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Manasseh in Scripture and Tradition: An Analysis of Ancient Sources and the Development of the Manasseh Tradition

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

MANASSEH IN SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION:
AN ANALYSIS OF ANCIENT SOURCES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
MANASSEH TRADITION

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE DEPARTMENT OF MINISTRY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

BY
STEVEN A. GRAHAM

PORTLAND, OREGON
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ונתתי את־לבי לדרוש ולחור בחכמה על כל־אשר נעשה תחת השמים
הוא ענין רע נתן אלהים לבני האדם לענות בו

I have given my heart to search and to seek by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a task of distress that
God has given to the children of men to be afflicted with. Ecclesiastes I, 13 (author's translation).

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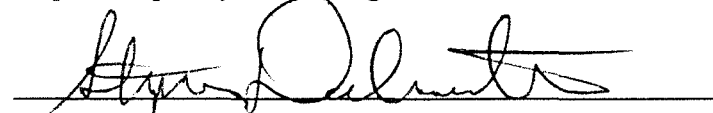
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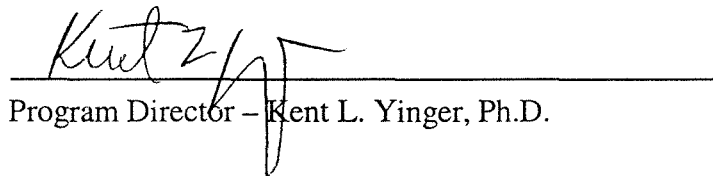
Title: Manasseh in Scripture and Tradition: An Analysis of Ancient Sources and the Development of the Manasseh Tradition

Presented by: Steven A. Graham

We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this thesis and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Master of Arts in Theological Studies.



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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|--|
| DtrN | Final redactor of the DH. Concerned with issues of Law (Nomos). |
| DtrH | Redactor of DH. Concerned with issues of History. |
| DtrP | Redactor of DH. Concerned with issues of Prophecy. |
| Dtr1 | Pre-exilic redactor of DH. |
| Dtr2 | Post-exilic redactor of DH. |
| Chr | Final redactor of the CH. |
| DH | Deuteronomistic History. Includes the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings |
| CH | Chronicler's History. Includes the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles. |
| ANF | Ante-Nicene Fathers |
| NAPNF | Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers |
| Ben. | Benedictine editors of the NAPNF as issued by Migne |
| MT | Masoretic Text |
| T | Targum |
| LXX | Septuagint |
| P | Peshitta |
| TDOT | <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> , by Johannes G. Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1974. |
| Gen | The Book of Genesis |
| Ex | The Book of Exodus |
| Lev | The Book of Leviticus |
| Deut | The Book of Deuteronomy |
| Jos | The Book of Joshua |
| Judg | The Book of Judges |
| Sam | The Book of Samuel |
| Ki | The Book of Kings |
| Ch | The Book of Chronicles |
| Neh | The Book of Nehemiah |
| Ps | The Book of Psalms |

| | |
|----------|------------------------------|
| Prov | The Book of Proverbs |
| Isa | The Book of Isaiah |
| Jer | The Book of Jeremiah |
| Ezek | The Book of Ezekiel |
| Matt | The Book of Matthew |
| Lk | The Book of Luke |
| Rom | The Book of Romans |
| Hag | Hagigah |
| Yeb | Yebamoth |
| B B | Baba Bathra |
| Sanh | Sanhedrin |
| Zeb | Zebahim |
| 2 Bar | Second Baruch |
| Tmos | Testament of Moses |
| Jub | Jubilees |
| AscenIs | Ascension of Isaiah |
| HelsynPr | Hellenistic Synagogal Prayer |

Preface

Church has been part of my life ever since my parents can remember. As an adult, I have led small group Bible studies, prayer meetings, worked in church camps, and even worked as a youth pastor for a brief time. I have exchanged many a night's sleep for study of the Scriptures. Church for me was Sunday morning and night, Tuesday night, Wednesday Bible study, Thursday prayer meeting, Friday small group and eventually Friday night and Saturday morning Sabbath services. I loved attending all meetings, discussions and activities that spoke of Scripture and YHWH.

Sadly, after becoming a pastor, the wind blew another direction. Not everyone has had my experience. But, my experience led me to undertake this study you have before you. Let me explain. I am driven to study and understand the essence and nature of Scripture. Church had not prepared me to understand the plurality of contradictions present within the sacred texts. It has been my impression that many people tend to avoid confronting these contradictions head on because of an underlying unspoken rule that to admit the Bible is contradictory is to deny its inerrancy. I believe what we might label as contradictions are better understood as by-products of how and why a particular book or section of a book came into being.

It seems that the Bible's messages are at times hidden behind what may be thought of as contradictions. This study is an attempt to show that these discrepancies do not qualify as evidence of the Bible's irrationality. The Bible is a carefully constructed book written by holy people, preserved by holy people, in order that future generations who wish to live in holiness might read about how it looked in the lives of others. The Bible can be read, cherished and followed. It just needs to be read carefully. It is not a magical book of straightforward rules of

obedience that fit comfortably into our modern way of thinking. It is an ancient document with a complex history behind it.

King Manasseh provides an excellent case study of a discrepancy within the Scriptures. In the Book of Kings, Manasseh is portrayed as evil throughout his life. In the Book of Chronicles, he is portrayed as repentant in the latter part of his life. One cannot be both reformed and not reformed at the same time. It violates a fundamental principle of logic. X cannot be both “X” and “not X” at the same moment and in the same way. So, in what ways are the two accounts of Manasseh different? How is Manasseh portrayed in Scripture. How has he been remembered throughout tradition, and finally, how might he be better understood in order that we might better appreciate the sacredness of the Bible? I have undertaken this project in order to grapple with these difficulties.

I wish to state upfront that definiteness ought not be construed as being a part of this work. My education is limited to Christian studies and; therefore, inevitable gaps in my research exist. The abundant material, the boundless variables, and the confidence I have that I do not yet know enough to do justice to the subject stand between my typewriter and my own endorsement. It is my hope that what is before you is informed and accurate and will serve those who wish an introduction to literature that has seemed inaccessible or unimportant. I wrote this thesis in order to explore a biblical contradiction and in order to collect related documents from both Jewish and Christian sources and house them together under one title.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Dr. Stephen Delamarter who first suggested the topic to me. His guidance throughout this project has been tremendous. I could not have completed my work without his input. Of course any mistakes and gaps in logic are most likely due to my stubborn refusal of his better judgment. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Kent Yinger who has

read my work and offered many valuable comments. His willingness to allow me to interrupt his own studies frequently with endless questions is appreciated. Finally, I would like to extend an especially warm and heartfelt thank you to Dr. MaryKate Morse. Her help in developing my skills as a scholar and refining my sometimes overzealous need to change the world yesterday is invaluable. My life has been enriched because I know her. She is a courageous Christian leader and a precise scholar. The only charge that has ever meant anything to me is, "Follow me." Dr. Morse can say it in any circle and in any situation.

Steven A. Graham

Portland, Oregon

April, 2002

CHAPTER I

Introduction

This is an examination of the history of the interpretation of King Manasseh in 2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 and several related verses. This study is undertaken in order to answer three related questions. First, why are there two differing accounts of Manasseh – one painting him as the model of evil and the other as the model of repentance? Next, what is the Manasseh tradition, and how has it developed within the textual histories of both Jewish and Christian milieus? Finally, what is the discrepancy between the biblical presentations of Manasseh and his reputation according to tradition? The purpose of this thesis is to document the scope and character of the Manasseh tradition. At the end, some suggestions will be given as to why these biblical accounts vary, and it will be shown that these dissimilarities do not necessarily correspond to disinformation.

This study is divided into two parts. The first part, chapter two, will consist of an inductive analysis of the two central biblical texts (and related verses) in which the Manasseh stories are told. The analysis will follow the framework of the texts themselves: introduction, body and conclusion.

Two sets of texts will be part of this first half: those credited to the Deuteronomist, and those assigned to the Chronicler. The first set includes 2 Kings 21:1-18; 23:12, 26-27; 24:3-4; Jeremiah 15:4. The second set incorporates 2 Chronicles 33:1-20, 22-23. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the extent to which the two accounts vary, and how the manner of narration served to promote the theological presuppositions and the historiographical intentions of each author.

The second half of the paper will be concerned with what the Manasseh tradition is, and how it has developed within both Jewish and Christian communities. In order to demonstrate this, the various Manasseh texts extant from the Second Temple period (excluding the Dead Sea Scrolls) and from formative Judaism and Christianity will be compiled and reviewed. Chapter three will look at the Septuagint, Targums, Vulgate, and Peshitta renderings of the Manasseh stories. These accounts begin to form the Manasseh tradition because, by strict definition, translations are interpretations. Chapter three will illustrate what appears to be various communities' attraction for either the Deuteronomist's understanding of Manasseh or the Chronicler's.

Chapter four builds on what was discovered in chapter three by looking at relevant texts from the Pseudepigrapha and the Apocrypha to understand how those later writers perceived Manasseh. Also, one key passage from the writings of Josephus enriching the discussion is included. Though the Dead Sea Scrolls yield critical information such as the Qumran version of the Prayer of Manasseh, due to limits of time and resource availability, they will not be addressed in this paper.

Chapters five and six will bring to a close the second half of this study. Included in chapter five are the germane rabbinic passages from the Talmud and Midrash Rabbah, and chapter six will contain the pertinent writings from the early church fathers. These chapters strengthen something highlighted in the two previous chapters. What could only be classified up to that point as apparent inclinations towards particular communal biases regarding Manasseh as either good or bad is now borne out in the subsequent Jewish and Christian writings. It is the purpose of these last two chapters to demonstrate these inclinations.

The final chapter will summarize the individual discoveries brought out in the body of the thesis. This summation will remind the reader of the compartmentalizing of Manasseh that seems to have taken place within tradition. However, it will also be clear by this point that this myopic classification at times neglected the reality that the Bible presents a dual understanding of Manasseh. Manasseh is a paradox. He is both evil and repentant, according to the Bible. The communities that wrote about him bifurcated tradition's memory of him.

This appears to have taken place, at least in part, because the social settings of the biblical writers differed from the social settings of those who read and passed along the biblical accounts. These differentiations in social situations seem to have developed into communal partialities for one perception of Manasseh over the other. One scholar expresses it as a "gravitational pull" exercised on the various translations and transmissions of these pericopes toward either one paradigm or the other. This is reasonable because these later texts stemmed from their communities' impressions of the biblical accounts rather than concerns about the exile itself, which is a significant factor for the original authors.

At the end of the paper, we will assess why biblical accounts vary and suggest that characterizing deviations between texts as contradictions is, at best, too simplistic to be accurate and is, at worst, too inaccurate to be biblical. A few words will be offered as an epilogue on my personal perception of the function and nature of the Bible, and how, perhaps, it could be read.

A. Assumptions Within This Study

The terms Deuteronomist and Chronicler are modern labels widely accepted within critical scholarship. Julius Wellhausen's study, "Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels," first published in 1878, offered a lucid explanation of how the various sources (believed by many to

be responsible for writing the Pentateuch) seemed to fit within the context of history. The impact of his theory is difficult to overestimate. His explanation became known as the Documentary Hypothesis, or the J. E. D. & P. theory. Though Wellhausen's conclusions are no longer as widely accepted as they had once been, the idea that lay behind the multiple-source theory has not been overturned.¹

Building on Wellhausen's thesis, subsequent scholars sought to extend these four sources into the book of Joshua and began speaking of a Hexateuch. Martin Noth disagreed. In 1943 he published "Ueberlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien" and formed the basis for later scholarship, including this paper. He asserted that the four succeeding books (according to the MT) formed a single theologically evaluated history based upon the book of Deuteronomy.² He referred to this collection as the Deuteronomistic History.

Though Noth's theory has been challenged and modified,³ its central claim that these books form a composite unit remains the consensus within modern critical scholarship. Likewise,

¹ "That a number of sources underlie the Pentateuch as we have it is generally agreed, but what these sources are, what their date and mutual relation may be, and how and when they were utilized in the final recension of the Pentateuch – these are questions on which scholars disagree." F.F. Bruce, "Biblical Criticism," in *The New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J.D. Douglas (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1974), 151. Nevertheless, a few scholars continue to be at variance with a multiple source theory. However, to enter into the particulars of this discussion is beyond the scope of the present paper. See bibliography for many excellent resources. Of particular interest are: Wellhausen, Noth, Cross, Weinfeld and Friedman.

² "Es gehört zu den sichersten und unangefochtensten Ergebnissen der wissenschaftlichen Literarkritik, daß wir in den Büchern Jos., Ri., Sam. und Kön. in Stücken größeren oder kleineren oder kleinsten Umfangs der literarischen Tätigkeit eines „deuteronomistischen“ Autors begegnen, der diese seine Bezeichnung – da seine Arbeit wie die aller anderen Autoren der alttestamentlichen Geschichtsüberlieferung anonym auf uns gekommen ist – der Tatsache verdankt, daß er in Sprache und Gedankenwelt eine nahe Verwandtschaft mit dem deuteronomischen Gesetz und den dieses Gesetz umrahmenden paränetischen Reden aufweist." Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien: Die Sammelnden und Bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke: Im Alten Testament* (Max Niemeyer Verlag: Halle, Germany, 1943), 45-46.

³ G. von Rad's idea of hope, H.W. Wolff's concept of kerygma, and F.M. Cross' analysis of Dtr1(c. seventh century) and Dtr2 (Exilic) are significant modifications of Noth's work.

his proposal that the theology of Deuteronomy provides the historiographical framework for the evaluation of Israel's history continues to enjoy widespread acceptance.⁴

B. Time, Place and Purpose: The Deuteronomist

It is widely held that the Deuteronomist (henceforth DtrN)⁵ wrote from a post-exilic community with the intention of explaining what had caused the disintegration of Israel in 722 B.C.E. and the exile of Judah in 586 B.C.E.⁶ DtrN's writings seem to be justifying God's actions and offering hope to an exiled community.⁷ It was true that God had promised an eternal kingdom to David (2 Sam 7:12-13), but by 586 B.C.E. that hope had been dashed. The perception among critical scholars is that DtrN's community was questioning why God would have allowed the destruction and exile of both the Northern and Southern kingdoms. The DH appears to

⁴ How this theology works itself out throughout the DH is outside the scope of this work.

⁵ The hand of several redactors can be distinguished in the DH. "DtrH (for history) focuses its attention on the monarchy and specifically the Davidic dynasty. A later stratum DtrP (for prophet) identifies the prophetic word as the locus of religious authority. Finally the latest stratum DtrN (for nomos) sees the Law as the way to the future for Judah." Leslie J. Hope, "The Meaning of Deuteronomy," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 10, no. 3 (July 1980): 112. The discussion for these several additional strata is covered extensively elsewhere (consult bibliography) and is outside the scope of this work. However, the perspective taken by this author is that the final redaction (DtrN) comes from a post-exilic community. It is the one under consideration throughout the body of this work.

⁶ "The great events in the shadow of which the Deuteronomist wrote were the catastrophes of 721 and 586 B.C.E., happenings which in his eyes had undoubted theological significance; they expressed Jahweh's rejection of both kingdoms; ever since, saving history with Israel had been at a standstill. This is the clue to the understanding of the Deuteronomist: he is writing at a time when there was distress and perplexity because no saving history was taking place. It is possible to connect the lacunae which have often been noticed in these histories with this quite unprecedented situation . . . Of course the Deuteronomist's sole concern is a theological interpretation of the catastrophes which befell the two kingdoms. Consequently, he examined past history page by page with that in view, and the result was quite unambiguous: the fault was not Jahweh's; but for generations Israel had been piling up an ever-increasing burden of guilt and faithlessness so that in the end Jahweh had had to reject his people." Gerhard Von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy* (London: SCM Press, 1963), 76-77. Consider also the following authorities: "Noth advanced his theory that the corpus Deuteronomy-2 Kings is the work of an author who wrote during the exilic period." Martin Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, trans. Jane Doull and revised by John Barton, JSOT, ed. David J.A. Clines and Philip R. Davies and David M. Gunn, vol. 15, Supplement Series (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1981), viii. See also, Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 265.

⁷ "The man who assembled the Deuteronomistic history . . . was inextricably tied to the issues of the world around him, its moments of joy and its catastrophes. And those issues and events had an impact on the way he pictured God and history." Richard Elliot Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco, CA.: HarperCollins, 1997), 134. A key to the dating of DH that gives credence to the above speculation is found at the end of DH (2 Ki 25:27-30). Jehoiachin (598-597 B.C.E.) reigned only three months in Jerusalem (2 Ki 24:8) before he was led off to captivity in Babylon. DtrN had to have been writing sometime after the end of the corpus of DH. This appears to have been not much earlier than 550 B.C.E. This goes along with the general consensus of modern scholarship.

answer this quandary according to the doctrine of the transferability of guilt. As the king goes, so go the people.⁸ God's actions are justified, and the people can find hope when they return from their disobedience to obey the conditional covenant made with David (Deut 4:23-31).

C. Time, Place and Purpose: The Chronicler

The book of Chronicles came from a different time and place, and therefore, serves a different purpose.⁹ It seems probable that the Chronicler (henceforth: Chr) could very well have written his account as the exiled community was returning from captivity.¹⁰ His concern seemed to be with individuals' behavior due to the upheaval connected with the process of re-acclimation to one's homeland after a multi-generational disconnection. Therefore, his retelling of the DH fit a new time and a different social situation. The filter through which he wrote is widely asserted to be the doctrine of individual reward and retribution. That is, an individual is rewarded or punished according to one's own behavior.

⁸ The DH was reflective of the chief concerns of a post-exilic community and could have been understood as "propaganda work of the Josianic reformation and imperial program." Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 284. Specifically, the DH called for an unmitigated return of the nation to serving the LORD with all their heart (Jos 22:5; 1 Sam 7:3, 12:20, 24).

⁹ This is important to understand because these books are written from a different perspective than were those included in the DH. It is convincingly argued by many that DtrN was an historian; the Chr was an interpreter. "Benzinger has said, 'The Chronicler is not at all a writer of history in our sense of the term; he does not aim to relate what took place but what serves to edify; he is not a historian but a Midrashist.'" Quoted by Jacob M. Myers in, "The Requisites for Response: On the Theology of Deuteronomy," *Interpretation* 15 (January 1961), xx. Therefore, the work of Chr grapples with theology in a different way than did DtrN. "For the real point is to see the Chronicler not as a poor historian or as a good historian, but as an interpreter." Peter R. Ackroyd, *The Chronicler in His Age* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 276.

¹⁰ As a "theologian" (an expounder of theological thoughts vs. strictly historical facts), the Chr sought to bring together a scattered community and unify what had been, for several hundred years (since 922 B.C.E.), a separated people. At the heart of the people of Israel is their faith in one God (Deut 6:4). They are known as "The people of the Book." Therefore, an effective way to reach masses of this "community" is to reach into their hearts through writings said to be the words of God. This seems to have been a central idea in the mind of the Chr. "We may, I believe, go a stage further and see the Chronicler's presentation and endeavour to unify, to draw together the diverse strands of Israel's thought into a more coherent whole." Ackroyd, *The Chronicler in His Age*, 280.

Nevertheless, the historiography of the Chr is similar to DtrN in that he saw God as involving Himself in the history of His people.¹¹ God's word was a point around which events revolved.¹² It is evident in the abundance of passages within the Books of Chronicles alone that the idea of things done in accordance with God's word was part of the mentality of the people.

Now, let us point ourselves afresh in the direction we are heading. First, the variations embedded in the biblical texts of Manasseh will be analyzed in order to decipher each pericope's function in the context of the larger body of work of which they are a part. Manasseh serves as the paradigm of evil in the Kings account in order to justify why God allowed His people to be sent into exile. The doctrine of the transferability of guilt is the theological lens through which his historiography is filtered. In the Chronicles account, Manasseh serves as the paradigm of repentance. Here again, the justice of God is emphasized, but this time it is the doctrine of reward and retribution that can be detected.

From there we will look through the textual records of the Jewish and Christian traditions making it clear that those responsible for these documents compartmentalized the perception of Manasseh, seeing him either in terms of DtrN's model of evil or the Chr's model of repentance. We will show that the textual records making up the Manasseh tradition have their roots in the dual accounts within Scripture. It was the subsequent writers that compartmentalized history's observation of him.

In recent years several scholars have noticed the textual discrepancies between the Manasseh passages in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. However, Manasseh is still not a primary focus

¹¹ Von Rad states this idea nicely in relationship to DtrN. "There exists . . . an inter-relationship between the words of Jahweh and history in the sense that Jahweh's word, once uttered, reaches its goal under all circumstances in history by virtue of the power inherent in it." Von Rad, *Studies in Deuteronomy*, 78. The same can likewise be seen through Chr's corpus. God's word is seen through the Bible to have a special effect in both the creation of events and/or their alteration.

¹² See 1 Ch 6:49; 12:23; 15:13, 15; 16:40; 25:5; 2 Ch 7:17; 8:13; 29:15; 30:16; 33:8; 34:21 34:32; 35:6, 13.

of study. Generally, scholars dedicate themselves to the broader fields of either Deuteronomistic studies or studies of the Books of Chronicles. Therefore, the perception of King Manasseh's reputation remains, by and large, segmented. This thesis serves to compile that tradition and put the relevant texts on display.

It is my belief that the Manasseh pericopes are not in an argument with one another but rather a dialogue. The attentive student of the Bible can learn from the tension between these texts rooted in the historiographical differences of two well-constructed stories. Perhaps by exploring this complex area of authorial intention, we will begin to unlock passages whose messages seem to have eluded us in certain ways.

Chapter II

Biblical Texts

This chapter will be composed of an in-depth analysis of the two Manasseh pericopes and the relevant texts that mention Manasseh. The chapter will be organized into two parts. The first half will analyze the account of Manasseh in 2 Kings 21:1-18 and several related texts. The particulars of how this examination will unfold will be explained as the investigation gets under way. The second half of the chapter will compare and contrast the Kings passage with the Manasseh account in 2 Chronicles 33:1-20. Two additional verses within the Book of Chronicles that relate to Manasseh will be discussed. The reason for the comparison rather than a second independent investigation is due to the widely held belief that the Chr used the work of DtrN as his major source.

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. First, we will show where and how the two biblical accounts vary. For my thesis, this means that we are able to establish the Bible as having provided the soil out of which later variations and interpretations grew. Second, by looking closely at the Manasseh pericopes we are able to see how they encapsulate the “doctrine of the transferability of guilt” (the belief that the transgressions of a king can have a direct cause and effect relationship on future generations) in the DH, and “doctrine of individual reward and retribution” (the belief that the behavior of individuals brings about immediate reciprocity – reward for right behavior and punishment for bad behavior) in the CH.

As we will see, these two theological premises help to answer how the Manasseh pericopes functioned within their larger contexts. From DtrN’s perspective, this helps to explain why divine judgment fell upon Israel on account of Manasseh’s sins. From the Chr’s perspective,

they helps to explain why divine judgment allowed Manasseh to reign for so long in spite of his atrocities. As the paper progresses, it will become clearer that the Manasseh pericopes seem to function as fundamental witnesses to this information.

The way in which Manasseh is presented in both the Book of Kings and the Book of Chronicles fits into a formula that can be observed throughout the DH and later adopted for the writing of the CH. This formula served as the standard way to chronicle the king's reign and evaluate his performance **בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה** – in the eyes of YHWH. We will refer to this formula as the kingly presentation formula. The existence of this formulaic presentation of the kings of Israel and Judah is undisputed within critical scholarship.¹

A comment must be made regarding the appellation, “the kingly presentation formula.” This is not, to the best of my understanding, a widely used term. I was able to identify in my research several designations for this schema. One scholar referred to it as the “regnal presentation formula.” It is an apt designation but seems stilted. I simply updated his language. Since it was never clear to myself that any one name ought to be preferred over another, the kingly presentation formula will be adopted with no further comment.

A. Kingly Presentation Formula in the DH: an Overview

Let us now look at the evidence that supports the presence of such a formula. In order to see how this formula works itself out within the DH, we will need to take a closer look at its structure. It has an introduction, a body and a conclusion that can be consistently identified and traced. The introduction is composed of two sub-sections: the demographic information and an

¹ To support this comment a quote from Richard Nelson demonstrates how customary it is to take for granted that, “Everyone knows that Kings has been organized into sections on the individual kings of Judah and Israel.” Richard Nelson, “The Anatomy of the Books of Kings,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 40 (1988), 44. This organizing into sections is this formulaic presentation.

assessment of his reign. There are modifications at several points but never any that were too far from the basic structure of the formula.

It starts, “___ was ___ years old when he began to reign, and he reigned ___ and his mother’s name was ___”.² Occasionally, “the daughter of ___”, is added,³ and, at times, the first part of the formula is slightly modified to tell the year the king began to reign instead of his age.⁴ This is followed with an evaluation of his reign stating either he “did evil in the sight of the LORD,”⁵ or he “did right in the sight of the LORD.”⁶

The body of the formula follows next. The body varies substantially and is outside the objective of the paper to seek to demonstrate the many possibilities. We are concerned only with the bodies of the Manasseh passages. We make mention of the body here as a matter of continuity. We will discuss the particulars of the bodies of the Manasseh passages as the need arises.

The closing section of the formula mirrors the introduction in that it has two constituent parts. First, a statement is made that mentions the rest of the acts of the king and what he did are written down elsewhere – usually in either in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel or Judah.⁷ Second, a simple declaration is then made of the king’s death and his successor. With

² Cf. 1 Ki 14:21; 22:42; 2 Ki 8:26; 14:2; 15:2, 33; 16:2; 18:2; 21:1.

³ Cf. 2 Ki 21:19; 22:1; 23:31; 23:36; 24:8, 18.

⁴ Cf. 1 Ki 5:25; 22:51; 2 Ki 12:1; 13:1; 15:13.

⁵ Cf. 1 Ki 15:26, 34; 16:25, 30; 22:52; 2 Ki 3:2; 8:18, 27; 13:2, 11; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28; 17:2; 21:2, 20; 23:32, 37; 24:9, 19.

⁶ Cf. 2 Ki 12:2; 14:3; 15:3; 18:3; 22:2. How particular kings lined up with the legislative material throughout the book of Deuteronomy determined their status, either good or bad. It seems reasonable that this would be the case since kings provided the religious leadership for the nation. “A common biblical notion presumes that the king provides religious leadership to the nation; therefore, kings are often condemned for non-standard cultic activities which lead the nation astray.” Marc Brettler, “Ideology, History, and Theology in 2 Ki 17:7-23,” *Vetus Testamentum* 39, no. 3 (July 1989), 275.

⁷ Cf. 1 Ki 11:41; 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:39, 45; 2 Ki 1:18; 10:34; 12:19; 13:8, 12; 14:15, 18, 28; 15:6, 11, 15, 21, 26, 31, 36; 16:19; 20:20; 21:25; 23:28; 24:5.

only slight variations, the statement “he slept with his fathers and ____ his son became king in his place” follows the death of each king.⁸

This formula can be found throughout the books of Kings beginning with the end of Solomon’s reign (1 Kings 11:41-43) through the beginning of Zedekiah’s reign (2 Kings 24:18-19). Every presentation follows this structure; though, as was pointed out, there are the occasional slight modifications. His report is a clear example of the kingly presentation formula’s most distinctive elements.

B. Kingly Presentation Formula in 2 Kings 21:1-18: An Outline

Our analysis will follow the main structural categories of the passage. A specific outline of our passage will help the reader to gain an overview of how the examination of this text will proceed. The structure of 2 Kings 21:1-18 follows the general kingly presentation formula described above.

I. Introduction

- a. The king’s name, age, length of reign and mother’s name (v.1)
- b. He is assessed as either good or evil in the eyes of YHWH (v.2)

II. Body

- a. The sins of Manasseh (vv.3-9)
- b. YHWH’s announcement of judgment (vv.10-15)
- c. Additional violations of Manasseh (v.16)

III. Conclusion

- a. Mention of further material recorded about king (v.17)

⁸ (Cf. 1 Ki 2:10; 11:43; 14:20, 31; 15:8, 24; 16:6, 28; 22:40, 50; 2 Ki 8:24; 10:35; 13:9, 13; 14:16, 22, 29; 15:7, 22, 38; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18; 24:6).

- b. Where he is buried, and who is his successor (v. 18)

C. Inductive Analysis: 2 Kings 21:1-18

For the purposes of our analysis we will combine the introduction (vv. 1-2) with the conclusion (vv. 17-18). After this, we will look at the body of the pericope where the majority of textual variations are. After we have investigated these three sections, we will look at the peripheral DH texts. We will then summarize and evaluate our discoveries up to that point. From there we will compare and contrast the individual pericopes.

1. Introduction and Conclusion

Each section will begin with a translation of the verses discussed. Following this overview, we will note several points of interest and look at how they impact the message of the passage. Some of the information will not directly impact our study but will be pointed out as a matter of thoroughness.

| 2 Kings 21:1-2, 17-18 | 2 Kings 21:1-2, 17-18 (author's translation) |
|--|--|
| בֶּן-שְׁתַּיִם עָשָׂה שָׁנָה מְנַשֶּׁה | 1 Manasseh was in his twelfth year |
| בְּמָלְכוֹ וַחֲמִשִּׁים וַחֲמִשָּׁן שָׁנָה מָלַךְ | <i>when</i> he began to reign. He reigned |
| בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ חֶפְצִיבָה: | in Jerusalem fifty-five years and the name of his mother <i>was</i> Hephzibah. |
| 2 וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה | 2 He did evil in the eyes of YHWH |
| כְּתוֹעֲבַת הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר | according to the abominations of the |
| הוֹרִישׁ יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: | nations whom YHWH destroyed from before the sons of Israel. |
| 17 וַיֵּתֶר דְּבָרֵי מְנַשֶּׁה וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה | 17 Now the rest of the words of Manasseh |
| וְחֻטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא הֵלֵאֵהֶם כְּתוּבִים | and all that he has done |

| | |
|--|--|
| עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמֶלֶכִי יְהוּדָה: | and the sin which he sinned, are they not written upon the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? |
| 18 וַיִּשְׁכַּב מְנַשֶּׁה וְעַם־אֲבֹתָיו | |
| וַיִּקְבֹּר בְּגִן־בֵּיתוֹ בְּגִן־עֶזָּא | 18 And Manasseh laid down with his fathers |
| וַיִּמְלֹךְ אָמוֹן בְּנוֹ תַחְתָּיו: | and he was buried in the garden of his house in the garden of Uzza |
| | and his son Amon reigned instead of him. |

Verse one begins with the introduction of the new king, stating how many years he reigned and where. Here, Manasseh's age is recorded instead of the year he began to reign.⁹

Verse two is an evaluation of Manasseh's reign. DtrN recorded that Manasseh had done evil in the sight of YHWH. It is evident that before evaluating someone as being sinful, there must first exist a standard by which that person can be critiqued. DtrN records two such criteria, though only one is critical for the present investigation. However, since both are significant within the whole of the DH, both will be mentioned. The first criterion for evaluation is found in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 and is directed toward the king.¹⁰ This criterion does not play a significant role in the evaluation of Manasseh's reign and will, therefore, not be pursued. The second criterion is fundamental to Manasseh's assessment. It deals with cultic purity and serves as a general expectation for all of Israel including, of course, the king.¹¹

⁹ Cf. 1 Ki 15:25; 22:51; 2 Ki 12:1; 13:1; 15:13.

¹⁰ This is a fascinating passage dealing with the averting of pride and abuse of power (Cf. Deut 8: 13-14). It has tremendous ramifications. Unfortunately, reviewing it is outside the confines of this study.

¹¹ The king is doubly bound to obey the commandments of God. First, it is he who is responsible for personally writing out a copy of the Law for his own use (Deut 17:18-20). Secondly, there is a warning within the DH that it will be in fact the king who will destroy Israel's way of life (1 Sam 8:10-18).

It must be mentioned that the demand for cultic purity cannot be located in a single passage. Rather, it is found scattered throughout the whole of Deuteronomy.¹² Certainly, the rules extending to all of Israel include more than mere cultic purity; however, as will be made known, all of Manasseh's recorded behavior falls under this rubric of cultic purity. It is for this reason that it is considered of distinct importance for the purposes of this analysis and will be explored thoroughly.

Let us now look at the conclusion, which begins at verse seventeen.

| 2 Kings 21:17 | 2 Kings 21:17 (author's translation) |
|---|---|
| וַיֵּתֶר דְּבָרֵי וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְחִטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא הֵלֹא־הֵם כְּתוּבִים עַל־סֵפֶר דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה: | Now the rest of the acts of __ and his... are they not written the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? |

Here is an indication that other information about Manasseh is recorded and where it is found – in this case, it is in the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah.¹³ This information does not contribute significantly to our purposes, but it is part of the formula under discussion and is, for this reason, relevant to point out.

| 2 Kings 21:18 | 2 Kings 21:18 (author's translation) |
|---|--|
| וַיִּשְׁכַּב מִנְשָׁה עִם־אֲבֹתָיו וַיִּקָּבֶר – בְּגִן־עֶזָּא וַיִּמְלֹךְ אָמוֹן בְּנוֹ תַּחְתָּיו: | He laid down with his fathers and he was buried in – the garden of Uzza and Amon his son became king in his place. |

¹² Cf. Deut 18:9-13. This is an example of one of several places where cultic purity is emphasized.

