

The Conversion of Manasseh and the Reign of Amon

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References: **2 Chronicles 33**, 2 Chronicles 33:10-20; Daniel 4:33-36; 2 Kings 19:35-37; 2 Kings 20:17-18; Psalm 119:71; Hebrews 7:25; Joel 2:25; Acts 19:19; Luke 15:4-7; Luke 15:15-17; Genesis 25:32-34; Jeremiah 15:4; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Samuel 13:14; 2 Kings 21:19-26; Romans 12:19

Opening and Prayer

I'm thankful Mary Campo is in service today. Yes, she's here tonight, and she's smiling. Yes, I know. Thank you. Very good. We're happy. She would like to feel better, but she's happy; she feels as good as she does. Yeah. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. All right. If someone would pray, please.

Heavenly Father, we thank You again for this time that we can come together again. Lord, we're just so grateful to You for the time we had and were able to spend together with You this morning. Amen. We praise You again for Your goodness to us. We praise You for Your answered prayer with Mary and her recovery, and that we can see her again this morning and tonight. And we just pray Your continued hand upon her of healing and restoration and encouragement as well.

We just thank You for the word that You gave us through Juergen this morning and how encouraging that was. And we ask that You be with Juergen and Wendy, both through this weekend and all the ministries that they'll be speaking at—but on Tuesday for Juergen, and on the special meeting for Wendy on Wednesday. And Lord, You just work as she shares You and all that You have done through her in the ministry You gave her. You just encourage everyone who's there and who will hear it. And You draw them all closer to You and encouraged in You. And Lord, I ask if there's anybody who may be there that doesn't know You, that You would use it to save them. And at that time, yeah, You just bless that work that You do.

And we just praise You, Lord, for all that You do in the many ministries at the assembly. And again, all the ways that You've allowed us just to watch You work through the years and faithfully every week. And You surprise us with who comes in. And yeah, we just thank You for it. And we ask that You protect each of the ministries through the week and just continue

to do a great work in each one of them. And especially, Lord, we lift up the ESL to You and we praise You for that ministry. And we ask that You strengthen and encourage the teachers and, yeah, just speak in a great way through them and save souls and just show Yourself to all those students. And yeah, we thank You, Lord.

We think of Jeet and Jazz, and we ask Your hand upon them as they travel this week into the States. And we praise You, Lord, as we already have, for Your hand upon them, taking them to India safely and doing such a great work through them and bringing them back safely. And we just ask that You continue to take them to their family in the States safely and give them a time of encouragement together, a time of enjoyment in You together, and bring them back safely to us as well. And continue the work that You did in India through them while they were seeds that were planted. Lord, continue to water it and bring it to fruit. And yeah, and as well as the morning ministry that they do every morning into India. Keep, keep, keep, keep working in that and bless it and do a great work to Your glory.

We thank You. And we think of Jill, Lord, at this time, and we ask that You just put Your hand upon her and encourage her and help her in her situation and need and desire for fellowship. And we ask that You would provide the way and work out the details for that, as well as this news of the brother Michael, Lord, in his situation and need. Thank You for his desire to learn more of You now and just draw him close to You and strengthen him. And provide not only a way for him to join in fellowship, but also, as was mentioned, that maybe a door could be open to that place where he is and Your word can go up to it and You shine Your light there and You save, save souls there.

Lord, these are great opportunities, but these are things that we need You for. So You lead the details of it all and You open the doors and You provide the hearts of those who are to be involved in You. And You lead us as You always have and do, do, do great things to Your glory through it. We thank You. We ask again, Lord tonight. I thank You for Your continued hand upon Amir's family and protection to them. And we ask that You continue tonight and protect them and open the door for contact with Amir this week, if it'd be possible and, yeah, show Yourself to his family through it and save them.

We thank You, Lord. We just thank You for Your goodness to us and Your faithfulness to us. And as we open Your word tonight, Lord, I ask that You put Your hand upon Harold. And again, we praise You for Your hand upon Harold and Norma in their health and recovery. Amen. And I ask that You continue with that as well. And just speak through Harold after a long day and be with his voice and give him the words to say. Let Your Spirit work tonight to draw us all closer to You and just to encourage us and give us the enjoyment of You together.

