

2 Chronicles 33

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[0 : 0 0] Until the reign of Manasseh. And how did it come about? 2 Chronicles chapter 33. Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king and he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem. 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.

For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down. He also erected altars for the bells and made ashram and worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them. He built altars in the house of the Lord of which the Lord had said, My name shall be in Jerusalem forever. For he built altars for all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord. He made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-Hinom. By the way, that just means he offered his sons as child sacrifices.

And he practiced witchcraft and used divination, practiced sorcery, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord provoking him to anger.

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.

[1 : 1 0] 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.

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

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.

When he was in distress, he entreated the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.

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.

Now after this, he built the outer wall of the city of David on the west side of Gahan in the valley, even to the entrance of the fish gate, and he encircled the Ophel with it and made it very high.

[2 : 1 9] Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah. 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 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. Nevertheless, the people still sacrificed in the high places, although only to the Lord their God.

Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, even his prayer to his God in 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. His prayer also on how God was entreated by him and all his sin, and his unfaithfulness on the sites on which he built high places and erected the ashram and the carved images.

Before he humbled himself, behold, they are written in the records of the Hosea. So Manasseh slept with his fathers and they buried him in his own house. And Ammon, his son, became king in his place.

Ammon was 22 years old when he became king and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. He did evil in the sight of the Lord as Manasseh, his father, had done. And Ammon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made and served them.

[3 : 35] Moreover, he did not humble himself before the Lord as his father Manasseh had done. But Ammon multiplied guilt. Finally, his servants conspired against him and put him to death in his own house.

But the people of the land killed all the conspirators against King Ammon. And the people of the land made Josiah, his son, king in his place. 2 Chronicles chapter 33.

I want you to see the downfall of a people. The portion of this chapter which is unique to the chronicler is the portion which declares that Manasseh, in his captivity, was humbled and cried out to the Lord his God and repented of his ways.

And God heard his prayer and everything that follows after that. If we were to read in 2 Kings, there are some aspects which are added to this. We'll get to it in just a moment.

But it stops short of the repentance of Manasseh. Now that shouldn't surprise us a little bit because we know in a few chapters later on in the book of 2 Kings, we are told that it is because of the sin of Manasseh that the Babylonians are coming to lead them away.

[4 : 43] Let's remind ourselves again of why we have 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles. I know we've said this repeatedly, but it bears reminding ourselves of.

1 and 2 Kings declare to us why the people went into Babylonian captivity. It declares their unfaithfulness. It declares their wickedness. It declares God's justice in sending the Assyrians and later on the Babylonians.

It declares that God is right in his judgment of the people. And therefore, it shows us that God is just in his retribution against them because of their disobedience and their sin.

And it tells us why they went into Babylonian captivity. Written probably about the time of the prophetic ministry of Jeremiah, if not written by Jeremiah himself. Because much of 1 and 2 Kings kind of speaks the way Jeremiah would.

Now, in contrast, 1 and 2 Chronicles is written after the Babylonian captivity. It is written to the grandchildren of those who left after the decree of King Cyrus.

[5 : 47] The whosoever will, wants to go back, can go back. So there's a small remnant. It is probably written from a scribe of the school of Ezra. That's why I'm so excited to get to Ezra and Nehemiah.

And I love the fact that it follows 1 and 2 Chronicles, even though in the Jewish scripture, 1 and 2 Chronicles is found at the very end of the Old Testament, only followed by the book of Malachi. But, anyway, it is written by one of the scribes of Ezra, more than likely, because it has a priestly feel to it.

The priests and the throne and the temple, these are important. And we're not here beating the dead horse, so to say, declaring, again, our wrong, because the people who just came out of this 70 years of captivity know they were wrong.

It is not a matter of whether God was just in sending them there. Now they are being reminded of who they are as the people of the Lord and how they then shall live. And it is for that reason that I believe the author includes this account for us, because they need to know as the people of the Lord that though they fall and they stumble, God is faithful.

And we'll see that in just a moment. But we are also reminded of what led to the downfall of the people. It is not just Manasseh. There is something, a series of events that may be staged for a moment because a good king comes up, but it is something that is brooding in the hearts and the minds of mankind until that day of fall.