¹³ Cf. 1 Ki 11:41; 14:19, 29; 15:7, 23, 31; 16:5, 14, 20, 27; 22:39, 45; 2 Ki 1:18; 10:34; 12:19; 13:8, 12; 14:15, 18, 28; 15:6, 11, 15, 21, 26, 31, 36; 16:19; 20:20; 21:25; 23:28; 24:5. The writer lets the reader know that there is more information to be found about each king. The phraseology suggests to most scholars that a selection process was at work in the composition of this historiography. Verse seventeen is a clear example of this, see text.

Verse eighteen declares Manasseh's death and records his son Amon as his successor.¹⁴

We notice in this verse that Manasseh was buried in the garden of Uzza. The mention of the garden belonging to Uzza seems to be a significant specification. This detail was left out of the Chr's version of the story. This will be discussed later when we compare the sister verse in the CH.

2. Body

The main body of the passage is broken down into three parts: the sins of Manasseh along with an indication of the people's culpability, an announcement of judgment by YHWH and finally, a verse summarizing Manasseh's general defiance. These three sections will form the general structure of our review. How each segment will be handled will be discussed at the beginning of individual segments. Each of the three sections will begin with a general overview of the verses involved in that portion of the study.

We will start here with the first section involving the sins of Manasseh (vv. 3-7) and the negligence of the people (vv. 8-9). To facilitate this portion of our study, after our translation we will list Manasseh's eleven recorded sins and group them according to the verses in which they are found.

Sins one through four are found in verse three. Sin four is in both verses four and five. Sins six through ten are in verse six, and sin eleven is in verse seven. Verses eight and nine indict the people for their refusal to listen to the commands of YHWH. These last two verses will be looked at afterwards.

¹⁴ See also, 1 Ki 2:10; 11:43; 14:20, 31; 15:8, 24; 16:6, 28; 22:40, 50; 2 Ki 8:24; 10:35; 13:9, 13; 14:16, 22, 29; 15:7, 22, 38; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18; 24:6.

3 וַיָּשָׁב וַיִּבְנֶן אֶת־הַבָּמוֹת אֲשֶׁר אָבִד
חִזְקִיָּהוּ אָבִיו וַיִּקֶּם מִזְבַּחַת לַבַּעַל
וַיַּעַשׂ אֲשֶׁרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אַחָאב מֶלֶךְ
יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְכָל־צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם
וַיַּעֲבֹד אֹתָם:

4 וַבִּנְה מִזְבַּחַת בְּבֵית יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר אָמַר
יְהוָה בִּירוּשָׁלַם אֲשִׁים אֶת־שְׁמִי:

5 וַיִּבְנֶן מִזְבַּחוֹת לְכָל־צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם
בְּשְׁתֵּי חֲצֹרוֹת בֵּית־יְהוָה:

6 וַהֲעִבִיר אֶת־בְּנוֹ בָּאֵשׁ וְעוֹנֵן וְנֹחַשׁ
וַעֲשָׂה אוֹב וַיִּדְּעוּנִים הִרְבָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת
הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לְהַכְעִיס:

7 וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־פֶּסֶל הָאֲשֶׁרָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
בְּבֵית אֲשֶׁר אָמַר יְהוָה אֶל־דָּוִד
וְאֶל־שְׁלֹמֹה בְּנוֹ בְּבֵית הַזֶּה וּבִירוּשָׁלַם
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתִּי מִכָּל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲשִׁים אֶת־שְׁמִי לְעוֹלָם:

8 וְלֹא אֲסִיף לְהַנִּיד רֶגֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִן־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָאֲבוֹתָם
כִּי אִם־יִשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר
צִוִּיתִים וּלְכָל־הַתּוֹרָה
אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה אֹתָם עַבְדִּי מֹשֶׁה:

9 וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ וַיִּתְּעוּ מִנִּשְׁאָה לַעֲשׂוֹת
אֶת־הָרַע מִן־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁמִיד
יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

3 And he returned and rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed. And he erected altars to Baal and he made Asherah, just as Ahab, king of Israel had made, and he bowed to all the hosts of heaven and he served them.

4 And he built altars in the house of YHWH *of* which YHWH said, "In Jerusalem I will put my name."

5 And he built altars to all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of YHWH.

6 And he made his son pass through the fire, and he practiced witchcraft and divination and he *dealt with* mediums and familiar spirits, and he did much evil in the eyes of YHWH to provoke *him* to anger.

7 And he put an image of Asherah, which he made *into* the house *of* which YHWH said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house in Jerusalem which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I put my name forever."

8 "And I will not make again the feet of Israel to flee from the land which I have given to their fathers if only they will observe to do according to all which I have commanded them and to all the Law which Moses my servant commanded them."

9 But they did not listen. Manasseh caused them to go astray doing more evil than the nations whom YHWH had destroyed from before the sons of Israel.

a. Culpability of Manasseh

In verses three through seven, we are told the extent of Manasseh's sins. The way these sins are presented does not appear to be random. Rather, each sin can be shown to reflect direct disobedience to specific injunctions within the Law Code of Deuteronomy (Deut 12-26). We can see this by looking more closely at the individual sins. We will do this by first making a list of the written sins. The spacing indicates how the sins are grouped according to DtrN in separate verses.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| verse three | 1) returned and rebuilt the high places 2) erected altars to Baal 3) made Asherah 4) bowed to all the hosts of heaven and served them. |
| verses four and five | 5) built altars in the house of YHWH |
| verse six | 6) made his son pass through the fire 7) practiced witchcraft 8) practiced divination 9) dealt with mediums 10) dealt with familiar spirits |
| verse seven | 11) put an image of Asherah into the house of YHWH |

We will begin with the four sins recorded in verse three.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2 Kings 21:3 | 2 Kings 21:3 (author's translation) |
| וַיָּשָׁב וַיִּבֶן אֶת־הַבִּמּוֹת | He returned and rebuilt the high places. |
| וַיִּקַּם מִזְבְּחֹת לַבַּעַל | He erected altars to Baal. |

וַיַּעַשׂ אֲשֵׁרָה

He made an Asherah.

וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לְכָל-צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם
וַיַּעֲבֹד אֹתָם:

He bowed to all the hosts of heaven, and he served them.

The verse leads off with Manasseh as having rebuilt the high places. High places comes from the word **בִּמְה** – a raised space. These places appear to have, at one time, served a legitimate function, but this was before the building of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 3:2). However, with the centralization of worship¹⁵ the toleration for maintaining such places was inconsistent with the explicit command of Deuteronomy 12:2.¹⁶ The order to destroy the high places comes at the opening of the Law Code. Also note that the destruction of the high places was specifically part of Josiah's reformation.¹⁷

An important underpinning of the Deuteronomist is the idea of seeking YHWH with the whole of one's person. These four sins recorded in verse three manifest a heart not seeking YHWH wholly. Deuteronomy gives assurance that YHWH will be found by the one who seeks after Him completely.¹⁸ It seems as though the inverse of this assurance can also be deduced as a principle within this book from a careful reading of several of the texts. That is, if unity with YHWH requires seeking Him with one's whole heart, surely the one who intentionally transgresses this directive will find himself or herself at odds with YHWH.¹⁹

¹⁵ Cf. Deut 12:5-7, 11, 13-14, 18, 26-28; 14:24; 16:2, 6; 26:2; 4-7. (Cf. 11:29).

¹⁶ Cf. 1 Ki 3:3-4; 12:31-32; 13:2, 32-33; 14:23; 15:14; 22:43; 2 Ki 12:3; 14:4; 15:4, 35; 16:4; 17:9, 11, 29, 32.

¹⁷ Emil G. Hirsch, "High Place," In *Jewish Encyclopedia* edited by Isidore Singer, vol 6, *God-Istria*, 3d ed. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1925), 387-89. See also, 2 Ki. 23:5, 8-9, 13, 19-20.

¹⁸ Cf. Deut 4:29; 10:12; 11:13-14; 26:16-17; 30:2, 6, 10.

¹⁹ Cf. Deut 11:16-17, 26-28; 12:28; 30:1-20.

Examples of specific actions that bring YHWH's displeasure upon the one who does them can be seen in Manasseh's behavior. There are multiple injunctions throughout the DH written against affiliating oneself with the Asherim²⁰ and offering service to Baal.²¹ Because there is only one true God,²² no one or no thing apart from YHWH Himself is ever to be worshipped.²³ Verse three gives evidence how Manasseh transgressed these injunctions.

| 2 Kings 21:4-5 | 2 Kings 21:4-5 (author's translation) |
|--|---|
| 4 וּבִנָּה מִזְבְּחֹת בְּבֵית יְהוָה | 4 And he built altars in the house of YHWH |
| 5 וַיִּבֶן מִזְבְּחֹת לְכָל־צָבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם | 5 And he built altars to all the hosts of heaven |
| 6 וַהֲעִבִיר אֶת־בְּנוֹ בָּאֵשׁ וְעוֹנֵן וְנָחֵשׁ וַעֲשָׂה אוֹב וַיִּדְּעֹנִים הִרְבָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לְהַכְעִיִּם: | 6 And he made his son pass through the fire, and he practiced witchcraft and divination and he <i>dealt with</i> mediums and familiar spirits, and he did much evil in the eyes of YHWH to provoke <i>him</i> to anger. |

Verse four continues what verse three began by showing us how directly Manasseh transgressed the ordinances to centralize worship of YHWH. Verse five magnifies this disobedience and can also be traced to additional theological ordinances within the book of Deuteronomy.²⁴

Verse six seems to hold a special negativity. This verse is best described as dealing with the realm of the occult. It begins with Manasseh sacrificing his own son by fire. This act of

²⁰ Cf. Deut 7:4-5; 12:3-4; 16:21-22; 1 Ki 14:15, 23-24; 17:10-11.

²¹ Cf. 1 Ki 16:31-32; 18:21, 40; 19:18; 22:53; 2 Ki 3:2; 10:18-28.

²² Cf. Deut 4:35, 39; 6:4-5; 32:39.

²³ Cf. Deut 5:6-9; 6:4-5, 13-15; 7:16; 8:19-20; 10:12-14, 20; 11:1, 13-17, 26-28; 12:29-30; 13:4-15; 17:2-7; 26:16-17; 28:36-37; 30:17-18; 31:18-20; 32:9-13 (esp. v. 12), 15-21 (esp. vv. 16-17 and 21), 39.

²⁴ Cf. Deut 4:19; 17:3.

violence goes against two specific charges from Deuteronomy²⁵ and is a violation of one of the ten commandments (Deut 5:17): **לֹא תִרְצַח** – do not murder.

Participation in witchcraft seems to have a strong sense of disapproval in the DH. We can deduce this in different ways. First, DtrN employed a wide range of cultic vocabulary to denounce sins surrounding this practice. Second, a connection exists between the general practice of witchcraft and the sin of rebellion (1 Sam 15:23a). Third, a lexical nuance can be seen in Deuteronomy 18:12. Let us look at these ideas one at a time. We will start by looking at the rich cultic vocabulary found in DH. We will compare the appropriate second Kings passage with a related passage from the Book of Deuteronomy. Notice the similar vocabulary and word order.

By placing 2 Kings 21:6 next to Deuteronomy 18:10-11, we can see how directly disobedient Manasseh was to YHWH's commands.

| Deut 18:10-11 | Deut 18:10-11 (author's translation) | 2 Kings 21:6 | 2 Kings 21:6 (author's translation) |
|--|--|---|---|
| לֹא־יִמָּצֵא בְךָ מַעֲבִיר בְּנוֹ וּבִתּוֹ בָּאֵשׁ קֶסֶם קְסָמִים מַעֲוֵן וּמְנַחֵשׁ וּמְכַשֵּׁף: | 10 He must not find among you one who makes pass his son or daughter through the fire, one who practices divination or witchcraft, or one interpreting omens, or one who is a sorcerer. | וַהֲעִבִיר אֶת־בְּנוֹ בָּאֵשׁ וְעוֹנֵן וְנִחֵשׁ וַעֲשָׂה אֹזֶב וַיִּדְעֲנִים הָרַבָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרָע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה לְהַכְעִיס: | 6 And he made his son pass through the fire, and he practiced witchcraft and interpreted omens and he <i>dealt</i> <i>with</i> familiar spirits and spiritists, and he did much evil in the eyes of YHWH to provoke <i>him</i> to anger. |
| וְחָבֵר חָבֵר וְשֹׂאֵל אֹזֶב וַיִּדְעֲנֵי וְדָרַשׁ אֶל־הַמֵּתִים: | or one casting a spell or one inquiring of a medium or a spiritist or one calling up the dead. | | |

²⁵ Cf. Deut 12:31; 18:10.

There are nine different words used in the above Deuteronomic passage to describe behavior associated with the practice of witchcraft. Four of these words are found in the Kings passage and in the same word order, giving an indication of a potential connection between the two passages. These words are listed below, side by side, in the order in which they are found in the two passages.

| Deuteronomy 18:10-11 | 2 Kings 21:6 (author's translation) |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| קִסָּם – one who practices divination | |
| מַעוֹן – one who practices witchcraft | עוֹן – one who practices witchcraft |
| מְנַחֵשׁ – one who interprets omens | נַחֵשׁ – one who interprets omens |
| מְכַשֵּׁף – one who is a sorcerer | |
| חָבֵר – one who casts spells | |
| שׂוֹאֵל – one who is a medium | |
| אוֹב – one who has a familiar spirit | אוֹב – one who has a familiar spirit |
| יִדְעָנִי – one who is a spiritist | יִדְעָנִי – one who is a spiritist |
| דֹּרֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים מֵהַמֵּתִים – one who calls up the dead | |

Obviously, the passage in Deuteronomy utilizes a richer variety of vocabulary than the Kings passage. However, the similarities remain clear. By reading the next verse in Deuteronomy (18:12), one can learn that any form of witchcraft is detestable to YHWH. This gives a good indication of the seriousness of disobedience in this area. Deuteronomy 18:12, gives a clear indication of the pessimism being expressed towards Manasseh on account of his behavior.

| Deut 18:12 | Deut 18:12 (author's translation) |
|---|--|
| <p>כִּי־תוֹעֵבֹת יְהוָה כָּל־עֲשֵׂה אֱלֹה וּבְגִלְלֵי הַתּוֹעֵבֹת הָאֵלֶּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מוֹרִישׁ אוֹתָם מִפְּנֶיךָ:</p> | <p>For detestable to YHWH are all who do these things and on account of these abominations YHWH your God will be disinheriting them from before you.</p> |

An additional point not available to the reader of the English text gives a further indication of the seriousness of these transgressions. The point can be argued from the grammatical structure of the verse. In Hebrew, the verse begins with a noun in construct form. כִּי־תוֹעֵבֹת יְהוָה – for detestable to YHWH . . . By putting the noun at the front of the sentence the emphasis goes on the noun. The one who disobeys the statute is not merely detestable (a strong word in its own right), but this one is especially detestable.

The second piece of evidence we alluded to earlier, that adds weight to the sense of disapproval in the mind of DtrN regarding the participation in witchcraft is found in 1 Sam 15:23a. The verse begins, כִּי חַטָּאת־קָסָם מָרִי וְאָוֶן וּתְרָפִים הַפָּצָר – For the sin of divination [is] rebellion. Here DtrN puts witchcraft in the general category of rebellion. We learned specifically from Deut 18:12 that witchcraft is detestable, but we also know from the whole of the DH, that rebellion in any form is unacceptable to YHWH. So, here we have the heaping of sin upon sin.²⁶ This connection gives some theological perspective to the level of seriousness implied in Manasseh's participation in this form of cultic impurity.

In addition to these two points, it is interesting to note that again a consistency can be detected in how the verses are written. The connection made in 2 Kings 21:6 with passing one's child through sacrificial fires and participating in witchcraft is presented in the same sequence as it is in Deuteronomy 18:10. In Deuteronomy the injunction is stated at the outset of detestable

²⁶ This idea of coupling sin is found in Isa 30:1. This is a sin of rebellious children.

things not to do when Israel enters the promise land. DtrN records this transgression at the top of his list of sins relating to witchcraft.

| 2 Kings 21:7 | 2 Kings 21:7 (author's translation) |
|--|--|
| וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־פֶּסֶל הָאֲשֵׁרָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה בְּבֵית...יְהוָה... אֲשִׁים אֶת־שְׁמִי לְעוֹלָם: | And he put an image of Asherah, which he made into the house of...YHWH... [in which] I will put my name forever. |

The sin in this verse takes on heightened culpability in light of the significance of the house of YHWH.²⁷ Not only is Manasseh committing a sin against the very dwelling of YHWH's glory, but his display also reveals lack of respect for the name of YHWH. There are several commands to destroy the Asherim²⁸ or simply to avoid association with them.²⁹ Manasseh does neither.

b. Culpability of the People

We now move onto the disclosure of the culpability of the people. Below is an example of a prominent Deuteronomistic theology: possession of the land is interwoven with the people's obedience. The people seem to have forgotten as the Scripture indicates, and now their rebellion was catching up with them.³⁰ The conditional covenant is frequently acknowledged throughout the Book of Deuteronomy.³¹

²⁷ Cf. 1 Ki 8:10-53.

²⁸ Cf. Deut 7:5; 12:3.

²⁹ Cf. Deut 16:21-22.

³⁰ Cf. Deut 31:14-19.

³¹ Cf. Deut 1:18-19, 35-36; 2:1, 37; 4:1-20, 23-29, 40; 5:1-33; 6:1-3, 12-19, 24-25; 7:1-6, 11-16; 8:1, 6-10, 19, 10:12-13, 16-21; 11:1, 8-9, 13-28, 32; 12:1, 20-28, 30-32; 13:1-29; 15:5; 19:9; 27:10; 28:1-62 (esp. vv. 58 and 62); 30:6-20; 31:9-13; 32:45-47.

| 2 Kings 21:8-9 | 2 Kings 21:8-9 (author's translation) |
|---|---|
| 8 <u>רק אם יִשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת</u> | 8. <u>only if</u> they will observe to do |
| 9 <u>וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ וַיִּתְּעַם מְנַשֶּׁה לַעֲשׂוֹת</u> <u>אֶת־הָרָע</u> | 9 <u>But they did not listen.</u> And Manasseh caused them to go astray doing [more] evil |

The underlined evidence indicates that according to DtrN the covenant made between YHWH and His people is conditional. This idea that the covenant is conditional helps the reader begin to piece together the logic of DtrN's use of the doctrine of the transferability of guilt. If the covenant were without condition, the idea of guilt would not be an issue.

c. Announcement of Judgment

Here we will look primarily at verses ten through fifteen, which identify the theological doctrine of the transferability of guilt that undergirds DtrN's historiography. Verse sixteen contributes to this understanding but will be treated in a separate section.

| 2 Kings 21:10-15 | 2 Kings 21:10-15 (author's translation) |
|--|---|
| 10 וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה בְּיַד־עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִיאִים לֵאמֹר: | 10 And YHWH spoke by the hand of his servants the prophets saying: |
| 11 יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מְנַשֶּׁה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה הַתַּעֲבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה הָרַע מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵיו וַיַּחֲטֵא גַם־אֶת־יְהוּדָה בְּגִלּוּלָיו: | 11 Because Manasseh the king of Judah has done the abominations more wickedly than all the Amorites who <i>were</i> before him and again he caused Judah to sin with his idols. |
| 12 לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי מְבִיא רָעָה עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיְהוּדָה | 12 Therefore, thus says YHWH God of Israel, behold I am bringing evil upon Jerusalem and Judah |

אֲשֶׁר כָּל-שֹׁמְעֵי תִצְלֶנָּה שְׁתֵּי אָזְנוֹי:
 13 וְנָטִיתִי עַל-יְרוּשָׁלַם אֶת קוֹ שֹׁמְרוֹן
 וְאֶת-מִשְׁקַלֶּת בֵּית אַחָאָב וּמַחִיתִי
 אֶת-יְרוּשָׁלַם כַּאֲשֶׁר-יִמָּחַה אֶת-הַצֶּלַחַת
 מָחָה וְהִפָּךְ עַל-פָּנֶיהָ:

which all who hear both his ears will tingle.
 13 I will stretch over Jerusalem a line of
 Samaria
 and the leveling instrument of the house of
 Ahab, and I will wipe
 Jerusalem as one wipes the dish.

I will wipe it and turn it upon her face.

14 וְנָטַשְׁתִּי אֶת שְׁאֵרִית נַחֲלָתִי וְנִתְּתִים
 בְּיַד אֹיְבֵיהֶם וְהָיוּ לְבָז
 וּלְמַשְׁפָּה לְכָל-אֹיְבֵיהֶם:

14 And I will abandon the remnant of my
 possession and I am giving them
 into the hand of their enemies and they will
 become as plunder
 and as spoil to all their enemies.

15 יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶת-הָרָע בְּעֵינַי
 וַיְהִיו מְכַעְסִים אֹתִי מִן-הַיּוֹם
 אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ אֲבוֹתָם מִמִּצְרַיִם
 וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:

15 Because they have done evil in my eyes

and they have been ones who are provoking me
 since the day their fathers came out of Egypt,
 and until this day.

These verses constitute the punishment YHWH plans to inflict on Judah. As additional verses in the DH will show, Manasseh is the one primarily held accountable for the doom of the Southern Kingdom; however, the people share in his culpability as we discussed earlier and as verse fifteen here also indicates.

The judgment of YHWH is clear. The primary responsibility falls to Manasseh.

יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מְנוּשָׁה...לְכֹן – because Manasseh...therefore... (vv. 11-12). However, the people too are blameworthy. They have transgressed the covenant, which maintains the necessity

of faithfulness.³² Below are the specific places that put forth these failures of both the king and the people.

| 2 Kings 21:10-12, 15-16 | 2 Kings 21:10-12, 15-16 (author's translation) |
|---|---|
| 10 וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה... לֵאמֹר | 10 And YHWH . . . spoke |
| 11 יֵעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מְנַשֶּׁה... הַתַּעֲבוֹת הָאֵלֹהִים... וַיַּחֲטֵא גַם־אֶת־יְהוּדָה בְּגִלּוּלָיו | 11 <u>Because</u> Manasseh has done . . . these abominations . . . and again [he caused] Judah to sin with his idols. |
| 12 לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנְנִי מְבִיא רָעָה עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְיְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר כָּל־שֹׁמְעָיו תִּצְלָנָה שְׁתֵּי אָזְנוֹ: | 12 <u>Therefore</u> , thus says YHWH God of Israel, behold I am bringing evil upon Jerusalem and Judah which all who hear both his ears will tingle. |
| 15 יֵעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶת־הָרַע בְּעֵינַי וַיְהִיו מְכַעְסִים אֹתִי | 15 <u>Because</u> they have done evil in my eyes and they have been ones who are provoking me |
| 16 וְגַם דָּם נָקִי שָׁפַךְ מְנַשֶּׁה הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד... לְבָדֵר מַחֲטָאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִחֲטִיא אֶת־יְהוּדָה לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינַי יְהוָה: | 16 <u>Moreover</u> Manasseh has poured out very much innocent blood . . . besides his sin, which he caused Judah to sin by doing evil in the eyes of YHWH. |

These verses demonstrate a shift in focus from Manasseh's sole responsibility (vv. 10-14) by placing some of the burden onto the people (v.15). Nevertheless, it is evident that even though both parties (the king and his people) are guilty according to DtrN, it is the king who is responsible first and foremost for leading the people into the catastrophe of 586 (1 Sam 8:7-22).

³² Cf. Deut 30:17-20; 32:15-22; Jos 7:11-12; Judg 2:1-3; 1 Sam 8:9-18; 1 Ki 8:22-25.

This is borne out in other parts of the DH. The obvious parallel is with the Northern Kingdom. There the kingdom is destroyed and its people are sent into exile because of the sins of King Jeroboam.³³

Verse sixteen can now be looked at by itself to see how it fits in with the overall message of DtrN. What scholars have identified as DtrN's use of the doctrine of the transferability of guilt will be perceived.

| 2 Kings 21:16 | 2 Kings 21:16 (author's translation) |
|--|--|
| 16 וַגַּם דָּם נָקִי שָׁפַךְ מְנַשֶּׁה הָרַבָּה מְאֹד עַד אֲשֶׁר-מָלֵא אֶת-יְרוּשָׁלַם פֶּה לָפֶה לְבַד מִחַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִחֲטִיא אֶת-יְהוּדָה לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה: | 16 <u>Moreover</u> Manasseh has poured out very much innocent blood until it filled Jerusalem from one end to the other besides his sin, which he caused Judah to sin by doing evil in the eyes of YHWH. |

Verse sixteen tells us little about the evil character of Manasseh that is different from what we have learned previously. The purpose of this verse seems to be more along the lines of a generalized summary of his evil character. Perhaps, the verse can be understood as the result of a later redactor's hand on the narrative. The use of וַגַּם – and moreover, is quite frequent in the DH. It is used frequently to strengthen an argument that has been put forth.³⁴ Its employment here seems to give additional justification to why YHWH allowed the Southern Kingdom to be exiled. As an isolated verse, it does not seem to blame Manasseh per se for the exile, but in its context it does support the idea of the doctrine of the transferability of guilt.

³³ Cf. 1 Ki 13:34; 14:15-16 and 2 Ki 17:22-23.

³⁴ This terminology is used 249 times in the Hebrew Scripture. As many as 75 uses are in the DH alone always employed to strengthen the argument being put forth, as one would expect. It is interesting to note the context of its multiple use in Jos 7:11-12, as a reinforcement that possession of the land is conditionally related to obedience. However, this may be an emendation similar to that in 2 Ki 16:3; 23:15; 24:4.

From the above information we are able to suggest that there is a direct connection between the behavior of Manasseh (and the people) and the downfall of the Southern Kingdom. But let us look at the remaining relevant Manasseh passages in order to leave no doubt in the mind of the reader as to the validity of the postulation that something like the doctrine of the transferability of guilt is present in the historiography of DtrN.

3. Doctrine of the Transferability of Guilt

The Manasseh pericope in the Book of Kings is not the end of the Manasseh story for DtrN. Further mention of his sins and also how they were linked to YHWH's vexation, which led directly to the destruction and exile of the Southern Kingdom, can be found in 2 Kings 23:12, 26-27; 24:3-4; Jeremiah 15:4. We will start by looking at 2 Kings 23:12 by itself.

The other three references speak decisively from the position of the doctrine of the transferability of guilt and will be look at together. Also included is a passage from the Book of Jeremiah. It has special significance. Many believe that Jeremiah (or his scribe Baruch) was responsible for the penning of the books of Kings. That discussion is outside the boundaries of this paper, but the connection between the Book of Jeremiah and the DH is assumed herein.³⁵ We will begin with our translation of 2 Kings 23:12.

| 2 Kings 23:12 | 2 Kings 23:12 (author's translation) |
|--|---|
| וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַגֹּג עָלִית אָחָז אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ מַלְכֵי יְהוּדָה וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה מְנַשֶּׁה בְּשַׁתֵּי חֲצֵרוֹת בֵּית־יְהוָה נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּרְץ מִשָּׁם וְהִשְׁלִיךְ אֶת־עַפְרָם | And the altars which <i>were</i> upon the rooftop of the upper chamber of Ahaz which the kings of Judah had made and the altars which Manasseh made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, the king had broken and he ran from there and he |

³⁵ A presupposition of this thesis is that the author of Jeremiah and of 2 Kings come from the same theological belief system. A tradition within Judaism believes Jeremiah to be the author of Kings. "Jeremiah wrote the book which bears his name, the Book of Kings, and Lamentations." (B.B. 15a).

We can see that this verse does little more than acknowledge that Manasseh had built altars in the house of YHWH, which was established in the body of DtrN's pericope (2 Kings 21:4-5). It allows us additional evidence of Manasseh's apostate character, but that is the extent of its benefit for our purposes. However, we will find that the three passages bring into primary focus the doctrine of the transferability of guilt.

2 Kings 23:26-27; 24:3-4 and Jeremiah 15:4

2 Kings 23:26-27; 24:3 and Jeremiah 15:4
(author's translation)

23:26 אֵךְ לֹא־שָׁב יְהוָה מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ
הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר־חָרָה אַפּוֹ בִיהוּדָה עַל
כָּל־הַפְּעָסִים אֲשֶׁר הִכְעִיסוּ מְנַשֶּׁה:

23: 26: However YHWH did not return from his great burning anger which burned against Judah because of all the vexations with which Manasseh had provoked Him.

27 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה גַּם אֶת־יְהוּדָה אֲסִיר
מֵעַל פָּנַי כְּאֲשֶׁר הִסְרֹתִי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּמֵאַסְתִּי אֶת־הָעִיר הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר־בָּחַרְתִּי
אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאֶת־הַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי
יְהִי שְׁמִי שָׁם:

27: YHWH also said to Judah, "I will remove you from before my face as I have removed Israel
and I will reject this city Jerusalem which I have chosen and the house of which I said, 'my name shall be there.

24:3 אֵךְ עַל־פִּי יְהוָה הָיְתָה בִיהוּדָה
לְהִסִּיר מֵעַל פָּנָיו בַּחֲטָאת מְנַשֶּׁה
כָּכָל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:

24: 3: Surely upon the command of YHWH it happened to Judah to remove them from before YHWH's face because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all which he had done.

4 וְגַם דָּם־הַנָּקִי אֲשֶׁר שָׁפַךְ
וַיִּמְלֵא אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם דָּם נָקִי וְלֹא־אָבָה
יְהוָה לְסַלֵּחַ:

24: 4 And also for the innocent blood which he poured out, for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood YHWH was not willing to forgive.

15: 4 וְנָתַתִּים לְזֹעָה לְכָל מַמְלָכוֹת
הָאָרֶץ בְּגַלּל מְנַשֶּׁה בֶן־יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ

15: 4 And I will make *them* an *object of horror* to all the kingdoms of the earth on account of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah
the king of Judah for what he has done in

Clearly the collective message derived from these five verses prevents any doubt as to why, according to the DH, the children of Israel have been exiled and their kingdoms destroyed. 2 Kings 23:26-27 starts out this section with a strong indictment of Manasseh's culpability that is most readily explained in sympathy with the doctrine of the transferability of guilt. Here, the Southern Kingdom is destroyed, and its people are sent into exile because of the fault of their king. The behavior of the king did, in fact, affect the realities of future generations. This is the essence of the doctrine of the transferability of guilt as presented by DtrN.

2 Kings 24:3-4 continues along the same lines assigning blame to Manasseh for the sufferings of the Southern Kingdom, though it leaves out any reference to the events of 722 B.C.E.. Verse four is closely connected to verse sixteen of chapter twenty-one. It is a reiteration of Manasseh's spilling of innocent blood, filling Jerusalem from one end to the other. And finally, the passage from Jeremiah encapsulates the heart of DtrN's accusation of Manasseh in a single verse. בְּגִלְלֵ מְנַשֶּׁה...עַל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה בִירוּשָׁלַם – on account of Manasseh . . . for what he has done in Jerusalem. Here, as in no other place, the doctrine of the transferability of guilt, Manasseh's incrimination and the vindication of God are all brought together.

4. Comparing and Contrasting the Pericopes

When the Manasseh pericopes from 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles are placed side by side, we discover that only the first halves of both accounts, as well as their conclusions, correlate closely enough to compare and contrast. Therefore, in order to get around this difficulty we will divide the second half of this chapter into two sub-sections. In the first sub-section we will analyze the

introductions through verse ten of both passages along with their conclusions. In the second subsection we will examine the body of the Chr's version of the Manasseh story and investigate why it was able to convince scholars that the Chr saw through the lens of the doctrine of individual reward and retribution.

In order to conserve space and preserve clarity, only the translations from the MT will be put forth. These individual presentations will be followed with an explanatory word, as was the case earlier in the chapter. However, since this is an analysis of the Hebrew text (and not the English translation), our elucidations will make use of the Hebrew text in order to clarify salient points. Our inspection will place the parallel verses side by side considering the pluses and minuses and other variations. The differences are underlined.

| 2 Kings 21:1-2, 17-18 (author's translation) | 2 Chronicles 33:1-2, 17-20 (author's translation) |
|--|---|
| 1 Manasseh was in his twelfth year <i>when</i> he began to reign. He reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years <u>and the name of his mother was Hephzibah.</u> | 1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and fifty-five years he reigned in Jerusalem. |
| 2 He did evil in the eyes of YHWH according to the abominations of the nations whom YHWH destroyed from before the sons of Israel. | 2 And he did evil in the eyes of YHWH according to the abominations of the nations, which YHWH dispossessed from before the sons of Israel. |
| 17 Now the rest of the words of Manasseh <u>and all that he has done and the sin which he sinned</u> , are they not written upon the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? | 18 Now the rest of the words of Manasseh, <u>even his prayer to his God and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of YHWH the God of Israel</u> are among the records of the kings of Israel. |
| | 19 <u>His prayer and how God was entreated by him and all his sin and his transgression and the places on which he built on them the high places and he caused to stand the Asherim and the carved images before he humbled himself</u> |

behold they are written upon the records of Hozai.

18 And Manasseh laid down with his fathers and he was buried in the garden of his house in the garden of Uzza and his son Amon reigned instead of him.

20 So Manasseh slept with his fathers and they buried him in his *own* house, and Amon his son became king instead of him.

There is only one plus in these opening verses. It is in DtrN's account. He mentions the name of Manasseh's mother. **וְשֵׁם אִמּוֹ הֶפְזִיבָה** – and the name of his mother [was] Hephzibah. Apart from this plus, these texts at this point are similar. It is in the conclusion where substantial variations occur. DtrN's conclusion takes only two verses to record; whereas, the Chr's version takes three.

