered by Jews, Catholics and Protestants as apocryphal, i.e., non-canonical and of doubtful authenticity. However, the fourth-century Vulgate included it at the end of the book of 2 Chronicles. It later became part of the Matthew Bible and the Geneva Bible of 1599. It is also found in the Apocrypha of the King James Bible.

The prayer departs from Christian teaching in that it says men such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not need to repent because they "did not sin" (verse 8). This runs counter to the clear teaching of Scripture that all have sinned (Romans 3:10-12; Romans 3:21-26). The righteousness of Abraham was a product of his faith in God and was not anything inherent in him (Romans 4:3; Philippians 3:8-9).

In summary, God has told us that Manasseh prayed a much-needed prayer of repentance, but He has not told us the content of that prayer.

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**C H Spurgeon - [Manasseh](#)**

"Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God." 2 Chronicles 33:13

It takes ten thousand times more faith to be an unbeliever than to be a believer in God's revelation. One man comes to me and tells me I am credulous, because I believe in a great First Cause who created the heavens and the earth, and that God became man and died for sin. I tell him I may be, and no doubt am very credulous, as he conceives credulity, but I conceive that which I believe is in perfect consistency with my reason, and I therefore receive it. "But," saith he, "I am not credulous—not at all." Sir, I say, I should like to ask you one thing. You do not believe the world was created by God. "No." You must be amazingly credulous, then, I am sure. Do you think this Bible exists without being made? If you should say I am credulous, because I believe it had a printer and a binder, I

should say that you were infinitely more credulous, if you assured me that it was made at all, and should you begin to tell me one of your theories about creation—that atoms floated through space, and came to a certain shape, I should resign the palm of credulity to you. You believe, perhaps, moreover, that man came to be in this world through the improvement of certain creatures. I have read that you say that there were certain monads—that afterwards they grew into fishes—that these fishes wanted to fly, and then wings grew—that by and by they wanted to crawl, and then legs came, and they became lizards, and by many steps they then became monkeys, and then the monkeys became men, and you believe yourself to be cousin ape to an orangutan. Now, I may be very credulous, but really not so credulous as you are.

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### **Gleason Archer - [Bible Difficulties](#) - Why is there no mention of Manasseh's repentance in 2 Kings?**

2 Chronicles 33:13–16 tells of King Manasseh's repentance and dedication to God after his release from captivity in Babylon (cf. v.11). In despair Manasseh cast himself on the mercy of the God he had hated and mocked during the decades of his wicked reign. Amazingly, the Lord responded to his cry and released him. According to vv.15–16, Manasseh then removed all the idols he had installed in the Jerusalem temple and all the pagan altars throughout the city and cast them into the trash heap outside the city walls. He then restored the worship of Yahweh in the temple according to the law of Moses and ended his days in restored fellowship with God.

But why was this final conversion of that wicked king not mentioned at all in the account in 2 Kings 21? The first nine verses of this chapter detail his sinful violation of God's covenant and the baneful influence he exerted for the spiritual downfall of his people. The next six verses record God's stern sentence of total destruction for Jerusalem and the southern kingdom because of Manasseh's unparalleled wickedness. The account closes (vv.16–18) with a summary of the unchecked bloodshed and crime that afflicted Jerusalem under his rule and makes no mention whatever of a change of heart before his death and burial.

It seems a bit strange that such an important development as the latter-day repentance of this long-reigning king receives no mention whatever in 2 Kings 21. But the reason seems to lie in the different focus of interest that guided the author of Kings. He was not quite so concerned with the personal relationship of individual leaders to the Lord as he was with the response of the nation as a whole to its responsibilities under the covenant. From the standpoint of lasting results, Manasseh's reign added up to a severe spiritual setback for Judah; and even his personal reform and restoration to fellowship with God came as too little and too late, so far as influencing the nation was concerned. Under his son and successor, Amon, the people reverted to their immoral, idolatrous lifestyle, just about as they had done before Manasseh's return from captivity. The curse of God was not lifted from the city, and the disaster of 587 B.C. came upon them just the same.

The author of Chronicles, however, takes more of a personal interest in the relationship each leader or king maintained toward God. Thus in 1 Kings 15:9–24 there is a relatively short account of Asa's reign, which centers attention on Asa's grave blunder in bribing Benhadad of Damascus to invade Israel from the north, thus compelling Baasha of Israel to give up his fortification of Ramah on his southern border. The maneuver seemed successful, and Baasha's fortress was later completely dismantled by Asa's troops; but there were sinister consequences for the future. In 2 Chronicles 16:7–9 God's prophet Hanani had to rebuke Asa for relying on the king of Syria for deliverance rather than on God. Hanani reminded Asa of the wonderful way Yahweh had come through for him in his combat with the huge army of the Ethiopians and Egyptians, when he had cast himself wholly on God's faithful mercy (an episode described at length in 2 Chron. 14:9–15 but entirely omitted in 1 Kings).

Going still further back, we find in 2 Chronicles 13:2–20 a long, detailed account of a victory won by Abijah son of Rehoboam over Jeroboam I. This was completely omitted by 1 Kings because it had no lasting results for the political struggle between the divided kingdoms. But for the Chronicler it was important because it showed how wonderfully God delivers those like Abijah who trust in Him in the presence of great difficulties and discouraging odds. Thus we can discern a pattern of selection as between the two historians. First Kings focused on the overall result of each king's reign, in the light of his faithfulness to the covenant. But the Chronicler was interested in recording great moments of faith, even when no lasting consequences ensued for the nation as a whole. Omission of an event in Kings is therefore not to be regarded as casting doubt on its historicity in Chronicles—any more than the omission of an event in one synoptic Gospel justifies doubt as to its historicity when it appears in another gospel.

