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### **Manasseh in Kings and Chronicles.**

Examining the history of King Manasseh in Kings and Chronicles, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of biblical history and how different authors and traditions have interpreted and recorded past events. In this essay, we will explore the similarities and differences between these two accounts of Manasseh's reign and consider the theological and literary implications of these differences.

The journey of King Manasseh is found in 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 have some similarities. Both reports describe Manasseh as the son of Hezekiah, becoming king when he was twelve and reigning for fifty-five years in Jerusalem. The two biblical passages describe Manasseh as doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord, following the practices of the nations that the Lord had driven out of the land of Israel. Both accounts describe Manasseh as rebuilding the high places his father, Hezekiah, had destroyed, erecting altars to the pagan gods Baal and Asherah, and even sacrificing his sons in the fire. They describe the Lord sending Assyrian armies to conquer Judah because of Manasseh's wickedness.

Second Kings 21 provides a more concise and straightforward account of Manasseh's reign, while 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 provides a more detailed and nuanced report. Second Kings 21 does not describe Manasseh's repentance and restoration. At the same time, 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 devotes a significant portion of the chapter to this theme. 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 includes more information about Manasseh's religious reforms, including the removal of foreign gods and the

restoration of the altar of the Lord. 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 includes information about Manasseh's burial in the garden of his palace, which is not mentioned in 2 Kings 21. The tone of the two accounts is somewhat different, with 2 Kings 21 emphasizing the severity of Manasseh's sins and the consequences of his actions. In contrast, 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 emphasizes the mercy of God and the possibility of repentance and forgiveness.

The authors' different theological and literary agendas influenced how they presented Manasseh's reign. They wrote for different audiences and contexts. The book of Kings was likely written during the Babylonian exile when the Israelites grappled with why they had been exiled from their land. The author of Kings may have emphasized the severity of Manasseh's sins and the consequences of his actions to make a theological point about the reasons for the exile. On the other hand, the book Chronicles was likely written after the return from exile, when the Israelites were focused on rebuilding their community and restoring their religious practices. The Chronicler may have emphasized the theme of repentance and restoration to encourage his readers to return to God and renew their covenant with Him.

The life of King Manasseh in the Bible offers positive and negative examples that we, as Christians, can learn from and apply to our own lives. Our actions have consequences: Manasseh's sins brought about implications not just for him but for the entire nation of Judah. This is a reminder that our actions and choices have ripple effects and that we should strive to live in a way that honors God and blesses those around us. The choices we make about how we consume and dispose of resources can have environmental consequences that affect the health and well-being of future generations. Our choices about political engagement, community involvement, and social justice can have far-reaching effects on the well-being of our society.

The dangers of syncretism: Manasseh's embrace of pagan gods can be seen as an example of idolatry or the worship of false gods, which is also a relevant issue in modern society. While the specific gods and practices that Manasseh embraced may not be present in contemporary culture, there are many other ways in which we can become caught up in idolatrous practices and beliefs. This can take many forms, such as the obsession with consumer goods, the pursuit of wealth and status, or the emphasis on "success" as defined by external measures like money and power. Many idols, such as individualism, celebrity culture, and the worship of technology and innovation, can be seen in modern society. We are influenced by unreal images, filters, realities, and even parallel/META universes, created to satisfy our pagan desires. People seek pleasure more in pictures than in real experiences.

Overall, Manasseh's story is a reminder of the power of God's grace and the importance of repentance, faithfulness, and obedience to God. The more I study the Bible, the more I am impressed with the depth and breadth of the messages. At the same time, I question whether we have really evolved as a society. Given that we have repeated the same sins over the years, and as technology advances, we find ourselves finding more sophisticated ways of sinning.

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