The most obvious variation is verse nineteen where the entire verse is a plus acknowledging Manasseh's change of heart. It is unique to the Chr's account. And, although the Chr does highlight some of Manasseh's cultic improprieties, as we shall see, the Chr's conclusion sides with the affirmation that Manasseh should be remembered as having prayed a prayer of atonement. So, even though the conclusion varies substantively, it does not destroy the structure of the kingly presentation formula.

Now, we will compare the variations in verse seventeen in 2 Kings with the variations in the corresponding verse in the Chr's account. What we will find gives additional evidence that the authors are each intending to end the accounts they constructed in accordance with what they wrote in the bodies of their work, either that Manasseh embodied evil according to DtrN or repentance according to the Chr.

17 וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַחֲטָאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא

18 וַתִּפְּלֹתוּ אֶל-אֱלֹהָיו וְדִבְרֵי הַחַיִּים

הַמְּדַבְּרִים אֵלָיו בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

It is clear in these few words from the two passages that DtrN continued to speak of Manasseh's sin; whereas, the Chr focused on Manasseh's prayer. Continuing on in the concluding parallel verses (v. 18 for DtrN and v. 20 for the Chr), we find an interesting minus in the Chr's version.

וַיִּקְבֹּר בֶּן-בֵּיתוֹ בֶּן-עֻזָּא

וַיִּקְבְּרוּהוּ בֵּיתוֹ

Here in this last verse is shown a small but significant difference between the two verses. It is a minus in the Chr's account. It is a noteworthy expurgation in the Chr's narrative that seems to have substantial implications in the arena of cultic cleanliness. The variation centers on the specificity of where Manasseh was recorded to have been buried. DtrN stipulates it was in Uzza's garden. The Chr leaves out this detail. Why? The answer seems to lie in who Uzza was within the larger bodies of both authors' works.

The Chr mentioned Uzza five times not in association with Manasseh.³⁶ DtrN mentions him four times apart from the reference in 2 Kings.³⁷ There seems to be a reason behind the Chr's editing out of Uzza from his account. What seems to lend credence to the idea that intention lay behind the elimination of Uzza's name from the Chr's memory of where Manasseh was buried is in the story the Bible tells of Uzza. In both the DH and the CH, Uzza is

³⁶ Cf. 1 Ch 8:7; 13:7, 9, 10, 11.

³⁷ Cf. 2 Sam 6:3, 6-8.

remembered solely for having touched the Ark of the Covenant in an unworthy manner. He acted against YHWH's command not to approach the Ark unworthily, and for his disobedience he was struck down.³⁸

There are very specific injunctions on how one is to approach the Ark of the Covenant.³⁹ However, when David sought to return the Ark to the City of David, he was disobedient in his handling of the Ark.⁴⁰ It was this that ultimately brought about Uzza's death (1 Chronicles 13:10). The recording of Uzza's transgression in the DH takes on additional negativity when one looks at a seemingly unrelated detail in the book of Samuel. There, DtrN records an incident in which YHWH struck down 50,070 people just for looking at the Ark! Certainly, looking is perceived as less offensive than touching. Surely the Chr did not miss the recording of this incident, which speaks to DtrN's perception of the wickedness of Uzza.

The reason why this has significance is that the Ark is a primary symbol of the cult of YHWH.⁴¹ This is strong circumstantial evidence for the hypothesis that the association of Uzza and cultic transgression accounts, at least in part, for the reason why DtrN would have been interested in associating Manasseh's burial with Uzza, and why the Chr might have wanted to suppress it.

From here, we are ready to begin analyzing the comparable parts of the pericopes within the body sections. Once again, the entire segment up for review will be first laid out in English to conserve space, as was already done. The main differences will continue to be highlighted in Hebrew where appropriate. The ones that will be talk about will be underlined in the English.

³⁸ Cf. 2 Sam 6:6-7 and 1 Ch 13:9-10.

³⁹ Cf. Ex 25:13-15; Deut 10:8.

⁴⁰ Cf. 1 Ch 13:7 with 1 Ch 15:12-13.

⁴¹ Cf. Ex 25:16-22; 26:34.

| 2 Kings 21:3-10 (author's translation) | 2 Chronicles 33:3-10 (author's translation) |
|--|---|
| 3 And he returned and rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed. And he erected altars to <u>Baal</u> and he made <u>Asherah</u> , just as <u>Ahab, king of Israel</u> had made, and he bowed to all the hosts of heaven and he served them. | 3 And he returned and rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he caused to stand the altars to <u>Baals</u> and he made <u>Asherim</u> and he worshipped all the hosts of heaven and he served them. |
| 4 And he built altars in the house of YHWH of which YHWH said, "In Jerusalem <u>I will put my name.</u> " | 4 He built altars in the house of the YHWH where the YHWH said, "In Jerusalem <u>my name will be forever.</u> " |
| 5 And he built altars to all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of YHWH. | 5 And he built altars to all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of the YHWH. |
| 6 And he made his <u>son</u> pass through the fire, and he practiced witchcraft and divination and he <i>dealt with</i> mediums and familiar spirits, and he did much evil in the eyes of YHWH to provoke <i>him</i> to anger. | 6 He made his <u>sons</u> pass through the fire <u>in the valley of Ben-Hinnom</u> and he practiced witchcraft and divination and <u>sorcery</u> and he <i>dealt with</i> mediums and a familiar spirit did much evil in the eyes of YHWH to provoke <u>him</u> to anger. |
| 7 And he put an image of <u>Asherah</u> , which he made in the house of which <u>YHWH</u> said to <u>David</u> and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name <u>forever.</u> " | 7 And he put an image of <u>the idol</u> , which he made in the house of <u>God</u> of which <u>God</u> said to <u>David</u> and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name <u>forever.</u> " |
| 8 And I will not make again the foot of Israel to flee from the land which I have given to <u>their</u> fathers if only they will observe to do <u>according to all</u> which I have commanded them and to <u>all</u> the Law <u>which</u> Moses <u>my servant</u> commanded <u>them</u> . | 8 I will not again <u>turn</u> the foot of Israel <u>from upon</u> the land I have <u>appointed</u> to <u>your</u> fathers if only they will observe to do <u>all</u> that I command them according to <u>all</u> the Law and statues and the ordinances <u>given</u> by the hand of <u>Moses</u> . |
| 9 <u>But they did not listen.</u> Manasseh caused <u>them</u> to go astray doing more evil than the nations whom YHWH had destroyed from before the sons of Israel. | 9 Thus, Manasseh caused <u>Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem</u> to do evil more than the nations whom YHWH had destroyed from before the sons of Israel. |
| 10 And YHWH spoke <u>by the hand of his</u> | 10 And YHWH spoke <u>to Manasseh and to his</u> |

servants the prophets saying:

people, but they did not pay attention.

Verse three: The variations between these verses are minor pluses. There is one plus on the side of DtrN. It is a reference to Ahab, Manasseh's grandfather. On the side of the Chr, there are two pluses that come in the form of a pluralizing of Baal and the Asherah.

Verse four: There are only two minimal variations here and both come in the latter half of the verses. The Kings passage uses the active construction אֲשִׁים אֶת־שְׁמִי – I will put my name; whereas, the Chr uses the passive voice: יִהְיֶה־שְׁמִי – my name will be. There is also, one plus added by the hand of the Chr. He adds the word לְעוֹלָם – forever.

Verse five: There are no variations.

Verse six: There are four pluses here, and all are on the side of the Chr. The first two pluses involve Manasseh's fire sacrifice. The Chr pluralizes בָּנָי – sons and specifies that Manasseh sacrificed them בְּגִי בֶן־הַנֶּם – in the valley of Ben-Hinnom. The second two pluses are word pluses. The Chr adds the word כִּשְׁף – sorcery, and he specifies לְהַכְעִיס – to provoke Him to anger (meaning, to provoke YHWH to anger). At this point, DtrN only implies who Manasseh provoked to anger using the construction: לְהַכְעִיס – to provoke [Him] to anger.

Verse seven: These verses have only minor changes. There is one plus on the Chr's side. He adds the word הָאֱלֹהִים – God near the top of the verse, whereas DtrN does not. The other changes come in the form of word variations. DtrN uses הָאֲשֵׁרָה – the Asherah; whereas, the Chr uses

הַסִּמָּל – the idol at the parallel spot. DtrN uses the word יְהוָה – YHWH to refer to God, (his preference throughout the whole of the DH). The Chr uses the word אֱלֹהִים – God.

Verse eight: There are several variations in verse eight that are pointed out in the English translations. Their lexical nuances are interesting but amount to very little in terms of our study. Therefore, we have underlined them in our translation, but we will not take the time to discuss them. There is one plus meriting some attention. It is on the side of the Chr. He added וְהַחֲקִים – and statutes and ordinances in the place where DtrN only used הַתּוֹרָה – the Law.

Verse nine: There are two pluses worth noting in these verses – one from each writer. DtrN begins with the words וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ – but they did not listen. These words are not found in the Chr's version. It is noteworthy because the people now specifically share in Manasseh's guilt in DtrN's account. The Chr's account censures the people as well, but his censure comes in verse ten; whereas, DtrN's acknowledgment that the people did not listen came in verse nine. The Chr's alteration comes in the specification of אֶת־יְהוּדָה וְיֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם – Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; whereas, DtrN simply uses a pronoun.

Verse ten: This verse prepares the reader for the upcoming divergence in storylines. DtrN uses the verse to speak of YHWH's word coming in a general prophetic way בְּיַד־עֲבָדָיו הַנְּבִיאִים – by the hand of His servants the prophets. The Chr uses the verse to bring specificity to the table. The word of YHWH was not simply pronounced; it was deliberately sent, but the people did not pay attention. וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מְנַשֶּׁה וְאֶל־עַמּוֹ וְלֹא הִקְשִׁיבוּ – And YHWH spoke

to Manasseh and to his people, but they did not pay attention. The guilt is plainly shared by both Manasseh and the people.

Our examination of these texts so far has revealed several minor variations in the form of word choice and how the accounts were constructed. We saw that these alterations presented little in the way of substantive differentiation in the messages the pericopes have put forth up to this point. The Chr offered two pluses that seem worth noting. One was the more precise description of the Law in verse eight, and the other was the specification of the people and the Nation of Judah in verse nine.

We can only make an educated guess at the rationale behind the amplification of the description of the Law and statutes and ordinances. Perhaps, the Chr's overall focus on cultic purity and his precision in his description of the requirements of God indicate to the reader a greater sense of Manasseh's disobedience. The more he disobeyed, the more momentous would be his repentance.

The specificity in identifying both the nation and the people in verse nine also appears to accentuate the magnitude of Manasseh's evil prior to his repentance. It was clear in DtrN's narrative that Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were the ones being spoken of, but by explicitly mentioning Judah *and* the inhabitants of Jerusalem, one is confronted with the magnitude of Manasseh's influence. It also seems possible to perceive in the Chr version the first hint at what will later blossom into the doctrine of individual reward and retribution. The king is still maintained as the leader of all the people, and certainly he has primary power to pilot them where he will. However, the people also share in their own destinations by choosing to do more evil than even the other nations. It is in the wording of this verse that the reader may possibly speculate on what could happen if the people decide instead to do good. The opportunity to

answer that conjecture comes in the Chr's departure from the DH. We are now ready to move into the final stage of our inductive analysis.

This section of the inductive analysis will proceed most effectively if all the verses to be reviewed are laid out in both their original Hebrew and English translation, as we did originally with the work of DtrN. Space will not be an issue, since only the Chr's pericope is being reviewed. From there, the study of the main ideas will follow in their natural groupings. The verses will be looked at in this combination: First, 2 Chronicles 33:11 will be examined by itself. It speaks of immediate judgment. Verses twelve and thirteen will be reviewed together. They highlight Manasseh's immediate repentance. Verses fourteen through sixteen will be considered collectively. They indicate the extent of Manasseh's restoration. Verse seventeen will be examined on its own. It sits alone as if an afterthought. Underlined are the points that will be discussed.

| 2 Chronicles 33:11-17 | 2 Chronicles 33:11-17 (author's translation) |
|---|---|
| וַיָּבֹא יְהוָה עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַצָּבָא אֲשֶׁר לְמֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר וַיִּלְכְּדוּ אֶת־מְנַשֶּׁה | 11 <u>Therefore</u> , YHWH brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them and <u>they captured Manasseh</u> |
| בַּחֲחִים וַיֹּאסְרוּהוּ בַּנְחָשְׁתִּים וַיִּלְכְּדוּהוּ בַּבֶּלָה: | with hooks and bound him with bronze <i>chains</i> and <u>made him go to Babylon</u> . |
| 12 וַכְּהָצַר לוֹ חָלָה אֶת־פָּנָיו יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו וַיִּכְנַע מֵאֵד מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתָיו: | 12 And when he was caused to suffer according to himself, he became grieved before YHWH his God and <u>he humbled himself</u> from before the God of his fathers. |
| 13 וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֵלָיו וַיַּעֲתָר לוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַע תַּחֲנוּנוֹ וַיִּשְׁיבֵהוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם לְמַלְכוּתוֹ וַיֵּדַע מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים: | 13 When <u>he made himself pray</u> to Him, He was moved towards him and <u>He heard his supplication</u> and <u>He brought him to Jerusalem</u> to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew for certain that YHWH, He <i>was</i> God. |

14 וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן בָּנָה חוֹמָה חִיצוֹנָה
לְעִיר־דָּוִיד מֵעֶרְבָהּ לְגִיחֹן
בִּנְחָל וְלָבֹא בְשַׁעַר הַדָּגִים
וְסָבַב לַעֲפֹל וַיִּגְבִּיהָ מְאֹד
וַיִּשֶׂם שָׂרֵי־חֵיל בְּכָל־הָעָרִים
הַבְּצֻרוֹת בִּיהוּדָה:

14 Now, after this he built the outer wall to the City of David westward toward Gihon from the valley to the entrance of the Gate of Fishes and

he encircled the Ophel and he caused it to be very high. Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities in Judah.

15 וַיִּסַּר אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי הַנֹּכֶר וְאֶת־הַסִּמָּל
מִבֵּית יְהוָה וְכָל־הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת אֲשֶׁר
בָּנָה בְּהָר בֵּית־יְהוָה וּבִירוּשָׁלַם
וַיִּשְׁלֹךְ חוּצָה לְעִיר:

15 And he removed the foreign gods and the idol from the house of YHWH and all the altars, which he built on the mountain of the house of YHWH and in Jerusalem he threw them outside the city.

16 וַיֵּכֵן אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה וַיִּזְבַּח עָלָיו
זִבְחֵי שְׁלָמִים וְתוֹדָה וַיֹּאמֶר
לִיהוּדָה לַעֲבֹד אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

16 And he established the altar of YHWH and sacrificed upon it offerings of peace and thanks and he said to Judah to serve YHWH the God of Israel.

17 אָבֵל עוֹד הָעָם זֹבְחִים בַּבָּמֹת
רַק לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:

17 Nevertheless the people still sacrificed in the high places *although only* to YHWH their God.

Verse eleven begins with a “וַ” The waw consecutive appears to serve the function of holding the entirety of the narrative together. The only absence of a waw come in the first verse, which begins the narrative and in verse seventeen. The reason for the absence in verse seventeen will be discussed a bit later but is one reason it has already been mentioned as exhibiting a certain oddity.

The message in this verse is that of immediate judgment made on Manasseh. He acted corruptly in verses three through nine, and by verse eleven he is shackled and heading off to Babylon as a prisoner. With this immediate judgment, the reader is made conscious of the

element of time. This sense of immediacy has not been part of either Manasseh story up to this point. However, as we shall see, an awareness of the moment is maintained throughout the Chr's revision. Consider verses twelve and thirteen, which may be referred to as Manasseh's immediate repentance.

| 2 Chronicles 33:12-13 | 2 Chronicles 33:12-13 (author's translation) |
|--|--|
| 12 וַיִּכְנַע | 12 And he humbled himself |
| 13 וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל וַיִּשְׁמַע תְּחִנָּתוֹ וַיְשִׁיבֵהוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם | 13 When <u>he made himself pray</u> to Him, He was moved towards him and <u>He heard his supplication</u> and He brought him to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew for certain that YHWH, He <i>was</i> God. |

The idea of immediate repentance can be deduced from the placement of Manasseh's contrition so close to his punishment. There is an interesting internal aspect in these verses found in the grammatical structure. Manasseh's humbling (וַיִּכְנַע – he humbled himself) is placed in the niphel imperfect which indicates reflexive, continuing action. Manasseh was not “humbled” by someone; but rather, he humbled himself. His entreaty to YHWH is in the hithpael form, which intensifies actions. Manasseh not only prayed, he prayed with fervor. YHWH then met Manasseh's immediate repentance with immediate restoration. Immediately YHWH וַיְשִׁיבֵהוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם – brought him [Manasseh] to Jerusalem.

| 2 Chronicles 33:14-16 | 2 Chronicles 33:14-16 (author's translation) |
|---|--|
| 14 וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן בָּנָה חוֹמָה חִיצוֹנָה לְעִיר־דָּוִיד מִעֶרְבָהּ לְגִיחוֹן בְּנָחַל וְלָבֹא בְּשַׁעַר הַדָּגִים וְסָבַב לְעֶפְלָי וַיְגַבִּיהָ מְאֹד וַיִּשֶׂם שָׂרֵי־חֵיל בְּכָל־הָעָרִים הַבְּצֻרוֹת בִּיהוּדָה: | 14 Now, after this he built the outer wall to the City of David westward toward Gihon from the valley to the entrance of the Gate of Fishes and he encircled the Ophel and he caused it to be very high. Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities in Judah. |

15 וַיִּסֶר אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי הַנֹּכַח וְאֶת־הַסִּמָּל
מִבֵּית יְהוָה וְכָל־הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת אֲשֶׁר
בָּנָה בְּהָר בֵּית־יְהוָה וּבִירוּשָׁלַם
וַיִּשְׁלֹךְ חוּצָה לְעִיר:

15 And he removed all the foreign Gods and
the idol from the house of YHWH and all the
altars, which
he built on the mountain of the house of
YHWH and in Jerusalem
he threw them outside the city.

16 וַיִּכֶן אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה וַיִּזְבַּח עָלָיו
זִבְחֵי שְׁלָמִים וְתוֹדָה וַיֹּאמֶר
לַיהוָה לַעֲבֹד אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

16 And he established the altar of YHWH and
sacrificed upon it offerings of peace and thanks
and he said to Judah to serve YHWH the God
of Israel.

Potentially, these verses have some fascinating undercurrents. In order to appreciate them, let us make a few observations of what we can know about the structuring of the Chr's pericope. Manasseh went from provoking YHWH to anger, which took seven verses to his repenting and the carrying out his restoration, which took only five. Verses three through seven explain to the reader that Manasseh built high places, made his sons pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and divination and various other acts of wickedness. Verses twelve and thirteen give an account of his supplication. Verses fourteen through sixteen cover the extent of his restoration in Jerusalem. There is never any mention in any of these verses of Manasseh's witchcraft, sorcery or the burning of his children. Why not? The explanation that will be suggested will make more sense if we first review what the Chr did actually include in his description of Manasseh's restitution.

The Chr wrote that Manasseh's restitution consisted of his building of an outer wall that encircled the city, specifically causing it to be וַיִּגְבִּיהָ מְאֹד – very high. The Chr then wrote how Manasseh put army commanders around the city to fortify it. Never are Manasseh's sins

expressly addressed except to say that he disposed of the idols that had been placed in the house of YHWH outside the city. These are the facts of the three-verse restoration. So, what might be an explanation for describing the events in such a way?

Perhaps, the key to unlocking this verse can be found in three places: in the absence of the naming of Uzza in verse twenty, in the Hebrew of verse fifteen וַיִּסֶּר – he removed, and in the overall message of verse fourteen. Taken as a whole, these three factors seem to suggest the possibility that what the Chr did was to create a picture of cultic purity brought to fruition by Manasseh. Consider the possibility by explaining more thoroughly what these three factors are. Combining points one and three to start will be most advantageous.

The question that is being answered is, what is the message the Chr is communicating by describing Manasseh's restoration in the way he does? By answering this question, it will be evident how successful the Chr was in painting a picture of cultic purity in the revised pericope. In order to create such a picture, the Chr needed to edit out any association with cultic impurity from the time of Manasseh's restoration onward. By thinking along these lines, the presentation by the Chr of Manasseh's renovation makes good sense.

The information in the relevant verses presents Manasseh's restoration as walling in the City of David, fortifying Judah, ridding Jerusalem of idols and setting up an altar to YHWH. All this activity can be placed under the rubric of cultic purity. Uzza relates to all of this in that he is remembered in the Bible for not treating YHWH as holy.⁴² Uzza approached the Ark to touch it, which was not his place to do and for this he was killed (1 Chronicles 13:10).

⁴² Cf. Lev 10:1-3.

Without any categorical assertions, it is interesting to note that the Chr limited Manasseh's restorative activities to purifying the city, building a wall of protection around it, and sacrificing peace and thank offerings to YHWH. The Chr creates in the reader's mind a picture of the Holy of Holies surrounded by a protective wall disallowing anyone even to look at it without proper access. Uzza did not fit into this picture. Therefore, the Chr removed him. By considering the expurgation of Uzza from the latter half of the pericope coupled with the description of the restoration centering on cultic purity, a consistent portrayal seems to be emerging. Let us move to our second point and see if more support for this perspective is forthcoming.

Point two comes in the form of a lexical similarity between verses eight and fifteen in the Chr's account. The word we will look at is סֹר – to turn, and its use is paralleled in these two verses. In verse eight, it is used by the Chr to describe what YHWH will not do in response to Israel's obedience. In verse fifteen, it is used by the Chr to describe what Manasseh did do in response to his obedience. The inference is that the parallel usage of the word provides the reader with some textual evidence affording him or her some room to speculate with what care the Chr constructed this account. By putting these two passages side by side we will be able to better see the parallels.

| 2 Chronicles 33:8 | 2 Chronicles 33:15 |
|---|--|
| 8 וְלֹא אֶסְרֶה לְהִסִּיר אֶת־הַגֹּל יִשְׂרָאֵל | 15 וַיִּסֶּר אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי הַנֶּכֶד וְאֶת־הַסֶּמֶל |
| מֵעַל הָאֲדָמָה | מִבֵּית יְהוָה |

The first parallelism is in the form of the verb. In verse eight, the verb is a hiphil infinitive indicating that the action is both active and causative. Verse fifteen uses the same

construction, though it is not in its infinitival form. Now let us look at the actual structure of the verses to notice their similarities.

In verse eight, YHWH *will not* remove “X” (followed by “אַתָּה”) and then a place is named from where the people *will not* be removed. In this case it is, מֵעַל הָאֲדָמָה – from upon the land. In verse fifteen, Manasseh *will* remove “X” (followed by “אַתָּה”) and then a place is named from where the foreign gods and the idol *will* be removed. In this case it is, מִבֵּית יְהוָה – from the house of YHWH.

The picture is no more than an interesting speculation, but the possibility that Uzza’s absence indicates that something is going on below the surface, along with the parallel use of סֹרֵר, is more an indication that the Chr did construct his composition with careful consideration.

Verse seventeen is all that remains of the primary pericope to discuss. There is one point of particular interest in this verse towards which we will direct our attention. It was briefly mentioned at the top of this segment and has to do with the use of the waw consecutive. The waw, as is well known is used as a connecting device that is able to link several verses (and sometimes chapters or more) together. This seems to be the case with the waw throughout the pericope. However, there is a curiosity when we get to verse seventeen, since verse seventeen does not begin with a waw.⁴³

⁴³ This leads to the speculation by some that perhaps 2 Ch 33:17 is a later emendation. We noted a similar possibility with the 2 Ki 21:16 passage.

5. Doctrine of Individual Reward and Retribution

The idea of immediacy is underscored in verses eleven through sixteen. Verse eleven tells of the immediate judgment of Manasseh for the sins he was reported to have committed. Verses twelve and thirteen tell of the immediate contrition on the part of Manasseh on account of the suffering he was enduring., and verses fourteen through sixteen tell of the immediate restoration of Manasseh to his kingdom and his renewal of Jerusalem to a state of cultic purity.

It is in the picture created in this section of the Chr's account of Manasseh that the doctrine of individual reward and retribution is most clearly seen. At nearly every point, the idea of immediacy is manifested except, as we pointed out, in the buildup of Manasseh's blameworthiness. The Chr seems to make the point that when YHWH spoke it had an immediate effect. YHWH spoke in verse ten, and in the next verse Manasseh received immediate judgment. This had not been the case in DtrN's account. YHWH announced His judgment and yet Manasseh was able to finish out what was recorded as the longest reign of anyone in Jerusalem (fifty-five years). Why was Manasseh, according to the well-established DH, evil as he was, able to reign longer than all others? Was there no justice from YHWH at this point?

It seems that the Chr answered that tacit uncertainty in his reworking of the Manasseh account. The solution to this dilemma was that one is not able to maintain good standing in the face of bad behavior. However, if one is willing to repent, as the Chr's pericope attests that Manasseh did, then one can be restored to the good graces of YHWH. And YHWH's people will not lack a man on the throne. For His lovingkindness is extended to His servants who walk

before Him in purity 2 Chron 6:14-16.⁴⁴ In the totality of these observations we see, as clearly as we do anywhere else, the doctrine of immediate reward and retribution.⁴⁵

This doctrine perhaps takes on a heightened importance for the people in light of what many believe was the time at which the Chr wrote his account. As we saw in our review of the scholarship surrounding the Chr, it seems likely that the CH was written to a community divided between the descendants of those who had been driven from the land and those who had never left. The dislocation and social upheaval brought on by the events of the exile affected many significant issues including property rights and social position. The community was struggling with how to rebuild a coherent social structure following the return from exile.

In the midst of these staggering challenges the Chr offered hope to his community by offering the conviction that YHWH moves to redeem and bless in response to repentance, faith and obedience. He makes this point by offering a theologically re-evaluated telling of Israel's history, a history that is seen to operate according to a doctrine of individual reward and retribution.

If the condition for receiving the forgiveness was obedience to the Law of God,⁴⁶ and the Israelites had not been maintaining that Law, then their lack of obedience must be why they had been exiled (2 Chron 34:21). The belief in the immediacy of reward for proper behavior could have been used to help convince these people that maintaining social order could be the key to rebuilding their disordered society. The future of the children of God depended on their ability to come back into immediate harmony with the Law.

⁴⁴ Note also that the lovingkindness of YHWH is forever. See, 1 Ch 16:34, 41; 17:13; 2 Ch 5:13; 7:3, 6; 20:21.

⁴⁵ The Manasseh pericope in the 2 Ch passage served the purpose of offering hope to an exiled people. Hope is seen throughout. Cf. 2 Ch 6:24-25, 36-39, 7:14-18; 21:6-7; 30:18b-20, esp. 33:12-13. If YHWH would forgive even such a wicked one as Manasseh, surely He would forgive His faithless children. Cf. Jer 3:6, 8, 11-12.

⁴⁶ Cf. 1 Ch 28:9; 2 Ch 6:16.

In light of this last insight, consider once again verse seventeen. It is in this atmosphere of optimism that this verse seems most well situated. Manasseh had chosen his destination; it was now the time for the people to decide theirs. The Chr seemed to be offering them a way to live in harmony with YHWH and with each other. This is speculative, of course, but it is one possibility.

Only one text remains to be considered to complete this chapter. These last two verses do not offer any unfamiliar information. They simply correspond with the picture that the Chr has already drawn.

| 2 Chronicles 33:22-23 | 2 Chronicles 33:22-23 (author's translation) |
|---|---|
| וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מְנַשֶּׁה אָבִיו וּלְכָל־הַפְּסִילִים אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מְנַשֶּׁה אָבִיו זָבַח אֲמוֹן וַיַּעֲבֹדָם: | <u>He did evil in the eyes of YHWH</u> <u>as Manasseh his father had done</u> , and Amon sacrificed to all the idols which he Manasseh his father has made, and he served them. |
| 23 וְלֹא נִכְנַע מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה כְּהַכְנִיעַ מְנַשֶּׁה אָבִיו כִּי הוּא אֲמוֹן הִרְבָּה אֲשָׁמָה: | 23: Moreover, <u>he did not humble himself from</u> <u>before YHWH as Manasseh his father had</u> <u>humbled himself</u> , but Amon multiplied guilt. |

As can be seen, these verses seem to incorporate both pictures of Manasseh. Amon did evil in the eyes of YHWH כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מְנַשֶּׁה אָבִיו – as Manasseh his father had done. But Amon fell short of humbling himself כְּהַכְנִיעַ מְנַשֶּׁה אָבִיו – as Manasseh his father had humbled himself. In spite of this dual impression, the reader is left with the impression that Manasseh is to be remembered ultimately not as a model of evil but as the model of repentance.

The purpose of this chapter has been to show the variations within the two biblical accounts of King Manasseh. Along the way, evidence was put forth that has led many scholars to associate the doctrine of the transferability of guilt with DtrN and the doctrine of individual reward and retribution with the Chr. For my thesis, this means that the Bible did indeed provide the ground from which the variegated traditions sprang. We are now ready to begin looking into the early stages of the Manasseh tradition. We will start with a review of the early biblical translations and versions in the following chapter.

Chapter III

Early Biblical Translations and Versions 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles

This chapter introduces into the discussion the Targums, Septuagint, Vulgate and Peshitta, which constitute the primary biblical translations and versions within formative Judaism and early Christianity. Leading this section will be our consideration of the Aramaic Targums of the Manasseh pericopes. However, we will be looking at the English translations instead of the Aramaic. The same will be true for the Vulgate and the Peshitta texts. The author has translated the Septuagint texts. Using translations of translations is never optimal, but for the purposes of this review it will be adequate. Our interest is in looking at the macro changes of how DtrN's and the Chr's portrayal of Manasseh was transmitted into non-Hebrew speaking communities.¹ The more technical discussion of lexical considerations that studying in the original affords is outside the aim of this work.

This chapter will comprise a review of the Manasseh pericopes in these four sources and a comparison of several of the more significant variations from the MT. We will also compare the different translations with each other when similarities between them are worth noting. This will broaden our perspective of the Manasseh tradition and give us a more informed consideration of its shape and how it developed. The organizing principle behind this chapter

¹ "Toute version supposant déjà une interprétation, une amorce d'exégèse, le Targum est, dans toute la littérature née de la <recherche> (dāraš) de l'Écriture, le chaînon le plus proche de celle-ci, en prise directe sur la Parole inspirée. Historiquement, il constitue aussi un élément essentiel de l'effort des guides d'Israël pour mettre cette Parole à la portée du peuple qui, après l'exil, délaissera l'hébreu en faveur de l'araméen et qui, de toute façon, se trouvera de plus en plus dépaycé devant la langue de la Bible. Le Targum qui a pu naître dans une communauté ignorant l'hébreu a pu aussi s'imposer dans un contexte bilingue comme interprétation paraphrasée traditionnelle d'un texte difficile à comprendre." Roger Le Déaut, "Un Phénomène Spontané de l'herméneutique Juive Ancienne: le <Targumisme>," *Biblica* 52, no. 4 (1971): 507. In this article Le Déaut refers also to the LXX, Peshitta and the Vulgate as Targums, which is true in that they are all translations. In this paper the Targums are considered only to be the Aramaic version of the MT. However, what is said in the above quote certainly applies to all aforesaid translations in this paper.

will be to track the variations and not to attempt either to follow the structure of each translation or to consider all their constituent parts. There are small discrepancies throughout all the texts but to look carefully at each would be outside the scope of this thesis.

Evidence will be brought forth that seems to suggest the possibility that the communities, which gave us these variations of the Manasseh narratives, may have regarded Manasseh through preconceived prejudices. There appears to be some support for the possibility of certain predispositions within the different communities that allowed some of them to take liberties the Bible did not directly provide. These liberties took the form of adjustments in how the message of each pericope was expressed in the different versions. In the case of the Aramaic Targums, some of the liberties the translators took were quite substantial, as we will see. But, even though the people behind these renditions allowed themselves certain freedoms in their interpretations, each remained mostly faithful to their original Hebrew counterparts in spite of individual vacillations.

The purpose of this chapter is to show that these individual vacillations taken together help to demonstrate that a Manasseh tradition was developing at the level of the community, though without necessarily any self-awareness. We will show that even at this early stage, a communal preference for either DtrN's perception of Manasseh as the model of evil or the Chr's perception of Manasseh as the model of repentance seemed to be emerging.²

As we will see, the greatest alterations to the message of the texts came through the Aramaic Targums. Since the Targums contain the most material changes, we will consider them first. After that, we will look at the Septuagint, the Vulgate and conclude with an assessment of

² A note must be added regarding the time when these translations were written. Chronologically, they did not come before many of the texts we will be discussing later. However, these translations are set before the others because of the general impact of scriptural texts on the development of religious communities. Because the Scriptures form the foundation of this tradition, their translations and variations are presented first.

the Peshitta. Comments on the more salient points will be given after each textual illustration with a comprehensive summary at the end of the chapter. We will show how our observations serve to advance our understanding of the development of the Manasseh tradition and offer a possible explanation for why both Jewish and Christian communities seem to have ultimately compartmentalized their memory of him. The full texts are provided in Appendix A for convenient referral.

A. Targums

By far the most interesting renditions of the Manasseh stories are found in the Aramaic Targums. However, due to the plethora of variations between the MT and its Targum counterparts, it would be confusing to attempt to highlight them all. Furthermore, it would go beyond the scope of this work to do so.³ Due to spatial constraints, the texts will be presented in English. When the MT is used for comparison, the Hebrew will be utilized in the explanation, as was the case in the latter half of chapter two.