**2 Chronicles 33:14 Now after this he built the outer wall of the city of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entrance of the Fish Gate; and he encircled the Ophel with it and made it very high. Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah.**

- he built (KJV): 2Ch 32:5
- Gihon (KJV): 2Ch 32:30 1Ki 1:33,45
- fish gate (KJV): Ne 3:3 12:39 Zep 1:10

- Ophel (KJV): or, the tower, 2Ch 27:3 Ne 3:26,27
- put (KJV): 2Ch 11:11,12 17:19

**Now after this he built the outer wall of the city of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entrance of the Fish Gate; and he encircled the Ophel with it and made it very high. Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah.**

**Raymond Dillard:** Building programs and large armies are the lot of the righteous king in Chronicles, and the author's inclusion of this material relates no doubt to showing divine blessing following upon repentance. It is possible that such fortification was undertaken prior to his revolt against Assyria, and that it has been dischronologized to this point as part of the Chronicler's presentation; however, it is equally probable that the fortification was undertaken after his return from Babylon as part of the Assyrian efforts to buttress their southern borders against Egypt. Manasseh may have been repairing damage done to the city walls when he was taken captive. Cf. 2Ch 32:5.

**Spurgeon** - This is not of very much importance, but what else did he do?

**Spurgeon** They do the same today, and we cannot get them away from them. Even some who love the gospel yet cling to the old Romish rites and ceremonies. Ah, men do love to multiply outward performances instead of spiritual worship! The one altar of Calvary is not enough for them; they must have many altars: "Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places."

**John Olley:** The Chronicler has told of previous kings who had been faithful but subsequently failed in some way (e.g., Asa, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah), but Manasseh stands out as the only king who began his reign in unfaithfulness but repented and did good.

**Andrew Hill:** The next report emphasizes Manasseh's political and religious reforms. Usually this is construed as the "healing of the land," the natural aftermath of prayer and repentance according to God's promise in 2Ch 7:14. The Chronicler sees royal building projects as an indication of divine blessing for obedience. Manasseh's reforms are both political and religious in nature suggesting God's acceptance of the king's prayer of repentance. The rebuilding of the city wall of Jerusalem (2Ch 33:14) may refer to repairs made necessary when Manasseh was taken captive by the Assyrians or to the continuation of the expansion of Jerusalem begun under Hezekiah (cf. Isa. 22:10-11; 2 Chron. 32:5). Strengthening the military presence in the fortified cities of Judah (2Ch 33:14) is almost routine for kings ruling in Jerusalem, since these cities form a shield against foreign invaders (cf. 2 Kings 18:13; 2 Chron. 14:6; 17:2; 26:9). Assuming Manasseh's renewed loyalty as an Assyrian vassal after his release from exile, both initiatives may have been encouraged by the Assyrians as defensive measures aimed at discouraging an Egyptian military campaign into Judah.

**2 Chronicles 33:15 He also removed the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, as well as all the altars which he had built on the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and he threw them outside the city.**

- he took (KJV): 2Ch 33:3-7 2Ki 21:7 Isa 2:17-21 Eze 18:20-22 Ho 14:1-3 Mt 3:8

**He also removed the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, as well as all the altars which he had built on the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and he threw them outside the city.** - Notice the order of his projects. First he fortified his defenses (v14) and then he removed the idols. He should have inverted the order!

**Martin Selman:** Manasseh's religious reforms represented a direct reversal of earlier policies (2Ch 33:2-9), since each of the items removed in verse 15 is mentioned in 2Ch 33:3, 7. Some form of regular worship was recommenced (2Ch 33:16), though its range seems rather limited (cf. 1 Chr. 23:31; 2 Chr. 2:4; 8:13; 31:3)

**2 Chronicles 33:16 He set up the altar of the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it; and he ordered Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.**

- repaired (KJV): 2Ch 29:18 1Ki 18:30
- peace (KJV): Lev 3:1-17
- thank (KJV): Lev 7:12-18
- commanded (KJV): 2Ch 33:9 14:4, See on ch. 2Ch 30:12 Ge 18:19 Lu 22:32

**He set up the altar of the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it; and he ordered Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.**

**Spurgeon** - When grace comes into any man's heart, there is sure to be a change in his action. Manasseh "took away the strange gods," —Sins which were before so pleasing to him are now abominations in his sight, and he flings them over the city wall like unclean things. In the very valley of the son of Hinnom where he had dedicated his sons to idols he now consumes his idol gods as foul and offensive things, to be cast away with all the refuse of the city. It was not possible for him to undo all the evil which he had wrought, as he soon found out.

## 2 Chronicles 33:17 Nevertheless the people still sacrificed in the high places, although only to the LORD their God.

- people (KJV): 2Ch 15:17 32:12 1Ki 22:43 2Ki 15:4

### Nevertheless the people still sacrificed in the high places, although only to the LORD their God.

**J. Barton Payne:** A half century of paganism could not be overcome by a half dozen years of reform.

**Spurgeon** -So far, it was well; but it would have been better if they had given up all those altars. The work of reformation is slow; you can lead men to sin as rapidly as you like, that is down-hill work; but to get them to toil with you up-hill toward the right is not so easy.

**David Guzik:** This reminds us of the distinction between two different kinds of high places. Some were altars to pagan idols; others were unauthorized altars to the true God. Manasseh stopped all the pagan worship in Judah, but unauthorized (that is, outside the temple) worship of the God of Israel continued.

**Andrew Hill:** The impact of Manasseh's religious reforms seems restricted to Jerusalem and its immediate environs, given the Chronicler's reference to ongoing worship in the high places (33:17). The worship associated with the Canaanite high places proves a snare for the Israelites throughout the history of the monarchies.

**Martin Selman:** As with all previous attempts to eradicate the signs and symbols of Canaanite religion, in practice its undemanding morality and sensuous practices proved irresistible to the majority of the People (cf. 2 Chr. 14:3; 15:17; 17:6; 20:33). Despite the formal changes, the people as a whole saw no need for a change of heart (cf. Isa. 29:13; Jer. 3:10; 2 Tim. 3:5).

## 2 Chronicles 33:18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh even his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are among the records of the kings of Israel.

- 1Ki 11:41
- the rest (KJV): 2Ch 20:34 32:32
- his prayer (KJV): 2Ch 33:12,13,19
- the seers (KJV): 2Ch 33:10 1Sa 9:9 2Ki 17:13 Isa 29:10 30:10 Am 7:12 Mic 3:7
- in the book (KJV): 1Ki 14:19 15:31

### Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh even his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are among the records of the kings of Israel.