Lord, if it's Your will, would You open the door of Zoom and whatnot for Eric to join? But be with him and Sarah in the Bahamas and encourage them and bless them and protect them as well. We thank You and we praise You tonight for just Your goodness and faithfulness to us. We give You this time in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

The Affliction of King Manasseh

Very, very good. Well, we're studying in 2 Kings, but we're going to start tonight in 2 Chronicles chapter 33. 2 Chronicles chapter 33. We have a story about Manasseh in 2 Chronicles 33; it is not recorded in the parallel story in 2 Kings. And so, though we pretty much finished our studies in 2 Kings, this story in 2 Chronicles is very interesting and probably we could learn a lot from it. So, 2 Chronicles chapter 33. And I'm going to get somebody, please, to read for me verses 10 through 17. That'll give my voice a rest. 2 Chronicles 33:10 through 17, please.

[2 Chronicles 33:10-17 NKJV]

¹⁰ And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. ¹¹ Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon. ¹² Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, ¹³ and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

¹⁴ After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and it enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. ¹⁵ He took away the foreign gods and the idol from 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 he cast them out of the city. ¹⁶ He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. ¹⁷ Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

Amen. Thank you, Roy. So, you may find that an amazing story; I certainly found it an amazing story. I can remember probably the first time that I read through it with understanding, and I said to myself, "Harold, this is **fantastic**." This is one of the most

wicked men in the history of the kings, and the Lord gave him, by His grace, the Lord gave him a conversion. And he turned around.

How long was Manasseh king? 55 years. And by the grace of God, he was converted later in life in a marvelous way. Actually, his story is not dissimilar to the story of Nebuchadnezzar, is it? Nebuchadnezzar was the wicked king, and God allowed him to be living like a sheep—sorry, like a cow or an ox—for seven years.

[Daniel 4:33-36 NKJV]

³³ That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws. ³⁴ And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever:

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.

³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?" ³⁶ At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me.

After which, not only was he converted, but he was restored to his kingdom. In this amazing story of Manasseh, not only was he converted to the Lord, but he was restored to his own kingdom. So 55 years—that's long enough to turn things around. Has the Lord given you longer life than you'd expected? And some of us say, "Yes." What's that mean? Well, it means He's given you an opportunity to do some things maybe that you should have done before, but you didn't, and an opportunity to turn around if you have to. What a wonderful thing when the Lord gives extra years.

So this is the story of Manasseh. That's the introduction. Let's go back now to verse 10 and pick up the detail. Verse 10 says, "The Lord spake to Manasseh and to his people, but they"—that is Manasseh and his people—"they would not hearken." That happened many times. The Lord apparently spoke by many prophets to Manasseh and his people, and he kept on saying

no. And he did all those wicked things that we read about in 2nd Kings, repeated here in 2nd Chronicles; he did much that was extremely evil.

Verse 11: "Wherefore, the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria." The Assyrians, remember, had been very active. They took Samaria away captive. They did much destruction in the land in the days of Hezekiah. And in a remarkable way, Sennacherib was defeated.

[2 Kings 19:35-37 NKJV]

³⁵ And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses--all dead. ³⁶ So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home, and remained at Nineveh. ³⁷ Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

But they come back again. And they came back in the days of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah. So, you've probably noticed it in life, that very often the Lord sends deliverance, but it's a short-lived deliverance. And the same problem that you fought five years ago is back, and you're fighting it again. It may have been 25 years ago. Very rarely does the Lord completely eliminate an enemy. David got much victory over Saul, but Saul pursued him. And the Assyrians were the enemy; the Samaritans and Israel were the enemy. And over and over they were defeated, but they kept on coming back. What happens to us when we find evil attacking us? We cry to the Lord, we get victory, and we continue to cry to the Lord to maintain that victory.

So, here we are in verse 11. The Lord brought upon them the captains, plural, of the hosts of the kings of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, bound him with fetters—must have been pretty miserable—and carried him to Babylon. You would have expected him to carry him to Nineveh, to carry him to somewhere where the Assyrians were strong. But instead, they carried him to Babylon. Remember now that Manasseh's father, just before Manasseh became king, had shown his riches and bragged in front of the men of Babylon. And the prophet Isaiah said, "The Babylonians are going to take you captive."

[2 Kings 20:17-18 NKJV]

¹⁷ "Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left," says the LORD. ¹⁸ "And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

And the first sign of that was that his own son Manasseh was taken captive to Babylon.

The Grace of Repentance

So, verse 12. When he was in affliction—what's that word mean? Distress. No, he was in pretty bad shape. We don't know what happened to him. Did he go to prison? Probably. Was he like Jeremiah, put in a prison with inadequate food, and the prison was just a hole in the ground? We don't know. He was in affliction there. What did he do? He besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.

So, you've heard it said, you've seen it in Scripture: very, very often the greatest blessings in a person's life come after the greatest affliction that they suffer. And so, the psalmist says it. I can't remember what psalm it's in; could be 119. And it says, "I was glad that I was afflicted."