We will find that the Targums display a noticeable negativity towards Manasseh, except in Targum of Jeremiah where Manasseh is portrayed as having repented. This is a significant alteration, but as we will witness it is not sufficient to counteract the overall negative impression

³ Some of the more stimulating emendations to the Aramaic text are the following: the substitution “I will make my Shekinah reside” for “אֲשִׁים אֶת־שְׁכִינִי.” 2 Ki 21:4, 7; 23:27; 24:3; 2 Ch 33:4. Another plus is in the utilization of the term “memra” twice in 2 Ch 33:13. These pluses are reflective of a later development within Rabbinic Judaism. For a brief introduction to the use of these terms see, Louis Ginzberg, “Anthropomorphism and Anthropopathism,” in *Jewish Encyclopedia* ed. Isidore Singer vol. 1, *Aach-Apocalyptic Lit.* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1925), 622. See also, Ludwig Blau, “Shekinah.” in *Jewish Encyclopedia* ed. Isidore Singer vol. 9, *Samson-Talmid* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1925), 258-60. “In MT the word mzbh means “altar,” be it an altar to the Lord or a heathen altar. Tg. Chr uses the Aramaic for of the word, mdbh’, to refer to an altar to the Lord, while a heathen altar is ‘gwr’, “a pile of stones,” perhaps acquiring its name from Hos 12:12: “their altars also shall be like stone heaps.” *The Targum of Chronicles*, trans. J. Stanley McIvor, The Aramaic Bible, ed. Kevin Cathcar, Michael Maher and Martin McNamara, vol. 19 (Collegeville, MN.: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 175.

of Manasseh left on the reader by the writers of the other Targum texts.⁴ Therefore, the community reading Targum Jeremiah clearly had a positive view of Manasseh. However, we are not analyzing individual communities. We are surveying an enormous range of texts over many hundreds of years in order to present evidence that can be looked at more carefully in the future.

We will evaluate four passages starting with the Targum of Jeremiah. The three other texts will be presented in the following groupings: I) Targum 2 Kings 21:9-11; II) Targums 2 Kings 23:26 and 24:3-4; and III) Targum 2 Chronicles 33:12-13. Though we are only looking at the more significant modifications, these texts do witness to both biblical accounts.

| Jeremiah 15:4 | Targum Jeremiah 15:4 |
|---|--|
| 15: 4 And I will make <i>them</i> an <i>object of</i> horror to all the kingdoms of the earth on account of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah the king of Judah <u>for what he has done in Jerusalem.</u> | 15: 4: And I will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth, <u>because they have not repented like Manasseh</u> the son of Hezekiah, the king of the tribe of the house of Judah, concerning what he did <u>more and more in Jerusalem.</u> |

The MT unequivocally blames Manasseh for the destruction and exile of the Southern Kingdom (Jer 15:1-4). Here, the Targum shifts blame from Manasseh onto the people. It is an unexpected alteration for anyone familiar with the MT, but it is one that leads to an important consideration.⁵ What caused the later interpreters to ignore the original intention of the passages? Clearly, the author of the MT of Jeremiah wrote strongly from the perspective of DtrN. But here in the Targum the perspective comes from the Chr.

⁴ I wish to make it clear that though the Targums and, as we will see later, the rabbinic writings display a predilection towards viewing Manasseh negatively that what I am documenting textual evidence. In no way ought one to construe the evidence as an accusation against the Jewish people, their teachings or their tradition. As is well known, Christians have caused much harm by their anti-Jewish rhetoric and behavior throughout our history. I do not intend on allowing my scholarship to be used hurtfully.

⁵ My Aramaic is only in its infancy. However, the original Aramaic proves that the text clearly is intending to portray Manasseh as repentant. “וּאֲחִינֹנָן לִיזַע לְכָל מַלְכוּת אַרְעָא עַל דְּלֹא חָבַו כְּמַנְשֶׁה בֶּר יְהוֹקִיָּה – And I will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth, because they have not repented as Manasseh the son of Hezekiah . . .”

The apparent disloyalty to the MT opens for the attentive reader the possibility that subsequent interpreters were not necessarily concerned with what concerned the original authors or their communities. Perhaps these later communities had their own concerns and questions, and there was not the pressing need for the doctrines of transferability of guilt and individual reward and retribution per se. Instead, subsequent interpreters may have utilized the texts to speak into their own time and circumstances. Conceivably, it is in this tendency to make the texts relevant that a stereotype of Manasseh began to develop causing the various communities to waver back and forth between the two models set forth by the biblical authors, Manasseh as a model of evil, or Manasseh as a model of repentance.

Before we can proceed to the next section, we have one other plus in Targum Jeremiah to consider. It is a subtle but negative accentuation of what evil Manasseh had done in Jerusalem. The MT reads simply: **בִּירוּשָׁלַם אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה** – for what he has done in Jerusalem. The Aramaic translation adds the words: “more and more.” Apparently, what evil Manasseh had done he did *more and more*. Let look further to see what other observations are notable. We now ready to compare 2 Kings 21:9-11 with its targumic counterpart.

| 2 Kings 21:9-11 | Targum 2 Kings 21:9-11 |
|--|---|
| 9 But they did not listen. Manasseh caused them to go astray <u>doing more evil</u> than the nations, which YHWH destroyed from before the sons of Israel. | 9 And they did not accept, and Manasseh led them astray to do <u>what was</u> more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed <u>utterly</u> from before the sons of Israel. |
| 10 And YHWH spoke through his servants the prophets saying: | 10 And the Lord spoke by means of his servants the prophets, saying: |
| 11 Because Manasseh the king of Judah has done the abominations more wickedly than all the Amorites who <i>were</i> before him and again he caused Judah <u>to sin with</u> his idols. | 11 Because Manasseh the king of the tribe of the house of Judah did those abominations, he did worse than all that the Amorites who were before him did, and he also made sin those of the house of Judah <u>in the service of</u> his idols. |

Three pluses can be observed in this section of the passage. Two in verse nine and one in verse eleven. The two pluses in verse nine seem to have a correlative relationship. Together they give an impression of Manasseh that is gradually becoming more disapproving. They emend the text to read that Manasseh led his people “astray to do what was more evil than the [other] nations whom the Lord destroyed utterly . . .” Manasseh not only caused Judah to sin more and more but to sin in ways that were more evil than the other nations. The word “utterly” is an interesting plus. Once something is destroyed, what purpose is served by claiming that it was destroyed *utterly*? Perhaps there was the desire on the part of the targumist to show the evil extremity to which Manasseh went in offending YHWH, which caused Him to destroy Judah utterly. Manasseh did even *more* than that which the other nations did that had resulted in their *utter* destruction. If their evil was that extreme, how much more evil must have been Manasseh’s?

The plus in verse eleven may strengthen this position in two ways. First, the plus indicates that what Manasseh made the people of Judah do was “in the service” of his idols. Any service inside the house of YHWH was especially insulting.⁶ The idols Manasseh caused the people to serve were set up in the house of YHWH where His name was said dwell forever only two verses back. The targumist appears to leave no doubt in the mind of the audience that Manasseh was wholly devoted to offending God. He was not only evil; he was deplorable.

The amplification of Manasseh’s sinfulness seems to be growing as additional Targum texts are considered. Consider the following examples where the additions continue to mount in the direction of a progressively negative perception of Manasseh.

⁶ Just two verses earlier in 2 Ki 21:7 it was reported that Manasseh put his idol “אֲשִׁים אֲחֻשְׁמִי לְעוֹלָם” – in this house [in which] I will put my name forever.” The importance of names in Hebrew tradition must be understood in order to better understand the nature and extent of Manasseh’s insult. Unfortunately, this discussion is outside the parameter of this paper.

| 2 Kings 23:26; 24:3-4 | Targum 2 Kings 23:26; 24:3-4 |
|---|---|
| 23: 26: However the LORD did not return from his great burning anger <u>which burned</u> against Judah because of all the vexations <i>with</i> which Manasseh had provoked Him. | 23: 26: But the Lord did not turn from the strength of his great anger, for his anger <u>grew strong</u> against those of the house of Judah on account of all the provocations that Manasseh provoked before him. |
| 24: 3: Surely <u>upon the command of the LORD it happened to Judah to remove them</u> from before <i>the LORD's</i> face because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all which he had done. | 24: 3: <u>But on account of the fact that they made provocation before the Lord this was against those of the house of Judah to exile them</u> from the land of the house of his Shekinah by the sins of Manasseh according to all that he did. |
| 24: 4 And also <i>for</i> the innocent blood which he poured out, <u>for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood the LORD was not willing to forgive.</u> | 24: 4: And also the innocent blood that he shed and filled Jerusalem. <u>The sin of innocent blood was evil from before the Lord so as not to forgive it.</u> |

Verse twenty-six is little more than a translator's choice of wording. However, coupling this choice with the wording of the next two verses we are looking at above, it seems that the targumist was exhibiting an inclination to show the evil extremity to which Manasseh should be regarded as having gone. Verse three implicates the people more than Manasseh, but it was Manasseh behavior that brought on their disobedience (T 2 Kings 21:9). Verse four adds the words, "The sin of innocent blood was evil from before the Lord so as not to forgive it." Again we are confronted with a repetition of Manasseh's culpability. The specific recitation of behaving in ways that are evil in the eyes of the Lord accentuates Manasseh's villainy.

So, in these three verses, we have only a slight reworking of the texts, the addition of the word "evil," and an explicit statement added about the spilling of innocent blood caused the Lord to specifically not forgive the people of Judah. It seems reasonable to speculate that perhaps the supplementary information in these above verses serves to further accentuate the culpability of Manasseh. Certainly, the biblical texts stemming from DtrN's perception of Manasseh as a

model of evil is at work in this negative rendering of Manasseh's character. Let us look at our final Targum passage. Keep in mind, the corresponding Hebrew passage paints Manasseh as decisively repentant.

| 2 Chronicles 33:12-13 | Targum 2 Chronicles 33:12-13 |
|---|--|
| <p>12 And when he was caused to suffer according to himself,</p> <p><u>he became grieved</u> before the LORD his God and he humbled himself from before the God of his fathers.</p> | <p>12 <u>Then the Chaldaeans made a bronze mule and bored many small holes in it. They shut him up inside it and lit a fire all around it.</u> When he was in distress, <u>he sought (help) from all his idols which he had made, but there was no help forthcoming, for there is no profit in them. Then he changed his mind and prayed before the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly from before the Lord, the God of his fathers.</u></p> |
| <p>13 When he made himself pray to Him,</p> <p>He was moved towards him</p> <p>and He heard his supplication</p> <p>and He brought him to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew <u>for certain</u> that the LORD, He <i>was</i> God.</p> | <p>13 He prayed before him. <u>Immediately angels all the angels who had been put in charge of the entrances to the gates of prayer which are in heaven went forth and, because of him, closed all the entrances to the gates of prayer which are in heaven, and all the windows and openings of heaven, so that his prayer would not be accepted. But immediately the mercy of the Lord of the universe prevailed, whose right hand is stretched out to receive the sinners who return to his fear and who break the inclination of their heart by repentance, and he made an opening and a gap in the heavens beneath the throne of his glory. He heard his prayer, he accepted his request, he shook the universe by his Memra, the mule was shattered, and he came out from there. Then there went forth a wind from between the wings of the cherubim; it blew him by the decree of the Memra of the Lord, and he returned to Jerusalem to his kingdom. And Manasseh knew that the Lord was God, who had worked with him these signs and wonders. He returned with all his heart before the Lord and forsook all the idols and no longer served them.</u></p> |

This seems to be strong support for postulating that the Aramaic community favored DtrN's account of Manasseh's malfeasance. However, consider that more is involved in the formation of communal perceptions than isolated verses. Therefore, caution should be exercised as the textual evidence is brought forth. With that said, the variations within this Targum are still most striking. This text is the most altered of all the ones we will examine. It is clearly coming from a predilection to paint Manasseh in the worse possible light. Here, the king responsible for the destruction of the entire Southern Kingdom repents. However, he does so only because he is being cooked alive. Further, the targumist adds that when he is in distress, he first sought help from his idols! before running out of options. It was only then and finally that he turned to YHWH (T 2 Ch 33:12).

When the great mercy of YHWH was moved to accept Manasseh's prayer, no less than "*all the angels* who had been put in charge of the entrances to the gates of prayer" without delay went and "closed all the entrances to the gates of prayer which are in heaven, *so that* his prayer would not be accepted." Nevertheless, YHWH prevailed, and in a moment the entire universe shook and Manasseh was freed and on his way back to Jerusalem on a wind from heaven. The reader is left with little to endow this rendition of Manasseh's repentance with any sort of honor. In the end, it was YHWH's mercy and not Manasseh's wholesomeness that is to be commended.

Conceivably these alterations could be an indication of the possibility that the communities which produced these Targums were more sympathetic with the DtrN's understanding of King Manasseh than with the Chr. This evidence is not enough to answer conclusively, but the collective weight of these examples is interesting indeed and does seem to reveal a preference towards DtrN's perception of Manasseh as the paradigm of evil, but can be, as we have stated, considered conclusive evidence.

From here we will move into the second half of this chapter with a contemplation of the applicable Septuagint, Vulgate and Peshitta passages.

B. Overview of Section: Septuagint, Vulgate and Peshitta

This section will be put forth in three combinations: first the LXX, then the LXX along with the Vulgate, and finally the Peshitta by itself. The first segment will look at one noteworthy textual variation, which is unique to the LXX. The second segment will examine a word change common to both the LXX and the Vulgate. The third segment will look at several variations in the Peshitta. Before starting, a disclaimer must be offered. Certainly, a basic understanding of these three translations is assumed in this thesis. However, as anyone who has even a cursory understanding of the history of the Septuagint will understand, a qualification of it must be prefixed.⁷ There are simply too many factors that complicate its transmission to make any overarching assertions.⁸ Nevertheless, some things still may to be said and some propositions and

⁷ The term Septuagint is a little misleading because there are many versions of the Hebrew Scriptures (MT) in Greek. There are three main versions recognized as having exerted a strong influence in the first few centuries of the Common Era. Perhaps their inclusion in Origen's Hexapla is an indication of their recognition. The three versions are known by the name of their translators: Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus. Aquila's is most known for its linguistic loyalty to the Hebrew. Symmachus wrote with literary eloquence in contradistinction to Aquila. Theodotion then falls somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. Even though the LXX was a product of the Jewish people, they distanced themselves from it when the Christians adopted it as their Holy Text.

⁸ Sidney Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968). The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Massoretic Text, MT), has a rich and interesting history of scholarship. The details of which can sometimes prove complex and confusing. Since it is the intention of this thesis to survey rather than critique, the reader is left to fill out the particularities elsewhere. The work of de Lagard, Swete, Rahlfs are early indispensable names in Septuagint studies. Barthélemy's argument and others against Kahle's work disputing a single *Vorlage* to the Septuagint is beneficial in understanding the history of Septuagint scholarship. Gaster's placing of the Septuagint in Palestine instead of Alexandria (an argument that involves "establishing the superiority of the Hebrew over the Samaritan Pentateuch as the true Scriptures." Sidney Jellicoe, *The Septuagint*, 63. For a brief but insightful comment on the Palestinian vs. Alexandrian argument see, Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible*, trans. Wilfred G.E. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 68. Also important in Septuagint studies are "liturgical approach" of Thackeray, and the work of S. Jellicoe.

observations remain to be made that can illuminate our survey as we progress still deeper into the historical archives out of which these traditions came forth.⁹

C. One Textual Variation Unique in Septuagint

We will begin with the most interesting of the variations to be sighted here. It is of some significance, though it does not impact the overall picture drawn of Manasseh. It is found in 2 Chronicles 33:15 and is sighted below. The MT records that Manasseh rid Jerusalem of all the pagan idols and disposed of them outside the city. Both the Vulgate and the Peshitta translations agree with the MT. However, in the LXX a change occurs. First let us look at the full verse in the Septuagint and then compare the critical words with their counterpart in the MT below.

| 2 Chronicles 33:15 | 2 Chronicles 33:15 (author's translation) |
|---|--|
| καὶ περιεῖλεν τοὺς θεοὺς τοὺς ἄλλοτρίους | And he removed the foreign gods |
| καὶ τὸ γλυπτὸν ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου καὶ πάντα | And the idols from the house of the Lord and all |
| τὰ θυσιαστήρια ἃ ᾠκοδόμησεν ἐν ὄρει οἴκου | the altars which he had built on the mountain |
| κυρίου καὶ ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ καὶ ἔξω τῆς πόλεως | of the Lord <u>and in Jerusalem and outside the city</u> |

Now let us look at just the critical change. It will be easy to see in a comparison/contrast format.

⁹ The importance of the Septuagint during the formative years of Christianity has shaped the very nature of the Church on an epistemological level. It was used by the Church Fathers as their Bible, and they soon let go of the fact that it was a translation into Greek from Hebrew. Therefore, when they came across a difficulty within the text, they sought to resolve it according to the "Greek language system." Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, 338. It must also be kept in mind that Christianity has always been a proselytizing religion Matt 28:19; Acts 1:8, and Hebrew was not the language of the people. It was Greek. Thus, "most of the ancient versions of the Bible were made from the LXX and not from the Hebrew. Not even the Peshitta or the Vulgate, most of which was translated from Hebrew, are immune to the influence of the LXX." Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, 346.

| 2 Chronicles 33:15b | 2 Chronicles 33:15b (author's translation) | 2 Chronicles 33:15b | 2 Chronicles 33:15b (author's translation) |
|--|---|---|---|
| וּבִירוּשָׁלַם וַיִּשְׁלֶךְ חוּצָה לְעִיר | and from in Jerusalem and he threw outside the city | καὶ ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ ἔξω τῆς πόλεως | and in Jerusalem and outside the city |

The full MT text indicates that once Manasseh had collected all the idols from within Jerusalem he cast them out of the city וַיִּשְׁלֶךְ חוּצָה לְעִיר – he threw them outside the city. However, the Greek renders this part of the text καὶ ἔξω τῆς πόλεως – and outside the city and gives no indication where Manasseh disposed of the idols.

The verse here in the LXX gives the impression that Manasseh not only removed the foreign gods and idols ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου – from the house of YHWH, but also rid the environs of pagan idols as well. The message suggests implicitly that Manasseh's restoration immediately followed his return and was overtly thorough.

D. Common Word Change in Septuagint and Vulgate

When reviewing the Septuagint and the Vulgate texts in relationship to the MT few discrepancies can be detected. When they can, the message remains essentially the same. The following example is a case in point. It is a word choice common to both the LXX and the Vulgate. It must be reiterated that this lexical difference is minor and in no way changes the substance of what is being communicated. However, it is interesting to note in that it helps to show a possible influence of the Septuagint upon the Vulgate.

The word אֲשֵׁרִים – Asherim, is changed in the Septuagint to ἄλση – a grove. The Latin uses its equivalent *lucos* – grove, for the same word. There is speculation as to why this change

would have taken place but no definiteness can be offered. One possible explanation is found in Jewish literature.¹⁰ “The Mishnah considered the ’asherah to be a living tree.”¹¹ So then, a possible connection can be brought to bear in that both texts seem to have recognized that an ’asherah is a living tree.

E. Five Textual Variations Unique in Peshitta

We will now look to the changes in the Peshitta. Since we are looking only at the English version of the Peshitta, this section will not be in any way complete. The deviations within the Peshitta color the text but do not modify the overall perception of its counterpart in the MT. There are five fairly obvious changes in the Peshitta passages from these two texts. Four of them are from Peshitta 2 Chronicles. It is outside the scope of this work to settle on the reasons for these alterations, but they will help to give us a better understanding of the Peshitta.

| 2 Chronicles 33:4 | Peshitta 2 Chronicles 33:4 |
|---|--|
| 4 He built altars in the house of YHWH where YHWH said, “In Jerusalem my name <i>will be</i> forever. | 4 <u>Moreover he worshipped all the host of heaven in the courts of the house of the LORD.</u> |

Here is an example of a deviation within the Peshitta that is substantive in that the verse is entirely different from the corresponding text in the MT. However, the overall impression the reader of the Peshitta gets of Manasseh from this text will not be substantially different from the impression given to the reader of the MT.

¹⁰ Cf. Orla i.7f; ‘Abodah Azrah iii.7,9f.; Sukkah iii.1-3.

¹¹ J.C. de Moor, “Asherah.” trans. John T. Willis, in *TDOT* ed. Botterweck G. Johannes and Helmer Ringgren, vol. 1, *Abh-Badhadh* (Grand Rapids, MI. 1974), 442.

| | | |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 2 Chronicles 33:6 | 2 Chronicles 33:6 (author's translation) | Peshitta 2 Chronicles 33:6 |
| וַעֲשֵׂה אוֹב | and he <i>dealt with</i> mediums | and <u>inquired</u> of the Chaldeans |

Peshitta 2 Chronicles 33:6 substitutes the term “Chaldean” for the Hebrew אוֹב – medium.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| 2 Chronicles 33:7 | 2 Chronicles 33:7 (author's translation) | Peshitta 2 Chronicles 33:7 |
| וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת־פֶּסֶל הַסֵּמֶל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה | And he put an image of the idol, which he made | And he set the image of the idol <u>which had four faces</u> , which he made |

Peshitta 2 Chronicles 33:7 differs from the Hebrew in that it has a plus in the text. It adds a description to the idol that Manasseh made as that “which had four faces.”

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 2 Chronicles 33:9 | 2 Chronicles 33:9 (author's translation) | Peshitta 2 Chronicles 33:9 |
| לַעֲשׂוֹת רָע מִן־הַגּוֹיִם | to do evil <u>more than</u> the nations | to do evil works <u>like</u> the nations |

Peshitta 2 Chronicles 33:9 has a lexical discrepancy when compared to the Hebrew. It is a variation that seems to slightly improve Manasseh's reputation. In this verse Manasseh's character is faintly exonerated. His evil is no longer “more than” the apostate nations but only “like” them. It must be admitted this slim modification does not offset the general impression of Manasseh's perception within the Peshitta texts.

A final passage we will touch upon likewise diverges from its Hebrew counterpart in content but not in sentiment.

| 2 Kings 21:13 | 2 Kings 21:13 (author's translation) | Peshitta 2 Kings 21:13 |
|--|--|---|
| וּמַחֲתִי אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם כְּאֲשֶׁר־יִמָּחַה אֶת־הַצִּלְחָת מִמָּה וְהִפֵּךְ עַל־פָּנֶיהָ: | and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes the dish. I will wipe it and turn it upon her face. | and I will smite Jerusalem and destroy it because of all the abominations which Manasseh had done in Judah |

Peshitta 2 Kings 21:13 is not at odds with the portrayal of him in the MT. It is an interesting variance, but a discussion of the reasons behind the change lies outside the scope of this paper. It is enough to mention it since it does deviate slightly from the biblical account record. However, the modification seems to be a translator making the text more readable rather than some attempt to alter Manasseh's reputation.

We have seen in this section the beginning of the Manasseh tradition in both Jewish and Christian communities. The Targums, which come from the Jewish community, varied the most substantively as one would expect given their purpose. However, we did notice such stark pluses that some speculation was warranted as to why these were added. It seems that perhaps the roots of a collective negativity may be developing within the Jewish tradition, but it is too early to say with complete definiteness. Recall that we did see a minor vindication of Manasseh's reputation in the Targum of Jeremiah. This was an important exoneration, but too minor to counteract the Chronicler's accusations. Pinpointing the origins of any broad-based trend is difficult. It seems more prudent to air on the side of caution, so we will not draw any conclusion yet. It is enough to make observations at this point.

The Christian tradition is more difficult to trace since it was not as isolated as the Jewish side. It is well-known that the Septuagint was the primary Scripture for the early church, and it was in the Septuagint that we noticed the one interesting deviation asserting that Manasseh

disposed of his foreign gods and idols from both inside Jerusalem and outside the city. Again, it would be premature to put forward any thoughts on the matter just yet. This information is only for the sake of acknowledgment at this point in the discussion. We must now proceed to a review of the Pseudepigrapha, Apocrypha and the one relevant text from the writings of Josephus.

Chapter IV

Other Second Temple Period Writings on the Traditions

The purpose of this chapter is to show that accounts of Manasseh in the literature extant from the second temple period reflect a dependence on the biblical materials, but already they demonstrate a tendency to describe Manasseh either in accordance with the model provided by the DH or the model provided by the CH. This is not unusual to expect since we have now left the inspired texts and are moving into an area directed more openly by the sentiments and situations of the stories' authors rather than by a need to follow an established text.

It is in this growing preference that we may begin to notice the compartmentalized perception of Manasseh, though rooted in Scripture, may be more a product of cultural prejudices than has before been considered. For my thesis this will mean that we are able to continue to affirm that the two biblical accounts are the primary source for the origination of the Manasseh tradition. And, though they continue to demonstrate the divergence in the two Manasseh traditions, it is now becoming clearer that the communities are beginning to share in the responsibility for the tradition's development.

In this chapter we will look at other relevant texts from the second temple period. The appropriate texts for the purpose of this thesis fall under three classifications: Pseudepigraphal writings, the writings of Josephus and the Apocrypha. Six books in the Pseudepigrapha contain references to King Manasseh;¹ Josephus' writings contain one, and the Apocrypha yields to us

¹ "Most scholars today acknowledge that the Apocrypha should be defined exclusively—to exclude documents not in the Septuagint—because the Pseudepigrapha is conceived inclusively—to include many more documents than those brought together, for example, by Kautzsch and Charles." James H. Charlesworth, "*The Prayer of Manasseh*, in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed James H. Charlesworth, vol. 2 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 629. I have included the *Prayer* as part of the Pseudepigrapha because it is included in Charlesworth's edition, even though in the past scholars have argued to present it as part of the Apocrypha. The Apocrypha contains eight

one quick mention of King Manasseh. We will continue to present the applicable texts in such a way so as to demonstrate that without any self-awareness, these certain texts, when collected as a body of literature, reflect inadvertently both the process of the development of the Manasseh tradition as well as becoming part of that tradition itself.

First, we will look through the texts of the Pseudepigrapha (in this section we will consider also the passage from *Tobit*). Again, we will review the specific texts to be examined in the usual way and follow up with a word of insight. Only the specific mentions of Manasseh will show up in the body of this thesis; for a fuller text consult Appendix B. Second, we will look at the work of Josephus and what he had to say about Manasseh. His section will be arranged in a different way in order to bring out the message he seemed to be communicating and what role his reference to Manasseh served in his approach.

A. Pseudepigrapha

The marginal notes and footnotes in Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* contain twenty references to the Manasseh accounts in Kings and Chronicles.² These are found in only six books. Of those six books only one gives a positive report without any negativity attached. We will start with the most accusatory picture. It is found in The Ascension of Isaiah. The texts will be underlined and then referred to in observation comments made following the text. We will proceed through the texts starting with the most negative one first.

references to Manasseh, but only one of those is speaking about King Manasseh. It is found in Tobit 14:10. The other reference are: six in *Judith* and once in *1 Esdras*. Because of the inclusion of *The Prayer of Manasseh* into the Pseudepigraphal section, and because the only remaining quote in the Apocrypha is only one verse, there will not be a separate section for the Apocrypha. *Tobit* will therefore be placed at the end of the more significant Pseudepigraphal section.

² 2 Bar 64:1- 65:2; TMos 2:8-9; Jub 1:13-24; AscentIs 1:1- 5:16, see also. b. Yeb 49b. HelSynPr 6:1-10; PrMan. See Steve Delamarter's *A Scripture Index to Charlesworth's Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Sheffield Academic Press, in press) on which the author worked.

1. (*AscenIs* 1:1- 5:16)

In reference to (2 Ki 21:6, 9, 16, 17; 2 Ch 33:6-12; Yeb. 49b)

In the twenty-sixth year...Hezekiah...summoned Manasseh his son, for he was his only son. He summoned him in the presence of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, the prophet...in order to hand over to him the words of righteousness which the king himself had seen... 'As the LORD lives whose name has not been transmitted to this world . . . all these commands and these words will have no effect on Manasseh...and he will be a follower of Beliar rather than of me. He will cause many in Jerusalem and Judah to desert the true faith...and by his [Manasseh's] hands I [Isaiah] will be sawed in half.' And when Hezekiah heard these words he wept very bitterly...and Hezekiah thought in his heart that he would kill Manasseh his son, but Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'The Beloved has made your plan ineffective . . . '(2) And it came about that after Hezekiah had died, and Manasseh had become king, (Manasseh) did not remember the commands of Hezekiah his father, but forgot them; and Sammael [an evil angel] dwelt in Manasseh and clung closely to him and Manasseh abandoned the service of the LORD of his father, and he served satan, and his angel, and his powers...and socery and magic, augury and divination, fornication and adultery, and the persecution of the righteous increased through Manasseh...and when Isaiah...saw the great iniquity which was being committed in Jerusalem, and the service of satan, and his wantonness, he withdrew from Jerusalem...(3)...And after [this], Belair will descend, the great angel, the king of this world...in the form of a man, a king of iniquity...and all the men of the world will believe him...and serve him...(5) Beliar was angry with Isaiah, and he dwelt in the heart of Manasseh, and he sawed Isaiah in half with a wood saw...Beliar did this to Isaiah through Belkira and through Manasseh, for Sammael was very angry with Isaiah...

To begin our observation of the *AscenIs*, we will give a synopsis of what has been written here. This will make it most apparent how very evil the portrayal of Manasseh is in the text. The text indicates that Manasseh was given the words of righteousness, but they had no effect on him. He then became a follower of Beliar rather than YHWH. This caused Manasseh to be responsible for many in Jerusalem and Judah to desert the true faith. The text then records how Manasseh sawed Isaiah in half by his own hand. Manasseh was also possessed by an evil angel,

Sammael, through whom he served satan. Sorcery, magic, augury, divination, fornication, adultery, and the persecution of the righteous are all recorded in this passage to have increased through Manasseh.

This is quite an indictment against Manasseh. Nowhere in this text is there any indication of the repentant Manasseh. Much of the denunciation echoes the biblical texts; however, there are embellishments (i.e., his being possessed, his sexual deviations), including an allegation that he sawed Isaiah in two. A fuller account of the murder of Isaiah is given in Yeb 49b (see, Appendix C). This incident will be reviewed in the section on rabbinic writing.

2. (2 Baruch 64:1- 65:2)

In reference to (2 Ki 21:2ff.)

64. And the ninth black waters you have seen; that is the wickedness that existed in the days of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah. For he acted very wickedly, and killed the righteous, and perverted judgment, and shed innocent blood, and violently polluted married women, and over turned altars and abolished their offerings, and drove away the priests lest they minister in the sanctuary. And he made a statue with five faces: Four of them looked into the direction of the four winds, and the fifth was on the top of the statue so as to challenge the zeal of the Mighty One. And then the wrath of the Mighty One went out so that Zion should be uprooted as has also happened in your days. But also the judgment went out against the two and a half tribes so that they also should be carried away into captivity as you have now seen. And the impiety of Manasseh increased to such a degree that the glory of the Most High removed itself from the sanctuary. Therefore, Manasseh was called the impious one in that time, and finally his habitation was in the fire. For although the Most High had heard his prayer, in the end when he fell into the brazen horse and the brazen horse was melted, it became to him a sign regarding the hour (which was to come). For he had not lived perfectly since he was not worthy, but (the sign was given to him) that he might know henceforth by whom he should be punished at the end. For he who is able to benefit is also able to punish.

65. This Manasseh sinned and he thought in his time that the Mighty One would not call account for these things. These are those ninth black waters you have seen.

In 2 *Baruch* we again notice that Manasseh is represented as decidedly evil. He acted very wickedly, and killed the righteous, perverted judgment, shed innocent blood, violently polluted married women, over turned altars – abolished their offerings, and drove away the priests. The idol he made had five faces, which is an interesting detail that does not come from the MT. It could be evidence of some slight connection between this text and the Peshitta.³ 2
Baruch states that this fifth face “challenged the zeal of the Mighty One.”

The next portion of the text is most condemning. It states, “The impiety of Manasseh increased to such a degree that the glory of the Most High removed itself from the sanctuary. Therefore, Manasseh was called the impious one in that time, and *finally his habitation was in the fire.*” Manasseh is now held responsible for the glory departing from the sanctuary due to his increased impiety and is also judged to spend eternity in hell. This condemnation is in spite of the acknowledgment that the “Most High had heard his prayer.” Overall, this passage reverberates in the sentiment that Manasseh is indeed the paradigm of evil.⁴

3. (*HelSynPr* 6:1-10)

In reference to (2 Ch 33:12-13)

O you who have fulfilled the promises which (were given) through the prophets, and have had mercy on Zion, and have had pity oh Jerusalem...now also, yourself, O Master God, accept the entreaties on the lips of your people, who (have come) out of (the) gentiles, who call upon you in truth, even as you received the gifts

³ Peshitta 2 Chronicles 33:7 refers to the idol that Manasseh made as having four faces. The connection is both slight and tenuous but perhaps intriguing enough to be pursued elsewhere. Cf. Ezek 10.

⁴ For the blaming of Manasseh for the departure of the glory of YHWH, see Zeb 61b, and for relegating him to eternal punishment, see Hag 15b; Sanh 90a; 102b.

of the righteous in their generations [from] Manasseh in the land of the Chaldeans after his offence...

