

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 33

Manasseh King of Judah

Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. ² He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. ³ He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had demolished; he also erected altars to the Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. ⁴ He built altars in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "My Name will remain in Jerusalem forever." ⁵ In both courts of the temple of the LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts. ⁶ He sacrificed his sons in ^a the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, practiced sorcery, divination and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger. ⁷ He took the carved image he had made and put it in God's temple, of which God had said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my Name forever. ⁸ I will not again make the feet of the Israelites leave the land I assigned to your forefathers, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them concerning all the laws, decrees and ordinances given through Moses." ⁹ But 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. ¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. ¹¹ So the LORD brought against them the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. ¹² In his distress he sought the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ Afterward he rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, west of the Gihon spring in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate and encircling the hill of Ophel; he also made it much higher. He stationed military commanders in all the fortified cities in Judah. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed fellowship offerings ^b and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁷ The people, however, continued to sacrifice at the high places, but only to the LORD their God. ¹⁸ The other events of Manasseh's reign, including his prayer to his God and the words the seers spoke to him

in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, are written in the annals of the kings of Israel. ^c 19 His prayer and how God was moved by his entreaty, as well as all his sins and unfaithfulness, and the sites where he built high places and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself—all are written in the records of the seers. ^d 20 Manasseh rested with his fathers and was buried in his palace. And Amon his son succeeded him as king.

3:1–20 Manasseh had the longest reign of any of the kings of Judah, a total of 55 years (v. 1). The emphasis in the two accounts differs: While both histories report at length the evil done in Manasseh's reign, only the Chronicler mentions his journey to Babylon and his repentance and restoration to rule. For the writer of Kings, the picture is only a bad one in which Manasseh could be considered almost single-handedly the cause of the exile (2Ki 21:10–15; 23:26). Some scholars regard the record of Manasseh's repentance in Chronicles as motivated by the author's emphasis on immediate retribution: Length of reign is viewed as a blessing for obedience, so that the Chronicler deliberately records some good in Manasseh as a ground for his long reign. However, it must be noted that length of reign is not elsewhere used by the Chronicler as an indication of divine blessing. The usual indicators for such blessing in his account are peace and prosperity, building projects, success in warfare and large families. (CSB)

33:1–9 The Chronicler includes the list of evils characterizing Manasseh's reign. Sinful patterns of Ahaz became the model for his grandson Manasseh, who reversed Hezekiah's reforms by rebuilding pagan sanctuaries and erecting false altars in the temple (cf 28:24–25; 29:15–19; 31:1). He effectively swayed the people's religious devotion over his long reign. (TLSB)

33:1 *fifty-five years*. 697–642 B.C. (CSB)

Manasseh's 55-year reign, longer than that of any other king, also set a record for apostasy. For decades the detestable practices of the Canaanites held sway. Like Ahaz, he sacrificed his sons; like Saul, he engaged in demonic practices. *twelve*. Probably guided by a regent. (TLSB)

33:6 *sacrificed his sons*. See 28:3–4. (CSB)

33:10 The Chronicler abridges what the Lord said to Manasseh and the people through the prophets; the fuller record is found in 2Ki 21:10–15. (CSB)

The Chronicler notes the sending of prophets, also noting that they were not listened to (cf 2Ki 21:10). This was also an issue in the death of Saul and the final destruction of Judah by Babylon (cf 1Ch 10:13–14; 2Ch 36:15). (TLSB)

33:11–17 Unique to the Chronicler, showing his stress on immediate retribution: Manasseh's evil brings invasion and defeat, while his repentance brings restoration to rule. (CSB)