[Psalm 119:71 NKJV]

It is good for me that I have been afflicted,
That I may learn Your statutes.

Because then, I sought the Lord. And many men of God will say, "It's true, the greatest blessings, the greatest turnarounds in my life came in a time of affliction, not in the time of prosperity." Something very peculiar about the human heart, that we respond under discipline. That's a good thing. Sometimes we need more discipline, not less. Good evening. Is that John? Yeah. Very good, John. Nice to have you with us. Thank you. And John, Michael will tell you, we're in 2 Chronicles chapter 33.

So, he humbled himself. How did he humble himself? What's the modifier there? He humbled himself **greatly**. Have you ever met people who humbled themselves, but not so greatly? I spoke to a woman recently. I said, "Are you going to come to this meeting?" She said, "No." I

time you humbled yourself before the Lord greatly? Frankly, I find that word "greatly" hard to reproduce in my own life.

I keep on reading about great men and women of God. Do you do that? You read a lot of missionary biography and read the stories of great men and women. It's good to read about them in the Bible; it's also interesting to read about them in contemporary print. I've got a book at home—I haven't read it other than a couple of pages. I've got lots of books at home that I've read a couple of pages, and I've got lots of books at home but I haven't read a couple of pages. But better to read a couple of pages than nothing.

So I ran across this book by E.A. Johnson. I thought it was something different by a totally different person; I thought it was a missionary story. But E.A. Johnson apparently is a medical doctor, or was, and he told about two great men of God that in his life he knew about. One was a man by the name of Stephen Olford. And Stephen Olford grew up as an assembly missionary in Africa. His father, just like Trevor Kamstra, went off—not to Mexico, he went off to Africa. And so Stephen Olford grew up in that context in Africa. Came back to Canada and to America, ended up in New York City, and he became a man, interestingly, totally devoted to holiness, and became a powerful man of God in New York City. What happens when you take God seriously regarding holiness?

So that was Stephen Olford. But this man, Johnson, Dr. Johnson, referred to Sidlow Baxter. And I don't know much about J. Sidlow Baxter other than his name; heard his name a long time ago. How I did, I don't know. Anyway, J. Sidlow Baxter was a mighty man of God. And he was a man, I think I've told you before in recent weeks, but he was a man who said that he ought to pray seriously. And so he said, "I'm going to pray out loud to God. Seriously." And sometimes he would pray out loud to God all day long. Now, I don't know how he would keep his voice going all day long, but he prayed out loud all day long. Harold, do you do that?

Restoration and Reformation

So, somehow, Manasseh got turned around in a marvelous way. And God, in His mercy, restored to him, even to the point where he came back to Jerusalem as the king. So, that's the story. But the interesting line at the end of verse 13 is this: "Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, He was God." What was the ultimate proof that God was real? Answer: Manasseh's sitting on the throne he used to be sitting on. How gracious is God? Joel talks about the days when they restored the years that the locusts had eaten.

[Joel 2:25 NKJV]

"So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten,
The crawling locust,
The consuming locust,
And the chewing locust,
My great army which I sent among you.

What a wonderful thing. All right. What's he do? Verse 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." So, he started out his reformation by fortifying the city of Jerusalem. And he built a wall around Ophel, and I don't know all the details. All I know is that his first reformation was rebuilding some of the wall, protecting the place, the city of God. And then he put captains in all the fenced cities of Judah. So, the Assyrians, remember, had taken many of those cities. And so, Manasseh put his armaments there in those cities. Good start, Manasseh.

Verse 15: "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 mountain of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city." So, he went through the city, and he got rid of its idolatry. And frankly, must have been a big pile of refuse that he carried out of the city. You remember what happened in the city of Ephesus, don't you? Paul was there preaching, and the Spirit of God was moving, and the wicked people trusted the Lord. They decided that they would have a bonfire, and they burned everything related to their former gods.

[Acts 19:19 NKJV]

Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.

How much money was burned up in the bonfire? How much did they have to pay to buy the stuff they ultimately burned? How much did they not save by selling that garbage to somebody else? What's the value? And we calculated it a while ago—\$5 million. They burned their own stuff. \$5 million of their own stuff. Good for them. How much value was involved in Manasseh getting rid of all these gods? Well, they were, many of them, artistic artifacts. And

who were not being able to do that man's evil. And the people who were not being able to do that man's evil.

Sometimes we leave behind a record that is incomplete and comes up afterwards. What did Shakespeare say? "The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often interred with their bones." Well, that's the wisdom of Shakespeare; he saw that in life. But sometimes we say, "Well, I did that. I got away with it, and nobody's going to know." Manasseh, you did that, and it was chronicled, and the record is there. We don't have it today. Maybe the archaeologists one day will dig up the sayings of the seers, and we'll read about Manasseh and some of the other bad things he did. How sad.