**Henry Morris** - book of the kings of Israel. The account of Manasseh in the canonical book of Kings does not mention such a prayer (2 Kings 21:1-18), so the nature of this apparently lost book of the kings of Israel is not known. An apocryphal book known as "The Prayer of Manasseh" may reflect the material in this missing book to some degree.

**Spurgeon** - So we must remember that all the deeds that we have done, both good and evil, are written in God's Book of Remembrance.

**Believer's Study Bible** - There is no mention of this prayer in the biblical Books of Kings (cf. 2 Kin. 21:1-18); thus, this reference to the "book of the kings of Israel" must surely refer to a noncanonical record with the same or a similarly derived title (cf. 1 Chr. 29:29).

**Mark Boda:** A comparison of the concluding summary note of Manasseh in 2 Kings 21:17-18 with the one in 2Ch 33:18-20 reveals the differing nuances of each account. The book of Kings emphasizes "the sins he committed" while Chronicles highlights "his prayer to God." The Chronicler mentions two sources for his account of Manasseh, one The Book of the Kings of Israel, and the other The Record of the Seers. The role of the prophetic voice is emphasized in this closing note and this record of the seers is said to contain details on locations of idolatrous sites. Although penitent in life, Manasseh was denied the honor of burial with the kings of

Judah in death.

**2 Chronicles 33:19 His prayer also and how God was entreated by him, and all his sin, his unfaithfulness, and the sites on which he built high places and erected the Asherim and the carved images, before he humbled himself, behold, they are written in the records of the Hozai.**

- his prayer also (KJV): 2Ch 33:11,12,19 Pr 15:8 Ac 9:11 1Jn 1:9
- all his sins (KJV): 2Ch 33:1-10 Ro 5:16
- before he (KJV): 2Ch 33:12 30:11 36:12 Ps 119:67,71,75 Jer 44:10 Da 5:22
- the seers (KJV): or, Hosai, So the Targum and Vulgate: the Syraic has Hanun the prophet; and the Arabic, Saphan the prophet. This record is totally lost; for the captivity and repentance of Manasseh are related no where else; and the prayer of Manasseh in the Apocrypha was probably composed long afterwards: it is not acknowledged as canonical even by the Romish church, though it was anciently used as a form of confession, and as such still received by the Greek church.

**His prayer also and how God was entreated by him, and all his sin, his unfaithfulness, and the sites on which he built high places and erected the Asherim and the carved images, before he humbled himself, behold, they are written in the records of the Hozai.**

**2 Chronicles 33:20 So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house. And Amon his son became king in his place.**

- Manasseh (KJV): 2Ch 32:33 2Ki 21:18
- Amon (KJV): 2Ki 21:19-25 1Ch 3:14 Mt 1:10

**So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house. And Amon his son became king in his place.**

#### **PAUL APPLE - DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

- 1) What are some encouragements for parents and some cautions related to parental expectations from this account of Manasseh in light of his godly father?
- 2) Why is it so dangerous to even dabble around the edges of any type of occult activity?
- 3) How has God's forgiveness of your sins not removed all of the negative consequences of your failures?
- 4) What would the current audience of the Chronicler find encouraging from this account?

#### **QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**Iain Duguid:** While known Assyrian records refer to Manasseh only as a loyal vassal, various scenarios have been proposed for his taking an opportunity to revolt and subsequently being punished. The most plausible scenario is that he rebelled amid the unrest following the revolt of Shamash-shum-ukin of Babylon (652–648 BC) against his brother Assurbanipal. The Chronicler, however, is concerned not with such circumstances but with revolt against God's words and its consequences ("therefore"). Manasseh's being "captured with hooks and bound with chains of bronze" reflects known Assyrian practice (cf. 2 Kings 19:28; Ezek. 19:9), a situation of "distress" (a form of Hb. *tsarar*, also describing Ahaz in 2 Chron. 28:20 ["afflicted"], 22). Unlike Ahaz, who "became yet more faithless," Manasseh "humbled himself" and "prayed." Importantly, what followed is that God "heard," an example of his keeping the promise of 7:14. The outworking of God's hearing Manasseh's prayer is relevant for hearers. While Manasseh remained an Assyrian vassal, God returned him not only geographically to Jerusalem but also "into his kingdom." The Chronicler's original hearers have similarly returned, but they do not yet have their own king, and so the past becomes a pointer to the future. Further, Manasseh's coming to "know the Lord was God" as a result of his return from Babylon reminds hearers of the frequent message of Ezekiel that, as a result of the people's exile and return, they too will "know that I am the Lord" (e.g., Ezek. 36:11, 38; 37:6, 13, 14; 39:22, 28).

**Jerry Thrower:** Manasseh's Evil

A. MANASSEH Started Baal Worship Again! (2 Kings 21:2-3; 2 Chronicles 33:2-3) We're familiar with BAAL worship at this point in our studies! As the storm god and bringer of rain, BAAL was recognized as sustaining the fertility of crops, animals, and people. BAAL'S followers often believed that immoral sex acts performed in his temple would contribute to BAAL'S work in increasing fertility of crops, animals, and people and so that is

what made it so attractive! It was driven by fleshly desires and lusts of people! BAAL was a part of the religion of virtually every culture of the ancient Near East. BAAL, of course, had been a favorite of the NORTHERN KINGDOM of ISRAEL after AHAB married the heathen, JEZEBEL, whose father was priest of BAAL! In fact, BAAL was even brought into JUDAH initially by AHAB and JEZEBEL'S daughter, ATHALIAH, who married JEHOAM king of JUDAH. ATHALIAH reigned over JUDAH after the death of her husband and her son, AHAZIAH and established BAAL worship even more! After JEHOIADA THE PRIEST had ATHALIAH slain and prior to JOASH'S reign, he and the people of JUDAH eradicated BAAL worship from JUDAH! But BAAL worship was then restored by king AHAZ, HEZEKIAH'S father only to be eradicated by HEZEKIAH once he began to reign! But now, we see MANASSEH bring BAAL worship back! In addition he built again the HIGH PLACES of worship that his father HEZEKIAH tore down AND he made GROVES! GROVES were where gods would be carved into trees or wooden poles that folks would worship. But we're about to see that was only the beginning of MANASSEH'S idolatry!

