

Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990, USA

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Webpage on the Internet: <http://www.askelm.com> • E-Mail address: askoffice@askelm.com

Dear Associates and Friends,

November 2020

“[Israel and Judah: 39. Kings Manasseh and Amon](#)” tells the story of Manasseh, the most evil king to rule over God’s people of either the southern Kingdom of Judah or the northern Kingdom of Israel (Samaria). He sinned grievously against YHWH and did great evil for most of his long reign — 55 years!

King Manasseh repented toward the end of his reign and tried to stop the wide-spread idolatry he once encouraged. Due to his prior example the people were polluted by sin and evil worse than ever. The downward trend toward God’s ultimate punishments of destruction and exile (already suffered by Samaria) was getting closer. The time of doom was approaching.

When Manasseh died, his son Amon reigned two years, continued to sin, and did evil. His was a short but sad story. The people of Judah increasingly followed the evil example of both kings.

Cast of Characters:

The cast is reduced considerably in this installment:

YHWH. Creator and controller of all in heaven and earth. YHWH influences individuals, kingdoms, countries, and peoples to work “**all things after the counsel of his own will**” (Ephesians 1:11). Despite the idolatry of the people of Judah, God again intervenes to rescue His chosen people. Will they change their ways? Do not disparage God. If you do so, things will not end well. In this episode of “Israel and Judah” the King of Judah receives close attention from his God who puts him on the throne, sees to it he is punished, and restores him to the throne again.

Manasseh. He ascended the throne of Judah after the death of his father Hezekiah. Manasseh was the greatest perpetrator of evil of any king of Judah and Israel. In God’s timing, Manasseh was punished and suffered for his sins and evils. He was turned to repentance.

Amon. This son of Manasseh reigned two years. He continued the sin, corruption, idolatry, and evil of his father. Other evil men dealt with Amon.

People of Judah. The corruption of the people of Israel continued and degenerated even more during the reigns of both good and evil kings. The people deal with those who dethrone Amon. Then they go on their merry way, worshipping other gods, while covering themselves by also including YHWH in their worship.

Things Unspoken in Scripture

Author James Davies in his book, *Notes on 2 Kings* (London: George Philip & Son, 1873), makes an interesting observation about one of King Manasseh’s sinful acts not otherwise mentioned in the text of Scripture until we learn about corrective action by Manasseh’s grandson, King Josiah:

“He [Manasseh] seems to have **displaced the Ark, whereupon the priests removed it from the Temple in order to preserve it, (as we infer from Josiah’s commanding the priests to restore it to the Temple).**”

• *James Davies, Notes on 2 Kings, 116–117*

Manasseh was so evil that the Ark of the Covenant was threatened, and the Levites and priests removed

the Ark from the Temple. Whether they did so with permission or not, Scripture does not say. We do know that Manasseh himself was a violent killer:

“Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, until he had filled Jerusalem from end to end, besides his sin with which he caused Judah to sin by doing what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh.”

• **2 Kings 21:16**

I cannot help speculating that perhaps one cause of violence and the shedding of innocent blood was because the priests and Levites remained faithful to YHWH and removed the Ark to hide it. As you will read in this month’s article, one of Manasseh’s sins was that he desecrated and ritually polluted the Temple itself.

Davies notes that after Manasseh and Amon were both dead, King Josiah, at some point in his reign, gave an intriguing command to the Levites:

“He said to the Levites who taught all Israel understanding and were holy to Yahweh:

‘Put the holy coffer [the Ark] in the house that Solomon son of David, king of Israel, built; it is no longer carried on your shoulders. Now serve Yahweh your Elohim and His people Israel.’”

• **2 Chronicles 35:3**

The phrasing of this verse seems to indicate the Ark was traveling around, carried by Levites, until Josiah told them to put it back into the Holy of Holies in the Temple. This meant that the Ark was not in the Temple for a period of time from the reign of Manasseh or perhaps in the reign of Amon, some time before Josiah began his reforms (2 Kings 23:1–20 and 2 Chronicles 34:1–7). The Ark needed to be returned to the Temple.

Who removed it from the Temple? We cannot know, it was either Manasseh or Amon. Davies thought Manasseh did it. But he repented of his sins and evils, and he tried to renew the worship of YHWH. Who knows, perhaps the Levites did not trust Manasseh even after his repentance. Amon was evil for the two years of his reign. My guess is that the removal happened during Amon’s reign.

There is a third possibility. The Levites removed the Ark, **“carried on [their] shoulders”** because of the evil kings to a series of hiding places, perhaps “on the move” often. This would be why Josiah told the Levites (those who carried it away?) to put it [back] **“in the house,”** specifically to put it back into the Holy of Holies.

Thank You

“But observe meticulously to keep the instruction and the law that Moses the servant of Yahweh enjoined on you: to love Yahweh your Elohim and to walk in all His ways, to observe His instructions, to cling to Him and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

• **Joshua 22:5**

We do not have to deal with or worry about rituals or an Ark that contained the Commandments. We are not bound by the Law of Moses, but we are held to the Law of love which is **“the Law of Christ”** (Galatians 6:2) which serves toward **“the fulfilling of the law”** (Romans 13:10). Christ has already done that work for us. His love should flow through us to others. We should want to do so simply because there is a need that we want to fulfill.

None of us live up to God’s standard. Few of us live up to our own standards. But we all measure up to Christ’s standard because we are **“in Christ”** and thereby are sinless before our Father, though our sins be as horrible as King Manasseh’s (and that includes the worst sins imaginable in this physical realm).

Thank you for allowing us to present information that goes into your hearts and minds. We are sustained by your contributions as God leads you to do so. Thank you and may God bless you.

David W. Sielaff
david@askelm.com