Verse 20: "So Manasseh slept with his fathers. They buried him in his own house, and Amon, his son, reigned in his stead." So that's the end of the story of Manasseh. What did we learn from it? God is gracious. We learned from it that just because yesterday was dismal doesn't mean to say it's impossible. We learned that God is able to take the last years of a man's life and make them valuable for God. And frankly, when you get close to the last years of a man's life, that's good news. And I say, "Lord, I don't have long, but could You use me for a little bit of good even yet?" You used Manasseh at the end of his life; could You use Harold at the end of his life too? What a wonderful thing if God were to do that for all of us.

It's interesting. 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel has got a lot of people in it who are getting close to the end of the years of their lives. What happens if the Spirit of God were to fall upon all of us, and we all were like Manasseh, doing everything we could to serve the Lord? Big blessings. So that's our story. Others now with comments on Manasseh? And we'll go back to 2 Kings to pick up the story of Amon.

Application: The Lost and Found

Not so much on Manasseh was I going to comment on, but on something that is, I think, pertinent to it. In our Bible reading today, we were reading in Luke 15; we were reading about Jesus giving them the parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin and the prodigal son. Amen.

[Luke 15:4-7 NKJV]

⁴ "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them,

"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" ⁷ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

How He says, you know, He leaves ninety-nine to go after the one that was lost so that it would be found and they rejoice. And there's much rejoicing in heaven when one man comes to repentance. And that's, of course, what happened to Manasseh. It doesn't matter; it's never too late to start for the Lord right now. I mean, as you were saying, it doesn't matter how old we are. It doesn't matter how much we did or didn't do when we were younger and up until this point. But the Lord is now looking at it from this point onwards. Can He use me? Can He use you? Can He use everyone in this room? For the glory of God. And He can.

And you mentioned this one fellow—he lived, he just wanted to live a holy life. And I think that word "holy", H-O-L-Y, is good. And W-H-O-L-L-Y—you know, wholly for the Lord. So close to the Lord. And the lost coin, you know, she wasn't saying, "Well, I've got all of the, you know, I've got nine pieces left." No, she was looking for the one, and they rejoiced when they found that one.

And the prodigal son—you know, sometimes just like Manasseh, what did he have to do to the prodigal son? He got him to the point where he realized... Can you imagine a good Jewish boy having to feed hogs? And that was something that they weren't even supposed to go near. And he had to feed hogs, and he would have liked to fill his belly with what the hogs were eating.

[Luke 15:15-17 NKJV]

¹⁵ Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"

Finally, you know, it's amazing how hunger can do something for you. You know, you get real hungry and want to eat. We see in the Bible that, you know, Esau—he got so hungry, he thought he was going to die, and he sold his birthright.

[Genesis 25:32-34 NKJV]

³² And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" ³³ Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

And he did the wrong thing there. This prodigal son, he did the right thing. He said, "Okay, it's time to go home." I mean, he started to remember the fact that when he was home... I mean, even now, he said, "My father's servants have plenty to eat." He treated his servants well, and "I have nothing to eat." And he made a conscious decision to repent and to go home. And isn't it a marvelous story to realize that God in Manasseh's life was just saying, "You've got to come home. You've got to come to Me. You've got to come back to Me." Whether he knew the Lord or not, I don't know. But he needed to repent. He repented with a great repentance, and the Lord restored him to his kingdom. And he did what he needed to do at that point in time and command them to follow the Lord.

They didn't all follow the Lord; they still did their practices in high places and their sacrifices and so on. Some of them did anyway, maybe, probably not all. But it's, you know, it's our time in life when we think that, "Okay, now it's time to retire." I've seen so many people. I remember living in a place where a lot of retired people came and there was an assembly there. And you know what? Half of the people that were retired went down south for three or four or five months in the wintertime, and the meeting just suffered greatly. The meeting suffered so greatly that it was pathetic. And they just thought, "Well, you know, I'm retired. So, you know, just get over it. We're going." And that's not the time to decide to go and take it easy and rest on our laurels, and "I've worked all my life and I deserve this," and that's it. No, we can't do that.

And, you know, the people at 16th Avenue Chapel—Harold, you, and there's Eric and there's Jeet and there's other older folks there that, you know what? They don't... I don't know, we can't see an example of the elders at 16th sitting back and saying, "Okay, I'm going to take home my holidays all the time and just do what I want." I mean, Jeet goes up to India and, and, and Jazz, and they worked themselves practically ragged for a month, and not to think about all the perils of things that they could have gone through or something that could have happened to them. And, and they went—they just kept going. What a good example for all of us.