HelSynPr offers the only fully positive report in all of the Pseudepigrapha that mentions Manasseh by name. Clearly, this passage is reflecting as unalloyed a perception of the repentant Manasseh as the Ascension of Isaiah passage spoke of him as unrepentant. Notwithstanding, the focus of the commendation really goes to YHWH who, from out of His mercy, forgave Manasseh. This text has a connection to the Christian tradition that should be pointed out. The connection can be noticed in the positive mention of the gentiles, which is generally considered an indication of a Christian's hand in the writing of the text.⁵

4. (*PrMan* 9-11 and 11-15)

In reference to (2 Ch 33:6-12)

The next three texts are traditionally tied to Manasseh, though they lack any internal reference to Manasseh. We start with *The Prayer of Manasseh*.⁶

Because my sins multiplied in number more than the sand to the sea, and on account of the multitude of my iniquities, I have no strength so that I can lift up my eyes. And now, O Lord, I am justly afflicted, and as I deserve I am harassed; for already I am ensnared. And I am bent by a multitude of iron chains, so that I cannot lift up my head; for I do not deserve to lift up my eyes and look and see the height of heaven, because of the multitude of the iniquity of my wicked deeds, because I did evil things before you, and I provoked your fury, and I set up idols and multiplied defilement. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned; and certainly I know my sins. I

⁵ This connection is further explored in chapter six.

⁶ Here, though Manasseh's name is not mentioned anywhere in the work, it has always been regarded as applying to King Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah. The *Prayer* was first discovered in a Christian work "Didascalia," (ca. 100-300 C.E.). In that text the *Prayer* is flavored with supplements from the author. Before the prayer there is a short introduction stating that Manasseh is the one offering the prayer. "And he prayed to the Lord saying 'O Lord Almighty . . .'" (followed by the body of the prayer). A brief but descriptive conclusion ends the passage. "The Lord heard his voice and had mercy on him. A flame of fire surrounded him, melting his chains. The Lord saved Manasseh from his torture, and brought him back to his throne in Jerusalem." The work spread rapidly within the early Church and is part of a collection of prayers and hymns preserved in the Codex Alexandrinus.

make supplication before you; forgive me, O Lord, forgive me!
And do not destroy me with my transgression; and do not be angry
against me forever; and so not remember my evils; and do not
condemn me and banish me to the depths of the earth! For you are
God of the repenters. And in me you will manifest all your grace;
and although I am not worthy, you will save me according to the
multitude of you mercies. Because of this (salvation) I shall praise
you continually through all the days of my life; because all the
hosts of heaven praise you, and sing to you forever and ever.

The character in the work admits that he multiplied his sins more than the grains of sand on the seashore, and on account of the multitude of his iniquities, his strength is gone. He confesses to being justly afflicted and deserves to be harassed. This sounds like the Manasseh of 2 Kings as well as the first half of the Manasseh of 2 Chronicles. What follow aligns itself with the picture created of him in 2 Chronicles 33:12-13. He is bent by a multitude of iron chains, so that he cannot lift up his head. He makes supplication before YHWH repeating several times that he had sinned.

What is intriguing about this prayer from one perspective is that, though it is pseudepigraphal, written well beyond the lifetime of Manasseh, it fails to acknowledge that he was indeed forgiven. Perhaps, it was preserved this way to give a ring of authenticity to the prayer. However, it is curious how verse thirteen can almost sound as if even in this prayer Manasseh is instructing God to forgive him. "And although I am not worthy, you will save me according to the multitude of you mercies." One could read this statement one of two ways, either God will save Manasseh because He is merciful, or because God is merciful, He must save Manasseh. One emphasizes God's mercy; the other downplays Manasseh's contrition.

The final two Pseudepigraphal references to King Manasseh are in *Jubilees* and in *The Testimony of Moses*.

5. (*Jub* 1:19ff.)

In reference to (2 *Ch* 33:12-13)

And Moses fell upon his face, and he prayed and said, 'Oh Lord, my God, do not abandon your people and your inheritance to walk in the error of their heart. And do not deliver them into the hand of their enemy, the gentiles, lest they rule over them and cause them to sin against you . . . ' And the LORD said to Moses, 'I know their contrariness and their thoughts and their stubbornness...But after this they return to me in all uprightness and with all of (their) heart and soul...and I shall purify them . . . ' and they will do my commandments.

Jubilees is focused on the Book of Genesis, so technically Manasseh is not a direct reference. Only the general paradigm fits, not the specific words. However, the intercession speech of Moses reported in 1:19ff. employs theological categories reminiscent of the Chronicler's account of Manasseh's repentance. Since it is included in the marginal notations of Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, it is included here.

6. (*TMos* 2:8-9)

In reference to (2 *Ki* 21:4ff.)

They [four of the twelve tribes] will offer their sons to foreign gods and they will set up idols in the Temple that they may worship them. (Yes), even in the house of the Lord they will perpetrate idolatry and carve images of all sorts of animals.

TMos, like *Jub* is not focused on Manasseh and so is not a direct reference to him. However, here also the marginal notation of Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* indicates a connection in language can be made between this section of *TMos* and DtrN's account of Manasseh. It is strictly on account of this that it is included here. The connection

between this passage and the above is stronger because specific phrases reverberate from 2 Kings.

Let us quickly look at the apocryphal passage in the Book of Tobit. We will then summarize what we saw in these two compilations before examining the significant passage in the work of Josephus.

B. Apocryphal Text Concerning Manasseh

1. Tobit 14:10

| Tobit 14:10b | Tobit 14:10b (author's translation) |
|---|--|
| Μανασσης ἐποίησεν ἐλεημοσύνην καὶ ἐσώθη ἐκ παγίδος θανάτου ἧς ἔπηξεν αὐτῷ Αμαν δὲ ἐνέπεσεν εἰς τὴν παγίδα καὶ ἀπώλετο | Manasseh gave alms and he was delivered from the trap of death that was set for him but Amon fell into the trap and was lost |

Tobit has one reference to Manasseh, and it clearly manifests a loyalty to the Chr's model of Manasseh as repentant. Though it sits in isolation, it is nevertheless an important reference in terms of our study because it shows a positive Jewish account of Manasseh.

So, let us review what we have thus far discovered in the texts of the Pseudepigrapha and the Apocrypha. As we looked over the Pseudepigrapha we found six textual connections to King Manasseh but only three that mentioned him by name (*AscenIs*, *2Bar*, and *HelSynPr*). We also discovered that two out of these three were almost completely enveloped in the negative (*AscenIs*, *2Bar*). Only one text named Manasseh and presented him in a positive light (*HelSynPr*). Two additional texts did not have specific references to Manasseh, but some connections could be inferred because of the language reminiscent of the Manasseh passages.

What we learn from this is that now, as we begin to fully move into the area of tradition, we are confronted with texts that almost completely compartmentalized his reputation. This is attested to as we have noticed in the textual evidence within the Pseudepigrapha, which presented more specific references to King Manasseh from the perspective of DtrN. The Chr's position was represented in both the Pseudepigrapha and the Apocrypha, but in the former the positive texts did not mention Manasseh by name, and in the Apocrypha the reference was brief. *PrMan* is an important witness to the discussion of the development of the Manasseh tradition because it is that same tradition that produced this letter in his name. It stands as the longest extra-biblical example of a positive perception of King Manasseh preserved in either Jewish or Christian records. Let us now move to the writings of Josephus.

C. Josephus

Our section on Josephus will be unique in its structure. Josephus was a specific person and is; therefore, unique to our discussion. Obviously, the other texts we are looking at came from the hands of specific people but unlike Josephus, they do not come with a particular and verifiable history.⁷ Jerome, of course, can be located within a historical framework; however, he was translating Scriptures. His conviction was to be true to them. Josephus, as many have recognized, held a conviction to be true to himself. The question we will ask in this section is to what extent did Josephus' apparent opinion of himself add bias to his writings?

⁷ "Daté avec certitude et précision, Josèphe est naturellement un témoin précieux." Renée Bloch, "Note Méthodologique Pour L'Etude de la Littérature Rabbinique," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 43 (1955) 206.

Josephus is an indispensable source within the field of biblical research. His writings have contributed substantially to our present knowledge of all areas of biblical scholarship.⁸ What makes Josephus so significant, beyond the scope of his writings, is that he lived at such a critical period in history and was not an insignificant obscurantist. He was brought into the household of the Emperor Vespasian and was the keeper of the sacred books.⁹ However, he is renowned for his penchant for embellishment; therefore, it is advisable to read him judiciously.

Josephus referred to King Manasseh in only one passage throughout all of his writings, but the passage is quite fruitful in terms of our interest. Josephus was acquainted with both accounts of Manasseh. His awareness of Manasseh's mother shows his familiarity with DtrN's account. "But when his son Manasseh, whose mother's name was Hephzibah . . . " (*Antiquities* 10.3.37). Likewise his understanding that Manasseh repented shows familiarity with the Chr's account. "But then it was that Manasseh perceived what a miserable condition he was in, and esteeming himself the cause of all, he besought God to render his enemy human and merciful to him. Accordingly, God heard his prayer, and granted him what he prayed for" (*Antiquities* 10.3.41). Beyond this, whether he told the account solely from 2 Chronicles or combined his narrative with information gleaned from 2 Kings would be unnecessary speculation. Let us look at what he wrote.

In his retelling of King Manasseh, Josephus painted Manasseh in all the derogatory colors made available to him from the biblical accounts and, of course, added some glosses of his own.

⁸ "Apart from the Bible itself, Flavius Josephus is by far the most important historical source illuminating the entire biblical era." Maier, Paul. *Josephus: The Essential Works*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1994), 8.

⁹ "It is not, therefore, as an obscure author, known only to his own people, and owing his limited success to the accidental interest taken in his work by Christians, that Josephus is to be viewed; but as a writer highly esteemed and popular in his age through a vast portion of the civilized world, and most probably, therefore, exercising considerable influence on religious opinion." Flavius Josephus, *Josephus: Complete Works* trans William Whiston, 8th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI.: 1970), xviii (quoted in intro. by Rev. Henty Stebbing).

But when his son Manasseh, whose mother's name was Hephzibah...had taken the kingdom, he departed from the conduct of his father, and fell into a course of life quite contrary thereto, and showed himself in his manners most wicked in all respects, and omitted no sort of impiety...for, by setting out from a contempt of God, he barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; not would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflown with blood (*Antiquities* 10.3.37ff).

Josephus does not shrink from his contempt of Manasseh, though he did not involve himself in a shopping list of Manasseh's transgressions. Instead in one fell stroke Josephus vilifies Manasseh by saying he set "out from a contempt of God, he barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; not would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them" (v.37). Here Josephus reveals more than perhaps seems apparent at first glance. He has summed up in one sentence the thrust of Manasseh's recorded treacheries.¹⁰ Not only has Manasseh transgressed the law, he has gone on to barbarously slay all the righteous men including specically the prophets. Josephus' mention of the prophets shows a connection he perceived between the historian (of which he was certainly one) and the prophet.¹¹

From here Josephus moves into the Chr's account of what transpired in the life of Manasseh.

God raised up war against them from the king of Babylon and Chaldea, who sent an army against Judea, and laid waste the country; and caught king Manasseh by treachery, and ordered him to be brought to him, and had him under his power to inflict what punishment he pleased upon him (*Antiquities* 10.3.40).

¹⁰ The statement "for he every day slew some of them..." is also to come up again within the Talmud, an indicator that this story was not unfamiliar in the early centuries (Sanh. 103b). More will be said of this in chapter five on this matter.

¹¹ "One basic reason for Josephus' great interest in the prophets is that he regards them as his predecessors as historians of the past. Indeed, in the poem to his *Jewish War* (1.18) Josephus declarest hat he will begin his work at the point where 'the historians of these events [i.e. the biblical history] and our prophets conclude.'" Louis H. Feldman, "Prophets and Prophecy in Josephus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 41, no. 2 (October 1990): 397.

It is clear that Josephus is not quoting the biblical account but reporting as a historian and using the biblical account as a resource. He continues in the vein of the Chr for the duration of the story.

But then it was that Manasseh perceived what a miserable condition he was in, and esteeming himself the cause of all, he besought God to render his enemy human and merciful to him. Accordingly, God heard his prayer, and granted him what he prayed for. So Manasseh was released by the king of Babylon, and escaped the danger he was in; and when he was come to Jerusalem, he endeavored, if it were possible, to cast out of his memory those his former sins against God, of which he now repented, and to apply himself to a very religious life. He sanctified the temple, and purged the city, and for the remainder of his days he was intent on nothing but to return his thanks to God for his deliverance, and to preserve him propitious to him all his life long (*Antiquities 10.3.41-42*).

Josephus was an historian but was not one to shrink from embellishment. The Bible does not go so far as recording that Manasseh perceived himself responsible for all the calamities Judah experienced, trying to forget his former sins or seeking only to express penitence towards God. Josephus even goes so far in his elaborations that he tells his reader that Manasseh ended his life in happiness and ought to be imitated. Manasseh is “deemed a happy man, and a pattern for imitation”(Antiquities 10.3.41-42). Though all these words may be true, they came from somewhere other than the biblical accounts.

The way Josephus brought the biblical stories to life seems to me, in many ways, made up for his speculative tendencies. Even with his proclivity towards exaggeration, reading Josephus greatly enhances our connection with biblical characters such as Manasseh. Josephus developed, correctly or incorrectly, characters with a dimension of life and reality that the Bible at times lacks. Clearly, Josephus had a commanding vision of himself and a comprehension of

his historical importance from both his former life as a general and later life as a keeper of sacred books. But how far did he take this perception?

It is not a primary interest of this paper to prove or disprove Josephus' self-perception. But, his self-perception did certainly influence how he wrote. Let us look at two quotes from the works of Josephus that give us an idea of how he perceived himself. The first comes from *The Wars of the Jews*. "I Joseph, the son of Matthias, by birth an Hebrew, a priest also, and one who at first fought against the Romans myself, and was forced to be present at what was done afterwards, [am the author of this work]" (*Wars* Preface 1.3). This quote shows his identification with the Jewish people. The second quote comes from *Against Apion*. This one shows Josephus' belief in his unique ability to perceive the truth and to tell it rightly.

At the first I was put into bonds; but was set at liberty afterward...during which time there was nothing done which escaped my knowledge...I was the only man that understood them...I composed the history of those transactions; and I was so well assured of the truth of what I related, that I first of all appealed to those that had the supreme command in that war, Vespasian and Titus, as witnesses for me...Now all these men bore their testimony to me, that I had the strictest regard to truth...How imprudent then must those deserve to be esteemed, who undertake to contradict me about the true state of those affairs! (*Apion* 1.9.48-56).

With this in mind let us revisit Josephus' embellishments to see if perhaps some deeper purpose lay underneath the surface of his words. If we take the following words through the voice of the teacher/priest that Josephus saw himself, might later generations add the term prophet to the list?¹² A prophet according to the Scriptures, which Josephus revered,¹³ is

¹² "Josephus' addition that Manasseh did not spare the prophets should be seen against the backdrop of his view of the close connection between history and prophecy, both of which crafts he practiced." Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Manasseh," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 9 (October 1991): 20.

¹³ "How firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation, is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them,

judged by whether or not his predictions are valid.¹⁴ Let us consider then what he said and how he used the Manasseh story to say it.

Josephus lived in a time that he may have considered to be substantially similar to the days in which Manasseh lived. Consider the following:

The upshot was this...along all the roads also vast numbers of dead bodies lay in heaps, and even many of those that were so zealous in deserting, at length chose rather to perish within the city; for the hopes of burial made death in their own city appear of the two less terrible to them...But these zealots came at last to that degree of barbarity, as not to bestow a burial either on those slain in the city, or on those that lay along the roads...but as if they had made an agreement to cancel both the laws of their country and the laws of nature, and, at the same time that they defiled men with their wicked actions, they would pollute the Divinity itself...they left the dead bodies to putrefy under the sun: and the same punishment was allotted to such as buried any, as to those that deserted, which was no other than death; while he that granted the favor of a grave to another, would presently stand in need of a grave himself...To say all in a word...the greatest objects of pity did most of all irritate these wretches...These men, therefore, trampled upon all the laws of man, and laughed at the laws of God; and for the oracles of the prophets, they ridiculed them as the tricks of jugglers...*yet did these prophets foretell many things concerning [the rewards of] virtue, and [punishments of] vice, which when these zealots violated, they occasioned the fulfilling of those very prophecies belonging to their own country...*when a sedition should invade the Jews, and their own hand should pollute the temple of God. Now, while these zealots did not [quite] disbelieve these predictions, they made themselves the instruments of their accomplishment (*Wars* 4.6.379-388).

Look at the resemblance to how Josephus recounted the tales of Manasseh.

Manasseh...showed himself in his manners most wicked in all respects, and omitted no sort of impiety...for he was so hardy as to defile the temple of God, and the city, and the whole country...by

or to make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately and from their very birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them" (*Against Apion* 1.8.42).

¹⁴ Cf. Deut 18:18-22.

setting out from a contempt of God, he barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, *till Jerusalem was overflown with blood...*(*Antiquities* 10.3.37-38).

Josephus is teaching an object lesson from history. He was speaking the truth of Scriptures into his time as he saw the need. His teaching tone and the way in which he perceived himself seems to suggest perhaps a touch of aggrandizement. Look at one final quote from him spoken in the midst of the upheaval taking place within his own lifetime. It seems that he could well be classified in terms of speaking forth biblical truth in an age of apostasy. He communicates with the conviction of one sent by God.

For wicked actions do not escape the divine anger, nor is justice too weak to punish offenders, but in time overtakes those that transgress its laws, and inflicts its punishments upon the wicked in a manner so much more severe, as they expected to escape it on account of their not being punished immediately (*Wars* 7.2.34).

Josephus, who died (ca. 100 C.E.), was part of the first Jewish revolt. He was a general and later became a scribe in the House of the Emperor Vespasian. Therefore, Josephus was in a unique position to be intimately acquainted with that of which he spoke. And it seems to be into this environment the Josephus employed both of the biblical models of Manasseh on his way to offering a prophetic critique of his own time and contemporaries.¹⁵ He died before the outbreak of the Bar Cochbah revolt, (132-135 C.E.). Might closer attention to his writings have served the Jewish people? Of course this is speculative, but the authoritative way in which Josephus wrote, the proclivity to unabashed exaggeration at will, does leave one open likewise speculate.

¹⁵ "It is almost as if Josephus is analyzing the demise of the Jewish state of his own day, which he likewise ascribes to the rebellion against the legitimate authority, in this case, Rome." Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Manasseh," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 9 (October 1991): 12. In this article Feldman brings up references in rabbinic literature that we are not discussing (Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana 4.14) as well as one to the Munich Manuscript of Berokoth 10a. These references go outside the scope of this project. Berokoth 10a in the Babylonian Talmud does not mention Manasseh by name.

In summary, we saw that out of the six Pseudepigraphal writings that relate to Manasseh, only four mention him by name. We also become aware that overall the impression left by these texts came from DtrN's model. The isolated text from the Apocrypha came from the Chr's model. In the writings of Josephus we saw only one text that dealt with Manasseh, and it gave a fairly balance vision including both DtrN's paradigm as well as the Chr's. Some evidence was also put forth that allowed us to speculate on the possibility that Josephus could be placed in a role beyond a simple historian. He lived in a violent time, and it seems that he used the Manasseh stories to speak into his culture.

We are beginning to see how these biblical texts were worked into the lives of those who read them. The doctrines of the transferability of guilt and individual of reward and retribution seem to be playing less of an active role in the application of these stories to the lives of these people. It is still too early to arrive at any conclusion, but it appears that the trend that may perhaps be developing is, in some way, associated with the life situations of the ones receiving the texts. From here we will move into the rabbinic community of formative Judaism and look at the non-biblical texts that were (and still are) a part of their heritage.

Chapter V

Early Jewish Tradition

In this chapter we will show the contour of early Jewish tradition by looking at the Babylonian Talmud and Midrash Rabbah. The Babylonian Talmud is used because it is more authoritative than the Jerusalem version. The relevant texts from the midrashim will also be cited and commented on as they also served as honored texts from very early in Jewish history. This chapter will be divided into two sections, one covering each of the two sources. The general format of first presenting the key passages from the larger references to Manasseh will be adhered to with comments following. Summaries will close each of the segments with an overview at the conclusion of the chapter.

This chapter will contribute to our overall realization of the categorizing of Manasseh that took place as formative Judaism moved into normative Judaism. The texts reveal a bias echoing the temperament of the Targums.¹ The intention of this chapter is to present clear and persuasive evidence that the categorization of Manasseh, though not stemming from a collectively conscientious voice, did arise in the texts of early Judaism. These texts provide us with documented verification lending support to the hypothesis that, at least in Jewish textual tradition, Manasseh has been compartmentalized.

¹ Again, I wish to emphasize that though these texts we are looking at tend to be negative in their presentation of Manasseh this is not to be construed to reflect negatively on the rabbis or on Judaism in general. There are other important factors that are involved in the development of tradition that would need to be discussed. It cannot be overstated how much the world has benefited from the Jewish nation. I do not expect anyone to use the information presented here to contribute in anyway to anti-Jewish sentiment.

A. Babylonian Talmud²

The rabbis mention the name Manasseh throughout the Talmud eighteen times. Of these, only thirteen refer to King Manasseh and all are found in only ten passages in five books. All but three of the passages give a negative impression. Of these all are found in Tractate Sanhedrin.³ In these three texts the perspective of 2 Chronicles is taken into account. Elsewhere Manasseh is portrayed as an evil and unrepentant king and one who has no portion in the world to come.⁴ Tractate Sanhedrin is mostly concerned with the power of the courts and legal matters.⁵ So, it is not surprising to find a mitigating presentation of Manasseh here.

1. *Sanh 90a*

All Israel have a portion in the world to come . . . [except] three kings and four commoners have no portion in the world to come:
The three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh . . .

Here we find the negative impression of Manasseh as seen in DtrN's account, though DtrN does not mention Manasseh's relationship with the world to come. There is no indication of his prayer of repentance, so there is no use made of the Chr's perspective in this passage. Because of the similarity of this text to Tractate Hagigah,⁶ we will momentarily interrupt our review of Tractate Sanhedrin.

² The significance of Louis Ginzberg's marvelous book, "The Legends of the Jews," for this project, escaped my realization until it was too late to be included in any blended way into my thesis. He offers a very thorough treatment of King Manasseh that can be easily accessed through his index. Dr. Ginzberg adds several additional texts that refer to King Manasseh not covered in my thesis. Though these supplementary references add breadth to the study, they do not significantly alter my overall impression of the rabbi's treatment of Manasseh as will be indicated in this chapter.

³ Cf. Sanh 101b, 102b, and 103a.

⁴ Cf. Sanh 90a, Sanh 102b.

⁵ Jacob Zallel Lauterbach, "Sanhedrin," in *Jewish Encyclopedia* ed. Isidore Singer vol. 11, *Samson-Talmid*, 3d ed. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls 1925), 44.

⁶ It is also found a third time later in Tractate Sanhedrin. Cf. Sanh 102b.

2. Hag 15b

We have learnt: Three kings and commoners (n.10) have no share in the world to come.” (n. 10) “The three kings are, Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh.

Here we have evidence from two different tractates that begin to provide us with what will become several texts from which we are able to derive our understanding of the seminal rabbinic review of Manasseh. We continue with Tractate Sanhedrin.

3. Sanh 99b

Our Rabbis taught: But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously: this refers to Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, who examined [Biblical] narratives to prove them worthless. Thus, he jeered, had Moses nothing to write . . . Thereupon a Heavenly Voice cried out: Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence, thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. And of him it is explicitly stated in post-Mosaic Scriptures (Job 5: 7), Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope (i.e., study). What is meant by 'and sin as it were with a cart rope'? – R. Assi said: Temptation at first is like a spider's thread, but eventually like a cart rope...Now on the view that he who insults his neighbour in the presence of a scholar is an epikoros, it is well; for then he who insults a scholar himself will be included in the expression, 'he who acts impudently against the Torah' But on the view that he who insults a scholar himself is an epikoros, who is meant by 'he who acts impudently against the Torah' – e.g., Manasseh b. Hezekiah...

The case against Manasseh is building. In this textual tribunal Manasseh is not receiving an unbiased trial. The references that he examined the Scriptures “to prove them worthless” is in keeping with the tone of the DtrN’s account but exceeding the limits of the biblical information.

4. Sanh 101b

Now, would Hezekiah king of Judah have taught the Torah to the whole world, yet not to his own son Manasseh? But all the pains he spent upon him, and all the labours he lavished upon him did not bring him back to the right path, save suffering alone, as it is written, And the Lord spake to Manasseh and to his people: but they would not hearken unto him. 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 (2 Ch 33:10ff). And it is further written, And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem unto his kingdom, and Manasseh knew that the Lord was God (2 Ch 33: 12ff). Thus thou learnest how precious is suffering. Our Rabbis taught: Three came with a circuitous plea, viz., Cain, Esau, and Manasseh . . . Manasseh-- he first called upon many deities, and (only) eventually called upon the God of his fathers (This is deduced from, And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God – implying that he had prayed to other deities before. ‘If thou [the other deities] wilt not hearken to my prayer,’ he pleaded, ‘of what profit was my turning to thee?’

Here is a presentation of Manasseh that reflects Targum 2 Chronicles 33:12-13 more than the biblical account. It seems to be aiming more at an object lesson of the preciousness of suffering rather than the vindication of Manasseh’s reputation. His “circuitous plea” seems only a by-product of the corrective strength of suffering.

5. Sanh 102b-103a

R. Abbahu used to make a practice of lection on the Three Kings (mentioned in our Mishnah as having no portion in the future world [Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh]). Falling sick, he undertook not to lecture (thereupon any more) (he viewed his illness as a punishment for dwelling upon the sins of others.); yet no sooner (102b) had he recovered, than he lectured (upon this) again. They (his disciples) remonstrated with him, ‘Did you not undertake not

to lecture on them?’ – He replied, ‘Did they abandon (their course), that I should abandon (my habit of lecturing upon them)?’... (That night) Manasseh came and appeared to him in a dream. ‘Thou hast called us thy colleagues and the colleagues of the father...’ He [the king] questioned him [Manasseh], ‘Since thou art so wise, why didst thou worship idols?’ He replied, ‘Wert thou there, thou wouldst have caught up the skirt of thy garment and sped after me.’ “Manasseh (denotes) that he forgot God Manasseh is connected with the root nashah . . . ‘to forget’. Another explanation: Manasseh (denotes) that he caused Israel to forget their Father in Heaven. And how do we know that he will not enter the future world? – Because it is written, Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem . . . and he made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel. Just as Ahab has no portion in the world to come, so has Manasseh neither. Judah said: Manasseh hath a portion therein, for it is written, and he prayed unto him and was intreated of him etc. R. Johanan said: Both of them (in support of their views) expounded the same verse. For it is written, And I will cause to be removed unto all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah (Jer 15:4). One Master maintains, ‘Because of Manasseh’ who repented, whilst they did not; whilst the other Master maintains, [103a] ‘because of Manasseh’ – who did not repent. R. Johanan said: He who asserts that Manasseh has no portion in the world to come weakens the hands of penitent sinners . . . R. Hisda said in the name of R. Jeremiah b. Abba: What is meant by the verse, I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding . . . I went by the field of the slothful – this refers to Ahaz (who forbade the study of the Law); and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding – this denotes Manasseh (Who destroyed the altar).

This passage is convoluted. Therefore, we will make a summary list of the several mentions of Manasseh in order to preserve clarity.

| | Negative | Positive |
|---|----------------------------|----------|
| 1 | no portion in future world | |
| 2 | did not abandon his course | |
| 3 | name means “forgot God” | |
| 4 | no portion in future world | |
| 5 | no portion in future world | |

| | |
|----|---|
| 6 | has a portion in future world |
| 7 | kingdoms removed because of Manasseh |
| 8 | did not repent Manasseh repented |
| 9 | no portion in future world |
| 10 | if no portion then penitent becomes weak |
| 11 | Manasseh is devoid of understand |

This passage has three positive statements and eight negative statements. The passage begins with a reiteration that Manasseh has no portion in the world to come, as was pointed out earlier.⁷ Then comes a rather interesting description of a dream in which Manasseh appears rather unrepentant to R. Abbahu boldly asserting that were the rabbi himself present during the lifetime of Manasseh, that rabbi too would have pursued idolatry. There is a definition of Manasseh's name, which means "to forget." Then come two allegations that Manasseh has no portion in the future world.

After these five negative comments, there is the positive counter-balance by Rabbi Johanan that Manasseh does have a portion in the world to come. Then comes an assertion citing Jeremiah 15:4. Next is the statement that Manasseh repented, followed by another claiming he did not repent and has no portion in the world to come. The last positive statement shows a concern for having mercy on the penitent. "He who asserts that Manasseh has no portion in the world to come weakens the hands of the penitent sinners." The text ends by claiming that Manasseh represents the one who has no understanding. Let us look to see how this passage concludes in Sanh 103b. In this text we simply numbered the negative as there were no positives.

⁷ Cf. Sanh 90a and Hag 15b.

6. *Sanh 103b*

Moreover Manasseh [1] shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in [2] doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Ki 21:16). Here, (in Babylon) it is interpreted as meaning that [3] he slew Isaiah; in the West (Palestine) they said: (It means) that [4] he made an image as heavy as a thousand men, and every day it slew all of them . . . [and] Manasseh [5] placed it [the idol which he himself made] in the Temple . . . [6] Manasseh cut off the Divine Name (from the Torah), and [7] broke down the altar . . . [8] Manasseh violated his sister . . .

Almost immediately the reader is confronted with eight assaults upon the character of Manasseh including two that are based in tradition and not scripture. That is, the slaying of Isaiah⁸ and sexual deviations.⁹ However, in the above passage the significance of the sexual violation seems more reproachable in that it is against his own sister, which is a direct violation of Scripture.¹⁰ The next passage from Tractate Sanhedrin continues the negative assault.

7. *Sanh 104a*

Then Manasseh (Hezekiah's son) too should not be included [in those from whom God averts His eyes], because of Hezekiah's honour? – A son confers privileges on his father, but a father confers no privilege on a son.

The message here is that even though Manasseh had a good father, Manasseh is not allowed to share in any of his reputation in the eyes of YHWH.¹¹ The weight of the passages we have looked at so far reflect DtrN's perception of Manasseh.

⁸ Cf. *AscenIs* 1.

⁹ Cf. 2 *Bar* 64 and *AscenIs* 1.

¹⁰ Cf. Lev 18:9; 20:17; 2 Sam 13:10-14.

¹¹ Cf. Leviticus (BECHUKKOTHAI) 36:3.

Surely his name was Jonathan, for it is said, And Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danite (The Danites appropriated Micah's graven and molten images, his ephod and teraphim and took also with them the young man who was his priest.)? – He said unto him: But (even) according to your argument, (it may be objected), ‘Was he the son of Manasseh? Surely he was the son of Moses, for it is written, the sons of Moses: Gershom, and Eliezer (1 Ch 23:15) but (you must say that) because he acted (wickedly) as Manasseh Manasseh the son of Hezekiah was one of the most wicked kings of Judah.’ (Cf. 2 Kings 21:1-17) the Scriptural text ascribed his descent to Manasseh, (so) also here (it may said that), because he acted (wickedly) as Manasseh who descended from Judah, the Scriptural text ascribed his descent to Judah. R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai: From here (one may infer) that corruption is ascribed to the corrupt Micah's priest who ministered to idolatry is described as a descendant of the corrupt king Manasseh.

The wickedness of Manasseh is the upshot of this passage. The weight of evidence is siding, as we have seen, with DtrN over and against the Chr. Tractate Yebamoth presents the execution of Isaiah by Manasseh.

And in it [the teachings of R. Eliezer b. Jacob] was also written, ‘Manasseh slew Isaiah.’ Raba said: He [Manasseh] said to him [Isaiah]: Your teacher Moses said, ‘For men shall not see Me and live’ (Ex. 33:20) and you said, ‘I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up’ (Isa. 6:1). Your teacher Moses said, ‘For what (great nation is there, that hath God so nigh unto them), as the Lord our God is whensoever we call upon him’ (Deut. 4:7), implying ‘at all time’, and you said, ‘Seek ye the Lord when he many be found’ (Isa. 55:6, which implies ‘but not always’). Your teacher Moses said, ‘The number of the days I will fulfill’ (Ex. 23:26, but will not make any additions) but you said, ‘And I will add unto your days fifteen years’ (2 Ki 22:6). ‘I know’, thought Isaiah, ‘that whatever I may tell him [Manasseh] he will not accept; and should

I reply at all, I would only cause him to be a willful (homicide)'. He [Isaiah] therefore pronounced (the Divine) Name and was swallowed up by a cedar. The cedar, however, was brought and sawn asunder. When the saw reached his mouth he died. (And this was his penalty) for having said, 'And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips' (Isa. 6:5).

Manasseh is here accused of murdering Isaiah. Not only did he inflict the punishment of death on righteous Isaiah, he did so by having him sawn asunder *lengthwise*!

10. Zeb 61b

The fire which descended from heaven in the days of Moses did not depart from the brazen altar until the day of Solomon. And the fire which descended in the days of Solomon did not depart until Manasseh came and removed it.

Here again is another passage in closer relationship to extra-biblical passages than it is with the Bible itself.¹²

So, here we have before us the relevant texts from the Talmud. The extant textual evidence points to a portrayal of Manasseh as the model of evil. Let us look now at the Midrash Rabbah.

