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Differing Views of King Manasseh

When reading the accounts of King Manasseh, it is essential to grasp the purpose the biblical author is trying to convey. The books of the Kings and the Chronicles cover similar historical periods in the history of Israel. However, there are some significant differences between the two. In Kings, it covers the reign of King Solomon to the Babylonian exile of the Israelites. The focus is on the political history of Israel and Judah, including the reigns of the various kings and the conflicts between the two kingdoms. Nonetheless, The Books of Chronicles focus more on the religious history of Israel, including the worship practices of the Israelites and the role of the Levites and priests in the temple. With this understanding, we can look at the life of King Manasseh and see his whole purpose in the biblical narrative.

Like many other Kings in the history of Israel, King Manasseh did evil in the sight of the Lord. In both accounts of his story, the authors spared no details on how Manasseh was corrupt and detestable during his reign, whether that be the rebuilding of pagan shrines, construction of altars to Baal, or worshiping pagan gods in the Temple of the Lord. Manasseh seemed relentless in his pursuit of rebelling against the customs of his predecessor and father, King Hezekiah, and God. We can see that the Lord was gracious to Manasseh and the people of

Israel by sending warnings. Verse 9 of both accounts allude to His leading God's people to do even more evil than the pagan nation the Lord destroyed. As a result of his actions, the Lord pronounced judgment on Judah, saying that he would wipe out Jerusalem and remove his people from the land.

Though there are many similarities between the 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, they have different intentions for those who read. 2 Kings 21 intends to speak about Judah's reign and history during this period. In contrast, 2 Chronicles 33 alludes to the more personal and spiritual account of King Manasseh's life. I believe that in verse 11 of 2 Chronicles, the story goes into more detail about God's punishment of Manasseh. This makes the personhood of Manasseh more visible to the reading audience. Prior to this verse, both accounts made him sound like a tyrant who rebelled and found complete strife with Godly living. However, the two accounts begin to differ in how they present Manasseh's repentance and eventual restoration. Though he was completely engulfed in his sin, when he was disciplined in the form of being taken into captivity by the Assyrian armies, this was the catalyst for his repentance. This started Manasseh to humble himself and acknowledge the God of His ancestors, and then restored him to proclaim "...that the LORD alone is God!" (2 Kgs 33:13 NLT). As a result, God would continue to use Manasseh to restore a righteous order to the kingdom of Judah.

2 Kings 21 focuses more on the judgment of the Lord on Judah due to his sins, while 2 Chronicles 33 emphasizes Manasseh's eventual humility and repentance. Yet, both are vital in understanding our walk with God. Remembering that we must reverence God in our lives and not be distracted and consumed in worshipping idols is essential. This will lead to our demise, regretting our decision, and becoming a captive by the things that God has already freed us as

believers from. Our pride often blinds our eyes to what is best for us, and despite our best efforts, the will of the Lord will always prevail, even if that means a season of humility and repentance is necessary. Manasseh's story can be very relatable to Christians who were brought up in the faith because his father was a righteous king, but Manasseh became consumed with the offerings of the world. Proverbs 22: 6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he grows older, he will not abandon it." (NASB). Nonetheless, Manasseh knew whom to call on when trouble came because it was already embedded within him.