And young people—the young people that are in our midst, you know, you have kids and you say, "My kids are a distraction and I can't really do things for the Lord. And I can't do this and I can't do that." But I don't see anywhere in the Bible that says you need to serve the Lord better after your kids are grown up. I don't see that anywhere. As a matter of fact, the very best example that you can set for your kids is if your kids are knowing that you're going to the meetings. Amen.

And dragging them along with you. We heard a sermon this morning and the fellow says, "When I was a young kid, I had a drug problem. My parents drug me to church every Sunday and every meeting there was." They drug me there; they made me come. I'm not saying that every parent that has small kids can be here tonight or at every single meeting—and I'm not saying that—but there is... we need to realize, I guess, I, I speak to myself. Listen, the finger's pointed right at me. Do what we can do for the Lord right now. And you know what? If we're all doing that, guess what? Our place at 16th Avenue Chapel is going to improve by a thousand percent and more. Not that it's not a good place now; it's absolutely a wonderful place right now. But how could it not be better? How could it not be better if everyone just did—if we all just did 10% more or 20% more? And some of that is praying.

How often do we lift up our leaders at 16th in prayer? Not that we think they're doing a bad job, but you know, Jan and I pray for you guys every day. Amen. And we keep praying for you every day. And we pray for a lot of you every day that we remember. And we don't remember to pray for everyone, but we, we, we are so thankful that we're just part of the family of God and we can pray for each other. And, oh, may the Lord God Almighty give us this good lesson of Manasseh to... we think, "Oh no, I'm going for the—I'm going on for the Lord. I'm praying. I'm reading my Bible. I'm doing this. I'm doing that." But you know, there's probably something that we can repent of and get right with the Lord, because I know in my life there is—maybe not in yours. Maybe nobody at 16th probably, but out here in Abbotsford, there's me for sure. And I'm sure Ken doesn't in Abbotsford, but maybe there's a few, you know, I know I am. So let's just take heed. It's a very practical, practical, practical lesson. And thank you, Harold, for bringing it out. Appreciate it.

The Consequence of Sin

Anything else? It's true. The examples we've got of this: Manasseh was one. We mentioned that Nebuchadnezzar was another. And certainly the prodigal son of Luke 15, as Paul has outlined it for us, is a third example. Praise the Lord. There's another mention of Manasseh in Jeremiah chapter 15 and verse 4.

[Jeremiah 15:4 NKJV]

I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.

It's amazing, this story about Manasseh and the stories about the children of Israel—Jonah—all these stories seem to have the same, similar kind of theme about the sinful nature of mankind. And what amazes me is that God's great mercy, even though the people of Israel knew that God is a merciful God. And yet, they sinned against Him. And whenever they got into a lot of trouble, just like Manasseh, the Lord led them into a lot of trouble that they would turn and repent of their ways, and know that the Lord, He is only... He's the only God that could save them.

And the Lord is merciful and gracious and long-suffering with a sinful man. And you know the story of Jonah—how Jonah knew that God was a merciful God, but he wanted those people in Nineveh to be destroyed. Because that seems to be human nature; human nature wants justice done here and now. But the Lord, He looks at the future and He sees a great potential in people. You know, some people have said, you know, a person like Hitler—he committed so much murder and atrocities in the world. If he repented at the last minute, he should not go to heaven. That man does not deserve to have forgiveness of sin. But, you know, the Lord could forgive even the most vile of sinners.

And you know, Paul—the apostle Paul—he says that, "I was the chief of sinners."

[1 Timothy 1:15 NKJV]

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

He persecuted the church and he stood by to see the Lord's people being persecuted and put in prison. But the Lord took a hold of him, and face to face He came with him and says, "You're persecuting Me and My people." And so that turning point there, when a person realizes that he's really on the wrong track, he's really on the wrong road, and he repents of his sins—it doesn't matter what he committed. I mean, this guy here that we're talking about, Manasseh—he sacrificed his own children to idols. And he reversed many of the things that his father had taught him, to love the Lord his God and to follow His ways and to respect His laws. And he despised the bitter consequences of sin and he learned from them

later on in life. And that's what really matters—until man's last breath has gone out of him, there's still a chance of repentance, and the Lord is long suffering and He'll wait.

And what amazes me is sometimes when the Lord puts pressure on people—because we don't know the hearts of people, but God does. And God knows that when He puts pressure on people, He puts him in a situation that that person has no way out except to turn to the Lord. Either that person is going to turn to the Lord or his heart is going to get more hardened and more hardened, and he's going to get farther and farther away from God. Just like when Moses... so many times he went to Pharaoh and he said, "My God said, 'Let my people go.'" And he hardened his heart more and more each time, and he got farther and farther away until he destroyed his whole military in that sea and drowned.