[7 : 14] Which, by the way, if we stay consistent, can you tell it's been about a week and a half since your pastor is preached? I haven't even got to my first point. If we stay consistent to our reality of what Scripture tells us, that man is not on an upward trajectory but on a downward spiral, then we should not be surprised if we find these same things taking place today because man is in a downfall.

We're not going up. We're going down. We're still trying to figure out how, quote, unquote, uncivilized people will accomplish some of the things they did that we can unearth in archaeology because they didn't do it with our advancements today.

Maybe they were just a little bit more advanced than we want to give them credit for. So we see here these aspects which lead to the downfall of the people and it really is what is leading to a downfall today.

Number one, we see without a doubt the depravity of man. You cannot read this chapter and not be amazed and astounded at the depravity of man's heart.

And you say, why is that? To be depraved means that there is nothing good within the heart of man. There is none that is righteous, no, not one. And as Paul would say, the heart of every man is desperately wicked.

[8 : 39] That we are a brood of vipers. We are poisonous. And it is the depravity of man that we are not going to pull ourselves by our own bootstraps. We're not going to make ourselves better.

And this is why we need, when rightly understanding salvation in Scripture, this is one of the key aspects of it, is we need to understand the depravity of man because without an understanding and a full comprehension of that, we would assume that we would be good enough and well enough to save ourselves.

But when we acknowledge that man is desperately depraved, that salvation cannot arise from us, then we understand that salvation is something that is given to us.

When the people of God were enslaved in Egypt, they were slaves crying out that could not set themselves free, but God heard their cry and God responded and sent them a savior.

We know that man is Moses. And he is a type of Christ. They were a depraved people looking for redemption that had to come from outside of them.

[9 : 45] And yet we understand in this chapter the depravity of man. You say, well, pastor, how do we see that? But it is because Manasseh is 12 years old when he begins to reign. You say, well, that makes little sense.

Well, it makes little sense unless you do the math and you figure out that Manasseh was seven when Hezekiah had his illness that was going to kill him. You say, well, that doesn't add up because 15 years were added to his life.

Right. Most Bible scholars believe that he was co-regent when he was 12 years old with his father for some time. So that even adds to the layer just a little bit. He was 12 when he became king, but his father Hezekiah, knowing he had 15 years to live, surely would have went ahead and established the throne.

Think like David and Solomon, right? Knowing that his time of departure was coming, Hezekiah is one of the few that is told you have 15 years to live. So he being 12, and it really, if you do the math on the timeline, it adds up this way.

He was 12 years old when he became king, but he would have been seven when his father was sick. And his father cried out to the Lord God, and God heard that cry, and God miraculously responded with this wondrous sign, a sign so astounding that the Babylonians came from a great distance away because they heard of the sign.

[10 : 57] And Manasseh was a seven-year-old young lad living in the house when that happened. Manasseh would have been eight when the Assyrians encamped around Jerusalem, and he saw his father hit his knees in prayer, and then he saw his father run to Isaiah and pray, and then he saw God respond to those prayers and miraculously deliver the city of Jerusalem because the Assyrians began to fight within themselves.

They all woke up, and the strongest among them was dead. So he would have been eight when the walls of Jerusalem were encircled with the troops, and then one day they were gone. So what we're saying is he was old enough to observe these.

At 12, he would have been co-regent with his father and reigned alongside of one of the most righteous kings that the nation of Israel ever had. But yet, as soon as Hezekiah dies, Manasseh rebuilds the high places, reintroduces idolatrous worship.

Why? Well, it would be prone to say, well, Hezekiah must have been a bad dad. Maybe we could just say that the heart of Manasseh is desperately wicked.

Careful how much blame we put because by putting blame, I mean, how much more training up a child in the way he should go could Hezekiah have done?

[12 : 21] The priests were in place. The Levites were in place. The temple doors were opened. All the sacrificial system was taking place. Everything was going on like no other time in the history of the nation of Israel.

And yet, Manasseh immediately goes back to idolatrous worship. And not just goes, I mean, He goes way back.

He does more wickedness, we are told, than the nations whom the Lord drove out from before the people of Israel. He didn't just rebuild the high places. Not only did He introduce Baal worship again and build an ashram, which is like a grove of idolatrous totem posts, so to say, but then it also has sorcery and witchcraft and He's offering His children, He's offering them up to fire and He's got all these things.

He's worshiping everything in the heavens. He's doing everything that God says that they shouldn't do. Why? Because of the depravity of man. Man, on his own, is desperately wicked.