B. MANASSEH Worshiped All The Hosts Of Heaven! (2 Kings 21:3b; 2 Chronicles 33:3; Cf. Deuteronomy 4:14-20) This was also a common heathen practice! Some of the heathen worshiped the SUN! (I read where Egypt actually had 5 sun gods) Some of the heathen worshiped the MOON! Some of the heathen worshiped the STARS and/or the CONSTELLATIONS made up of the STARS. Some worshiped the SKY itself! Hang on we're not done yet...

C. MANASSEH Defiled The TEMPLE Again With Worship Of His False Gods! (2 Kings 21:4-5, 7-9a; 2 Chronicles 33:4-5, 7-8; Cf. 1 Kings 8:27-30; Jeremiah 7:30) Now, we've seen several others who defiled the TEMPLE! We've also seen others who defiled the TEMPLE by bringing idols into the TEMPLE! (e.g., In fact, we saw MANASSEH'S grandfather, King AHAZ send back plans from DAMASCUS for URIJAH the priest to duplicate a god that he saw when he met the ASSYRIAN king in DAMASCUS!) (Then he had the audacity to take the sacrifices and offerings people were bringing for the LORD and have them offered on the altar of the false god in the TEMPLE of the LORD!) But that's still not all...

D. MANASSEH Sacrificed His Son (Children) To MOLECH! (2 Kings 21:6a; 2 Chronicles 33:6a) Consider this, if it had not been for his grandmother rescuing his father from his grandfather's same shenanigans, he would never have been born! We're still not done...

E. MANASSEH Was Involved In The Occult! (2 Kings 21:6b; 2 Chronicles 33:6b; Cf. Deuteronomy 18:9ff) 1. He Observed Times – i.e. astrology 2. He Used Enchantments – i.e. charm; whisper. To seek or to give omens or foretell. 3. He Used Witchcraft – i.e. practice sorcery. (e.g. potions) 4. He Dealt With A Familiar Spirit– i.e. a person controlled by an evil spirit which professes to be a medium with the dead. 5. He Dealt With Wizards – i.e. one who deals in magic and sorcery in an attempt to pry into the secrets of the spirit world. The only King I remember who was involved in any of this was King Saul who went to a witch to call up Samuel's spirit . Now we go literally off the charts of the wickedness of those kings before him!

F. MANASSEH Caused JUDAH To Do Worse Than The Heathen! (2 Kings 21:6f, 9; 2 Chronicles 33:9) Now, there is no detail given us about what this entailed! Let's suffice it to say that if it was worse than the heathen, it had to be really, really bad!

G. MANASSEH FAILED TO HEED THE WARNING OF GOD! (2 Chronicles 33:10) No surprise there as everything he did up to this point was anti-God!

**Martin Selman:** The Bible consistently affirms that God's door remains open to anyone, even after what should have been closing time. If such an invitation could be extended to Manasseh, as it was to a guilt-ridden tax-collector, a thief on a cross, or the chief of sinners, no one is excluded (Luke 18:9-14; 23:40-43; 1 Tim. 1:15). The condition of humble repentance remains unchanged, for "everyone . . . who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 14:11; 18:14).

**Wilcock:** Here was a son of godly parents who went into sin to the very limit and then came back to God. That should be an encouragement to parents who are reading this today. Maybe you have a son or a daughter who has gone the very limit, and you despair that your child will ever turn back to God. I would have given Manasseh up, but God didn't. God heard his prayer.

**Mark Boda:** One should not miss the relevance of this story of Manasseh to the community living in the wake of the Babylonian exile and Persian restoration. With its depiction of Manasseh's exile to Babylon, his subsequent humble prayer and restoration to his kingdom, 2Ch 33:11-13 reflects a regular typology used by the Chronicler, that of exile and restoration. On one level the story is related to the agenda of the Chronicler to encourage continuing returns of people from Mesopotamian exile (cf. 2Ch 30:6-9; 36:20-23) and to identify the true ideals of the restoration, especially repentance. On another level, however, its single focus on a Davidic royal figure (without any mention of people accompanying him) suggests that Manasseh was to serve as a role model for the return

of the Davidic house.

**Phil Winfield:** The Shocking Story of King Manasseh If there was ever a study that debunks the idea that **good parents always have good children then this study of the Kings in Judah certainly does that.** It seems that really wicked kings sometimes had really virtuous sons and really good kings sometimes left their kingdom to extremely vile sons. Many times we are astounded by the way things turn out in families.

### **God Relents When Sinners Repent!**

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#### **STEVEN COLE - None Beyond Hope (2 Chronicles 33:1-20)**

What would you think if you heard that the notoriously immoral rock singer Madonna had been converted to Christ? Or what if you heard that Shirley MacLaine had abandoned all her New Age spiritualism and had embraced Christianity? Throw in Saddam Hussein, combine them all into one grossly immoral, spirit-worshipping, violent person. Would you say that such a person is beyond the hope of God's grace?

I'll admit that the conversion of such people is not commonplace. But the story of King Manasseh shows that what is impossible with man is possible with God. Manasseh combines into one person the most flagrantly offensive sins we can imagine. He set up immoral Baal worship in the temple in Jerusalem. He was into witchcraft, sorcery, and spiritualism. He practiced human sacrifice, offering his own sons in the fire to pagan idols. He slaughtered many innocent people, including many prophets, according to Jewish historians (2 Kings 21:16). They also say that he killed the prophet Isaiah by putting him between two boards like a sandwich and sawing him from head to toe (see Heb. 11:37). He caused Judah to do more evil than the nations whom God had destroyed before Israel. He was the most wicked king in the history of Judah. Yet he was converted.

That's good news for those of us who have loved ones who have pursued sin with a vengeance. They are not beyond the hope of God's grace! It's good news as we pray for the conversion of wicked leaders in our country. God can do it! It's good news for anyone hearing this message who has committed such gross sins that you wonder if God could ever forgive you. Even if you were raised in a godly home and turned away, so was Manasseh. And yet he found God's mercy when he repented, and so can you. Our text shows us that ...

Because God is merciful, there is hope for the worst of sinners who repent.

If anyone could be beyond hope, it would have been the wicked King Manasseh.