And so it's amazing that our God is such a long-suffering God, a merciful God. So we can learn from these things, from stories over and over that are fairly similar. We read in the all the 40 years that they were through the desert and the Lord provided them all the food and their needs that they needed throughout the journey. The Lord was merciful to them and He loved them. But it says that they rebelled against God, and they faced many consequences from their rebellion. And yet the Lord had mercy on them. And the Lord—you remember reading the story about Moses where he turned the anger of God because God was so displeased with those people? And He says, "I'm going to destroy all of them." And Moses found grace with God and he turned the anger of God away from these people.

But, you know, the Lord is so gracious and long-suffering. We know that many people, when they have a very good situation in life—they have a very good life, lots of money, banks are full of their accounts with money and they've got all kinds of worldly things—they don't need God and they don't want God because they know that that would interfere with the sin that they love. And, um, when we went to India, we ministered many times to Jazz, his brother and her sister-in-law, and her sister-in-law says, "You know something? God has really blessed us. And we don't want to hear the stuff that you've got to say there. Our children are all doing really well, and we are happy and content with all that God has given us, and we don't want to hear about Jesus." So these kinds of people, they will never repent. And they think that God is blessing them because they're doing so well; their children are blessed, they're doing really well and they don't need God.

But it's amazing that God knows the heart of every human being. And these people, even if you put pressure on them, they will not repent. But He knows those that will repent, and that's the reason that He applies pressure to people like Manasseh, even though they were evil and they had been brought up in the Lord's ways. Just like many, many Christians that bring their children up in the ways of the Lord; they drag them to meetings, whether they

want to go or not. But many of these children become wayward and they walk away from what they had learned from all the teachings that they had attended. But many times, these wayward children remember what they were taught, and once they get into a lot of trouble, they will turn and repent of their ways and turn to the Lord.

So that's the most wonderful thing—the Lord is teaching us through the many lessons that we learn in the Old Testament how God dealt with people. And these are the many people that He has written about that did repent. And we're grateful for the stories that the Lord tells us in the Old Testament. The king after king—there are some that came, kings that came that loved the Lord with all their heart. Like we read about the King David and a man after the Lord's own heart.

[1 Samuel 13:14 NKJV]

But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

And then we read about the many, many kings that were so evil that the Lord just set them aside, and their evil also came upon their people as well. And their people also followed them into evil and the sacrifice to idols and they burnt their children, just like Manasseh did. And the people followed these kings and they brought great destruction upon their citizens. And that was the horrible, the horrible thing. That was the result of—and they're held responsible for all that they did. Because you know something? People that are in authority, whether it be kings or whether it be elders of a church or pastors, whether it be teachers—the Lord holds them responsible because they have a great effect in what they do. They lead people astray or they lead people to the Lord. The Lord looks upon all that happens there.

So it's wonderful reading these stories about the many people that the Lord dealt with. And we can see in our own lives how the Lord dealt with us. And Lord—and there's always a consequence to sin. I don't care who it is. Sin has a consequence. And sometimes people realize the consequences of the sins that they have committed, and they repent and turn to the Lord. It says there, "He greatly repented." It wasn't just... it's just like an outstretched, it's like a getting on your knees or on your belly and just aching with the fact that you have sinned.

And God is a merciful God and He will forgive your sin. So, you know, these are the things that we are grateful for, to learn about the love of Christ who came to die for the sins of

mankind. And like I said, until our last breath is gone from our body, everybody still has a chance to repent. And the Lord is gracious. The Spirit of God will speak to a sinner once; He will speak to a sinner twice. And if He's gracious, He'll speak to a sinner three times. But after that, a sinner's heart seems to get hardened more and more as he rejects the counsel of God. And we're just so thankful that the Lord gives so many chances to sinners, as He did to us in our lives as well when we look back on it.

So, you know, I'm really thankful for the Old Testament. There's lots of learning from the Old Testament of the nature of man's sin. And we are no different than these people that are mentioned in the Old Testament. We are sinners by nature when we're born into this world. But we thank God that through Christ, He has created a new creation and He's changing us day by day. And the sins that we do commit in our lives, we repent and we don't keep this bag over our shoulders or over our back and let it pile up and pile up as a heavy load upon us. But we know that the Lord is gracious and we can go to Him and He will forgive our sins. He is faithful to do that. And we are thankful; otherwise, we would get so burdened down that we wouldn't be able to do anything for the Lord. We wouldn't be able to even do any kind of service in the Lord's work.

