

# 1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY

## Part V: Gaining Direction From God's Work In The Rest Of Judah's Dynasty, 2 Chronicles 13-36

### P. Being Encouraged From Manasseh's Life To Face And Confess Our Sins

(2 Chronicles 33:1-20)

#### I. Introduction

- A. Not only among very sinful unbelievers, but some believers who have miserably sinned or walked out of fellowship with God for decades often doubt God would ever want to forgive and bless them.
- B. Yet, God's mercy is infinitely great, a fact Paul noted in recalling how God had forgiven him, the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), a fact that is illustrated in 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 as follows:

#### II. Being Encouraged From Manasseh's Life To Face And Confess Our Sins, 2 Chronicles 33:1-20.

- A. The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles were written after the return of the Babylonian Captivity Hebrew exiles to the Promised Land, Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, p. 590-591.
- B. Accordingly, it was discouraging to the exiles who had initially gone into the Babylon Captivity to see the rebuilt temple was not nearly as magnificent as the temple of Solomon that had been destroyed ( Haggai 2:3, Ibid., p. 591); thus, it was tempting for them to think God might not bless them to the same degree as He had blessed them in the era of David and Solomon prior to their apostasy and subsequent judgment.
- C. Thus, the author of 2 Chronicles told of the great sin, severe judgment, repentance and restoration of king Manasseh to give the returned exiles hope to trust in God's forgiveness and blessing of them, Ibid., p. 646:
  1. Though the account of Manasseh's great sins as Judah's king appear in both the Chronicles and Kings accounts, the 2 Kings account omits any reference to his restoration after divine judgment, Ibid.
  2. The author of Chronicles, however, emphasized this restoration in an effort to "give hope to the exilic and postexilic community of Jews" that God would also restore them for their repentance, Ibid.
- D. The Chronicler's account with this theme thus unfolds in 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 as follows:
  1. Manasseh began his reign by going into such deep sin it exceeded that of the former Canaanite pagans:
    - a. Though his father, Hezekiah had removed Judah's idols to honor God (2 Chronicles 29:1-31:21), king Manasseh began to rule with a full dedication to idolatry equal to the wickedness of the pagan nations God had judged to be driven out of Canaan by the people of Israel, 2 Chronicles 33:1-2.
    - b. Manasseh rebuilt the high places Hezekiah had destroyed, he rebuilt the Baal altars, made groves and worshipped and served all the false astral gods, 2 Chronicles 33:3.
    - c. Indeed, Manasseh built altars to worship idols in the Lord's temple, including altars for the whole starry host of heaven in the two courts of the temple, and he became involved in deep witchcraft where he practiced the human sacrifices of his own human infant sons, 2 Chronicles 33:4-6.
    - d. Even worse than the pagans, Manasseh made an image in disobedience to the first commandment, and put it in the temple, the place God ordained to David and Solomon to be His temple, 33:7-8.
    - e. Thus, when Manasseh had done worse than the pagan nations whom God had displaced from Canaan in judgment, He sent word to warn him to repent, but Manasseh did not do so, 33:9-10.
  2. God then severely judged Manasseh by allowing the Assyrians to capture him, put a hook in his nostrils, bind him and take him to Babylon in fulfillment of the Mosaic Covenant, cf. Deuteronomy 28:15, 25; cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., ftn. to 2 Chronicles 33:11.
  3. In his affliction, Manasseh humbled himself, repented, and prayed to God for help, 2 Chron. 33:12-13a.
  4. God graciously heard him, and brought Manasseh back from captivity, 2 Chronicles 33:13b.
  5. Upon thus realizing God was to be heeded, Manasseh increased Jerusalem's defenses (2 Chron. 33:13c, 14), took away the pagan idols, casting them out of the city, he repaired the Lord's altar and commanded the people of Judah to worship the Lord, 2 Chronicles 33:15-16.
  6. The nation obeyed, but errantly worshiped God on the high places versus only at the temple, 33:17.

***Lesson:*** *Though Manasseh sinned even MORE than the pagan nations God had punished in driving them out from before His people, Israel, and though God severely judged him with humiliating, severe captivity, once Manasseh truly repented, God fully restored and blessed him.*

***Application:*** *May we be encouraged that, regardless how badly we have failed the Lord, it is ALWAYS worthwhile for us to repent, for God's mercy is infinite, and He can and will forgive and bless us again!*