## **1. Manasseh was the worst of sinners.**

He came to the throne at age 12. Bible scholars believe that he shared a ten-year co-regency with his godly father, King Hezekiah, so he would have been 22 when his father died. But in spite of his father's godly example, Manasseh quickly turned the kingdom from a spiritual high to a low described as more evil than the nations which Israel had dispossessed from the land (2Ch 33:9). Manasseh's sin was unusually bad because ...

### **A. MANASSEH SINNED AGAINST GREAT LIGHT.**

It was not as if he had never heard about God or had no models of godliness. His father was the most godly king after David. Although Hezekiah had fallen into pride during his later years, he humbled himself and walked with God. It is inconceivable that the godly Hezekiah had not spent time telling his son and heir to the throne about God and the great things God had accomplished during his reign. Besides Hezekiah there were Isaiah the prophet and other godly men in the kingdom. The priests and Levites were teaching people the law of God. Manasseh was born into a spiritual oasis, but he walked away from it.

Often the most flagrant sinners are those who reject a godly upbringing. When they turn from the things of God they seem to be driven to rid themselves completely of the faith they have rejected. Hugh Hefner, the founder of the evil Playboy empire, is the son of a Methodist minister. Sad to say, Hefner's father later was employed by Playboy. But Manasseh's father was no phony. Hezekiah was a true man of God. You wonder, why did his son turn out so bad?

I can't answer that question with certainty, because the text gives no clue. But we need to remember that while parents have a great responsibility to train their children in the ways of God, ultimately each person must answer to God for himself or herself. You may be growing up in a Christian home, as I did. Your parents may teach and model the things of God. But there comes a point where *you* must yield to Jesus Christ as your own Savior and Lord. Your parents' faith will not get you into heaven.

We also need to realize that there is no such thing as an innocent child. I love kids; they're so cute and sweet. But my theology says

that every child, even one born to Christian parents, has a sinful nature capable of all the awful things that Manasseh did. Every child raised in a Christian home is as much in need of a definite conversion from God as Manasseh needed. As Christian parents, we need to pray, work, and look for signs of conversion in our children. It's fine when children pray to ask Jesus to come into their hearts, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they have been genuinely converted. Is there evidence of repentance from sin? Is there a hunger for the things of God? Is there submission to God's Word? Even those who are not outwardly rebellious need to experience God's grace through the cross of Christ. But Manasseh sinned against the light of his godly upbringing.

## **B. MANASSEH SINNED BOLDLY.**

While all unbelievers are the servants of sin, not all are bold sinners. Outwardly many are decent, law-abiding people. They have a sense of propriety and shame. They make sure that their sin remains within socially acceptable limits or behind closed doors. A New Yorker cartoon showed two clean-shaven, decent-looking, middle-aged men sitting in a jail cell. One says to the other, "All along I thought our level of corruption fell well within community standards!"

Manasseh's corruption exceeded community standards! He had no sense of shame. If there had been Geraldo or Oprah, Manasseh would have been on there, telling all the sordid details of his wicked life. His motto was, "If you've got it, flaunt it!" It's as if he was trying to be outrageous, to see if he could shock people with the extent of his wickedness. He sinned against great light; he sinned boldly.

## **C. MANASSEH LED OTHERS INTO SIN.**

You would have thought that with all the godly people in the land after Hezekiah's revival, they would have opposed Manasseh and forced him from the throne. But people tend to be followers. While they will go along with a king who is bold for the Lord, they also will quickly turn aside and follow the next king who is bold to do evil.

As God's people, we need to be careful not to be influenced to tolerate evil by ungodly leaders, whether politically or in the church. It's easy to be swayed by a man of power or wealth. It makes you feel important to know some famous person, whether a politician or a well-known Christian. I find that Christians are just as enamored by famous people as the world is. But even though an entertainer, sports figure, politician, or author professes to be a Christian doesn't mean that he is in line with God's Word. We need to evaluate everything a leader says by God's Word of truth and have the courage to stand against evil, no matter who is promoting it. A final point shows why Manasseh was an especially flagrant sinner:

## **D. MANASSEH LOVED HIMSELF AND HATED GOD.**

God's Word is clear: If we love Him, we will keep His commandments (1 John 5:3; John 14:15). But Manasseh did not want to "observe to do all" that God had commanded His people through Moses (2Ch 33:8). Why didn't he obey? Because he loved himself and hated God.

All sinners love themselves and hate God, but it's especially true of those who practice idolatry, witchcraft, sorcery, and sacrificing their own children to false gods! People do those things to manipulate spiritual power for their own benefit. Why offer your own children to the gods? So the gods will be nice to you! Too bad about the child's happiness; you're only concerned with yourself! With idols, you can make your own god according to your own liking. If you don't like a holy God who confronts your sinful behavior, you create a god who tolerates sin. At the root of all idolatry is the love of self and the hatred of the one true God who alone deserves and demands our obedient love.

I read in the *Arizona Daily Sun* (11/5/94, p. 3) an article about the woman who recently admitted to drowning her two sons. It explained how "authorities" (that means psychologists) say that "an unbearable pileup of stresses may trigger latent emotional or mental illness" that leads to this sort of tragedy. Instead of sinful behavior for which the woman is responsible, the cause is some mysterious, latent "illness." Maybe they'll find the defective DNA strand that leads to such illness some day! Also, according to a psychologist quoted in the article, women who kill their children sometimes "have very low self-esteem." But the Bible says the problem is too much self-love, not a lack thereof. The woman loved herself more than her children.

If anyone was a candidate for hell, you would have thought Manasseh would be. He seems like a hopeless case if there ever was one. But the good news is that because God is merciful, there is hope for the worst of sinners who repents. As with Saul of Tarsus, the Lord delights to take the chief of sinners and turn him into the best of saints as a trophy of His grace. What the sinner must do is to repent.

## **2. Manasseh repented.**



That's all that God was waiting for! Manasseh didn't have to vow to join a monastery and wear hair shirts. Nor did he need to work on building his self-esteem. We read (2Ch 33:12) that "he entreated the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers" and God showed him mercy. If repentance is God's requirement for sinners to be reconciled to Him, then it's important to understand what it means.