And in case we missed the point, Manasseh repents and responds and even tries to clean up things. But the reason we finish the chapter reading about his son is as soon as Manasseh dies, his son goes back to doing what Manasseh was doing.

[13:44] Why? Because the righteousness of the Father does not imply righteousness of the Son. Just as the sins of the Father does not imply the sins of the Son.

Each and every one is accountable for his actions. And we are reminded that man left to himself or woman left to herself is desperately wicked.

It is the depravity of man that shows us that no matter how good it may be, there is within each and every one of us a desperate, wicked heart that just wants to do it our way.

It's not just that Manasseh's a bad guy. No, this is just what he wanted to do. And we'll get to just how far that goes in just a moment. So we see the depravity of man. And that is, by the way, the first starting point of the downfall of man.

How can I confidently and boldly tell you that mankind is not on an upward trajectory that we are going down, even with all of our technological advancements, even with all of our life expectancy is increasing, even with everything that is going on and with all of our medical advancements.

[14:56] Why would I say that? It's because without a shadow of a doubt, I know that there is none righteous, no, not one. Save for the work of Christ.

And if you allow a depraved individual to live longer, he will not get better. He would just go further into his depravity. And that's not a judgment on the world.

It's a declaration of our condition. Right? It is the depravity of man. Number two, we see the word of God ignored. Yes, it's not alliterated. I know. Look at the word of God ignored.

After declaring to us all of the wickedness, which Manasseh does. Second Chronicles tells us that Manasseh misled Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil.

We'll get to that, how he misled them in just a moment. But after he did that, it tells us in verse 10, the Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people. Second Kings tells us that the way God spoke to Manasseh and his people was that he brought his, in the wording there, servants or slaves.

[16:15] The Lord sent his servants to them, which were the prophets, who would declare the word of God. These are unnamed prophets who are prophesying during the time of Manasseh and declaring the imminent coming of judgment.

But it tells us here that they paid no attention to them. Now it reads a little softer in the book of Second Chronicles.

It says, oh, they just didn't pay any attention to them. Well, that just means he wasn't listening to the word of God. Well, we also find that he had ignored the word of God because two times in the passage it tells us that he set up altars in the house of the Lord from which the Lord God had said.

So two times we were told God had said something in particular about the house of God. And he had said that he would never depart from there. It would stand as his name. And yet he disregarded that declaration from the word of God and established his own altars within the house of God himself.

And if that weren't enough, the way he ignored the word of God, we are really clarified with that in the book of Second Kings because it tells us, and even Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us of these events too, though that's extra biblical, we don't give it biblical weight.

[17:24] It reconciles so well with the biblical testimony that we kind of fill in the gaps just a little bit here that what took place during the reign of Manasseh is when a prophet would come and declare the word of God to him.

He didn't just ignore him. He killed him. Because see, the sin that God declares of Manasseh that led to the coming of the Babylonians, the book of Kings tells us that he filled Jerusalem with their blood.

And the way he did it, think about this for just a moment. His father had set up the priests and the Levites and the Lord was sending the prophets. More than likely, when you reconcile it with what transpired in history, is that anyone that was righteous serving the Lord God was slain by Manasseh.

He so did not want to hear what God had to say, he didn't just ignore them, he removed them. Violently.

Filling the city with their blood. It is a vivid picture of how far Manasseh went to ignore the word.

[18 : 41] He wasn't content to have the prophet stand over there and just talk about it and just say, well, I'm just going to disregard that. This wasn't a disregard for the word of God. This was a disdain for the word of God, right?

If you stood up and said, Manasseh, you shouldn't be doing that. Think John the Baptist, right? Then you were slain. And it is because of that wickedness that God says the nation of Judah will fall.

And it is when the word of God begins to be ignored and the depravity of man is exalted that the people begin to go further and further and further down.

Now that's where 2 Kings leaves us, right? With a depraved individual who is ignoring the word of God by slaying the prophets of God and even the priests and the Levites of God more than likely. We find here that he is really upset about that. So then we come to this reality that they are ignoring the word of God. So God has something that he's going to do in response to that.

[19 : 41] Because by the way, the sin and the rebellion of man does not disrupt the purposes and plans of God. So we come to our third thing in this passage and that is the humility that came.