33:11 *captured Manasseh*. Assyrian ruler Esarhaddon (681–669 BC) records the tribute of 22 kings west of the Euphrates, and Manasseh is listed among them. (TLSB)

took him to Babylon. In extant non-Biblical records there is no reference as yet to Manasseh being taken to Babylon by an Assyrian king. Esarhaddon (681–669 B.C.) lists him among 22 kings required to forward materials for his building projects, and Ashurbanipal (669–627) names him as one of a number of vassals supporting his campaign against Egypt. The fact that an Assyrian king would have him taken to Babylon suggests that this incident may have taken place during the rebellion of Shamash-Shum-Ukin against his brother and overlord Ashurbanipal. This rebellion lasted from 652 to 648, and Manasseh may have joined or at least have been suspected of assisting in the Babylonian defection from Assyria. Manasseh may have been found innocent, or he may have been pardoned on the basis of a renewed pledge of loyalty. Egypt had also bolted from the Assyrian yoke under the new 26th dynasty, and the return of Manasseh to rule may reflect the Assyrian need of a vassal near the border of Egypt. (CSB)

33:12–16 Unique to 2Ch. Manasseh’s repentance reflects the prayer of Solomon at the temple dedication (7:14). Gr Naz: “I know of a Fifth [baptism] also, which is that of tears, and is much more laborious, received by him who washes his bed every night and his couch with tears; ... who goeth mourning and of a sad countenance; who imitates the repentance of Manasseh and the humiliation of the Ninevites upon which God had mercy” (NPNF 2 7:358). Luth: “Why shall we have any doubt that God in His heart considers and counts the afflictions of His children and that He measures our tears and records them on unbreakable tablets which the enemies of the church are completely unable to destroy except by repentance? Manasseh was a very great tyrant and a most terrible persecutor of the godly. Therefore his exile and captivity would not have been sufficient to atone for those sins; but when he recognizes his sin and is truly repentant, the Lord shows him mercy” (AE 1:289). (TLSB)

33:12 The language is reminiscent of Solomon’s prayer (7:14). (CSB)

33:14 *rebuilt the outer wall*. For the Chronicler such building programs are a sign of divine blessing (8:1–6; 11:5–12; 14:6–7; 26:9–10, 14–15; 32:1–5, 27–30; 1Ch 11:7–9; 15:1). (CSB)

33:15–16 Whatever the precise nature of Manasseh’s reforms, Josiah would later still need to remove “the altars Manasseh had built in the two courts of the temple” (2Ki 23:12). (CSB)

33:16 *restored*. By consecration or even by physically bringing it back to its rightful place. (TLSB)

33:17 *high places*. Manasseh's reformation, which came at the end of his life, failed to eradicate worship at the high places. But by every act of sacrifice contrary to God's ordinance, the people heaped up wrath for themselves (cf Jer 15:4). Even the king's son remained unregenerate (vv 21–25). (TLSB)

33:18 Cf 2Ki 21:17. (TLSB)

33:19 *prayer*. Such a prayer is found in the apocryphal writings. (TLSB)

33:20 *buried in his palace*. Cf. 2Ki 21:18. His burial in the palace garden makes Manasseh the fifth king the Chronicler names who was not buried in the tombs of the kings. (CSB)

33:10–20 Through distress and the admonitions of the prophets, the Lord leads Manasseh to repentance. Like a patient father, the Lord disciplines us and even allows us to learn our lessons the hard way, through error and pain. Yet He is always ready to hear us, just as He heard and had compassion on the wicked king Manasseh. • O Lord, instruct me through the words of Your prophets, and grant me sincere repentance day by day, that I may know You alone as my God. Amen. (TLSB)

Amon King of Judah

²¹ Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. ²² 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. ²³ But unlike his father Manasseh, he did not humble himself before the LORD; Amon increased his guilt. ²⁴ Amon's officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace. ²⁵ Then the people of the land killed all who had plotted against King Amon, and they made Josiah his son king in his place.

33:21–25 See 2Ki 21:19–26. The Chronicler's account of the reign of Amon (642–640 B.C.) is quite similar to that in Kings, apart from (1) the additional note that Amon was not repentant like his father Manasseh, a note based on a passage unique to the Chronicler (vv. 12–13), and (2) the absence of the death formula. (CSB)

Like Manasseh, Amon's reign began in idolatry. Unlike Manasseh, Amon did not humble himself but increased his guilt (v 23; unique to 2Ch). For this, Amon is assassinated (v 24). (TLSB)