So He is gracious so that we can unload our burdens onto Him, for He cares for us and He wants us to carry on and go on. Otherwise, we would be weighed down and we wouldn't be getting anywhere. So blessed be the Lord our God who loves us and cares so much for us that He makes our load so light because He has carried our burdens. And all we need to do is rely on His strength that we can carry on from day to day as we do. And we thank Him for this story about Manasseh—that he did repent and he did turn to the Lord and he did turn his people, their hearts to the Lord. And they did acknowledge the God of their forefathers, and everything turned out to be a good story at the end of it all. Amen.

The Reign and Death of King Amon

So back to 2 Kings now. And 2 Kings omits the story of Manasseh's conversion; it points out how he died, and we covered that a week or two ago. We're going to pick up 2 Kings 21, verse 19.

[2 Kings 21:19-26 NKJV]

¹⁹ Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. ²⁰ And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. ²¹ So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked; and he served the

idols that his father had served, and worshiped them. ²² He forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD. ²³ Then the servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. ²⁴ But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place. ²⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ²⁶ And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place.

So Amon was his son. Manasseh had reigned 55 years. Amon was 22 when he began to reign after his father. And verse 20: Amon did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father Manasseh did. And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served and worshiped them. And he forsook the Lord God of his fathers and walked not in the way of the Lord.

So my question would be: so what good did Manasseh's conversion and new life do? What was the value? What was the value? He had a son and the son reverted to the ways of his father before the conversion. And so often you ask the question, "So what good is the conversion of a man or a woman?" And in the case of Israel, I think we will find that this conclusion is valid: Manasseh's conversion resulted in the... what's the word I want now? The deferment of the fulfillment of the prophecies that were made against him because of his sin.

Jesus referred us to Jeremiah. It's true: the nation went into captivity because of Manasseh's sin. When? Well, frankly, after the death of his grandson. What did all that conversion, what did all that reformation do? Among other things, it deferred the wrath of God. Is that important? Yeah. A lot of people got saved in spite of the fact that the judgment was going to come. But Amon lived for two years, and then along comes Josiah. I can't remember—was it 27 or more years he reigned? A lot of people lived, died in that time; a lot of people turned to the Lord. The Lord fulfilled all the promises that He had made, all the warnings that He had made against Manasseh, but there was a deferment of the justice of God.

What's God's plan? What's God's prophecy for the world today? Answer: Soon and very soon, Israel will be surrounded by her enemies and there will be a time of Jacob's trouble. What about in the meantime? Well, frankly, if the people were to turn to the Lord, there would be a deferment of that judgment. That's good news. In your life, in your family, in our assembly—what happens if we turn to the Lord? A deferment of the judgment that's going to come. That's good news.

So what happens? Verse 23: "And the servants of Amon conspired against him and slew the king in his own house." What is the average life expectancy of a wicked king? Not very long. What happens to them? Somebody else conspires against them and kills them. Then what happens to the guy who conspired and killed him? We've seen it repeatedly in Kings: the next fellow conspires against him and kills him, and the next guy conspires against him and kills him. What's the life expectancy of the average king who's elected because of his own conspiracy? Answer: Not very long.

Who would want to be king? When I was younger, I used to think "king," "boss," that'd be a good thing. But the more you study the Scripture, the more you say, "I'm not sure I want to be king. I think I'd rather be a servant and preach the gospel." Billy Graham, are you willing to be king? Or are you willing to be president of the United States? Billy Graham says, "No. I got more important things to do. I'm going to preach the gospel." Good for Billy Graham; he made the right decision.

So anyway, here's King Amon. Two years he conspired... no, two years the conspirators came against him. And then verse 24: "And the people of the land slew all that had conspired against King Amon. And the people of the land made Josiah his son, king in his stead." So Amon was there for two years and they conspired against him, and the people of the land killed all the conspirators. The Lord's promise is: "Justice is mine."

[Romans 12:19 NKJV]

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Vengeance is Mine, saith the Lord; I will repay. Don't take vengeance into your own hand. Was Amon worthy of death? Yes. What happened to those who conspired against him? They all died. Let God be the judge. What do we do? Keep preaching the truth. Preach the word. Be instant—in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort. That's what we say: by the grace of God, I'm going to be like Timothy, and I'm just going to keep on telling people about Jesus.

