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BIB 102: Old Testament Literature

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Compare and Contrast of King Manasseh

This essay seeks to give a brief compare and contrast on the two accounts of King Manasseh in 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33:1 – 20. Why was King Manasseh such a bad king? What are some similarities in the two accounts in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles? What are some differences and why is that important? What can be learned from the life of King Manasseh? As we dive into a quick summary and similarity report on the two accounts of King Manasseh in 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33: 1 – 20, all these questions and others will be answered below and hopefully some lessons can be learned from his life.

Manasseh was one of the kings of Judah and he reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem. He was known to be one of the worst kings in the history of the kings of Judah, and ironically he served as king the longest. King Manasseh was known to be the worst king in Judah due to his evil and treacherous acts done in the land. He rebuilt evil altars that had been destroyed previously, and he set up altars for pagan gods. He worshipped and served the stars and the moon. He even made a carved image of a pagan god and had it placed in the temple of the LORD. King Manasseh made his child pass through fire and burned him as an offering to a pagan god. Apart from himself, he caused many of the people of Israel to sin greatly and give offerings to pagan gods. Although the LORD spoke to King Manasseh, he did not listen and kept doing what was evil in the LORD's sight. Eventually after his long reign as king of Judah, he

passed away and was buried in the garden of Uzza and his son Amon became king in his place. This is a brief summary of King Manasseh and the similarities between 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33:1 – 20 are very major. However, there are a few differences that must be mentioned.

In the first place, in 2 Kings 21: 6, it mentions that King Manasseh made his son pass through the fire and burned him as a sacrifice. However, in 2 Chronicles 33: 6, it says that he made his sons pass through the fire, which gives the indication of King Manasseh having more than one child. King Manasseh worshipped many pagan gods which are seen in both accounts in Scripture. However, in 2 Kings, it says that he worshipped a pagan god named Asherah but in 2 Chronicles, the pagan god is named as Asherim. When King Manasseh was doing evil in the sight of the LORD, it states in 2 Kings that the LORD spoke through his servants the prophets concerning the king and it goes into a brief description of the way the LORD will deal with King Manasseh. In the account of 2 Chronicles, it says that the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people but they did not listen. This gives off the idea that in 2 Chronicles, the LORD spoke to Manasseh before He handed him over to his enemies, and in 2 Kings, the LORD spoke to his prophets and did not warn King Manasseh about his actions. One of the major differences to highlight in the account of King Manasseh is in the latter part of 2 Chronicles 33. King Manasseh is seen as an evil king all throughout 2 Chronicles 33, but when he was in great trouble with the King of Assyria, he humbled himself before the LORD and sought after Him. The LORD was moved by his act of forgiveness and brought him back safely to Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 33: 14 – 20 recounts the way Manasseh made a complete change of heart and removed all the idols and foreign gods from the temple of the LORD. He even built altars to the LORD and offered peace and burnt offerings on them to the LORD. 2 Chronicles 33: 18 states that his “good deeds” are

found in the book of Kings but according to 2 Kings 21, there is no records of such. There are only reports of his evil acts in Judah.

There are many similarities between 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33: 1 -20 but there seems to be a lot of discrepancy between the two as well. This may be due to the authors of the book of Kings and the book of Chronicles. The authors of the book of Kings were prophets and the authors of the book of Chronicles were scribes. So a lot of the views can be seen or changed depending on the prophet or the scribe and the time it was written.

To conclude on the account of King Manasseh, one of the things we can learn from the two accounts of his life is grace. It shows us that despite being Judah's worse king, God still gives us grace to come back to Him and repent. In life, it does not matter what people call you but what you answer to. When Manasseh was seen as a bad king, God still saw him as His child. Most people fall short and do crazy things that are not recommendable, but God still extends grace. Another lesson that can be seen in King Manasseh's story is mercy. With all the evil this king did, God still warned him instead of taking him out like the LORD did with Onan in the story in Genesis. For fifty-five years, the LORD showed him mercy and gave him many chances to repent and come back to him. This shows the many ways our God is merciful to us. As many years we have been alive on earth, the Lord still forgives us when we go astray, no matter how much we do evil in His sight.