## **A. REPENTANCE MEANS TURNING TO GOD FROM SIN AND PERFORMING DEEDS APPROPRIATE TO REPENTANCE.**

I'm using here the Apostle Paul's words as he summarized his message to Agrippa (Acts 26:20). He kept declaring both to Jews and Gentiles "that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance." Maybe you're thinking, "I thought that salvation is by faith in Christ. Doesn't repentance add works to simple faith?"

The biblical answer is that saving faith and repentance are flip sides of the same coin. You can't have one without the other. Note Acts 26:18, where Paul related Christ's direct words to him, that He was sending Paul to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." Turning from darkness (sin) to light (holiness) and from Satan's domain to God is repentance; it is the means of receiving forgiveness of sins.

That last phrase ("faith in Me") shows that repentance is synonymous with faith in Christ. You can't truly believe in Christ without turning from your sin any more than you can turn north at the same time you're heading south. Because God and sin are at opposite ends of the spectrum, you cannot turn to God without turning from sin. Repentance begins as an entreaty, "God be merciful to me, the sinner!" But it continues in deeds appropriate to repentance. Manasseh removed the foreign gods, idols, and altars, set up the altar of the Lord and began serving Him (2Ch 33:15-16). In other words, repentance is not just talk. It is faith in God that results in a godly change of direction.

## **B. REPENTANCE MEANS FORSAKING SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SUBMISSIVELY CASTING OURSELVES ON GOD'S UNDESERVED FAVOR.**

Manasseh "humbled himself greatly" before God (2Ch 33:12). Humility is at the heart of repentance. The root of all sins is pride, thinking that we are sufficient in ourselves apart from God. It frequently manifests itself in people who think that they can commend themselves to God by their good works. They don't want to admit that they are sinners, totally dependent on God. They don't want to humble themselves by submitting to God's ways.

The Hebrew word translated "**humbled**" is used often in a military context of bringing a proud, rebellious people into subjection. When used spiritually, the emphasis is on a proud, independent person abasing himself. Manasseh, whose life to this point could be summed up by the song, "I Did it My Way," turned from his self-sufficiency and self-will and cast himself totally on God's undeserved favor. Then he came to know personally what before he had only known intellectually, "that the Lord was God" (2Ch 33:13).

What happens when a person repents? Does God put them on probation? Does He say, "We'll consider your application"? No, thank God!

## **3. Repentance results in God's undeserved blessings.**

When Manasseh repented, God could have said, "I hear you talking. But you've messed up royally [pun intended!]. After what you've done, don't expect Me to give back your kingdom!" But look at 2Ch 33:13: God "brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom." Amazing grace! Did Manasseh deserve that? No way! God would have been perfectly just to say, "I forgive you, but you'll die as a captive in Babylon."

I'm not saying that there aren't consequences to our sin, even when we repent. "The people still sacrificed in the high places" (2Ch 33:17). They were damaged by Manasseh's sin. His son Amon followed his father's sin, not his repentance, and was assassinated after two years on the throne. Manasseh's repentance did not restore to life Isaiah and the others Manasseh had murdered, including his sons. He had to live with those memories for the rest of his life. Sin always leaves scars. But even so, Manasseh enjoyed God's undeserved favor after he repented. His kingdom was restored. Even better, he came to know God and to be reconciled to Him. When he died, instead of incurring God's wrath which he deserved, he was welcomed into God's presence.

That's how God waits to bless every sinner who repents. He won't undo all the consequences of your sin (that's part of His grace, to teach us the seriousness of sin); but He will give you undeserved blessings beyond measure. He brings you into His family, the church, where you find love like you've never known. He arranges the circumstances of your life for good as a loving Father. He cares about your every need. He forgives all your sin. He will welcome you into heaven when you die, to be with Him through all

eternity. Amazing, abundant grace!

I think that we're tipped off to God's great mercy in the first verse of our text: "he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem." *Fifty-five years!* That's the longest reign of any king in Judah, longer than David or Solomon or Hezekiah! Why would God allow this wicked king to occupy the throne for 55 years? For the same reason He has put up with all the wickedness in the world to this point in history: "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

A poor woman from the slums of London was invited to go with a group of people for a holiday at the ocean. She had never seen the ocean before, and when she saw it, she burst into tears. Those around her thought it was strange that she should cry when such a lovely holiday had been given her. "Why in the world are you crying?" they asked. Pointing to the ocean she answered, "This is the only thing I have ever seen that there was enough of." God has oceans of mercy. There is enough of it for the worst of sinners. There is enough of it for you and me!

## Conclusion

Years ago newspapers carried the story of a teenager named William, who was a fugitive from the police. He had run away with his girlfriend because the parents had been trying to break them up. But what William didn't know was that an ailment for which he had been seeing the doctor was diagnosed just after he ran away as cancer.

So here was William, doing his best to elude the police, lest he lose his love, while they were doing their best to find him, lest he lose his life. He thought they were after him to punish him; they were really after him to save him. (Told by Howard Hendricks, *Say it With Love* [Victor Books], p. 14.)

Maybe you've thought that God was after you to punish you. The truth is, He is after you to bless you. Even if you have been the worst of sinners, if you will turn to God from your sin He will forgive and bless you. No one is beyond hope, because God's grace is greater than all our sin!

## Discussion Questions

1. Why is humility essential for repentance?
2. Some say that to preach repentance is to add works to faith. Is it? Why? Why not?
3. How do you explain godly parents having a wayward child in light of Proverbs 22:6?
4. How would you have felt if you had been Isaiah's widow when God forgave and restored Manasseh to his throne? Is God's grace "fair" (see Matt. 20:1-16; Luke 15:11-32)?

### 2 Chronicles 33:21 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem.

- two years (KJV): 2Ch 33:1 Lu 12:19,20 Jas 4:13-15

#### **Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem.**

**Frederick Mabie:** Amon's brief reign lasts from about 643-641 BC, a time of significant Assyrian power in the biblical world.

**Raymond Dillard:** The Chronicler's account of Amon follows rather closely that in 2 Kgs 21:19-26. The most notable difference is that for the writer of Kings, Amon was "just like" his father Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:20 // 33:22), whereas in Chronicles Amon is contrasted to Manasseh because of his failure to repent (33:23). The Chronicler explicates "walking in all the ways his father walked" (2 Kgs 21:21) as "offering sacrifices and worshiping all the idols his father Manasseh had made" (33:22).

