

<<< 2 Chronicles Chapter Thirty-Three

~ Our Spiritual Safari has traveled a very long, unpaved, rocky and uphill road through Chronicles to reach the summit of Mount Revival in our previous report; during the reign of that great king, King Hezekiah. Hezekiah was the best king, by far, after David and Solomon. Hezekiah had the most glorious revival in the land – ever – in the history of Judah. We also know from our study in Kings that the Lord spared Hezekiah’s life for fifteen additional years after the boil he developed - which would have killed him. That was a gracious dispensation on the part of God, to be sure – and it was a direct answer to Hezekiah’s prayer. However, it was during that time of his life when Hezekiah foolishly displayed the wealth of Judah to the spies from Babylon; indeed, that was a huge mistake. Well, that is the only thing God records during Hezekiah’s extended fifteen years of lifetime: a grave mistake.

And, just like that, Hezekiah is dead at the time we pick up in this report. That means we must come down from our high and lofty place up on the mountain of revival; and we arrive at bad King Manasseh on the throne in the southern kingdom of Judah. This report finds Judah practicing evil that is comparable to the evil day we live in today, to be sure. Remember, the northern kingdom of Israel has been taken completely into Assyrian captivity at this time in which we are studying.

Well, Manasseh was the worst king Judah ever had, by far. Manasseh will go to such evil extremes, as we will see, that God Himself had to intervene. But being Hezekiah’s son – how do we explain that? – This safari doesn’t explain it. I see it happening all around me and I don’t have the answer; so, I know I could not explain it regarding this account. What I do know is when bad parents produce a bad child, it seems normal – and no one seems to ask any questions. It is the exception to that rule that we have here; which personally disturbs me.

Of course, the character of those we grow up around is a heavy, heavy influence; and all young people go through a period when they think their parents are stupid. But this extreme between Hezekiah and Manasseh seems almost unbelievable. During this time in the reign of Manasseh is the time when the Shekinah Glory will leave the temple, too; because of the sins of the people and their rebellion. The Shekinah Glory moved out of the temple to the walls of Jerusalem and waited there for a while; but none turned to Him. Then, He moved out to the Mount of Olives and waited; but there was no movement on the part of the people to follow. So, the Shekinah Glory was called back up into Heaven and ***Ichabod*** was written over the threshold of the temple. Today, the Islamic Mosque of Omar stands on the Temple Mount.

Make no mistake: this is when the visible Presence and Glory of God departed from the temple, my friends. Their house is indeed now left unto them desolate. Most Biblical scholars seem to think that the Shekinah Glory did not leave the temple until some later point in time - nearer the captivity by Babylon. Well, if the Shekinah Glory did not leave the temple during this reign of Manasseh, we must consider how we don't see any other reign that would cause the Presence of God to remain! This was most certainly the time when the Spirit of God left the temple....

¹ Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem:

² But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

~ God always gives evil men ample time to turn to Him; and Manasseh reigned much longer than most of the other kings. Manasseh ruled longer than both David and Solomon. God is merciful, He is longsuffering, and He isn't willing that any should perish. See, God has plenty of time on His hands with eternity behind Him — and eternity ahead of Him! God isn't in any hurry. We're getting *God's viewpoint* here in Chronicles; and God says

Manasseh was an evil man. Actually, Manasseh is as bad as Ahab and Jezebel were; Balaam was worshipped with child sacrifice. They worshipped Mercury, Venus – all the stars of Heaven – all in different ways; the horoscope business was big business in the temple at this time.

Some people think necromancy and horoscope is all just innocent fun; except many put more trust in their horoscope than they do in the Word of God! Hollywood believes if you cross this star with that star you'll get some mysterious and spectacular something – but that's been proven a failure time after time. It's amazing how many seemingly intelligent people get all wrapped up in this sort of thing. Well, Manasseh went all the way – and I do mean “*all the way*” - in idolatry! ~

³ For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

⁴ Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever.

⁵ And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

⁶ And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

~ There were different degrees of how egregious one could become with idolatry. If you gathered leaves and burned them – that may not have been so bad; but when you are burning your children alive, that's a real problem. That's what Manasseh was doing, and it does not – cannot – get any worse than child sacrifice. There is a tremendous movement towards Satanic worship presently. It's all around us. So, God reasons with them – and God

reasons with us, too. See, as we read on here, God tells His people that He will bless them if they will turn from their idolatry and worship Him....

⁷ And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

⁸ Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.

⁹ So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

¹⁰ And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.

¹¹ Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

¹² And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,

¹³ And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.

~ Because Manasseh has sacrificed his own children in the fire, I think I would have given him up – and I know most of you would have given him up, too. Well, God didn't give him up. God did send trouble, however – and plenty of it. This should have all been a stark warning to the nation, but

they were blinded by continual and willful sin. Most people don't accept Manasseh coming back to God. Well, he did; although there was no revival at this time.

The Word of God tells us to train up a child in the way he should go and when he is older he will return to it. I'm sure Hezekiah raised this boy right; but we still have not figured out what went wrong there in that father and son relationship in the first place. Unfortunately, the people in Manasseh's kingdom never did truly turn back to God. This may be the most remarkable account in the entire Bible regarding the revelation of just how gracious God really is and can be....

¹⁴ Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah.

¹⁵ And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city.

¹⁶ And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.

¹⁷ Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the LORD their God only.

¹⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel.

¹⁹ His prayer also, and how God was intreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up

groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they are written among the sayings of the seers.

²⁰ So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

²¹ Amon was two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem.

²² But he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them;

²³ And humbled not himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more.

²⁴ And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house.

²⁵ But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

~ So, our Spiritual Safari has come up the rocky, unpaved, uphill and dangerous path of revival in Chronicles and we're going to see one last revival period under King Josiah. It's not exactly what Hezekiah saw happen in his day, but it's still revival, to be sure. We also continue to follow the footsteps of the fathers in the southern kingdom of Judah at this very late hour in their history from *God's viewpoint*. Manasseh was a thoroughly wicked man who lived in abject disobedience to God. Yet, by the end of his life, Manasseh's heart was turned to Him. That's the amazing Self-testimony by God of His patience and sovereignty!

I believe patience and sovereignty are the real messages here. Even so, Judah will soon be taken into captivity down in Babylon. I hope you have prayed for wisdom, judgment and discernment as you study your Bible. Just one more report in Chronicles and we're going to leave Judah. We're going

to jump in our safari time machine and join Paul in Corinth; as Judah goes into Babylonian captivity. There, in Corinth, we're going to continue to examine the same grace and mercy of God that He has shown to Manasseh in this section of Scripture. I hope you will travel along with us ~

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And With Wizards >>>
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