The humility that came upon him. So what is staying the hand, the judgment hand of God during the time of Manasseh and the very thing that is staying the hand, the judgment hand of God in today's time if we understand it correctly.

Because we are a depraved people who naturally long to ignore the word of God because which one of us really relishes in the fact if you're just going to be honest and transparent for just a moment which one of us relishes in the fact of opening up a book that tells us how wicked we are. I would say not many of you because when I began to preach that way people kind of draw back. We don't like to hear it right because we say well I'm not. Well that is who we are naturally but praise be to God we're not talking natural to brothers and sisters in Christ.

We're talking supernatural right and we're talking because of this point that is the humility that came upon him. God was not stayed by his ignoring or disregarding or even disdaining the word of God because God had another plan.

[20 : 53] God raised up the ruler of Assyria to come and to lead him away and it tells us that he captured him with hooks. It literally means that they put a ring in his nose and put a chain coming out of that ring and led him away in humiliation.

Now what's really astounding about this is there is one prophet who prophesies during the reign of Manasseh that we have a book written by and it is Nahum. So if you were to read Nahum the prophet you would go read his prophecy and it has nothing to do with Judah it has nothing to do with Israel.

The prophecy of Nahum is all about the Assyrians that God has declared judgment upon the Assyrians that God is going to bring the power of Assyria to a standstill that because they have had pride up in themselves think when they encircled Jerusalem and Sennacherib says no God can stand before me well God has a word for him too and that comes through Nahum the prophet who stands to say oh you think you're strong then I'm going to remove you.

So at the same time God's raising up a prophet declaring the judgment of the people he is also using that same people to display his judgment upon his people. If you ever want your mind to smoke on the providence and the sovereignty of God consider that.

God is saying you're not who you think you are therefore you will fall through Nahum the prophet and I have declared judgment against you and you will not be the superpower but as long as you're here let me use you to humiliate Manasseh.

[22 : 20] He truly holds the heart of the kings in the palm of his hand and turns them however he wishes. And by the way he is righteous in all of those acts. You say how can he use them and judge them at the same time?

The answer to that is because he is God. And we have to say so be it. And he uses them to lead Manasseh away and then we come to this astounding passage understanding what we know about Manasseh because this is the second time we have been told about this.

When he was in distress you say oh this is one of those sick bed confessions well stay with me in just a moment. When he was in distress he entreated the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.

D. Martin Lloyd-Jones I was reading a writing of his today and I came upon this he was speaking of the living in the joy of our salvation and it's this great line that he said he said you must be made miserable before you can know true Christian joy.

Until you know how miserably bad you are in your sin you will never understand how much joy you possess in Christ.

[23 : 50] You must be made miserable before you can have true Christian joy. But what makes the heart miserable? It is conviction and a realization of who we are.

God made Manasseh miserable and he realized he was miserable because that's who he was. And he cried out and it's not astounding to me that he cries out that he entreats the Lord and he humbles himself. What astounds me is what follows that.

He, that's God. He was moved by his entreaty. The prayer of wicked Manasseh moved holy God. That's grace and mercy. That's an astounding attribute of God. There is nothing in the man Manasseh that we would say, oh, I want to go to him and ask Manasseh to pray for me.

[24 : 59] Right? He's not one of those in the book of James that if we're sick and we need to find a righteous man to pray for us, we don't run to Manasseh. But yet all of a sudden we find Manasseh in a state of brokenness and humiliation and he's crying out and God hears and responds and look at how he responds.

Look at this. It is not that God just says, okay, no, he moves to such an extent that the Assyrians let him go. He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem and to his kingdom.

He put him back on the throne. You say, after everything he did? Right. You say, oh, well, Manasseh doesn't deserve to be king.

Well, my friend, scripture's all about Christ. What do we deserve? We don't deserve to be here. because internally we're all a bunch of Manassas.

But praise be to God he brought us to a point where in our humiliation we were moved and we cried out to him and he heard our pleas and he responded and he restored us and he renewed us and he brought us back to himself and set us not upon a throne but upon his throne.

[26 : 15] That's mercy. That's wonder. And just in case you doubt the authenticity of Manasseh we know the authenticity of an event not based upon what happens in the heat of the moment but the events that follow the heat of that moment.

When he gets back to his throne what does he do? He reinforces the wall. He begins to be concerned about the people around him. He removes all the idols. He throws them out of the city. He restores the temple.