**Thomas Constable:** Amon represented the other alternative that the returned exiles could choose: no repentance. His fate would have been, and is, a warning to seek the LORD. **Martin Selman:** Although the cloud of exile hangs over chapters 28-36, Manasseh and Amon in their contrasting ways show that a fatalistic attitude in the face of God's judgment is quite unjustified.

**J. Barton Payne:** Amon was the unhappy product of his father's pagan life, not of his pious death. This brief summary of his reign closely parallels II Kgs 21:19-26 and notes the immediate relapse of Judah to the pre-conversion religion of Manasseh.

**A.C. Gaebelein:** The utter corruption of human nature is seen in the case of his son Amon. With the awful experience of his father before him, and no doubt exhorted by Manasseh to serve the LORD and be true to Him, he followed deliberately the bad example of his father's idolatry. He trespassed more and more and did not repent like his father Manasseh, but died in his sins. Under his reign

the wickedness reached a higher mark than under any previous king.

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### Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 33:21-25

We have little recorded concerning Amon, but enough unless it were better. Here is,

I. **His great wickedness.** He did as Manasseh had done in the days of his apostasy, 2Ch 33:22. Those who think this an evidence that Manasseh did not truly repent forget how many good kings had wicked sons. Only it should seem that Manasseh was in this defective, that, when he cast out the images, he did not utterly deface and destroy them, according to the law which required Israel to burn the images with fire, Deu. 7:2. How necessary that law was this instance shows; for the carved images being only thrown by, and not burnt, Amon knew where to find them, soon set them up, and sacrificed to them. It is added, to represent him exceedingly sinful and to justify God in cutting him off so soon,

**1. That he out-did his father in sinning: He trespassed more and more,** 2Ch 33:23. His father did ill, but he did worse. Those that were joined to idols grew more and more mad upon them.

**2. That he came short of his father in repenting:** He humbled not himself before the Lord, as his father had humbled himself. He fell like him, but did not get up again like him. It is not so much sin as impenitence in sin that ruins men, not so much that they offend as that they do not humble themselves for their offences, not the disease, but the neglect of the remedy.

II. **His speedy destruction.** He reigned but two years and then his servants conspired against him and slew him, 2Ch 33:24. Perhaps when Amon sinned as his father did in the beginning of his days he promised himself that he should repent as his father did in the latter end of his days. But his case shows what a madness it is to presume upon that. If he hoped to repent when he was old, he was wretchedly disappointed; for he was cut off when he was young. He rebelled against God, and his own servants rebelled against him. Herein God was righteous, but they were wicked, and justly did the people of the land put them to death as traitors. The lives of kings are particularly under the protection of Providence and the laws both of God and man.

**2 Chronicles 33:22 He did evil in the sight of the LORD as Manasseh his father had done, and Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and he served them.**

- as did Manasseh (KJV): 2Ch 33:1-10 2Ki 21:1-11,20 Eze 20:18
- for Amon sacrificed (KJV): Amon's conduct is recorded as like his father Manasseh, in sacrificing to graven images; by which some think it is an evidence that Manasseh did not truly repent, but they forget how many good kings had wicked sons. In one point of view Manasseh was defective, although it cannot be supposed that it affected his eternal state; for when he cast out the images, he did not utterly deface and destroy them, according to the law in De 7:5, which required, moreover, that the graven images should be burnt with fire. How necessary that law was, this instance shows; for the carved images being only thrown aside, and not burnt, Amon knew where to find them, soon set them up, and sacrificed to them. Isa 44:13-20

**He did evil in the sight of the LORD as Manasseh his father had done, and Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and he served them.** One has to ask why were these carved images Manasseh had made still in existence. This makes one question the completeness of Manasseh's repentance.

**THOUGHT** - Is there something that tempts you to do evil? If it is not a human being, then you need to destroy it, lest it destroy you and/or your offspring!

**J.A. Thompson:** Just as Manasseh could not go back and undo the damage he had done to his nation, even so he could not back and change the son he had raised to be a pagan. Amon followed in his father's footsteps, but not the steps that Manasseh would have like him to follow.

**J. Barton Payne:** Either their removal had not involved their destruction (2Ch 33:15), or the concentration of Manasseh's reformation in Jerusalem had left available his more scattered idolatries (cf. 2Ch 33:17).

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**QUESTION** - [Why was the worship of Baal and Asherah a constant struggle for the Israelites?](#)

**ANSWER** - Throughout the Old Testament, we read accounts of idol worship among the Israelites, especially the worship of [Baal](#) and [Asherah](#), or sometimes Baal and [Ashtoreth](#). The paganism that surrounded God's people crept in, gained a foothold, and led to much misery. It was a constant struggle to stay true to the Lord their God.

God had commanded Israel not to worship idols (Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 5:7)—indeed, they were to avoid even mentioning a false god’s name (Exodus 23:13). To prevent compromise, they were warned not to intermarry with the pagan nations and to shun practices that might be construed as pagan worship rites (Leviticus 20:23; 2 Kings 17:15; Ezekiel 11:12). Israel was the nation chosen by God to one day give rise to the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. Yet, even with their heritage and so much riding on their future, Israel was continually drawn into dalliances with Baal and Asherah.

Baal was the supreme god in ancient Canaan and Phoenicia. As the storm god, he was usually depicted holding a raised lightning bolt. His consort, Asherah, was the chief female deity and was represented by a carved pole or limbless tree trunk planted in the ground. Baal and Asherah are often mentioned together in Scripture. Sometimes Baal is mentioned with the goddess Ashtoreth who, in Canaanite mythology, was closely related to Asherah and may have been for a time considered the same goddess. All of them were fertility gods, and their worship rites involved sexual perversion.

After the death of [Joshua](#), the worship of Baal and Asherah became a plaguing and perennial problem for Israel. It didn’t take long: in the very next generation after Joshua, “The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord; they forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs” (Judges 3:7). Later, God told the judge [Gideon](#) to clean house: “Tear down your father’s altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it” (Judges 6:25). Again, in the days of Jephthah, “the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths” (Judges 10:6).