B. Midrash Rabbah

In order to be fair to the context of the following passages and yet not present an overwhelming amount of extraneous material, the reader is encouraged to consult Appendix C for a particular passage's fuller setting. There are six books in the Midrash Rabbah that speak of Manasseh: Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Esther, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes. The first two present a mixed review; Deuteronomy and Song of Songs are negative; Esther comes out

¹² Cf. 2 Bar 64.

with the Chr's position, and the final book presents a neutral perception. The goal of this section is to look at all the material in order to decide whether or not the positive presentations of Manasseh within the Midrash Rabbah are strong enough to override the negative impression given by the rabbis in the Talmud. We will work through the texts in the sequence they are presented in the Midrash Rabbah.

1. *Leviticus (METZORA) 17:7*

...THERE SEEMETH TO ME TO BE, AS IT WERE, A PLAGUE IN THE HOUSE alludes to the filth of idolatry, or as some say, to the image set up by [King] Manasseh, which is indicated in what is written, *And behold northward of the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry* – babi'ah (Ezek. VIII, 5).

Here is the first impression of Manasseh given to the reader of these texts. It is from the perspective of DtrN.

2. *Leviticus (EMOR) 30:3*

Another exposition of the text, AND YE SHALL TAKE YOU ON THE FIRST DAY. It bears on what is written in Scripture: *When He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute*, etc. (Ps. CII, 18). R. Abin said: It is impossible for us to fathom the character of David...when he foresaw that wicked men would emanate from him, such as Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon, he would call himself a poor man; as it says, A Prayer of the poor man, when he delayeth... Another exposition of the text...'He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute ones,' however, alludes to the prayer of Manasseh king of Judah, who was destitute of good deeds, and 'Hath not despised their prayer' alludes to his own prayer and that of his forebears, as may be inferred from the fact that it is written, And he prayed unto Him; and He was entreated (wayye'ather) of him (II Chronicles XXXIII, 13). (What is the meaning of "wayye'ather to him"? R. Eliezer son

of R. Simeon answered: In Arabia they call a breach (*hithirta*) ‘athirta.) *And brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom* (*ib.*). How did He bring him back? R. Samuel b. Jonah said: He brought him back (*heshibo*) in a wind; as you read, ‘He causeth the wind to blow (*mashib*).’ At that instant *Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God* (*ib.*) and at that instant Manasseh admitted that there was justice and that there was a Judge. R. Isaac interpreted the text as referring to the present generations who have no king and no prophet, no priest and no *Urim* and *Thummin*, indeed they have nought but prayer alone. David said to the Holy One, blessed be He: ‘Sovereign of the Universe! Despise not their prayer; *Let this be written for the generation to come*’ (*ib.* CII,19). From this it may be inferred that the Holy One, blessed be He, accepts the penitent...

Here again the Midrashist begins the exposition involving Manasseh on negative note. However, there is the recollection of the Chr’s vision of Manasseh half way through. The targumist uses this information to embellish the biblical texts with his own thoughts. The biblical text reads: וַיֵּדַע מְנַשֶּׁה כִּי יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים – then Manasseh knew for that YHWH, He was God. The targumist continues in favor of Manasseh, “and at that instant Manasseh admitted that there was justice and that there was a Judge.” Here Manasseh does not just acknowledge YHWH but also His justice and His rulership. This passage tips its hat one more time to the kindness of YHWH in the final line cited: “...the Holy One, blessed be He, accepts the penitent.” This passage ends with an expression of the Chr’s point of view.

3. *Leviticus (BECHUKKOTHAI) 36:3*

Consider the text, *Hand to hand, the evil man shall not be unpunished* (Prov.XI, 21). Bar Kappara said: Ahaz and all the wicked kings of Israel have no share in the next world....It is this that Hezekiah is thinking of when he says, *Behold, for my peace there was bitterness to me, bitterness* (Isa. XXXVIII, 17), by which he meant, ‘*There was bitterness to me*’ in regard to my

predecessor, Ahaz, and 'There was bitterness to me' as regards my successor, Manasseh . . .

This passage reflects the observation we made in three of the talmudic passages stating that Manasseh has no portion in the next world.¹³ This passage communicates DtrN's position of Manasseh's badness. So, out of the three passages we reviewed from Lev Rabbah, we saw two that came out on the side of DtrN and one that sided with the Chr's view.

4. Numbers (NASO) 9:7

Thus you learn that in the case of the ten tribes their doom was sealed solely on account of the iniquity of adultery. When that the doom of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin was sealed on account of adultery alone? From the fact that Jeremiah protested before God: In the day of Manasseh Israel did more evil deeds than the present generation, yet you destroyed them not except in my own time. Accordingly it is written, *My bowels, my bowels! I writhe in pain! The chambers of my heart! ...Destruction followeth upon destruction*, etc. (Jer. IV, 9f.). Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to him: 'In the days of Manasseh, even though they did provoke Me, the children were still the children of their fathers, but now they are children of lewdness.' Hence it is written, *For My people is foolish*, etc. (ib. 22) . . . Yet, although they transgressed all the commandments, and have denied the Holy One, blessed be He – as you read, *They have belied the Lord* (ib. 12) – He shows long-suffering.

This text focuses on the long-suffering of YHWH. Manasseh is mentioned twice, though the function he serves is as a reference point making YHWH's patience all the more clear.

¹³ Cf. Sanh 90a; 102b; Hag 15b.

5. Numbers (NASO) 12:4

All this serves to teach you that the Temple was not deficient even in small details...R. Hnina b. Isaac says: On the day when Manasseh introduced an image into the Temple all those fruits withered. This confirms the text, *The flower of Lebanon languisheth* (Nahum I, 4).

This passage is negative and sides with DtrN. Without wishing to break the flow of our exposition of Numbers Rabbah, inserting Song of Songs Rabbah connects naturally in content to the above passage. It will be helpful to read it as a momentary interruption, as it gives additional insight to the aforesaid statement.

6. The Song of Songs 3:10 § 3

For when Solomon built the Temple, he fashioned out of this gold all manner of trees, and when the trees in the field produced their fruit, these in the Temple also produced fruit, and the fruit used to drop off and it was gathered and put aside for the repair of the Temple. When Manasseh set up an image in the Temple, all those trees withered, and so it says, *And the flower of Lebanon languisheth* (Nah. I, 4). But in the time to come, the Holy One, blessed be He, will restore them, as it says, *It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing* (Isa. XXXV, 2).

Clearly the position taken in this text is negative but could come from either the DtrN's account or the first half of the Chr's. The text is intriguing, though it goes beyond the biblical evidence. Here is more evidence of perhaps a community reading their own prejudices into the text.

7. Numbers (NASO) 14:1

We have learned elsewhere: Three kings and four commoners have no share in the World to Come. The three kings are: Jereboam, Ahab, and Manasseh. R. Judah holds that Manasseh does possess a share in the World to Come, for it says, *And he prayed unto Him; and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem, into his kingdom* (II Chron. XXXIII, 13). The Sages answered R. Judah: He restored him to his 'kingdom' but not to the like of the Hereafter... Those who expound the Scriptures metaphorically say that they all have a share in the World to Come, except Balaam. What is the reason? *'Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine... Moab is my washpot,'* etc. *'Gilead is mine'* alludes to Ahab king of Israel, who died in Ramoth Gilead. *'Manasseh is mine'* means literally, Manasseh the son of Hezekiah... Another explanation of the text, *'Gilead is mine,'* etc. Sama son of Rakta expounded in the name of R. Simeon b. Lakish... If a man should come and say that God does not receive the penitent, there is Manasseh the son of Hezekiah; let him come and give evidence. For no creature in the world acted so wickedly before Me as he did, yet in the hour of repentance I accepted him; as is borne out by the text, And he prayed unto Him; and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom (II Chron. XXXIII, 13).

Here are both the positive and negative perceptions of Manasseh. This reflects the presentation of Manasseh by the Chr. One view does not take priority as much as the two views are simply presented. This is typical of rabbinic commentary. That is, they seek not so much agreement with each other as much as to mine the minor points of scripture for their hidden treasures.¹⁴ Grand truths, Sabbath, God's uniqueness, and being set apart are taken for granted as they are the bedrock of all Jewish piety. What makes this passage distinct from the other passages we have looked at so far is that this passage reflects typical rabbinic dialogue.

¹⁴ "What appears to be an arbitrary treatment of the biblical text arises in reality from the view that everything is contained in the Torah . . . Turn and turn it (the Torah), for everything is in it'." H.L. Strack and Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, ed. and trans. Markus Bockmuehl, 2d ed. (Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, 1992), 238. This passage is found in Tractate Aboth 23a

8. Deuteronomy (VAETHCHANAN) 2:20

What is the meaning of, '*The increase of the wicked is sin*'? The one entry (*biah*) that Manasseh made into the Temple was the cause of sin unto Israel, for he made a four-faced idol and brought it into the Holy of Holies... Why a four-faced idol? To correspond to the four cardinal points. He [Manasseh] said: Let every one who comes from the four cardinal points bow down to this idol. And what did God do unto him? He delivered him into the hand of his enemies. Whence do we know this? For it said, *Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, and bound him with fetters* (II Chron. XXXIII, 11). They made a copper mule and they put him into it and kindled a fire under it so that he was burnt within. Whereupon Manasseh called upon every idol to which he had [formerly] offered sacrifices and not one of them answered him, as it is said, *Yea, though one cry unto him, he cannot answer, nor save him out of his trouble* (Isa. XLVI, 7). When Manasseh saw that he was in a sore plight, and that not one of these idols answered him, he began to call upon God. He said: 'Master of the Universe, behold, I have called upon all the idols of the world and I have learnt that there is no reality in them; Thou Master of the Universe art a God above all gods, and it Thou wilt not answer me I will declare, heaven forrend, that all Beings are alike.' Thereupon God answered him: 'Ah, wicked man, by right, I should not answer you, because you have provoked Me to anger; but in order not to close the door before the penitent, that they should not say, "Lo, Manasseh sought to repent but he was not received," I will answer you.' Whence do we know this? For it is said, *And he prayed unto Him; and He was entreated (wayye'ather) of him* (II Chron. XXXIII, 13); read, *wayyehather*. This teaches that the ministering angels had closed up the windows of the firmament to prevent his prayer reaching heaven, but what did God do? He broke through the firmament beneath His Throne of Glory and received his prayer, and He restored him to his kingdom in Jerusalem. R. Samuel b. Unya said in the name of R. Aha: He brought him back on the wind, as one says, 'Thou causest the wind to blow.' At that moment Manasseh knew the *the Lord, He is God*.

This passage displays interesting duality. Ostensibly it presents the Chr's narration, but it does so with the lips of DtrN. What is meant by that is, the passage begins with pointing out that Manasseh set up a four-faced idol in the Temple. From there the author moves into a recounting

of Manasseh's repentance in the Chr's pericope. However, notice the underlined message towards the bottom of the text. It has YHWH answer Manasseh with the words, "Ah wicked man..."

Also notice the apparent motivation in forgiving Manasseh. "I [YHWH] should not answer you...but in order not to close the door before the penitent, that they should say..." This does not bring to mind the repentance written of in the second book of Chronicles. This repentance has an edge of insistence to it.

9. Esther 9:2

Not one of them could give counsel like his wife Zeresh, though he had three hundred and sixty-five counselors, corresponding to the number of days in the year. He wife said to him: 'This man about whom you are inquiring – if he is of the seed of the Jews, you will not prevail against him unless you contrive something against him which no one of his nation has ever experienced. If you throw him into a fiery furnace, Hananiah and his companions have already been delivered from this; if into a lion's den, Daniel has already escaped from one. If you imprison him in a dungeon, Joseph has already escaped from one. If you make him sit on hot irons, Manasseh has already prayed and been answered by the Holy One, blessed be He, and escaped from it...

This passage is a good example of the Chr's perspective. Let us now direct our attention to the two remaining passages from the Song of Songs Rabbah.

10. The Song of Songs 2:5 § 3

R. Meir then came forward and took as his text: *Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel* (1 Kings XIII, 11). ‘Who as he? He was Amaziah the priest of Bethel.’ Said R. Jose to him: ‘Meir, there is some confusion here. Who was he? He was *Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh* (Judg. XVIII, 30). The nun of Manasseh is suspended, as though to indicate that if he was virtuous he would be accounted the son of Moses, and if not, the son of Manasseh.¹⁵ (The colleagues expressed their surprise to R. Samuel b. Nahman, saying ‘After becoming a priest to idolatrous worship, could he have lived so long!’ He replied to them: ‘Yes; because he tried to discourage idolatry . . .”

This passage too comes from DtrN’s point of view.¹⁶

11. The Song of Songs 4:4 § 9

Although it [Jerusalem] is a desert, there is the same liability in infringing its boundary now that it is desolate as there was when it was standing. R. Levi said: The Holy One, blessed be He, said: ‘In its ruin it has produced righteous men for Me, while in its flourishing period it produced sinners against Me. In its ruin it produced righteous men for Me, such as Daniel and his associates, Mordecai and his associates, Ezra and his associates. In its flourishing period it produced sinners against Me, such as Ahaz and his associates, Manasseh and his associates, Amon and his associates.’ R. Abba quoting R. Johanan applied to this dictum of R. Levi the verse, *For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife* (Isa. LIV, 1). This means: She produced more righteous men for Me in her ruin than she produced for Me as an inhabited city.

Once again, here is another text expressing exclusively the outlook of DtrN.

¹⁵ There is a footnote at this point in the Midrash. “The infamous king of Judah who spread idolatry; v. II Kings XXI.”

¹⁶ The curious reference to the suspended nun is found in the Hebrew Text. Manasseh written in the Hebrew script as is מְנַשֶּׁה – Manasseh. The second letter in the Hebrew Bible sits just above all the other letters. It is a novelty that can only be pointed out but not examined as it is outside the scope of this paper.

12. *Ecclesiastes 3:3*

Know that it is so, because it is written, *Behold, a son shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name (I Kings XIII, 2), and Manasseh had not yet entered the world!* He said to them: Is it then written, '*A son shall be born to the house of David*' from Hezekiah? It is not stated thus, but simple '*To the house of David*', i.e. from the rest of the royal house of David.

This text is neutral in its opinion of Manasseh. However, it is quoting from DtrN (1 Kings 13:2). What we have seen then is a preference in the Midrash Rabbah to favor DtrN's impression of Manasseh. The same seemed to be the case for the rabbis who contributed to the Talmud.

So, here we have been presented with texts spanning over a millennium. What we found was evidence attesting to the rabbinic predilection for the point of view of DtrN. It must be reasserted that though the extant textual evidence seems to indicate a particular point of view, no definite conclusion about actual Jewish tradition can be made. There is much that has not been part of this discussion that would need to be looked at before any real assertions could be made. What could be stated is that Jewish tradition according to the texts we reviewed side more with the picture given of Manasseh as the model of evil over the model of repentance. We may now move to our last set of texts: the patristic writings.

Chapter VI

Early Christian Tradition

This chapter will show the shape the Christian tradition in its relationship with the two perceptions of Manasseh in the early patristic writings. The extant writings of the Early Church Fathers are the authoritative texts outside of the Bible used for the Christian Tradition. The Christian writings tend to prefer the repentant Manasseh to the sinful one, as we shall see. They refer to him in eight separate sources. Four of those lean towards the Chr's perspective, while three lean toward DtrN; one is neutral.¹ We will begin by looking first at the passages that reflect the Chr's vision. As we have established, the method of presenting the texts will be to look at them upfront and afterwards offer an appraisal.

A. Early Patristic Texts

1. *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* vol 7 ANF book 2 chapt. 22 ("That David, the Ninivites, Hezekiah, and his son Manasseh, are eminent examples of repentance. The Prayer of Manasseh, King of Judah")

It is also thy duty, O bishop, to have before thy eyes the examples of those that have gone before, and to apply them skillfully to the cases of those who want words of severity or of consolation. Besides, it is reasonable that in thy administration of justice thou shouldst follow the will of God; and as God deals with sinners, and with those who return, that thou shouldest act accordingly in thy judging. Now, did not God by Nathan reproach David for his offence? And yet as soon as he said he repented, He delivered him from death saying "Be of good cheer; thou shalt not die." ... and Manasseh returned and built the high places...and set up altars...(recounting of 2 Ki 21:2-7; 2 Ch 33:3-7) and Manasseh shed innocent blood very much until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another...And the Lord brought upon him the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, and they caught Manasseh in

¹ *Theophilus in his letter to Autolytus* (vol 2 ANF bk 3 ch 24). This passage is included in Appendix D but will not be discussed since it cannot contribute to our discussion.

bonds, and they bound him in fetters of brass, and brought him to Babylon; and he was bound and shackled with iron all over in the house of the prison. And bread made of bran was given unto him scantily, and by weight, and water mixed with vinegar but a little and by measure, so much as would keep him alive; and he was in straits and sore affliction. And when he was violently afflicted, he besought the face of the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the face of the Lord God of his fathers. And he prayed unto the Lord...(follows a prayer of contrition). And the Lord heard his voice, and had compassion upon him. And there appeared a flame of fire about him, and all the iron shackles and chains which were about him fell off; and the Lord healed Manasseh from his affliction...(recounting of 2 Ch 33:13-20). Ye have heard, our beloved children, how the Lord God for a while punished him that was addicted to idols, and had slain many innocent person; and yet that He received him when he repented, and forgave him his offences, and restored him to his kingdom. For He not only forgives the penitent, but reinstates them in the former dignity.

Constitutions of the Holy Apostles mentions Manasseh more than in all the other patristic writings. It is a letter of exhortation to leaders in the early church on how they are to deal with the accused. The passage gives a very detailed account of his wickedness according to 2 Kings 21:2-16 and 2 Chronicles 33:2-9, but is speaking from the Chr's position of Manasseh of the model of repentance.

2. *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles vol 7 ANF book 2 chapt. 23* ("Amon may be an example to such as sin with an high hand.")

There is no sin more grievous than idolatry, for it is an impiety against God: and yet even this sin has been forgiven, upon sincere repentance. But if any one sin in direct opposition, and on purpose to try whether God will punish the wicked or not, such a one shall have no remission, although he say with himself, "All is well, and I will walk according to the conversation of my evil heart." Such a one was Amon the son of Manasseh. For the Scripture says: "And Amon reasoned an evil reasoning of transgression, and said, My father from his childhood was a great transgressor, and repented in

his old age; and now I will walk as my soul lusteth, and afterwards I will return unto the Lord. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And the Lord God soon destroyed him utterly from His good land. And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house, and he reigned two years only.

Constitutions of the Holy Apostles here again, came down on the side of the Chr giving Manasseh credit for repenting from his great transgressions. The focus again in this passage, as was the case earlier, is on teaching. Manasseh and Amon are used as object lessons to teach of God's mercy. Manasseh is someone whom God forgave, but to use God's mercy as an excuse to sin is both dangerous and something that must at all time be assiduously avoided.² One never knows the hour of one's death.³

3. *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles vol 7 ANF book 7 chapt. 39 ("A Prayer Containing the Memorial of His Providence, and an Enumeration of the Various Benefits Afforded the Saints by the Providence of God Through Christ.")*

Thou who hast fulfilled Thy promises made by the prophets, and hast had mercy on Zion, and compassion on Jerusalem, by exalting the throne of David, Thy servant, in the midst of her, by the birth of Christ, who was born of his seed according to the flesh, of a virgin alone; do Thou now, O Lord God, accept the prayers which proceed from the lips of Thy people which are of the Gentiles, which call upon Thee in truth, as Thou didst accept of the gifts of the righteous in their generations. In the first place Thou did respect the sacrifice of Abel, and accept it as Thou didst accept of the sacrifice of Noah when he went out of the ark; of Abraham, (a listing of many others) . . . of Manasseh in the land of the Chaldeans, after his transgression.

² This theme is also seen in Rom 6:1ff.

³ Cf. Lk 12:16-20.

Constitutions of the Holy Apostles continues to teach that YHWH accepts the prayers of those who call on Him in truth. In this context, even a sinner like Manasseh, when he had put off his transgressions, was able to call upon YHWH, and Manasseh's prayers were accepted. The Chr's tale was herein retold.

What we have seen so far in *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* was the Chr's model of Manasseh as repentant. However, there is an emphasis here on God's mercy more than on Manasseh's repentance.

4. *Chrysostom vol 10 NAPNF (first series) ("The Gospel of Matthew") homily 67 ("Matt. 21: 12-13")*

Let no man then of them that live in vice despair; let no man who lives in virtue slumber. Let neither this last be confident, for often the harlot will pass him by; nor let the other despair, for it is possible for him to pass by even the first. Hear what God saith unto Jerusalem, "I said, after she had committed all these whoredoms, Turn thou unto me, and she returned not." When we have come back unto the earnest love of God, He remembers not the former things. God is not as man, for He reproaches us not with the past, neither doth He say, Why wast thou absent so long a time? when we repent; only let us approach Him as we ought. Let us cleave to Him earnestly, and rivet our hearts to His fear.

Such things have been done not under the new covenant only, but even under the old. For what was worse than Manasseh? but he was able to appease God. What more blessed than Solomon? but when he slumbered, he fell. Or rather I can show even both things to have taken place in one, in the father of this man, for he the same person became at different times both good and bad.

The Gospel of Matthew, homily 67 seeks to light a fire under both those who are burdened by their guilt or overly confident of their virtue. He uses Manasseh and calls him the worst of all; and yet, God forgave him. Therefore, let the unrighteous seek God, and cleave to Him with hearts of repentance and fear. This passage also takes the Chr's position.

5. Jerome vol 6 NAPNF (second series) ("Letters") Letter 77

He who by his virtues teaches me how to stand and not to fall, by his penitence teaches me how, if I fall, I may rise again. Among the kings do we read of any so wicked as Ahab, of whom the scripture says: "there was none like unto Ahab which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord"? For shedding Naboth's blood Elijah rebuked him, and the prophet denounced God's wrath against him: "Hast thou killed and also taken possession? ...behold I will bring evil upon thee and will take away thy posterity" and so on. Yet when Ahab heard these words "he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted ...in sackcloth, and went softly." Then came the word of God to Elijah the Tishbite saying: "Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days." O happy penitence which has drawn down upon itself the eyes of God, and which has by confessing its error changed the sentence of God's anger! The same conduct is in the Chronicles attributed to Manasseh...

Jerome, Letter 77 focuses primarily on Ahab rightfully teaching the sinner how to repent in fasting, sackcloth and to go on from that point to walk humbly before YHWH. The ending of the passage calls such a one happy for having through confession and repentance changed the wrath of YHWH. It is into this category that Jerome places Manasseh. Jerome's letter follows the example laid out by the Chr.

6. Gregory of Nazianzen vol 7 NAPNF (second series) Oration 39 ("Oration on the Holy Lights") chapt 17

Yes, and I know of a Fifth [baptism] also, which is that of tears, and is much more laborious, received by him who washes his bed every night and his couch with tears; whose bruises stink through his wickedness; and who goeth mourning and of a sad countenance; who imitates the repentance of Manasseh and the humiliation of the Ninerites upon which God had mercy; who utters the words of the Publican in the Temple, and is justified...

Oration on the Holy Lights is a strikingly biblical portrayal of the repentant whom YHWH seeks to forgive.⁴ Forgiveness according the Scriptures, both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian, allocate clemency to those who seek forgiveness not through outward actions alone but from the heart.⁵ This passage comes from the perspective of the Chr.

7. (*"From Saul to the Captivity"*) *Revelation of Paul* vol 8 ANF (*"Revelation of Paul"*)

While he was yet speaking, there came other three, and saluted me, saying: Welcome, Paul, beloved of God, the boast of the churches, and model of angels. And I asked: Who are you? And the first said: I am Isaiah, whom Manasseh sawed with a wood saw. And the second said: I am Jeremiah...

Revelation of Paul is the first of the passages from the patristics that unreservedly retained the stance of DtrN. This view, as we observed in the Pseudepigrapha (*AscenIs*), and in the Talmud (Sanh 103b and Yeb 49b) does not come from the Bible. Obviously, it was a widely known tradition as evidenced from these divergent sources.

8. *Augustine* vol 2 NAPNF (*first series*) (*"City of God"*) book 18 chapt 25

"...when Manasseh began to reign over the Hebrews, – an impious king, by whom the prophet Isaiah is said to have been slain."

City of God is another declaration of the extra-biblical attestation that Manasseh was guilty of slaying Isaiah the prophet. This entry by Augustine sides with the DtrN's recounting of the Manasseh story.

This harmony in the face of biblical disharmony seems to come out of variegated communities not conscientiously seeking to castigate Manasseh but nevertheless did. ⁴ Cf. Neh 9:1-3; Jonah 3:5-10; James 4:8-10.

⁵ Cf. Deut 4:29.

Men who rage after their stepmothers are subject to the same canon as those who rage after their sisters.⁶

Basil, Letter 217 does not mention Manasseh by name. However, the footnote in the passage indicates that traditionally Manasseh is taken to be included those who are spoken of in this passage. However, this assertion is outside the biblical evidence. But as we did see earlier, there is evidence for this conviction in the rabbinic writings recording in the Talmud.⁷ The position of this perspective replicates the position of DtrN.

We have seen here in the extant writings of the Early Church Fathers, the Christian tradition of Manasseh in a process of development. There were only a few texts written by individuals, and these individuals were disconnected from each both by time and distance in a way the rabbis were not. Therefore, any sort of conclusions based on this manuscript evidence alone is, at best, tenuous.⁸

That said we are able to make some interesting observations with caution. We noticed that out of the ten passages (one found only in the appendix) that mention Manasseh, six were in

⁶ "e.g. according to the Ben. note, Manasseh and Hezekiah" Basil, "Letters," in *NAPNF*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 8, *Second Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 258.

⁷ Cf. Sanh 103b.

⁸ As was the case in chapter five with Louis Ginzberg's *The Legends of the Jews*, he also includes four references relating to Manasseh that are not covered herein. They most refer to the Martyrdom of Isaiah but one does state in Pseudo-Hippolytus, "Manasseh restored the city of Baalbek which Solomon had built." Louis Ginzberg, *The Legend of the Jews*, trans. Henrietta Szold (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1937), 375. These additional references are on the negative side, but since they do not mention Manasseh by name except the final one, the overall picture drawn in this chapter is not significantly altered. An example that can be cited to illustrate why our perception does not change can be seen in one of the references made by Ginzberg. Justin Martyr (*Dialogue*, chpt. 120) uses Isaiah's death as a vehicle to cast more typical dispersions at the Jewish people, which sadly enough was rampant among the early church fathers and dishonored the name they claimed they were representing. Speaking at Trypho, Martyr states, "... but from those [passages of Scripture] had your teachers comprehended, be well assured they would have deleted them, as they did those about the death of Isaiah, who you sawed asunder with a wooden saw."

line with the Chr's viewpoint and three came from DtrN's (The one in the appendix was neutral.). The latter three passages were embellished with material that did not come from the pages of Scriptures.

In the end what we can only admit that the patristic texts more often acknowledge Manasseh's repentance, but because of the scarcity of evidence no conclusions can be acknowledged. We must be even more cautious with speaking of the development of a Manasseh tradition within the Christian community than we were with its development within the Jewish community. The Christian texts did not experience the same level of dialogue with one another, as did the rabbinic texts.

It is also critical to consider that both Augustine and Basil wrote of Manasseh from a very negative perspective. Their influence was such that a few words from them could overturn many words from someone less well known. Therefore, we can only claim that the scant textual evidence leans slightly in the direction of a preference for the Chr's position. We cannot make any assertion that this reflects accurately the actual the sentiment of the early Christian community. What we can offer is this: a compartmentalizing played a role in the developing tradition of Manasseh. To this developing categorization, the patristics bore witness.

Chapter VII

Summary of the Argument

This has been a study of Manasseh in Scripture and tradition. We undertook it in order to gain a better understanding of the two variant versions of Manasseh in Scripture – one coming from the pen of DtrN portraying Manasseh as the model of evil and the other coming from the pen of the Chr portraying Manasseh as the model of repentance. We were able to use what we learned from the discrepancies between these two presentations of Manasseh and apply it to our understanding of the compartmentalizing of his reputation in tradition. We reviewed in what way these two representations were transmitted within the textual histories of both Jewish and Christian milieus into I have called the Manasseh tradition. Our purpose has been to analyze the biblical passages in order to suggest that the Bible was the document that provided the soil out of which the Manasseh tradition arose and to understand the scope and character of the development of that tradition.

We began by making the decision to consider the writers of each text as the final redactors, since to attempt more specificity would have been outside the scope of this work and simply added unnecessarily to the complexity and length of this piece. We then gave evidence justifying the categorization of the two pericopes as either being a part of the DH or the CH. From there we led an in-depth inductive analysis of the biblical material beginning with the DH. We learned that DtrN wrote from the theological standpoint of the doctrine of the transferability of guilt; whereas, the Chr seemed more connected to the doctrine of individual reward and retribution. These theological persuasions yielded to us the filters through which we were able to examine the ensuing traditions.

Next, we looked at the Manasseh tradition through these two doctrinal lenses and watched how the tradition developed within the textual histories of both the Jewish and Christian communities. In order to accomplish this, the various Manasseh texts extant from the second temple period (excluding the Dead Sea Scrolls) and from formative Judaism and Christianity were compiled and reviewed. We began with several translations and versions of the biblical texts. We noted that the Targums manifested the greatest variations and sided primarily with the Chr's vision. The variations within the Septuagint and Vulgate differed in ways that were closely connected with each other and differed very little from the MT. The Septuagint offered one possible shading of the Chr's text, but due to its lack of supporting evidence we noted it only as an interesting variation. We looked also at the Peshitta and saw that the more distinctive alterations were from the book of Chronicles but did not modify the overall picture of Manasseh.

We then built on this information by looking at relevant texts from the Pseudepigrapha and the Apocrypha to understand how those later writers perceived Manasseh. Also, one key passage from the writings of Josephus that enriched the discussion was included. We discovered that as we began to fully move into the area of tradition, we were confronted with texts that almost completely compartmentalize his reputation. It was then becoming clearer that a possible thread was developing. The biblical texts were now being worked into the lives of those who read them, and the original purposes of the writers of the texts were becoming less significant. Perhaps these communities looked at Manasseh through their own perceptions and historical settings over and above the original textual settings. This prejudice effected the development of the Manasseh tradition, and each community's memory of him began to polarize.

We moved from the biblical translations into the second temple writings, and we were able to notice a development within the Manasseh tradition as the separate communities began to

record their own perceptions of Manasseh. We introduced Josephus and how he used the dual presentation of Manasseh to speak into his own community. Then we moved into the broader category of the Jewish tradition. We examined the relevant rabbinic passages from the Talmud and Midrash Rabbah. We found that the preponderance of evidence pointed to an apparent rabbinic partiality to regard Manasseh through the lens of DtrN. We found some textual evidence to support that the Babylonian Talmud and the Midrash Rabbah seemed to prefer the perception of Manasseh found in the Book of Kings over and against the one found in the Book of Chronicles.

After this, we turned our attention to the Christian tradition. We examined the relevant patristic passages. There we saw the Christian tradition of Manasseh leaning in the direction of a preference for the Chr's account. However, because there were only a few individual texts disconnected from each other both by time and distance, any conclusions based on this manuscript evidence alone must be understated. We pointed out that the reference to Manasseh by Augustine and Basil were in opposition to the majority of texts. Consequently, the potential impact of a few words from them could overturn a lot of words from someone less influential.

With that in mind, we were still able to make some interesting observations. We saw that out of the ten passages that mentioned Manasseh, six were in line with the Chr's viewpoint and three came from the viewpoint of DtrN. One was a neutral chronology that we did not discuss as it had no relevance to our work here. We discussed that since both pericopes contained negative material we were unable to state confidently whether a church father who included both negative and positive information about Manasseh was looking at both DtrN's work and the Chr's work or just the Chr's. Therefore, we concluded by saying definiteness cannot be offered in the

Christian tradition because it is not possible to decide with complete confidence from which pericope the negative material was derived.¹ It could have come from either passage.

In the end what we learned was that in the passages we studied there was evidence that indicated Manasseh was often viewed from the perspective of DtrN or the Chr , which is in my experience normative even up to the present. However, this categorization neglects the reality of the duality of the biblical presentations. We saw that Josephus gave the fullest presentation of Manasseh using both biblical perspectives. We were not able to offer any definitiveness on either the Jewish or the Christian traditions since we looked only at textual evidence and did not consider other factors that influence traditions.

Manasseh is a paradox. He is both evil and repentant, according to the Bible. The communities that wrote about him bifurcated tradition's memory of him. The two biblical accounts of Manasseh stand in tension with one another. We may speculate that this took place, at least in part, because the historical settings of the biblical writers differed from the historical settings of those who read and passed along the biblical accounts, but this is only speculation. However, it does seem that the differentiations in historical situations may have developed into preferences for one perception of Manasseh over the other.

It is not enough to pass off the differences in the tradition history as mere contradictions. This is too simplistic to be accurate. Instead, I suggest that the books of the Bible, like people, have individual histories. When we learn to sympathize with those particulars histories, we will be in a better position to more fully hear and comprehend the deeper messages implanted in

¹ It is difficult to speak of a Christian tradition in the same way as one can speak of a Jewish tradition. The Christian do not have the overarching unity that is a part of Jewish heritage. Also, the Christian texts were not dialogical as were the rabbinic texts we considered.

those books. We will then discover that dissimilarities do not necessarily correspond to disinformation and objective analysis does not necessarily correspond to untruth.

It is a challenging road ahead for us all. Coming to terms with the difficulties present in the Scripture is no less difficult than trying to cover them up. I believe that once we engage in this inescapable conversation, we will see how much more there is to gain by accepting the fuller presentation of God's word than there is to lose by accepting it. The ones who have the courage to move forward and into this mystery of God, will be the ones who can look forward to finding Him. In our distress, the Bible teaches, we are to turn to YHWH (2 Chronicles 15:4). From here we will find Him if we search for Him with our entire heart and soul (Deuteronomy 4:29).

