



Week 6: 2 Chronicles 33:1-16

RETURN TO REPENTANCE

King Manasseh's reign is marked by a stark contrast between his initial wickedness and eventual repentance. He institutes idol worship, builds altars to false gods, practices sorcery, and leads the people of Judah astray into great sin. This disobedience brings divine judgment, as Manasseh is captured by Assyrian forces and brought to Babylon in chains. However, in his distress, he humbles himself before God, seeking forgiveness and restoring the worship of the Lord in Judah. From this point onwards, Manasseh's a very different king – a different king, indeed!

THE SCRIPTURE: 2 CHRONICLES 33:1-16

¹ Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. ² And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. ³ For he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had broken down, and he erected altars to the Baals, and made Asheroth, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. ⁴ And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem shall my name be forever." ⁵ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. ⁶ And he burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger. ⁷ And the carved image of the idol that he had made he set in the house of God, of which God said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name forever, ⁸ and I will no more remove the foot of Israel from the land that I appointed for your fathers, if only they will be careful to do all that I have commanded them, all the law, the statutes, and the rules given through Moses." ⁹ Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the people of Israel. ¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they paid no attention. ¹¹ Therefore the LORD brought upon them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria, who captured Manasseh with hooks and bound him with chains of bronze and brought him to Babylon.

¹² And when he was in distress, he entreated the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. ¹³ He prayed to him, and God was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God. ¹⁴ Afterward he built an outer wall for the city of David west of Gihon, in the valley, and for the entrance into the Fish Gate, and carried it around Ophel, and raised it to a very great height. He also put commanders of the army in all the fortified cities in Judah. ¹⁵ And he took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built on the mountain of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem, and he threw them outside of the city. ¹⁶ He also restored the altar of the LORD and offered on it sacrifices of peace offerings and of thanksgiving, and he commanded Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel.

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LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 6

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a person in your life who has experienced the most surprising transformation? What was the person like before and after?
2. Consider that a friend calls you late at night and is lost without access to a map. What kinds of things would you say to help your friend find his or her way to safety?

DIVING DEEPER

3. In 2 Chronicles 33:1-9, we find a list of all the vices of Manasseh's early years of his reign. Make a list of them below.
4. Why do you believe Manasseh is accused of leading the nation of Israel astray in verse 9? Do you consider this a fair charge against him? Why or why not?
5. To what degree do you think that the leaders in your life (i.e. family, work, church, nation) are responsible for your conduct? Do you think this absolves you of guilt?
6. Verse 10 presents another instance of disobedience. What is this disobedience, and why might it be regarded as the most egregious yet?
7. What is the Lord's response to this last evil of Manasseh, and was it effective?
8. Which of the following do you most agree with, and why? Which statement most aligns with what 2 Chronicles 33 teaches us?
 - a. "When distress enters my life, it is most often a random occurrence."
 - b. "When distress enters my life, it is most often because I've sinned."
 - c. "When distress enters my life, it is most often because the Lord wants to lead me to him."

9. Read 2 Corinthians 1:9-10. Can you think of a circumstance in your life right now in which God may be allowing difficulty to lead you deeper dependence upon Him?
10. Read 1 Peter 1:6-7 and 2 Corinthians 4:7-15. What are some other reasons that the Lord may choose to allow distress to enter into the life of a believer?
11. According to Acts 5:31 and 11:18, repentance is a gift that God gives—it is only possible because of his grace. In other words, no one can repent unless God grants repentance. What, therefore, must be our first step towards repentance? Where do you see this in Manasseh's life?
12. Imagine that you have known Manasseh for years before 2 Chronicles 33:12. Witnessing his drastic change, what kinds of things would prove to you that the king's heart has experienced a genuine and permanent change for the better?
13. What in your life do you need to turn from in order to follow Jesus more closely? What would turning from that look like in your life? Read Galatians 6:1. What would turning from that look like as others would stand alongside you?