We'd like to solve the problem in Iran. I'm thankful the Lord didn't tap me on the shoulder and say, "Harold, you go over there and solve the problem in Iran." What do we do? Tell people about Jesus. What's Amir do? Tell people about Jesus. What do you do? What do you do? What do you do? Amir, you preach the gospel; tell them Jesus loves you. Not much hope—frankly, there's not much hope for Iran, and there's not much hope for Canada, and there's

not much hope for Vancouver. And frankly, there's not much hope for you and me apart from this: Jesus loves me, and He's going to take me to heaven. And in the meantime, I can tell people about Him. I can tell people about Him. I can tell people about Him. I can tell people about Him. I can tell them about Him. I can tell them about Him. I can tell them about Him. I can tell them about Him. I can tell them about Him. I can tell them about Him. I can tell them about Him. I can tell them about Him. I can tell them about Him. I can tell them about Him. I can tell them about Him.

And frankly, there's not much hope for you and me apart from this: Jesus loves me, and He's going to take me to heaven. And in the meantime, I can tell people about Him. That's what's important.

So that's the way our story ends at the end of chapter 21. I guess there are two other verses. "Now the rest of the Acts of Amon, verse 25, which he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? And he was buried in his sepulcher in the garden of Uzza, and Josiah, his son, reigned in his stead." Where was he buried? He was buried in his own backyard. Like his father, neither of them were buried with the other kings. They were wicked men, and so they didn't get to be buried with the others. But they were buried in their own backyard. At least they were buried.

So that's the end of that story, and that's pretty much the end of our time tonight. So next time, we're going to pick up Josiah. And frankly, Josiah's story is an interesting story for many reasons, not the least of which is that he was a good man. And we read much about him. In spite of the fact that shortly after his death the Babylonians came and conquered the country, yet he was a good man. Did a good job. And so we're going to read lots about good King Josiah.

All right. Going to ask someone else just to close in prayer tonight. And thank you all. May the Lord bless us. See you next week—see you tomorrow night... no, Tuesday night for prayer meeting, and all the other Zoom meetings during the week, and next Sunday. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Closing Prayer

Our loving Father in heaven, how we thank Thee and bless Thee again for Thy goodness to us. And Lord, we thank Thee that You show us over and over again by great mercy how much You love us. Yes. How much patience You have with us, and how long-suffering You are with all of mankind, wishing that none should perish. And we thank Thee for our wonderful Savior who came into the world so long ago that we might be saved. He came to seek and to save those that were lost. And our loving Father, we know that we were lost at one time, but now

we are found by Him, and His mercy and His grace does follow us all the days long. And we're so thankful, Lord, for leading and guiding us day by day. And Lord, we thank Thee again that the promises of our God are yea.

And Lord, we thank Thee again for the wonderful things that You have prepared for us. We thank Thee for teaching us from Your word, Lord. We thank Thee that the Spirit of God abides in us, and He teaches us all things concerning our wonderful Savior. And Lord, we thank Thee for the stories of the man, the people that You dealt with in the Old Testament, and they also reveal things about ourselves as well. We are no different than these people. And Lord, we just want to thank You again that the past is a learning experience even for us—that there's always a time to repent until the last breath is gone out of a human being. There's still hope in that human being.

And Lord, we thank Thee that You have given us this great commission to go and preach and tell the world about the love of God in Christ. We thank Thee for the opportunity to work in the Lord's vineyard. And Lord, we know that You're the one who works with us, and You prepare the way for us. You even lead us to the people that You want us to talk to. And Lord, we're grateful for that. For we see so many people in the world, and we wonder, "Will this one be saved? Will this one turn to Christ? Will this one go his own way? Will this one perish and go to hell?" And Lord, we wonder at so many beautiful people in the world, yet only You know the hearts of all mankind.

You know all that belong to Thee, Lord. Yet we don't know. But we know that You love everybody, and You don't want any to perish. And Lord, You send Your people because You love all these people of the world and You want to give them a chance. Until the last breath is gone, Lord, You wish that they would repent and turn to Thee and have their sins forgiven, a home in heaven, to be with You—the one who loved them and died for them.

So, Lord, we thank Thee for this Thy assembly. We thank Thee for the brothers and sisters that come to the study. And Lord, we know that we learn more and more of Your personality and Your character, and Your wonderful mercy that You show to all of mankind throughout history. So, we thank Thee for the lessons that we learned here, even this evening, about Manasseh and his great repentance. Lord, may our hearts always be repentant from day to day. We know that that's where it starts; we must humble ourselves before Thee. And Lord, Thou art a merciful God, always willing to forgive.

So, Lord, we thank Thee for this evening. We thank Thee again for Your word. We pray Your blessings upon all that have attended, that they might take home a blessing as they learn the story about Manasseh's great repentance. Thank You. Thank You. Thank You, Lord Jesus. In Your own precious name. Amen. Amen. Amen.