During the monarchy, the kings got involved, forsaking the Lord and bringing the worship of Baal and Asherah into Israel. Under [King Ahab and Queen Jezebel](#), Israel was a state sponsor of a Phoenician form of idol worship, and the prophet Elijah had to confront “four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and . . . four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table” (1 Kings 18:19). The evil King Manasseh of Judah undid all the reforms of his father Hezekiah and “erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole” (2 Kings 21:3). In His indictment of Israel before sending them into exile, God said, “They forsook all the commands of the Lord their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal” (2 Kings 17:16).

There are several reasons why the worship of Baal and Asherah was such a problem for Israel. First, the worship of Baal and Asherah held the allure of illicit sex, since the religion involved ritual prostitution. This is exactly what we see in the incident of [Baal of Peor](#), as “the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods” (Numbers 25:1–2). During this episode an Israelite named Zimri brazenly brought a Midianite woman into the camp and went straight to his tent, where the two began having sex (verses 6–8, 14–15).

Another reason that the worship of Baal and Asherah was a perennial problem for Israel is what we could call international peer pressure. Israel wanted to be like the other nations (see 1 Samuel 8:5, 20). The other nations worshiped Baal and Asherah, and so many Israelites felt a pull to do the same.

And, most basically, Israel worshiped Baal and Asherah because of Satan’s temptations coupled with mankind’s [sinfulness](#). The enemy of our souls tempted Israel to worship idols; the sacrifices made to Baal and Asherah were really sacrifices to demons (1 Corinthians 10:20). The stubborn willfulness of humanity works in tandem with Satan’s seductions, and the result is rebellion against God. Israel repeatedly forsook their covenant with God, lost God’s blessings, and chased after the Baals and Asherahs to their own destruction.

The [book of Hosea](#) aptly uses adultery as a metaphor to describe Israel’s idol worship. Forsaking the God of their covenant and chasing after false gods such as Baal and Asherah was akin to [spiritual adultery](#). But God promised to restore His unfaithful people and love them forever:

In that day,” declares the Lord, . . .  
“I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips;  
no longer will their names be invoked. . . .  
I will betroth you to me forever;  
I will betroth you in righteousness and justice,  
in love and compassion.  
I will betroth you in faithfulness  
and you will acknowledge the Lord.”  
(Hosea 2:16–17, 19–20)

The problem of Baal and Asherah worship was finally solved after God removed Israel from the Promised Land. Due to the Israelites’ idolatry and disregard of the law, God brought the nations of Assyria and Babylon against them in an act of judgment. After the exile, Israel was restored to the land, and the people did not dally again with idols.

Christians today may be quick to judge the Israelites for their idolatry, but we should remember that idols take many forms. Idolatrous sins still tempt the modern-day believer (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8–10). Instead of bowing down to the ancient forms of Baal and Asherah, we today sometimes honor possessions, success, and physical pleasure to the dishonoring of God. Just as God disciplined the Israelites for their idolatry and forgave them when they repented, He graciously disciplines us and extends the offer of forgiveness in Christ (Hebrews 12:7–11; 1 John 1:9; 2 Peter 3:9). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**2 Chronicles 33:23 Moreover, he did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done, but Amon multiplied guilt.**

- humbled (KJV): 2Ch 33:1,12,19 Jer 8:12
- trespassed more and more (KJV): Heb. multiplied trespass, 2Ch 28:22 Jer 7:26 2Ti 3:13

## NOT LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

**Moreover, he did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done, but Amon multiplied guilt.**

**Iain Duguid:** The Chronicler uses Amon's reign as a contrast to the positive action of Manasseh in "humbling himself." That becomes the focus of attention in the two reigns, an example for hearers to heed.

**Matthew Henry:** He fell like him, but did not get up again like him. It is not so much sin as impenitence in sin that ruins men, not so much that they offend as that they do not humble themselves for their offences, not the disease, but the neglect of the remedy.

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### QUESTION - [Who was King Amon in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - 2 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. 2 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). 2 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). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

## 2 Chronicles 33:24 Finally his servants conspired against him and put him to death in his own house.

- 2Ch 24:25,26 25:27,28 2Sa 4:5-12 2Ki 21:23-26 Ps 55:23 Ro 11:22

### Finally his servants conspired against him and put him to death in his own house.

**Andrew Hill:** The reason behind his assassination is unspecified (2Ch 33:24). Clearly the general populace is not in sympathy with the coup since they execute those palace officials party to the conspiracy (2Ch 33:25a).

**.A. Thompson:** The reasons that Amon's officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace are not given, but they may have had a political motivation in the international politics of the day. Amon was perhaps pro-Assyrian in his policies at a time when Assyria's power was declining and many Israelites were looking toward Egypt for leadership. If so anti-Assyrian opponents of Amon's foreign policy lay behind the plot.

## 2 Chronicles 33:25 But the people of the land killed all the conspirators against King Amon, and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place.

- slew (KJV): Ge 9:5,6 Nu 35:31,33
- the people (KJV): 2Ch 26:1 36:1
- Josiah (KJV): 2Ch 34:1

**But the people of the land killed all the conspirators against King Amon, and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his place** - The spiritual lives of the kings in this section are like a roller coaster - Hezekiah up, Manasseh down (then up), Amon down, Josiah up! Go figure!

**Raymond Dillard:** Scholars have reached a variety of conclusions regarding the sociopolitical identity of the group designated by the phrase "people of the land"; some conclude they were (1) a privileged social class composed of free landowners; (2) a collective designation for free people, citizens; (3) a reference to the population of the provincial towns as distinguished from the population of Jerusalem; (4) a proletariat of the common folk; (5) a national council composed of elders.

**Andrew Hill:** The expression "people of the land" (2Ch 33:25a) may be an idiom for a coalition of religious and political leadership centered in Jerusalem since they also function as "king makers" in other succession crises (cf. 2Ch 22:1; 26:1; 36:1).

**J.A. Thompson:** Most commentators agree that these were the free landholders of Judah who always acted decisively in times of crisis to maintain the Davidic dynasty in the land.

**Dilday:** The only positive contribution Amon made to the history of Judah was to produce one of the best kings to reign on the throne of Jerusalem.

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