

2 Chronicles 33 : 1-13. Commit to memory vs. 10-13. Read the chapter.

GOLDEN TEXT—Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.—Proverbs 14: 34.

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

2 ¹ But did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, ² like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord ³ had cast out before the children of Israel.

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 best of heaven, and served them.

4 ⁴ Also he built altars in the house of the Lord, whereof the Lord ⁵ 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 ⁷ And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hin'nom: ⁸ also he observed times, and used enchantments, and ⁹ used witchcraft, and dealt with ¹⁰ a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger.

7 And he set ¹¹ a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God ¹² had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house,

Revised Version.—¹ And he; ² after the; ³ Omil had; ⁴ the; ⁵ Asheroth; ⁶ And he built; ⁷ He also made; ⁸ and he practised augury; ⁹ practised sorcery; ¹⁰ them that had familiar spirits; ¹¹ the graven image of; ¹² out of; ¹³ off the land; ¹⁴ if only; ¹⁵ observe; ¹⁶ even all the law; ¹⁷ And; ¹⁸ so that they did evil more than did the nations; ¹⁹ gave no heed; ²⁰ in chains; ²¹ distress; ²² he.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED 1

Time and Place—Manasseh reigned from 697 to 642, B.C.; Judah and Babylon.

Connection—The good King Hezekiah (see Lessons I. and II.) died after reigning over Judah for twenty-nine years, and was succeeded on the throne by his wicked son, Manasseh.

I. MANASSEH'S SIN.—1, 2. Manasseh. The name means "forgetting," and sadly this young king forgot his duty to God and his people. Twelve years old . . . began to reign; although in Judah, as in England, a king was not supposed to be of age till eighteen. Reigned fifty and five years; the longest reign in Judah's history. Did . . . evil. Probably after his father's death he fell under the influence of wicked counsellors. In the sight of the Lord; who is pleased when we do right, and displeased when we do wrong. Like unto . . . the heathen. But he was guiltier than they, because he had clearer knowledge.

3-5. We have here a black list of Manasseh's sins against God and the nation. Built . . . high places; temples for idol worship, usually situated on rising ground. Hezekiah . . . had broken down. See ch. 31: 1 What a disloyal son, undoing his father's work, instead of carrying it on! Altars for Baalim; plural of Baal, the highest god of the Canaanites. He was worshipped under different forms, hence the plural. Made Asheroth (Rev. Ver.); carved

and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen ¹² 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 ¹³ out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; ¹⁴ so that they will ¹⁵ take heed to do all that I have commanded them, ¹⁶ according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.

9 ¹⁷ So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, ¹⁸ and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord ¹⁹ had destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they ¹⁹ would not hearken.

11 Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh ²⁰ among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

12 And when he was in ²¹ affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.

13 And ²² 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.

poles used in the worship of the impure goddess Ashtoreth. Worshipped all the host of heaven; the sun, moon and stars, and the signs of the Zodiac.

6-8. Caused his children to pass through the fire. The cruel god Moloch was worshipped by placing children in the arms of his huge image, whence they rolled into the fire below. Manasseh followed Ahaz (2 Kgs. 16: 3) in this dreadful practice. In the valley, etc.; the valley of the Kidron lying to the east of Jerusalem. Observed times; sought to distinguish lucky from unlucky days by the movements of birds or clouds, or other appearances in nature. Used enchantments, and . . . witchcraft; sought help from supposed higher powers, other than God? Dealt with them that had familiar spirits (Rev. Ver.); those who pretended to be able to communicate with the spirit world. All these practices are forbidden in Deut. 18: 10, 11.

9, 10. Not only against God did Manasseh sin, but against his people as well. By his example and influence, he made them do worse than the heathen. King and people became obstinate, too, in their sin. The Lord spake (in warning) . . . but they would not hearken.

II. MANASSEH'S PUNISHMENT.—11. The king of Assyria . . . took Manasseh among the thorns. The Hebrew words may mean that Manasseh had a hook thrust through his nostrils to



Assyrian Scribes Taking Account of Prisoners, etc.

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