Appendixes

A (Bible Versions)

1. Hebrew Bible (Author's Translation)

a. (2 Kings 21:1-18)

1 Manasseh was in his twelfth year *when* he began to reign. He reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years and the name of his mother *was* Hephzibah.

2 He did evil in the eyes of YHWH according to the abominations of the nations whom YHWH destroyed from before the sons of Israel.

3 And he returned and rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed. And he erected altars to Baal and he made Asherah, just as Ahab, king of Israel had made, and he bowed to all the hosts of heaven and he served them.

4 And he built altars in the house of YHWH *of* which YHWH said, "In Jerusalem I will put my name."

5 And he built altars to all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of YHWH.

6 And he made his son pass through the fire, and he practiced witchcraft and divination and he *dealt with* mediums and familiar spirits, and he did much evil in the eyes of YHWH to provoke *him* to anger.

7 And he put an image of Asherah, which he made *into* the house *of* which YHWH said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house in Jerusalem which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I put my name forever."

8 And I will not make again the feet of Israel to flee from the land which I have given to their fathers if only they will observe to do according to all which I have commanded them and to all the Law which Moses my servant commanded them.

9 But they did not listen. Manasseh caused them to go astray doing more evil than the nations whom YHWH had destroyed from before the sons of Israel.

10 And YHWH spoke by the hand of his servants the prophets saying:

11 Because Manasseh the king of Judah has done these abominations more wickedly than all the Amorites who *were* before him and again he caused Judah to sin with his idols.

12 Therefore, thus says YHWH God of Israel, behold I am bringing evil upon Jerusalem and Judah which all who hear both his ears will tingle.

13 I will stretch over Jerusalem a line of Samaria and the leveling instrument of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes the dish. I will wipe it and turn it upon her face.

14 And I will abandon the remnant of my possession and I am giving them into the hand of their enemies and they will become as plunder and as spoil to all their enemies.

15 Because they have done evil in my eyes and they have been ones who are provoking me since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, and until this day.

16 Moreover Manasseh has poured out very much innocent blood until it filled Jerusalem from one end to the other besides his sin, which he caused Judah to sin by doing evil in the eyes of YHWH.

17 Now the rest of the words of Manasseh and all that he has done and the sin which he sinned, are they not written upon the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

18 And Manasseh laid down with his fathers and he was buried in the garden of his house in the garden of Uzza and his son Amon reigned instead of him.

b. (2 Kings 23:12, 26-27; 24:3-4)

12 And the altars which *were* upon the rooftop of the upper chamber of Ahaz which the kings of Judah had made and the altars which Manasseh made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, the king had broken and he ran from there and he smashed them *into* dust into the brook of Kidron.

26 However YHWH did not return from his great burning anger which burned against Judah because of all the vexations *with* which Manasseh had provoked Him.

27 YHWH also said *to* Judah, "I will remove *you* from before my face as I have removed Israel and I will reject this city Jerusalem which I have chosen and the house *of* which I said, 'my name shall be there.

3 Surely upon the command of YHWH it happened to Judah to remove them from before *YHWH's* face because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all which he had done.

4 And also *for* the innocent blood which he poured out, *for* he filled Jerusalem *with* innocent blood YHWH was not willing to forgive.

c. (Jeremiah 15:4)

4 And I will make *them* an *object of* horror to all the kingdoms of the earth on account of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah the king of Judah for what he has done in Jerusalem.

d. (2 Chronicles 33:1-20)

1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and fifty-five years he reigned in Jerusalem.

2 And he did evil in the eyes of YHWH according to the abominations of the nations, which YHWH dispossessed from before the sons of Israel.

3 And he returned and rebuilt the high places that Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he caused to stand the altars to Baals and he made Asherim and he worshipped all the hosts of heaven and he served them.

4 He built altars in the house of YHWH where YHWH said, "In Jerusalem my name *will be* forever."

5 And he rebuilt altars to all the hosts of heaven in the two courts of the house of YHWH.

6 He made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-Hinnom and he practiced witchcraft and divination and sorcery and he *dealt with* mediums and a familiar spirit. He did much evil in the eyes of YHWH to provoke him to anger.

7 And he put an image of the idol, which he 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 from all the tribes of Israel, I will place my name forever.

8 I will not again turn the foot of Israel from upon the land I have appointed to your fathers if only they will observe to do all that I command them according to all the Law and statutes and the ordinances *given* by the hand of Moses.

9 Thus, Manasseh caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do evil more than the nations whom YHWH had destroyed from before the sons of Israel.

10 And YHWH spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they did not pay attention.

11 Therefore, YHWH brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them and they captured Manasseh with hooks and bound him with bronze *chains* and made him go to Babylon.

12 And when he was caused to suffer according to himself, he became grieved before YHWH his God and he humbled himself from before the God of his fathers.

13 When he made himself pray to Him, He was moved towards him and He heard his supplication and He brought him to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew for that YHWH, He *was* God.

14 Now, after this he built the outer wall to the City of David westward toward Gihon from the valley to the entrance of the Gate of Fishes and he encircled the Ophel and he caused it to be very high. Then he put army commanders in all the fortified cities in Judah.

15 And he removed the foreign Gods and the idol from the house of YHWH and all the altars, which he built on the mountain of the house of YHWH and in Jerusalem he threw them outside the city.

16 And he established the altar of YHWH and sacrificed upon it offerings of peace and thanks and he said to Judah to serve YHWH the God of Israel.

17 Nevertheless the people still sacrificed in the high places *although* only to YHWH their God.

18 Now the rest of the words of Manasseh, even his prayer to his God and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of YHWH the God of Israel are among the records of the kings of Israel.

19 His prayer and *how God* was entreated by him and all his sin and his transgression and the places on which he built on them the high places and he caused to stand the Asherim and the carved images before he humbled himself behold they are written upon the records of Hozai.

20 So Manasseh slept with his fathers and they buried him in his *own* house, and Amon his son became king instead of him.

e. (2 Chronicles 33:22-23)

22 He did evil in the eyes of YHWH as Manasseh his father had done, and Amon sacrificed to all the idols which he Manasseh his father has made, and he served them.

23 Moreover, he did not humble himself from before YHWH as Manasseh his father had humbled himself, but Amon multiplied guilt.

1. Aramaic Bible

a. (Targum 2 Kings 21:1-18)

1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he ruled, and he ruled fifty-five years in Jerusalem, and the name of his mother was Hephzibah.

2 And he did what is evil *before* the Lord according to the abominations of the nations that the Lord drove out from before the sons of Israel.

3 And he turned and built the high places that Hezekiah his father destroyed, and he erected altars to Baal, and he made an Asherah just as Ahab the king of Israel did, and he worshipped all the *hosts* of the heavens, and he served them.

4 And he built altars in the house of the sanctuary of the Lord that the Lord said: "In Jerusalem I *will make my Shekinah reside.*"

5 And he built altars to all the *hosts* of the heavens in two courts of *the house of the sanctuary* of the Lord.

6 And he make his son pass in the fire, and he was practicing augury and divination, and he used spiritualists and necromancy. He did much that was evil *before* the Lord so as to provoke (him) to anger.

7 And he placed the image of the Asherah that he made in the house that the Lord said to David and to Solomon his son: "In this house and in Jerusalem that I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, *I will make my Shekinah reside* forever.

8 And I will not continue *to remove Israel* from the land that I gave to their fathers only if they take care to do according to all that I commanded them and to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them."

9 And *they did not accept*, and Manasseh led them astray to do what was more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed utterly from before the sons of Israel.

10 And the Lord spoke by means of his servants the prophets, saying:

11 "Because Manasseh the king of *the tribe of the house of Judah* did those abominations, he did worse than all that the *Amorites* who were before him did, and he also made sin *those of the house of Judah in the service of his idols.*

12 Therefore thus said the Lord God of Israel: Behold I am bringing evil upon Jerusalem and Judah so that every one who will hear it, his two ears will tingle.

13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem *the cord of the destruction of Samaria and the plummet of the desolation* of the house of Ahab, and I will wipe away Jerusalem just as the flask *is wiped, wiped and turned upon its face.*

14 And I will drive out the remnant of my inheritance, and I will give them over in the hand of their enemies, and they will be for a spoil and a *misfortune* for all their enemies,

15 because they have done what is evil *before me*, and *they were causing anger before me* from the day that their fathers went forth from Egypt and unto this day."

16 And also Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he filled Jerusalem end to end, besides his sins that he made sin *those of the house of Judah*, to do what was evil *before* the Lord.

17 And the rest of the acts of Manasseh and all that he did, and his sins that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of *the kings of the house of Judah*?

18 And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the garden of his house, in the garden of Uzza. And Amon his son ruled in his place.

b. (Targums 2 Kings 23:12, 26-27; 24:3-4)

12 And the king broke down the altars that were upon the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz that the kings *of the house of Judah* made and the altars that Manasseh made in two courts of *the house of the sanctuary* of the Lord, and *he removed them far* from there and cast their dust to the valley of Kidron.

26 But the Lord did not turn from the *strength* of his great anger, for his anger *grew strong* against *those of the house of Judah* on account of all the provocations that Manasseh provoked *before* him.

27 And the Lord said: “And also *those of the house of Judah* I will exile from the land *of my Shekinah* just as I *exiled Israel*; and I will cast off this city that I chose, Jerusalem, and the house that I said: ‘My name will be there.’”

3 But *on account of the fact that they made provocation before the Lord this was against those of the house of Judah to exile them from the land of the house of his Shekinah* by the sins of Manasseh according to all that he did.

4 And also the innocent blood that he shed and filled Jerusalem. The *sin of innocent blood* was *evil from before the Lord so as not to forgive it*.

c. Aramaic Bible (Targum Jeremiah 15:4)

4 And I will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth, because *they have not repented like Manasseh* the son of Hezekiah, the king of *the tribe of* the house of Judah, concerning what he did *more and more* in Jerusalem.

d. (Targum 2 Chronicles 33:1-20)

1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem.

2 He did what was evil *before* the Lord, according to the abominations of the peoples whom the Lord had driven out from before the children of Israel.

3 He rebuilt all the high places which his father Hezekiah had demolished and set up the “altars” (a pile of stones, Aramaic “gwr” vs. Hebrew “mdbh”) to the baals and made Asherahs and bowed down to all the *armies* of heaven and worshipped them.

4 He built the “altars” and *set up a carved image* in the *sanctuary* house of the Lord, (of) which the Lord had said: “In Jerusalem I *shall cause my Shekinah to dwell* for ever.”

5 He built the “altars” to all the *armies* of heaven in the two courts of the *sanctuary* house of the Lord.

6 He cause his sons to pass through the fire in the valley of Bar Hinnom, and *he consulted cloud-augurs, diviners, and sorcerers*, and he made lying oracles and apparitions of the dead. He did much that was evil *before* the Lord to stir up anger *before* him.

7 He placed the image of the figure which he had made *in his likeness* in the *sanctuary* house of *the Lord*, of which *the Lord* had said to David and to Solomon his son: “In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, *I shall cause my Shekinah to dwell* for ever *and ever*.”

8 And I shall not any more *send into exile the people, the house of* Israel from upon the land which I set up *through* your fathers, only if they will observe to do all that I commanded them with regard to all the law and the covenants and the judgments (given) through Moses.”

9 But Manasseh led *the men of* Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray to do more evil than the peoples which the Lord had destroyed from before the children of Israel.

10 Then the Lord spoke *with* Manasseh and *with* his people and *warned them through the prophet*, but they paid no heed.

11 Then the Lord brought against them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria. They secured Manasseh with *manacles*, bound him with *chains of* bronze, and took him to Babylon.

12 *Then the Chaldeans made a bronze mule and bored many small holes in it. They shut him up inside it and lit a fire all around it.* When he was in distress, *he sought (help) from all his idols which he had made, but there was no help forthcoming, for there is no profit in them. Then he changed his mind and prayed before the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly from before the Lord, the God of his fathers.*

13 He prayed *before* him. *Immediately angels all the angels who had been put in charge of the entrances to the gates of prayer which are in heaven went forth and, because of him, closed all the entrances to the gates of prayer which are in heaven, and all the windows and openings of heaven, so that his prayer would not be accepted. But immediately the mercy of the Lord of the universe prevailed, whose right hand is stretched out to receive the sinners who return to his fear and who break the inclination of their heart by repentance, and he made an opening and a gap in the heavens beneath the throne of his glory.* He heard his prayer, he accepted his request, he

shook the universe by his Memra, the mule was shattered, and he came out from there. Then there went forth a wind from between the wings of the cherubim; it blew him by the decree of the Memra of the Lord, and he returned to Jerusalem to his kingdom. And Manasseh knew that the Lord was God, who had worked with him these signs and wonders. He returned with all his heart before the Lord and forsook all the idols and no longer served them.

14 After this he built *the* outer wall for the city of David *from the valley* of Gihon in the wadi to the entrance to the gate of the *fishmongers*, and he continued it round the *palace* and raised it very high. Then he placed army commanders in all the fortified cities *which were in the house of* Judah.

15 He did away with the *idols of the nations* and the figure from the *sanctuary* house of the Lord and all the “*altars*” which he had built on the mountain of the *sanctuary* house of the Lord and in Jerusalem, and he cast them outside the city.

16 He built the altar of the Lord and sacrificed upon it sacrifices, the sacrifices of holy things and of the thanksgiving, and he told *those of the house of* Judah to serve the Lord, the God of Israel.

17 However, the people were still sacrificing on the high places, but only to *the name of the Memra of the Lord*, their God.

18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer *which he prayed before the Lord* his God, and the words of the *prophets* who spoke *with* him in the name of *the Memra of the Lord*, the God of Israel, behold they *are written* in the Acts of the kings of *the house of* Israel.

19 And his prayer *which he prayed before the Lord* and *how the Lord accepted his prayer* and all his sin and infidelity, and the sites on which he built the high places and set up the Asherahs and the images *and his humbling himself* – behold, they are written in the Acts of Hozai.

20 Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him *in* his house, and Amon his son became king in his place.

e. (Targum 2 Chronicles 33:22-23)

22 He did what was evil *before* the Lord, as Manasseh his father had done, and Amon sacrificed to all the images which Manasseh his father had made, and he served them.

23 But he did not humble himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself, but this Amon caused sin to abound.

3. Septuagint (Author's Translation)

a. (2 Kings 21:1-18)

1 Manasseh was twelve years of when he became king, and he ruled 55 years in Jerusalem, and the name of his mother was Hephzibab.

2 And he did evil in the eyes of the Lord according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord removed from the presence of the sons of Israel.

3 And he returned and rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father pulled down Hezekiah and he raised the alter for baal, and he made a grove, as Ahab the king of Israel did and worshipped all the host of heaven and served them.

4 And he built an altar in the house of the Lord of which he said, "In Jerusalem I will put my name."

5 And he built an altar to all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.

6 And he led his sons in the fire and to practice divination and divined from omens and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord provoking him to anger.

7 And he put the carved image, the grove, in the house *in* which the Lord said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem which I have chosen from all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name there forever."

8 And I will not make the foot of Israel to wander again from the land which I gave to their fathers if they will keep all that I have commanded them *and do* according to all the law that I commanded them *through* my servant Moses.

9 But they did not listen and Manasseh led them astray to do more evil in the eyes of the Lord than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the face of the sons of Israel.

10 And the Lord spoke through his servants the prophets saying

11 Because Manasseh king of Judah did these abominations, and did more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, he also made Judah sin with his idols

12 Therefore, thus says the Lord of Israel, "Behold I myself am bringing evil on Jerusalem and on Judah so that all *those who* hear, both his ears will tingle.

13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measure of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab and I will wipe Jerusalem as a dish is wiped, wiping it and turning it upside down

14 And I will reject the remnant of my possession and I will deliver them into the hands of their enemy, and they will become as spoil and as plunder to all their enemies.

15 Because they themselves did evil in my eyes and they have been ones making me angry from the day *in* which I led their fathers out from Egypt until this day."

16 And moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he filled Jerusalem from one end to the other; besides his sins which he made Judah sin doing evil in the eyes of the Lord

17 Now the rest of words of Manasseh and all that he did and his sin which he sinned are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

18 And Manasseh slept with his father and he was buried in the garden of his house in the garden of Uzza and Amon his son became king in his place.

b. (2 Kings 23:12, 26-27; 24:3-4)

12 And the altars on the roof of the upper chambers of Ahaz which the kings of Judah had made and the alters which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, the king pulled down and smashed from there and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron.

26 Nevertheless, the Lord did not turn away from the fierceness of his great anger which was furious anger in Judah because of the provocations which Manasseh had provoked him.

27 And the Lord said, "I will remove Judah from my presence just as I removed Israel. And I will reject Jerusalem, this city which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, 'My name will be there.'"

3 Yet on the command of the Lord, it happened to Judah to remove *them* from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh according to all that he did.

4 And he shed innocent blood and filled Jerusalem *with* innocent blood. And the Lord did not desire to have mercy.

C. (Jeremiah 15:4)

4 And I will give them over to distress among all the kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, the king of Judah for all that he did in Jerusalem.

d. (2 Chronicles 33:1-20)

1 Manasseh was twelve when he became king and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem.

2 And he did evil before the Lord according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord put to death from before the sons of Israel.

3 And he returned and rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father pulled down he erected altars to the baals and made groves and worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served them.

4 And he built altars in the house of the Lord of which the Lord said, "In Jerusalem my name shall be forever."

5 And he built altars to all the hosts of heaven in the two courtyards of the house of the Lord.

6 And he led his children through the fire in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom and he practiced divination and he used omens and he practiced enchantments and he dealt with mediums and sorcerers. He increased in doing evil against the Lord making him angry.

7 Then he put the carved image of the idol which he made 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 from all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name there forever."

8 And I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I gave to their fathers, yet if only they would observe to do all that I commanded them according to all the law, the ordinances and all the judgments *given* by the hand of Moses.

9 And Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants in Jerusalem to do more evil than all the nations which the Lord drove out from the presence of the sons of Israel.

10 And the Lord spoke to Manasseh and to his people but they did not pay attention.

11 And the Lord led the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them and they captured Manasseh in chains and they bound him in foot irons and they led *him* to Babylon

12 And when he was distressed he sought the face of the Lord his God and was very humbled before the face of the God of his fathers

13 And he prayed to him, and he gave attention to him and he listened to his cry and he returned him to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.

14 And after these things he built a wall outside the City of David from the southwest down from Gihon in the valley to the entrance of the Fish Gate around to the Ophel, and he raised *it* very high. And he put commanders of the army in charge in all the fortified cities of Judah.

15 And he removed the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the Lord and all the the altars which he had built on the mountain of the house of the Lord and in Jerusalem and outside the city

16 And he set up the alter of the Lord and sacrificed to him offerings of peace and adoration, and he said to Judah to serve the Lord the God of Israel.

17 Nevertheless, the people still *sacrificed* upon the high places but only *to* the Lord their God.

18 And the rest of the words of Manasseh and his prayer to God and the words of the seers *who* spoke to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel, behold, these are among the records.

19 His prayer and how *God* listened to him and all his sins and his rebellions and the places on which he built the high places and set up a grove and carved idols before turning back, behold, it is written upon the words of the seers.

20 And Manasseh slept with his fathers and they buried him in the garden of his house, and Amon his son became king in his place

Septuagint (Author's Translation) (2 Chronicles 33:22-23)

22 And he did evil in the presence of the Lord as his father Manasseh had done, and Amon sacrificed to all the idols which his father Manasseh had made, and he served them.

23 And he was not humble before the Lord as Manasseh he father, but Amon he son multiplied guilt.

4. Vulgate (Douay-Rheims)

a. (2 Kings 21:1-18)

1 Manasses was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned five and fifty years in Jerusalem: the name of his mother was Haphsiba.

2 And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the idols of the nations, which the Lord destroyed from before the face of the children of Israel.

3 And he turned, and built up the high places, which Ezechias, his father, had destroyed: and he set up altars to Baal, and made groves, as Achab, the king of Israel, had done: and he adored all the host of heaven, and served them.

4 And he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which the Lord said: In Jerusalem I will put my name.

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven, in the two courts of the temple of the Lord.

6 And he made his son pass through fire: and he used divinations, and observed omens, and appointed pythons, and multiplied soothsayers, to do evil before the Lord, and to provoke him.

7 He set also an idol of the grove, which he had made, in the temple of the Lord: concerning which the Lord said to David, and to Solomon his son: In this temple, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my name for ever. 8 And I will no more make the feet of Israel to be moved out of the land, which I gave to their fathers: only if they will observe to do all that I have commanded them, according to the law which my servant Moses commanded them.

9 But they hearkened not: but were seduced by Manasses, to do evil more than the nations which the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the Lord spoke in the hand of his servants, the prophets, saying:

11 Because Manasses, king of Juda, hath done these most wicked abominations, beyond all that the Amorrites did before him, and hath made Juda also to sin with his filthy doings:

12 Therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring on evils upon Jerusalem and Juda: that whosoever shall hear of them, both his ears shall tingle.

13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the weight of the house of Achab: and I will efface Jerusalem, as writings tables are wont to be effaced, and I will erase and turn it, and draw the pencil often over the face thereof.

14 And I will leave the remnants of my inheritance, and will deliver them into the hands of their enemies: and they shall become a prey, and a spoil to all their enemies.

15 Because they have done evil before me, and have continued to provoke me, from the day that their fathers came out of Egypt, even unto this day.

16 Moreover, Manasses shed also very much innocent blood, till he filled Jerusalem up to the mouth: besides his sins, wherewith he made Juda to sin, to do evil before the Lord.

17 Now the rest of the acts of Manasses, and all that he did, and his sin, which he sinned, are they not written in the book of the words of the days of the kings of Juda?

18 And Manasses slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Oza: and Amon, his son, reigned in his stead.

b. (2 Kings 23:12, 26-27; 24:3-4)

12 And the altars that were upon the top of the upper chamber of Achaz, which the kings of Juda had made, and the altars which Manasses had made in the two courts of the temple of the Lord, the king broke down: and he ran from thence, and cast the ashes of them into the torrent Cedron.

26 But yet the Lord turned not away from the wrath of his great indignation, wherewith his anger was kindled against Juda: because of the provocations, wherewith Manasses had provoked him.

27 And the Lord said: I will remove Juda also from before my face, as I have removed Israel: and I will cast off this city Jerusalem, which I chose, and the house, of which I said: My name shall be there.

3 And this came by the word of the Lord against Juda, to remove them from before him for all the sins of Manasses which he did;

4 And for the innocent blood that he shed, filling Jerusalem with innocent blood: and therefore the Lord would not be appeased.

c. (Jeremiah 15:4)

4 And I will give them up to the rage of all the kingdoms of the earth: because of Manasses the son of Ezechias the king of Juda, for all that he did in Jerusalem.

d. (2 Chronicles 33:1-20)

1 Manasses was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem.

2 And he did evil before the Lord, according to all the abominations of the nations, which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel:

3 And he turned, and built again the high places which Ezechias his father had destroyed: and he built altars to Baalim, and made groves, and he adored all the host of heaven, and worshipped them.

4 He built also altars in the house of the Lord, whereof the Lord had said: In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever.

5 And he built them for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord.

6 And he made his sons to pass through the fire in the valley of Benennom: he observed dreams, followed divinations, gave himself up to magic arts, had with him magicians, and enchanters: and he wrought many evils before the Lord, to provoke him to anger.

7 He set also a graven, and a molten statue 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 out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever.

8 And I will not make the foot of Israel to be removed out of the land which I have delivered to their fathers: yet so if they will take heed to do what I have commanded them, and all the law, and the ceremonies, and judgments by the hand of Moses.

9 So Manasses seduced Juda, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to do evil beyond all the nations, which the Lord had destroyed before the face of the children of Israel.

10 And the Lord spoke to his people, and they would not hearken.

11 Therefore he brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of the Assyrians: and they took Manasses, and carried him bound with chains and fetters to Babylon.

12 And after that he was in distress he prayed to the Lord his God: and did penance exceedingly before the God of his fathers.

13 And he entreated him, and besought him earnestly: and he heard his prayer, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom, and Manasses knew that the Lord was God.

14 After this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon in the valley, from the entering in of the gate round about to Ophel, and raised it up to a great height: and he appointed captains of the army in all the fenced cities of Juda:

15 And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord: the altars also which he had made in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem, and he cast them all out of the city.

16 And he repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed upon it victims, and peace offerings, and praise: and he commanded Juda to serve the Lord the God of Israel.

17 Nevertheless the people still sacrificed in the high places to the Lord their God.

18 But the rest of the acts of Manasses, and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers that spoke to him in the name of the Lord the God of Israel, are contained in the words of the kings of Israel.

19 His prayer also, and his being heard and all his sins, and contempt, and places wherein he built high places, and set up groves, and statues before he did penance, are written in the words of Hozai.

20 And Manasses slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his house: and his son Amon reigned in his stead.

e. (2 Chronicles 33:22-23)

22 And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, as Manasses his father had done: he sacrificed to all the idols which Manasses his father had made, and served them.

23 And he did not humble himself before the lord, as Manasses his father had humbled himself, but committed far greater sin.

5. Syriac Bible (Peshitta)

a. (2 Kings 21:1-18)

1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah.

2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations which the LORD destroyed from before the children of Israel.

3 For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for Baal and made idols, as Ahab king of Israel had done; and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.

4 He built an altar in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.

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 son to pass through the fire, and used divinations and practiced augury and appointed men with familiar spirits and wizards; he wrought much which was evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

7 And he set the image and the idol that he had made in the house of the LORD in the house of which the LORD 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, will I put my name for ever;

8 Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave to their fathers, only if they will observe to do everything that I have commanded them, and all the laws that my servant Moses commanded them.

9 But they did not harken; and Manasseh seduced them, and they did more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the LORD spoke by his servants the prophets, saying,

11 Because Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah has done these abominations and has done more wickedly than all that the Amorites did, who were before him, and has made Judah also sin with his idols;

12 Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Judah and upon Jerusalem that whoever hears of it, both his ears shall tingle.

13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; and I will smite Jerusalem and destroy it because of all the abominations which Manasseh had done in Judah.

14 And I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and be trampled under the feet of all their enemies,

15 Because they have done that which was evil in my sight and have provoked me to anger since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even to this day.

16 Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sins wherewith he made Judah sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.

17 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh and all that he did and the sins that he sinned, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah.

18 And Manasseh slept with his fathers and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of the treasury; and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

b. (2 Kings 23:12, 26-27; 24:3-4)

12 And the altar that was on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and broke them down from thence and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

26 Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of his great wrath wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked him.

27 And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and I will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

3 And there came a fierce wrath against Judah, to remove them out of his sight on account of the sins of Manasseh and all that he had done.

4 And also for the innocent blood that he had shed; for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon.

c. (Jeremiah 15:4)

4 And I will cause them to be a horror in all the kingdoms of the earth, because of the transgression of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.

d. (2 Chronicles 33:1-20)

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

2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to the works of the nations which the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel.

3 For he built again the altar which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he built shrines for the idols and made images of leopards, and worshipped them.

4 Moreover he worshipped all the host of heaven in the courts of the house of the LORD.

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

6 And he also caused his son to pass through the fire in the great valley; and he practiced augury and soothsaying and sorcery, and inquired of the Chaldeans and of familiar spirits; and he did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

7 And he set the image of the idol which had four faces, which he had made, in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen for myself out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever;

8 Neither will I any more remove the children of Israel from this land which I have given to their fathers; if only they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole and my statutes and my ordinances which my servant Moses commanded them.

9 So Manasseh caused Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go astray and to do evil works like the nations which the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the Lord spoke to Manasseh and to his people; but they would not hearken.

11 Therefore the LORD brought against them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria, who captured Manasseh alive and bound him with chains and carried him to Babylon.

12 But when he was in distress, he prayed before the Lord his God and revered greatly the LORD God of his fathers.

13 And he prayed before the LORD, and he heard his voice and heard his prayer, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God.

14 Now after this he built an outer wall to the city of David on the west side of the brook of Gihon to the entrance of the fish gate, and encircled the whole of Jerusalem with an outer wall and raised it up to a great height, and he appointed commanders of the army in all the fortified cities of Judah.

15 And he took away the strange gods and the idols out of the house of the Lord, and the idols 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 built an altar of the LORD, and sacrificed upon it burnt offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to keep the feast to the LORD God of Israel;

17 And not to sacrifice again to strange gods, not to offer burnt offerings to them, but before the LORD their God only.

18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh and his prayer to his God and the words of the prophets who prophesied concerning him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

19 His prayer, also, and how the LORD heard his voice, and all his sins and his iniquity, and the places on which he built for the idols, behold, they are written among the sayings of Hanan the prophet.

20 So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his house, in the garden of the treasury; and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

e. (2 Chronicles 33:22-23)

22 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as Manasseh his father had done; for Amon sacrificed to all the images and idols which Manasseh his father had made and worshipped them;

23 And he did not humble himself before the LORD his God, as Manasseh humbled himself before the LORD his God; but Amon committed sins more and more.

B (Pseudepigraphal, Apocryphal and Josephus Texts)²

1. The Pseudepigraphal Texts Concerning Manasseh:

a. (2 Baruch 64:1- 65:2)

In reference to (2 Ki 21:2ff.)

64. And the ninth black waters you have seen; that is the wickedness that existed in the days of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah. For he acted very wickedly, and killed the righteous, and perverted judgment, and shed innocent blood, and violently polluted married women, and over turned altars and abolished their offerings, and drove away the priests lest they minister in the sanctuary. And he made a statue with five faces: Four of them looked into the direction of the four winds, and the fifth was on the top of the statue so as to challenge the zeal of the Mighty One. And then the wrath of the Mighty One went out so that Zion should be uprooted as has also happened in you days. Gut also the judgment went out against the two and a half tribes so that they also should be carried away into captivity as you have now seen. And the impiety of Manasseh increased to such a degree that the glory of the Most High removed itself from the sanctuary. Therefore, Manasseh was call the impious one in that time, and finally his habitation was in the fire. For although the Most High had heard his prayer, in the end when he fell into the brazen horse and the brazen horse was melted, it became to him a sign regarding the hour (which was to come). For he had not lived perfectly since he was not worthy, but (the sign was given to him) that he might know henceforth by who he should be punished at the end. For he who is able to benefit is also able to punish.

65. This Manasseh sinned and he thought in his time that the Might One would not call account for these things. These are those ninth black waters you have seen.

b. (TMos 2:8-9)

In reference to (2 Ki 21:4ff.)

“They [four of the twelve tribes] will offer their sons to foreign gods and they will set up idols in the Temple that they may

² All texts taken from *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, vol. 1 & 2 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983).

worship them. (Yes), even in the house of the Lord they will perpetrate idolatry and carve images of all sorts of animals.”

c. (Jub 1:13-24)

In reference to (2 Ki 21:14ff and 2 Ch 33:12-13)

And I shall hide my face from them, and I shall give them over to the power of the nations to be captive, and for plunder, and to be devoured. And I shall remove them from the midst of the land, and I shall scatter them among the nations. And they will forget all of my laws and all of my commandments and all of my judgments, and they will err concerning new moons, Sabbaths, festivals, jubilees, and ordinances. And afterwards they will turn to me from among the nations with all their heart and with all their soul and with all their might. And I shall gather them from the midst of all the nations. And they will seek me so that I might be found by them. When they seek me with all their heart and with all their soul, I shall revel to them an abundance of peace in righteousness. And with all my heart and with all my soul I shall transplant them as a righteous plant. And they will be a blessing and not a curse. And they will be the head and not the tail. And I shall build my sanctuary in their midst, and I shall dwell with them. And I shall be their God and they will be my people truly and rightly. And I shall not forsake them, and I shall not be alienated from them because I am the LORD their God. And Moses fell upon his face, and he prayed and said, ‘Oh Lord, my God, do not abandon your people and your inheritance to walk in the error of their heart. And do not deliver them into the hand of their enemy, the gentiles, lest they rule over them and cause them to sin against you . . . And the LORD said to Moses, ‘I know their contrariness and their thoughts and their stubbornness...But after this they return to me in all uprightness and with all of (their) heart and soul...and I shall purify them... and they will do my commandments.

d. (AscenIs 1:1- 5:16)

In reference to (2 Ki 21:6, 9, 16, 17; 2 Ch 33:6-12; Yeb49b)

In the twenty-sixth year...Hezekiah...summoned Manasseh his son, for he was his only son. He summoned him in the presence of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, the prophet...in order to hand over to him the words of righteousness which the king himself had seen...‘As the LORD lives whose name has not been transmitted to this world...all these commands and these words will have no effect on

Manasseh...and he will be a follower of Beliar rather than of me. Her will cause many in Jerusalem and Judah to desert the true faith...and by his [Manasseh's] hands I [Isaiah] will be sawed in half. And when Hezekiah heard these words he wept very bitterly...and Hezekiah thought in his heart that he would kill Manasseh his son, but Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'The Beloved has made your plan ineffective...(2) And it came about that after Hezekiah had died, and had become king, (Manasseh) did not remember the commands of Hezekiah his father, but forgot them; and Sammael [an evil angel] dwelt in Manasseh and clung closely to him and Manasseh abandoned the service of the LORD of his father, and he served satan, and his angel, and his powers...and socery and magic, augury and divination, fornication and acultery, and the persecution of the righteous increased through Manasseh...and when Isaiah...saw the great iniquity which was being committed in Jerusalem, and the service of satan, and his wantonness, he withdrew from Jerusalem...(3)...And after [this], Belair will descend, the great angel, the king of this world...in the form of a man, a king of iniquity...and all the men of the world will believe him...and serve him...(5) Beliar was angry with Isaiah, and he dwelt in the heart of Manasseh, and he sawed Isaiah in half with a wood saw...Beliar did this to Isaiah through Belkira and through Manasseh, for Sammael was very angry with Isaiah...

e. (HelSynPr 6:1-10)

In reference to 2 Ch 33:12-13)

O you who have fulfilled the promises which (were given) through the prophets, and have had mercy on Zion, and have had pity oh Jerusalem...now also, yourself, O Master God, accept the entreaties on the lips of your people, who (have come) out of (the) gentiles, who call upon you in truth, even as you received the gifts of the righteous in their generations [from] Manasseh in the land of the Chaldeans after his offence...

f. (The Prayer of Manasseh, in full)

1 O Lord, God of our fathers, God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, and of their righteous offspring;

2 He who made the heaven and the earth with all their embellishment;

3 He who bound the sea and established it by the command of his word, he who closed the bottomless pit and sealed it by his powerful and glorious name;

4 He (before) whom all things fear and tremble; (especially) before your power.

5 Because the grandeur of your magnificence cannot be endured, and none can endure or stand before your anger and your fury against sinners;

6 But unending and immeasurable are your promised mercies;

7a Because you are Lord, long-suffering, and merciful, and greatly compassionate; and you feel sorry over the evils of men.

