

## 2 Chronicles 33 – Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**2 Chronicles 33** -- 1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 2 But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

- The chapter begins by introducing us to Manasseh, who we first met when we were studying through the book of second kings.
- It's worthy of noting that Manasseh's reign was the longest in Israel's history, but sadly it was as evil of a reign as it was long.
- As we'll see towards the end of the chapter, he does repent in a dramatic way however, not before committing abominable sins.

- There's something very interesting here that I'd like to point out and it has to do with Manasseh's age when he became king.
- We're told that he was twelve years old, which means that three years into the 15-years God gave Hezekiah he has this son.
- The reason I point this out is because; a bad son comes from a good father at the end of his life, when he fell because of pride.

Charles Spurgeon of Manasseh's evil wrote, "He was a son of David, but he was the very reverse of that king, who was always faithful in his loyalty to the one only God of Israel. David's blood was in his veins, but David's ways were not in his heart. He was a wild, degenerate shoot of a noble vine."

- One has suggested that were Hezekiah to know he would have such a wicked son, he wouldn't want to live for 15 more years.
- While I do understand the reasoning behind that thought, I do believe that God, in His sovereignty would bring good out of evil.
- Namely, by way of his repentance at the end of his life, which as we'll see, was a powerful testimony of God's grace and mercy.

3 For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. 4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem shall My name be forever." 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

- Here we're told that Manasseh reinstated the very idolatrous worship that his father Hezekiah had removed from the temple.
- It's interesting the Holy Spirit would have the Chronicler record the detail in verse four concerning God's name in Jerusalem.
- The reason this is interesting is that we know from prior studies and our prophecy updates that this is literal by way of the Shin.

6 Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 7 He even set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8 and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers—only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses." 9 So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

- If you're anything like me and I suspect that you are, this is a very hard read in the sense that it's almost painful to see all this.
- This isn't just words on the page of our Bibles, this actually happened and it took place in the one place where God's name is.
- To put this into perspective it would be akin to practicing witchcraft and setting up sexual images here in this beautiful church.

2 Kings 21:7 (NKJV) — 7 He even set a carved image of Asherah that he had made, in the house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever;

Adam Clarke - "From the whole it is evident that Asherah was no other than Venus; the nature of whose worship is plain enough from the mention of whoremongers and prostitutes."

10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. 11 Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon.

- This is one of those places in the Word of God, where you almost have to do a double take of sorts to get your mind around it.
- First, notice that Manasseh and the people would not listen to the Lord when He spoke to them concerning their grievous evil.
- In 2 Kings 21:9, we're provided more detail, such that, not only did they not listen, they actually "paid no attention," to the Lord.

- I think you would agree this is an apt description of those who want nothing to do with the Lord, but not for the Lord's people.
- I find it interesting that replete throughout the Old Testament, we read passages like 'hear, O Israel, hear the Word of the Lord.'
- This because there was this deliberate refusal on the part of God's people to both hear and take heed to the Word of the Lord.

- Another thing that I find very interesting here is in the narrative we find no mention of anyone taking a stand for righteousness.
- This would seem to indicate the Israelites were willing participants in the unspeakable evil imposed upon them by Manasseh.
- To me, this would explain why God would mete out such a harsh judgment upon all of Jerusalem, Judah, and even to Samaria.

- Lest one think that God's judgment at the hands of the Assyrian's was disproportionate we would do well to consider two things.
- First, God in His grace and mercy tried to get their attention by speaking to them, but they would not pay attention to the Lord.
- Second, the unspeakable evil that God tried to warn them about was certainly deserving of swift and severe judgment initially.

- Again, in 2 Kings 21, we have more detail that describes the evil of Manasseh, who we're told shed very much innocent blood.

2 Kings 21:16 (NKJV) — 16 Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

- It's for this reason that Jewish tradition suggests it was actually Manasseh who sawed the prophet Isaiah in half in Jerusalem.

Of this, Charles Spurgeon wrote, "We cannot vouch for the tradition that the prophet Isaiah was put to death by him by being sawn in sunder, but terrible as is the legend, it is not at all improbable."

12 Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

- This is perhaps amongst the greatest examples of repentance in scripture by virtue of how evil the reign of king Manasseh was.
- It brings up an interesting question as it relates to how God brings a man to repentance whether it's his kindness or his justice.
- By that I mean, often times, God in His grace and mercy will show kindness to us with the hopes that we will simply repent.

2 Peter 3:9 (NKJV) — 9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Romans 2:4 (NKJV) — 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

- I'm personally of the belief that God in His longsuffering and forbearance will do everything possible to get our attention first.
- Then, if we don't listen, like Manasseh and the people, He will deliver us into the hands of the Assyrians, so-to-speak to do it.
- Thankfully, God loves us too much to just give up on us, so He gives us second chances as it were, because He's merciful.

Again, Spurgeon says it best this way, "Oh! I do not wonder at Manasseh's sin one half so much as I wonder at God's mercy."

G. Campbell Morgan had this to say, "Manasseh's repentance was evidently the chief subject in the mind of the chronicler, and while his sins are painted faithfully and revealed in all their hideousness, all becomes but background which flings into relief Manasseh's genuine penitence and the ready and gracious response to God."

14 After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and it enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. 15 He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem; and he cast them out of the city. 16 He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. 17 Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

- Here we're told that Manasseh diligently seeks to right all of the wrongs and restore and rebuild that which he had destroyed.
- To his credit, he even takes away the foreign gods, idols and altars he himself had built and has them cast out of Jerusalem.
- To me, this speaks to the magnificent grace of God in the life of one who has been forgiven of so much responding this way.

F.B. Meyer - "Turn to Him with brokenness of soul, and He will not only forgive, but bring you out again; and give you, as He did Manasseh, an opportunity of undoing some of those evil things which have marred your past."

18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel. 19 Also his prayer and how God received his entreaty, and all his sin and trespass, and the sites where he built high places and set up wooden images and carved images, before he was humbled, indeed they are written among the sayings of Hozai. 20 So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house. Then his son Amon reigned in his place. 21 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22 But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done; for Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and served them. 23 And he did not humble himself before the LORD, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more. 24 Then his servants conspired against him, and killed him in his own house. 25 But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

- The chapter ends with the record of Manasseh's death and his son reigning in his place, but he did evil in the sight of the Lord.
- I find it interesting that we're told Amon did not humble himself as his father Manasseh had but he trespassed more and more.
- I find it even more interesting that the narrative takes an abrupt turn and introduces us to Josiah, who was the son of Amon.