

Handout: 2 Kings Lesson 8

Manasseh's sins in 2 Kings 21:1-16:

1. He rebuilt the altars to Yahweh in high places, thus encouraging illicit worship outside the Temple.
2. He reinstated pagan worship including the worship of Baal.
3. He built pagan altars within the inner and outer courts of Yahweh's Temple and put a statue of Asherah inside the Temple, perhaps in the Sanctuary.
4. He sacrificed his own son to a pagan god.
5. He practiced soothsaying and divination and approved consulting mediums and spirit guides.
6. He shed the blood of the innocent.

The two prophetic images in 2 Kings 21:13:

1. The plumb-line is a metaphor for divine judgment. In the construction of buildings or walls, the end of a line was attached to a weight and was suspended to see if a wall was vertical. In this case, the line and the weight are used for the rigorous measurement of the integrity and faithfulness of Jerusalem which is found to be defective.

2. The wiped clean and turned over dish is a metaphor for total destruction. When the last remnant of food is wiped from a dish, the dish can be wiped clean and turned upside down. Turning a dish upside down is a sign that the person who was eating is now fully satiated.

There are two statements conveyed by the dish that is an image of total destruction:

- Not only are the city and its people wiped out, but Yahweh has had His fill of Judah's sinning and can take no more.
- Yahweh will judge Judah and when He has finished He will turn Judah upside down, divesting the country of all it once contained.

Prophets prior to the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem and also afterwards had visions and made prophecies concerning Samaria and Jerusalem being measured by a divine plumb-line:

- The prophet Amos, during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel, had a vision of the Lord standing by a wall with a plumb-line in his hand ready to judge the Northern Kingdom (Amos 7:7-9).
- The prophet Isaiah gave a prophecy concerning a measuring line of chaos being stretched across Jerusalem (Is 34:11).
- The inspired writer of the Book of Lamentations (credited to Jeremiah in 2 Chr 35:25) writes of Yahweh's resolve to destroy the walls of Jerusalem and "stretching out the line, not staying his hand until he has engulfed everything ..." (Lam 2:8).
- Zechariah will have a vision of a mysterious figure with a measuring line who will measure the restored Jerusalem (Zec 2:5-9/2:1-5).

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The good works accomplished by Manasseh to atone for his past evil deeds in 2 Chr 33:11-17:

1. He expanded the walls of the city of Jerusalem.
2. He established governors in all the major cities.
3. He removed all the foreign gods, the idol of Asherah, and the other altars from the Temple.
4. He repaired the altar of Yahweh in the Temple.
5. He reestablished right liturgical worship.

He did not, however, end the practice of illicit worship of Yahweh in sites outside the Jerusalem Temple.

All Josiah's religious reforms were according to the Law of the Covenant and fulfilled prophecy:

1. All the altars and cult objects relating to pagan gods that could be found were smashed and burned to ashes (Ex 20:3-5; 34:13; Lev 19:4; 26:1; Dt 7:5; 12:3).
2. In obedience to the law, he executed any Judeans/Israelites who had become pagan priests (Dt 5:7-8; 13:2, 6-12; 16:21-22; 17:2-5).
3. He destroyed the place of male cult prostitution within the Temple precincts (Lev 18:22; Dt 23:18-19).
4. He destroyed the ritual cemetery of children sacrificed in the Valley of Hinnom (Lev 18:21; 20:2-5).
5. He destroyed the "high places" where illicit worship of Yahweh and pagan worship had taken place (Lev 26:30; Num 33:53; Dt 12:4-9, 11-12).
6. He went to Samaria and destroyed the cult center at Bethel (2 Kng 23:15-20).
7. He fulfilled the prophecy of God's prophet in 1 Kings 13:1-2.