7b You, O Lord, according to the sweetness of your grace, promised forgiveness to those who repent of their sins, and in the multitude of your mercies appointed repentance as the salvation for sinners.

8 You, therefore, O Lord, God of the righteous ones, did not appoint grace for the righteous ones, such as Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, those who did not sin against you; but you appointed grace for me, (I) who am a sinner.

9a Because my sins multiplied in number more than the sand to the sea, and on account of the multitude of my iniquities, I have no strength so that I can lift up my eyes.

9b. And now, O Lord, I am justly afflicted, and as I deserve I am harassed; for already I am ensnared.

10 And I am bent by a multitude of iron chains, so that I cannot lift up my head; for I do not deserve to lift up my eyes and look and see the height of heaven, because of the multitude of the iniquity of my wicked deeds, because I did evil things before you, and I provoked your fury, and I set up idols and multiplied defilement.

11 And now behold I am bending the knees of my heart before you; and I am beseeching your kindness.

12 I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned; and certainly I know my sins.

13 I make supplication before you; forgive me, O Lord, forgive me! And do not destroy me with my transgression; and do not be angry against me forever; and so not remember my evils; and do not condemn me and banish me to the depths of the earth! For you are God of the repenters.

14 And in me you will manifest all your grace; and although I am not worthy, you will save me according to the multitude of your mercies.

15 Because of this (salvation) I shall praise you continually through all the days of my life; because all the hosts of heaven praise you, and sing to you forever and ever.³

2. Apocryphal Text Concerning Manasseh:

a. Tobit 14:10

| Tobit 14:10b | Tobit 14:10b (author's translation) |
|---|--|
| Μανασσης ἐποίησεν ἐλεημοσύνην καὶ ἐσώθη ἐκ παγίδος θανάτου ἧς ἔπηξεν αὐτῷ Αμαν δὲ ἐνέπεσεν εἰς τὴν παγίδα καὶ ἀπώλετο | Manasseh gave alms and he was delivered from the trap of death that was set for him but Amon fell into the trap and was lost |

3. Josephus Text Concerning Manasseh:

a. Antiquities of the Jews: 10.3.36-46:

HOW MANASSEH REIGNED AFTER HEZEKIAH; AND
HOW, WHEN HE WAS IN CAPTIVITY, HE RETURNED TO
GOD, AND WAS RESTORED TO HIS KINGDOM, AND LEFT
IT TO [HIS SON] AMON

36. When king Hezekiah had survived the interval of time already mentioned, and had dwelt all that time in peace, he died, having completed fifty-four years of his life, and reigned twenty-nine. 37. But when his son Manasseh, whose mother's name was Hephzibah, of Jerusalem, had taken the kingdom, he departed from the conduct of his father, and fell into a course of life quite contrary thereto, and showed himself in his manners most wicked in all respects, and omitted no sort of impiety, but imitated those transgressions of the Israelites, by the commission of which against God, they had been destroyed; for he was so hardy as to defile the temple of God, and the city, and the whole country; 38. for, by setting out from a contempt of God, he barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem

³ James H. Charlesworth, "The Prayer of Manasseh, in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed James H. Charlesworth, vol. 2 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 635ff.

was overflown with blood. 39. So God was angry at these proceedings, and sent prophets to the king, and to the multitude, by whom he threatened the very same calamities to them which their brethren the Israelites, upon the like affronts offered to God, were now under. But these men would not believe their words, by which belief they might have reaped the advantage of escaping all those miseries; yet did they in earnest learn that what the prophets had told them was true. 40. And when they persevered in the same course of life, God raised up war against them from the king of Babylon and Chaldea, who sent an army against Judea, and laid waste the country; and caught king Manasseh by treachery, and ordered him to be brought to him, and had him under his power to inflict what punishment he pleased upon him. 41. But then it was that Manasseh perceived what a miserable condition he was in, and esteeming himself the cause of all, he besought God to render his enemy human and merciful to him. Accordingly, God heard his prayer, and granted him what he prayed for. So Manasseh was released by the king of Babylon, and escaped the danger he was in; 42. and when he was come to Jerusalem, he endeavored, if it were possible, to cast out of his memory those his former sins against God, of which he now repented, and to apply himself to a very religious life. He sanctified the temple, and purged the city, and for the remainder of his days he was intent on nothing but to return his thanks to God for his deliverance, and to preserve him propitious to him all his life long. 43. He also instructed the multitude to do the same, as having very nearly experienced what a calamity he was fallen into by a contrary conduct. He also rebuilt the altar, and offered the legal sacrifices, as Moses commanded; 44. and when he had reestablished what concerned the divine worship, as it ought to be, he took care of the security of Jerusalem: he did not only repair the old walls with great diligence, but added another wall to the former. He also built very lofty towers, and the garrisoned places before the city he strengthened, not only in other respects, but with provisions of all sorts that they wanted: 45. and indeed, when he had changed his former course, he so led his life for the time to come, that from the time of his return to piety towards God, he was deemed a happy man, and a pattern for imitation. 46. When therefore he had lived sixty-seven years, he departed this life, having reigned fifty-five years, and was buried in his own garden; and the kingdom came to his son Amon, whose mother's name was Meshulemeth, of the city of Jotbath.

C (The Talmud and Midrash Rabbah Texts)

1. Babylonian Talmud:

The twelve passages in the Babylonian Talmud that refer to King Manasseh (“Manasseh”):

a. Hag 15b: “We have learnt: Three kings and commoners (n.10) have no share in the world to come.” (n. 10) “The three kings are, Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh.”

b. Yeb 49b: And in it [the teachings of R. Eliezer b. Jacob] was also written, ‘Manasseh slew Isaiah.’ Raba said: He [Manasseh] said to him [Isaiah]: Your teacher Moses said, ‘For men shall not see Me and live’ (Ex. 33:20) and you said, ‘I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up’ (Isa. 6:1). Your teacher Moses said, ‘For what (great nation is there, that hath God so nigh unto them), as the Lord our God is whensoever we call upon him’ (Deut. 4:7, implying ‘at all time’), and you said, ‘Seek ye the Lord when he many be found’ (Isa. 55:6, which implies ‘but not always’). Your teacher Moses said, ‘The number of the days I will fulfill’ (Ex. 23:26, but will not make any additions) but you said, ‘And I will add unto your days fifteen years’ (2 Ki 22:6). ‘I know’, thought Isaiah, ‘that whatever I may tell him [Manasseh] he will not accept; and should I reply at all, I would only cause him to be a willful (homicide).’ He [Isaiah] therefore pronounced (the Divine) Name and was swallowed up by a cedar. The cedar, however, was brought and sawn asunder. When the saw reached his mouth he died. (And this was his penalty) for having said, ‘And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips’ (Isa. 6:5).

c. BB 109b: Surely his name was Jonathan, for it is said, And Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danite (The Danites appropriated Micah’s graven and molten images, his ephod and teraphim and took also with them the young man who was his priest.)? – He said unto him: But (even) according to your argument, (it may be objected), ‘Was he the son of Manasseh? Surely he was the son of Moses, for it is written, the sons of Moses: Gershom, and Eliezer (1 Ch 23:15) but (you must say that) because he acted (wickedly) as Manasseh (Manasseh the son of Hezekiah was one of the most wicked kings of Judah. (Cf. 2 Kings 21:1-17) the Scriptural text ascribed his descent to Manasseh, (so) also here (it may said that),

because he acted (wickedly) as Manasseh who descended from Judah, the Scriptural text ascribed his descent to Judah. R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai: From here (one may infer) that corruption is ascribed to the corrupt (Micah's priest who ministered to idolatry is described as a descendant of the corrupt king Manasseh.

d. Sanh 90a: "All Israel have a portion in the world to come . . . [except] three kings and four commoners have no portion in the world to come: The three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh. . ."

e. Sanh 99b: Our Rabbis taught: But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously: this refers to Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, who examined [Biblical] narratives to prove them worthless. Thus, he jeered, had Moses nothing to write . . . Thereupon a Heavenly Voice cried out: Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence, thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. And of him it is explicitly stated in post-Mosaic Scriptures (Job 5:7), Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope (i.e., study). What is meant by 'and sin as it were with a cart rope'? – R. Assi said: Temptation at first is like a spider's thread, but eventually like a cart rope.

e. Sanh 99b: Now on the view that he who insults his neighbour in the presence of a scholar is an epikoros, it is well; for then he who insults a scholar himself will be included in the expression, 'he who acts impudently against the Torah.' But on the view that he who insults a scholar himself is an epikoros, who is meant by 'he who acts impudently against the Torah? – e.g., Manasseh b. Hezekiah

f. Sanh 101b: Now, would Hezekiah king of Judah have taught the Torah to the whole world, yet not to his own son Manasseh? But all the pains he spent upon him, and all the labours he lavished upon him did not bring him back to the right path, save suffering alone, as it is written, And the Lord spake to Manasseh and to his people: but they would not hearken unto him. 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 (2 Ch 33:10ff). And it is further written, And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem unto his kingdom, and Manasseh knew that the Lord was God (2 Ch 33:12ff). Thus thou learnest how precious is suffering. Our Rabbis taught: Three came with a circuitous plea, viz., Cain, Esau, and Manasseh . . . Manasseh-- he first called upon many deities, and (only) eventually called upon the God of his fathers (This is deduced from, And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God – implying that he had prayed to other deities before. ‘If thou [the other deities] wilt not hearken to my prayer,’ he pleaded, ‘of what profit was my turning to thee?’

g. Sanh 102b: R. Abbahu used to make a practice of lection on the Three Kings (mentioned in our Misnah as having no portion in the future world [Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh]). Falling sick, he undertook not to lecture (thereupon any more) (he viewed his illness as a punishment for dwelling upon the sins of others.); yet no sooner (102b) had he recovered, than he lectured (upon this) again. They (his disciples) remonstrated with him, ‘Did you not undertake not to lecture on them?’ – He replied, ‘Did they abandon (their course), that I should abandon (my habit of lecturing upon them)? . . . (That night) Manasseh came and appeared to him in a dream. ‘Thou hast called us thy colleagues and the colleagues of the father . . . ’ He [the king] questioned him [Manasseh], ‘Since thou art so wise, why didst thou worship idols?’ He replied, ‘Wert thou there, thou wouldst have caught up the skirt of thy garment and sped after me.’

g. Sanh 102b: Manasseh (denotes) that he forgot God (Manasseh is connected with the root nashah . . . ‘to forget’. Another explanation: Manasseh (denotes) that he caused Israel to forget their Father in Heaven. And how do we know that he will not enter the future world? – Because it is written, Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem . . . and he made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel. Just as Ahab has no portion in the world to come, so has Manasseh neither. Judah said: Manasseh hath a portion therein, for it is written, and he prayed unto him and was intreated of him etc. R. Johanan said: Both of them (in support of their views) expounded the same verse. For it is written, And I will cause to be removed unto all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah (Jer 15:4). One Master maintains,

‘Because of Manasseh’ who repented, whilst they did not; whilst the other Master maintains, **[103a]** ‘because of Manasseh’ – who did not repent. R. Johanan said: He who asserts that Manasseh has no portion in the world to come weakens the hands of penitent sinners . . . R. Hisda said in the name of R. Jeremiah b. Abba: What is meant by the verse, I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding . . . I went by the field of the slothful – this refers to Ahaz (who forbade the study of the Law); and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding – this denotes Manasseh (Who destroyed the altar).

h. Sanh 103b: Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had fill Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Ki 21:16). Here, (in Babylon) it is interpreted as meaning that he slew Isaiah; in the West (Palestine) they said: (It means) that he made an image as heavy as a thousand men, and every day it slew all of them . . . [and] Manasseh placed it [the idol which he himself made] in the Temple . . . Manasseh cut of the Divine Name (from the Torah), and broke down the altar. . . Manasseh violated his sister . . .”

i. Sanh 104a: Then Manasseh (Hezekiah's son) too should not be included [in those from whom God averts His eyes], because of Hezekiah's honour? – A son confers privileges on his father, but a father confers no privilege on a son.

j. Zeb 61b: The fire which descended from heaven in the days of Moses did not depart from the brazen altar until the day of Solomon. And the fire which descended in the days of Solomon did not depart until Manasseh came and removed it.

2. The Midrash Rabbah:

a. Leviticus (METZORA) 17:7

AND I PUT THE PLAGUE OF LEPROSY IN A HOUSE OF THE LAND OF YOUR POSSESSION. IN A HOUSE, etc., alludes to the Temple, as it is said, *Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will defile My, sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes, and the longing of your soul* (Ezek. XXIV, 21) . . . THERE SEEMETH TO ME TO BE, AS IT WERE, A PLAGUE IN THE HOUSE alludes to the filth of idolatry,

or as some say, to the image set up by [King] Manasseh, which is indicated in what is written, *And behold northward of the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry* – *babi'ah* (Ezek. VIII, 5).

b. Leviticus (EMOR) 30:3

Another exposition of the text, AND YE SHALL TAKE YOU ON THE FIRST DAY. It bears on what is written in Scripture: *When He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute*, etc. (Ps. CII, 18). R. Abin said: It is impossible for us to fathom the character of David.

Sometimes he calls himself a poor man and sometimes he calls himself a king. How can that be? On those occasions when he looked and foresaw that righteous men were destined to spring from him, such as Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah, he would call himself a king; as it says, *Give the king Thy judgments, O God* (ib. LXXII, 1). But when he foresaw that wicked men would emanate from him, such as Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon, he would call himself a poor man; as it says, *A Prayer of the poor man, when he delayeth* – *ya'atof* (ib. CII, 1). R. Alexandri interpreted the verse as applying to a labourer. It is like a labourer who sits and watches for the moment when he can rest awhile from his labour, and finally finishes it when it is late. ('*Ya'atof*' can bear such a meaning, as you may infer from the citation, *So the "atufim were Laban's* (Gen. XXX, 42). What is the meaning of "*atufim*"? R.

Isaac son of R. Hilkiyah answered: The late ones.) Another exposition of the text, '*When He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute one.*' It should have gone on to say, *And hath not despised his prayer* (Ps. CII, 18); or, if it must be, '*Not despised their prayer,*' it should have read, '*He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute ones*'? '*He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute ones,*' however, alludes to the prayer of Manasseh king of Judah, who was destitute of good deeds, and '*Hath not despised their prayer*' alludes to his own prayer and that of his forebears, as may be inferred from the fact that it is written, *And he prayed unto Him; and He was entreated* (wayye'ather) *of him* (II Chronicles XXXIII, 13). (What is the meaning of "*wayye'ather to him*"? R. Eliezer son of R. Simeon answered: In Arabia they call a breach (*hithirta*) '*athirta.*') *And brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom* (ib.). How did He bring him back? R. Samuel b. Jonah said: He brought him back (*heshibo*) in a wind; as you read, '*He causeth the wind to blow* (*mashib*).' At that instant *Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God* (ib.) and at that instant Manasseh admitted that

there was justice and that there was a Judge. R. Isaac interpreted the text as referring to the present generations who have no king and no prophet, no priest and no *Urim* and *Thummin*, indeed they have nought but prayer alone. David said to the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Sovereign of the Universe! Despise not their prayer; *Let this be written for the generation to come*' (*ib.* CII,19). From this it may be inferred that the Holy One, blessed be He, accepts the penitent. *And a people which shall be created shall praise the Lord* (*ib.*) implies that the Holy One, blessed be He, will create them as a new being. Another exposition is that '*Let this be written for the generation to come*' alludes to the generation of Hezekiah, which was on the verge of death; '*And a people which shall be created shall praise the Lord,*' for the Holy One, blessed be He, created them afresh.

c. Leviticus (BECHUKKOTHAI) 36:3

Consider the text, *Hand to hand, the evil man shall not be unpunished* (Prov.XI, 21). Bar Kappara said: Ahaz and all the wicked kings of Israel have no share in the next world; as it says, *All their kings are fallen, there is none among them that calleth unto Me* (Hosea VII, 7). Yet surely he is reckoned in the chronology of kings, as is proved by the text, *In the days of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah* (Isa. I, 1)? R. Aha in the name of R. Eleazar and R. Jose in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi said it was because he was not devoid of shame. How? When the prophet came to rebuke him, he went out to a place of uncleanness, thinking that the *Shechinah* would not dwell in a place of uncleanness. Hence it is written, *Then said the Lord unto Isaiah: Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the Upper pool, in the highway of the fullers' (kobes) field* (*ib.* VII, 3). Do not read '*kobes*' (fuller) but '*kobesh*' (pressing down). How is this to be understood? When the prophet came to rebuke him, he cast [lit. 'pressed'] down his face. Rabbi says it was because he had suffered chastisement through his eldest son; as it is written, *And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the ruler of the house, and Elkanah that was next to the king* (II Chron. XXVIII, 7). R. Hosha'ya the Great said it was because his father was a righteous man. It is this that Hezekiah is thinking of when he says, *Behold, for my peace there was bitterness to me, bitterness* (Isa. XXXVIII, 17), by which he meant, '*There was bitterness to me*' in regard to my predecessor, Ahaz, and '*There was bitterness to me*' as regards my successor, Manasseh. Manasseh's father, however, was a

righteous man and his son a wicked one, but the father of Ahaz was a righteous man and his son, too, was a righteous man. R. Simeon expounded: It is not written in our text, *The seed of the righteous one shall escape* (Prov. XI, 21), but, '*The seed of the righteous ones*,' signifying that he who slips through between two righteous men '*shall escape*'.

d. Numbers (NASO) 9:7

Thus you learn that in the case of the ten tribes their doom was sealed solely on account of the iniquity of adultery. When that the doom of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin was sealed on account of adultery alone? From the fact that Jeremiah protested before God: In the day of Manasseh Israel did more evil deeds than the preset generation, yet you destroyed them not except in my own time. Accordingly it is written, *My bowels, my bowels! I writhe in pain! The chambers of my heart! ...Destruction followeth upon destruction*, etc. (Jer. IV, 9f.). Said the Holy One, blessed b He, to him: 'In the days of Manasseh, even though they did provoke Me, the children were still the children of their fathers, but now they are children of lewdness.' Hence it is written, *For My people is foolish*, etc. (*ib.* 22)...Yet, although they transgressed all the commandments, and have denied the Holy One, blessed be He – as you read, *They have belied the Lord* (*ib.* 12) – He shows long-suffering.

e. Numbers (NASO) 12:4

All this serves to teach you that the Temple was not deficient even in small details...R. Hnina b. Isaac says: On the day when Manasseh introduced an image into the Temple all those fruits withered. This confirms the text, *The flower of Lebanon languisheth* (Nahum I, 4).

f. Numbers (NASO) 14:1

We have learned elsewhere: Three kings and four commoners have no share in the World to Come. The three kings are: Jereboam, Ahab, and Manasseh. R. Judah holds that Manasseh does possess a share in the World to Come, for it says, *And he prayed unto Him*;

and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem, into his kingdom (II Chron. XXXIII, 13). The Sages answered R. Judah: He restored him to his 'kingdom' but not to the like of the Hereafter... Those who expound the Scriptures metaphorically say that they all have a share in the World to Come, except Balaam. What is the reason? '*Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine... Moab is my washpot,*' etc. '*Gilead is mine*' alludes to Ahab king of Israel, who died in Ramoth Gilead. '*Manasseh is mine*' means literally, Manasseh the son of Hezekiah... Another explanation of the text, '*Gilead is mine,*' etc. Sama son of Rakta expounded in the name of R. Simeon b. Lakish... If a man should come and say that God does not receive the penitent, there is Manasseh the son of Hezekiah; let him come and give evidence. For no creature in the world acted so wickedly before Me as he did, yet in the hour of repentance I accepted him; as is borne out by the text, *And he prayed unto Him; and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom* (II Chron. XXXIII, 13).

g. Deuteronomy (VAETHCHANAN) 2:20

Another explanation: WHEN THOU SHALT BEGET CHILDREN. This bears out what Scripture says, *The wages of the righteous is life; the increase of the wicked is sin* (Prov. X, 16). '*The wages of the righteous is life.*' R. Tanhum says: This refers to Eliphaz, who grew up in the lap of Isaac. '*The increase of the wicked is sin.*' This refers to Amalek, who grew up in the lap of Esau.

Another explanation: '*The wages of the righteous is life*': Whatever David and Solomon his son did was to give life to Israel. What is the meaning of, '*The increase of the wicked is sin*'? The one entry (*biah*) that Manasseh made into the Temple was the cause of sin unto Israel, for he made a four-faced idol and brought it into the Holy of Holies. Whence this? For it is said, *And behold northward of the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry* – be-biah (Ezek. VIII, 5). R. Aha said: Oh, this great wrong (*bia*) in the world, that the stranger dislodges the owner! And why did he make a four-faced idol? To correspond to the four *hayyoth* that bear God's throne.

Another explanation: Why a four-faced idol? To correspond to the four cardinal points. He [Manasseh] said: Let every one who comes from the four cardinal points bow down to this idol. And what did God do unto him? He delivered him into the hand of his enemies. Whence do we know this? For it said, *Wherefore the*

Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, and bound him with fetters (II Chron. XXXIII, 11). They made a copper mule and they put him into it and kindled a fire under it so that he was burnt within. Whereupon Manasseh called upon every idol to which he had [formerly] offered sacrifices and not one of them answered him, as it is said, *Yea, though one cry unto him, he cannot answer, nor save him out of his trouble* (Isa. XLVI, 7). When Manasseh saw that he was in a sore plight, and that not one of these idols answered him, he began to call upon God. He said: ‘Master of the Universe, behold, I have called upon all the idols of the world and I have learnt that there is no reality in them; Thou Master of the Universe art a God above all gods, and it Thou wilt not answer me I will declare, heaven forrend, that all Beings are alike.’ Thereupon God answered him: ‘Ah, wicked man, by right, I should not answer you, because you have provoked Me to anger; but in order not to close the door before the penitent, that they should not say, “Lo, Manasseh sought to repent but he was not received,” I will answer you.’ Whence do we know this? For it is said, *And he prayed unto Him; and He was entreated (wayye’ather) of him* (II Chron. XXXIII, 13); read, *wayyehather*. This teaches that the ministering angels had closed up the windows of the firmament to prevent his prayer reaching heaven, but what did God do? He broke through the firmament beneath His Throne of Glory and received his prayer, and He restored him to his kingdom in Jerusalem. R. Samuel b. Unya said in the name of R. Aha: He brought him back on the wind, as one says, ‘Thou causest the wind to blow.’ At that moment Manasseh knew the *the Lord, He is God*.

h. Esther 9:2

Not one of them could give counsel like his wife Zeresh, though he had three hundred and sixty-five counselors, corresponding to the number of days in the year. He wife said to him: ‘This man about whom you are inquiring – if he is of the seed of the Jews, you will not prevail against him unless you contrive something against him which no one of his nation has ever experienced. If you throw him into a fiery furnace, Hananiah and his companions have already been delivered from this; if into a lion’s den, Daniel has already escaped from one. If you imprison him in a dungeon, Joseph has already escaped from one. If you make him sit on hot irons, Manasseh has already prayed and been answered by the Holy One, blessed be He, and escaped from it

i. The Song of Songs 2:5 § 3

R. Meir then came forward and tood as his text: *Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel* (I Kings XIII, 11). 'Who as he? He was Amaziah the priest of Bethel.' Said R. Jose to him: 'Meir, there is some confusion here. Who was he? He was *Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh* (Judg. XVIII, 30). The *nun* of Manasseh is suspended, as though to indicate that if he was virtuous he would be accounted the son of Moses, and if not, the son of Manasseh.[cf. ftnt 4] "The infamous king of Judah who spread idolatry; v. II Kings XXI." (The colleagues expressed their surprise to R. Samuel b. Nahman, saying 'After becoming a priest to idolatrous worship, could he have lived so long!'" He replied to them: 'Yes; because he tried to discourage idolatry...

j. The Song of Songs 3:10 § 3

For when Solomon built the Temple, he fashioned out of this gold all manner of trees, and when the trees in the field produced their fruit, these in the Temple also produced fruit, and the fruit used to drop off and it was gathered and put aside for the repair of the Temple. When Manasseh set up an image in the Temple, all those trees withered, and so it says, *And the flower of Lebanon languisheth* (Nah. I, 4). But in the time to come, the Holy One, blessed be He, will restore them, as it says, *It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing* (Isa. XXXV, 2).

k. The Song of Songs 4:4 § 9

Although it [Jerusalem] is a desert, there is the same liability in infringing it boundary now that it is desolate as there was when it was standing. R. Levi said: The Holy One, blessed be He, said: 'In its ruin it has produced righteous men for Me, while in its flourishing period it produced sinners against Me. In its ruin it produced righteous men for Me, such as Daniel and his associated, Mordecai and his associated, Ezra and his associated. In its flourishing period it produced sinners against Me, such as Ahaz and his associates, Manasseh and his associated, Amon and his associates.' R. Abba quoting R. Johanan applied to this dictum of R. Levi the verse, *For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife* (Isa. LIV, 1). This means: She

produced more righteous men for Me in her ruin than she produced for Me as an inhabited city.

I. Ecclesiastes 3:3

Know that it is so, because it is written, *Behold, a son shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name* (I Kings XIII, 2), and Manasseh had not yet entered the world! He said to them: Is it then written, '*A son shall be born to the house of David*' from Hezekiah? It is not stated thus, but simple '*To the house of David*', i.e. from the rest of the royal house of David.

D (The Early Patristic Texts)

1. Theophilus to Autolycus vol 2 ANF book 3 chapt 24 (“From Saul to the Captivity”)

“... and after him Hezekiah, 29 years; and after him Manasseh, 55 years; and after him Amon, 2 years...

2. Constitutions of the Holy Apostles vol 7 ANF book 2 chapt. 22 (“That David, the Ninivites, Hezekiah, and his son Manasseh, are eminent examples of repentance. The Prayer of Manasseh, King of Judah”)

It is also thy duty, O bishop, to have before thy eyes the examples of those that have gone before, and to apply them skillfully to the cases of those who want words of severity or of consolation. Besides, it is reasonable that in thy administration of justice thou shouldst follow the will of God; and as God deals with sinners, and with those who return, that thou shouldst act accordingly in thy judging. Now, did not God by Nathan reproach David for his offence? And yet as soon as he said he repented, He delivered him from death saying “Be of good cheer; thou shalt not die.’... and Manasseh returned and built the high places...and set up altars...(recounting of 2 Ki 21:2-7; 2 Ch 33:3-7) and Manasseh shed innocent blood very much until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another...And the Lord brought upon him the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, and they caught Manasseh in bonds, and they bound him in fetters of brass, and brought him to Babylon; and he was bound and shackled with iron all over in the house of the prison. And bread made of bran was given unto him scantily, and by weight, and water mixed with vinegar but a little and by measure, so much as would keep him alive; and he was in straits and sore affliction. And when he was violently afflicted, he besought the face of the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the face of the Lord God of his fathers. And he prayed unto the Lord...(follows a prayer of contrition). And the Lord heard his voice, and had compassion upon him. And there appeared a flame of fire about him, and all the iron shackles and chains which were about him fell off; and the Lord healed Manasseh from his affliction...(recounting of 2 Ch 33:13-20). Ye have heard, our beloved children, how the Lord God for a while punished him that was addicted to idols, and had slain many innocent person; and yet that He received him when he repented, and forgave him his offences, and restored him to his kingdom. For

He not only forgives the penitent, but reinstates them in the former dignity.

3. Constitutions of the Holy Apostles vol 7 ANF book 2 chapt. 23 (“Amon may be an example to such as sin with an high hand.”)

There is no sin more grievous than idolatry, for it is an impiety against God: and yet even this sin has been forgiven, upon sincere repentance. But if any one sin in direct opposition, and on purpose to try whether God will punish the wicked or not, such a one shall have no remission, although he say with himself, “All is well, and I will walk according to the conversation of my evil heart.” Such a one was Amon the son of Manasseh. For the Scripture says: “And Amon reasoned an evil reasoning of transgression, and said, My father from his childhood was a great transgressor, and repented in his old age; and now I will walk as my soul lusteth, and afterwards I will return unto the Lord. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And the Lord God soon destroyed him utterly from His good land. And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house, and he reigned two years only.

4. Constitutions of the Holy Apostles vol 7 ANF book 7 chapt. 39 (“A Prayer Containing the Memorial of His Providence, and an Enumeration of the Various Benefits Afforded the Saints by the Providence of God Through Christ.”)

Thou who hast fulfilled Thy promises made by the prophets, and hast had mercy on Zion, and compassion on Jerusalem, by exalting the throne of David, Thy servant, in the midst of her, by the birth of Christ, who was born of his seed according to the flesh, of a virgin alone; do Thou now, O Lord God, accept the prayers which proceed from the lips of Thy people which are of the Gentiles, which call upon Thee in truth, as Thou didst accept of the gifts of the righteous in their generations. In the first place Thou did respect the sacrifice of Abel, and accept it as Thou didst accept of the sacrifice of Noah when he went out of the ark; of Abraham, (a listing of many others)...of Manasseh in the land of the Chaldeans, after his transgression.

5. (“From Saul to the Captivity”) Revelation of Paul vol 8 ANF (“Revelation of Paul”)

While he was yet speaking, there came other three, and saluted me, saying: Welcome, Paul, beloved of God, the boast of the churches, and model of angels. And I asked: Who are you? And the first said: I am Isaiah, whom Manasseh sawed with a wood saw. And the second said: I am Jeremiah...

6. Augustine vol 2 NAPNF (first series) (“City of God”) book 18 chapt 25

“...when Manasseh began to reign over the Hebrews, – an impious king, by whom the prophet Isaiah is said to have been slain.”

7. Chrysostom vol 10 NAPNF (first series) (“The Gospel of Matthew”) homily 67 (“Matt. 21: 12-13”)

Let no man then of them that live in vice despair; let no man who lives in virtue slumber. Let neither this last be confident, for often the harlot will pass him by; nor let the other despair, for it is possible for him to pass by even the first. Hear what God saith unto Jerusalem, “I said, after she had committed all these whoredoms, Turn thou unto me, and she returned not.” When we have come back unto the earnest love of God, He remembers not the former things. God is not as man, for He reproaches us not with the past, neither doth He say, Why wast thou absent so long a time? when we repent; only let us approach Him as we ought. Let us cleave to Him earnestly, and rivet our hearts to His fear.

Such things have been done not under the new covenant only, but even under the old. For what was worse than Manasseh? but he was able to appease God. What more blessed than Solomon? but when he slumbered, he fell. Or rather I can show even both things to have taken place in one, in the father of this man, for he the same person became at different times both good and bad.

8. Jerome vol 6 NAPNF (second series) (“Letters”) Letter 77

He who by his virtues teaches me how to stand and not to fall, by his penitence teaches me how, if I fall, I may rise again. Among the kings do we read of any so wicked as Ahab, of whom the scripture says: “there was none like unto Ahab which did sell

himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord”? For shedding Naboth’s blood Elijah rebuked him, and the prophet denounced God’s wrath against him: “Hast thou killed and also taken possession? ...behold I will bring evil upon thee and will take away thy posterity” and so on. Yet when Ahab heard these words “he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted ...in sackcloth, and went softly.” Then came the word of God to Elijah the Tishbite saying: “Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days.” O happy penitence which has drawn down upon itself the eyes of God, and which has by confessing its error changed the sentence of God’s anger! The same conduct is in the Chronicles attributed to Manasseh...

9. Gregory of Nazianzen vol 7 NAPNF (second series) Oration 39 (“Oration on the Holy Lights”) chapt 17

Yes, and I know of a Fifth [baptism] also, which is that of tears, and is much more laborious, received by him who washes his bed every night and his couch with tears; whose bruises stink through his wickedness; and who goeth mourning and of a sad countenance; who imitates the repentance of Manasseh and the humiliation of the Ninerites upon which God had mercy; who utters the words of the Publican in the Temple, and is justified...

10. Basil vol 8 NAPNF (second series) (“Letters”) Letter 217 paragraph 79

“Men who rage after their stepmothers are subject to the same canon as those who rage after their sisters.”⁴

⁴ “e.g. according to the Ben. note, Manasseh and Hezekiah” Basil, “Letters,” in *NAPNF*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, vol. 8, *Second Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989, 258.

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