

Angelica Hutchinson
Professor David Emanuel
BIB 102: Old Testament Literature:NA
22 March 2023

King Manasseh

King Manasseh started his reign as king in Jerusalem at the age of twelve years old. He was king for only fifty-five years; he was the longest king. His mother's name was Hephzibah, and his father's name was Hezekiah. King Manasseh was considered to be evil in the sight of YHWH. The reason why he was known to be evil is because he was following the practices of the pagan nation that God deemed detestable; YHWH also drove them out of the land ahead of the Israelites, which were the Amorites. Manasseh rebuilt the pagan shrines that his father Hezekiah had destroyed in 2Kings 18:3-5. Manasseh did the same thing that King Ahab did in 1 Kings 16:32–33, which was the construction of the altars for Baal and setting up the Asherah pole. He worshiped and bowed to all the powers of the heavens and built pagan altars for them in both courtyards of YHWH's Temple; he also carved an image of Asherah and placed it in the Temple. He even sacrificed his son in the fire, which means that he was worshipping Molech, who is a fertility god. In Lev 18:21, God commanded us not to do this abominable thing. These are some of the evil practices he committed that aroused the anger of YHWH: Divination, sorcery, consulting with mediums and psychics.

The two texts are comparable in that they both record that Manasseh became monarch at the age of twelve and ruled for fifty-five years. They both insisted that he was a wicked ruler in the eyes of YHWH and that he practiced despicable activities like visiting mediums, spiritists, and divination. Both of them talked about the various gods that people venerated and honored, such as Molech, whom he honored by giving his son as a tribute, and the power of the universe as a whole. Additionally, they both had exact accounts of how Manasseh had led the people of Judah into dreadful sins that had made them do evil in God's eyes. They both knew that Manasseh had rebuilt the holy places that Hezekiah had destroyed. Both of them stated that after Manasseh's death, Amon was able to succeed in becoming the new king. They both discussed what Manasseh did in relation to the fact that the Israelites and the inhabitants of Jerusalem committed more sin than the Amorites, a country that existed before the Israelites and who were associated with paganism.

The location is different in the two passages; for instance, in 2Kings 21, it is not specifically stated where Manasseh offered his son as a sacrifice to the deity Moloch or Molech. The location, however, was mentioned in 2Chron 33 when it was said that he offered his son as a

sacrifice in the Valley of Ben Hinnom's fire. Additionally, children were also mentioned, whereas son was the only word used in 2Kings 21. I was able to see from 2Chron 33 that this seemed to indicate that he had done it more than once. Hephzibah, his mother, is not mentioned in 2 Chronicles 33 as she is in 2Kings 21, which is another distinction. It was only noted that YAHWEH spoke to Manasseh in 2 Chronicles. However, 2 Kings went into greater detail about what YAHWEH said to Manasseh, not just that God spoke to him. However, in 2 Kings 21, all that was discussed was the sins he had committed and how he had led the people of Judah to sin to the point where they started acting in a way that was repugnant and evil in the eyes of YHWH. They discussed how God reacted when they disregarded what He had to say to them. And with what God did to basically show him that He is the One who is God— not Manasseh. Having his eyes opened to God's revelation or His wrath; that he is not as powerful as he had imagined himself to be, Manasseh was moved to repent before God in 2 Chron 33. The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah, according to 2 Kings, contains a full account of Manasseh's years of service as king and everything he accomplished. But in 2 Chron, it was mentioned that the accounts were kept in the books of the kings of Israel. God allegedly reacted kindly to King Manasseh's sincere petition and deed of repentance, according to 2Chron. The Asherah pole and the lofty places he renovated were mentioned in 2 Chronicles, but 2 Kings makes no mention of them. When Manasseh passed away, it was revealed in 2 Kings that he was buried in the palace's yard of Uzza. Even so, in 2Chron, all that is said about him is that he was interred and that he rested in the palace. Manasseh and King Ahab both committed the same transgression in regards to the Asherah pole and the Baal shrines; this parallel between him and King Ahab was drawn in 2 Kings 21. But they did not compare their actions in 2 Chron 33. The figure he created, carved, and carried into God's Temple is not mentioned in 2 Chron 33, but it is revealed in 2 Kings 21, that it was the Asherah pole.

I don't believe any of the accounts were actually changed. One account, in my opinion, merely sums up what happened in his life, whereas the other went into great depth and took the time to really let the reader know what actually transpired. I was angry with King Manasseh because he had the temerity to provoke God's wrath in such a way and force the people to engage in such heinous acts when he was supposed to be leading them to venerate the one and only GOD, YAHWEH. But after reading 2Chron, I was able to make sense of everything much more clearly, and as a result, I no longer feel as angry and frustrated towards him. Instead, I am more sympathetic. He reminds me of the Apostle Paul when he was Saul, in my opinion. As a result, now that I am aware of King Manasseh's background thanks to what 2Chron discussed, I no longer have any problem with him.

I do not think they made the adjustments, as I've previously indicated. I think that's how it appeared because one account contained a seemingly straightforward account with some limited information, whereas the other account contained in-depth information about his life. In both

stories, the reader will get a detailed account of what happened in his life, giving us access to the full story. The same is true of the New Testament, where the four gospels each contain an account of Jesus' life and how they all concur on the events that took place during His lifetime but are different in how they present His complete life. Only his evil behavior as a monarch is described in the stories in 2 Kings, but he is also described as such in 2 Chronicles. But in 2Chron, it demonstrated how God humbled him and how he sincerely repented before God. However, 2Kings it just made him out to be a bad king and left out how God changed his life.

In conclusion, the first lesson we can learn from the life of King Manasseh is as it states in 1John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". As a result of this, he was transformed from a wicked monarch to a virtuous king, just like his father, Hezekiah. Given that he was a wicked monarch in God's eyes before repenting, God no longer views him as evil, which further demonstrates God's mercy. God did exactly what was said in 1John 1:9 that He would do toward King Manasseh. He was guilty of so many sins, but God was merciful to him and pardoned them all. In His sight, it was as if he had never done those sinful things. No matter how evil and blasphemous someone was towards God, once they truly repent and ask God for forgiveness, He will forgive and love them without hesitation. I also see God being patient with Manasseh, knowing that He is God. He could have easily gotten rid of him in a flash, but He chose to have grace, patience, and compassion towards him and his ignorance. In today's generation, He is still walking in His nature. God can change the worst of the worst and turn them into someone good, just by loving them and showing them what it is like to receive or get a taste of His merciful nature. So we, as humans, need to have reverence for YHWH. He is not just some ordinary being; He is literally God, and we should respect His laws, His house, and all that He deems to be holy and pure; we should treat it more highly than anything else we have ever encountered. I also discovered that if I try to think that I am superior to God, He will most certainly prove to me that I am not, and that I should continue to act in a childlike manner--if I humble myself, He will exalt me in His own timing. And refrain from walking in pride or ego, or else He will end up humbling me-- He will not be doing this in a judgeful or condemning manner, but instead in a loving and convicting way, for He reproves those He loves. So I will know that He is doing it out of His loving nature towards me.