He opens up the altar. He begins to offer thank offerings and burnt offerings by the way. Those are praise offerings. Why? Because he knows who God is. And the reason God moved in this way is not because he saw anything good in Manasseh.

We need to understand he did it because of that phrase found at the end of verse 13. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God. God moves for his own namesake that he gets the glory and the honor.

You know why I believe that God moved in such a way in my own life? Because I know me. I know how wicked and desperately wicked that I am. I know the own depravity of my heart. It is not because I was deserving of it.

[27 : 22] It's so that I may know that he is God. And in knowing that I could declare it to other people. And that's exactly what Manasseh begins to do. It says that he encourages the people to worship only the Lord God.

They're still worshipping on the high places but they're worshipping the Lord God on the high places. They're doing it wrong but at least their focus is right now. Right? He's trying to correct all of his misdeeds.

And we see this is the humility that came and number four this was the grace that was displayed. I just gave you both of them at one moment. In that humility we find grace.

And what astounding grace that is. It is not gracious that Manasseh in his distress cries out.

It is gracious that in his cry God hears him and responds and restores him. Now it would be good if the story ended there and if we're honest each of us wanted to end there.

[28 : 30] But we're looking at the downfall of a people. And so that we are not like Paul using grace as a crutch to sin we have this last and fifth thing that we need to understand and that is the consequences that endured.

So in light of all this we read this account but why did God declare two times in the word of God that it was the sin of Manasseh that led to the fall of the people.

This account by the way is written after both of those things have been declared. Because if we're not careful we look at that and say well God heard him and God restored him and God brought him back then God's not fair to say that it was his sin that led to the fall.

Oh but it is. And the classic example of that is when we look at his son who only had a two year reign Ammon only had a two year reign and we look at the reality that though Manasseh tried to correct all of his wrongs though he tried to clear all of the consequences as soon as his 22 year old son becomes king he begins to do the things which his father used to do.

Because here's something that we understand about sin. Sin has consequences and those consequences will come. And the grace we receive is a grace for the moment and a grace moving forward but it does not erase the consequences of everything we've already done.

[30 : 08] When we cry out and we say oh Lord forgive me we have to be careful because this is a proper understanding of salvation. We dare not go to him and say Lord forgive me that way I don't have to pay the price of everything I've already done in this life.

That is to rid ourselves of the consequences of our actions. Because all that is is trying to use the forgiveness of God as an escape clause for the seeds we've already sown.

But salvation is Lord forgive me for I know I'm desperately wicked I deserve everything that comes upon me I need to be restored now presently so that I may live with you eternally come what may but my security rests in you.

See the reality is no matter how hard we try we cannot go back we cannot go back God alone has the power to forget our sins it tells us they are cast into the sea of forgetfulness but that application is for eternity that is when we stand before him eternally in Christ when we stand before him on that day of judgment and every believer will stand before our Lord and Savior on judgment day not the great white throne of judgment but the judgment day we will stand before him in Christ all of our sins have been laid upon Christ and we have been righteousness has been imputed to us through Jesus Christ on that day God will not bring up everything we did he will bring up who we are in Christ God has the power to forget all we have done because in Christ the work of Christ is greater than our failures it's greater than our sins it's greater than all of our misery and in Christ on that day all will be forgotten but as long as we're in this life the seeds we have sown remain the consequences endure and we can't go back so we don't come to him hoping to rid ourselves of the consequences of the actions we've already done we come to him in light of the consequences we know we expect and say

Lord I deserve this for from this day on may I be holy and fully and totally committed to you there's a big difference as parents and grandparents you know it because when a child runs to you after you know the truth and then they want to tell you something just to remove the consequences of their actions that's a lot different than when coming to you and confessing the truth first the consequences of our sins endure so God is right to say that all of the blood shed by Manasseh and the trajectory set by Manasseh was the reasoning for the coming of the Babylonians does that mean he was not graciously restored and redeemed no you say well pastor is he in heaven

[33 : 22] I can't answer that question it's not for me to know but I can stand amazed at the grace of God that God would even restore him now there is a good king who comes after him but it's not his son there's just a little bit longer here but we see the downfall of a people in 2nd Chronicles 33 thank you my brothers won't Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[37 : 10] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[39 : 40] Thank you.