OET Open English Translation

Open English Translation of the Bible

The Prayer of Menasheh

King of Yehudah,
When He Was Held Captive in Bavel

Introduction

This short *Prayer of Menasheh* (Manasseh) is presented as the prayer of Yehudah's (Judah's) king while he was held captive in Bavel (Babylon). The account in 2 Chronicles 33:10-20 tells how Menasheh humbled himself, prayed, and was restored to his kingdom, but doesn't give the words of his prayer. This document gives a prayer in his voice.
The prayer moves from acknowledging God's power and mercy to a direct confession of wrongdoing. Menasheh admits that he doesn't deserve rescue, asks for forgiveness, and promises to praise God. Its central hope is that God's compassion can reach even someone who has sinned greatly.
The Prayer of Menasheh is recognised as Deuterocanonical Scripture by the Greek Orthodox and Russian Orthodox Churches. It is included in an appendix to the Latin Vulgate Bible.

Main components of this prayer

God's power, patience, and mercy *1:1-8*
Confession and a plea for forgiveness *1:9-13*
Confidence in God's mercy and a promise of praise *1:14-15*

Lighter type marks additions. Underscores join parts of a single source word.
Struck words are untranslated. The ◘ sign marks a verse with no text.
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Readers' Version

Menasheh asks God for forgiveness

1:1 Oh LORD Almighty in heaven, God of our fathers Avraham, Yitshak (Isaac), and Ya'akov (Jacob), and of their righteous descendants, 2 you who've made heaven and earth, with all their order, 3 who've bound the sea by the word of your commandment, who've shut up the deep, and sealed it by your terrible and glorious name, 4 whom all things fear, yes, tremble before your power, 5 for the majesty of your glory can't be borne, and the anger of your threatening towards sinners is unbearable. 6 Your merciful promise is immeasurable and unsearchable, 7 for you're the master Most High, of great compassion, patient and abundant in mercy, and relent at human suffering. 8 You,[1] Oh master, according to your great goodness have promised repentance and forgiveness to those who've sinned against you. Of your infinite mercies, you've appointed repentance to sinners, that they may be saved. You therefore, Oh master, who are the god of the just, haven't appointed repentance to the just, to Avraham, Yitshak, and Ya'akov, which haven't sinned against you, but you've appointed repentance to me, a sinner. 9 Because I've sinned more times than there are grains of sand in the sea. My transgressions are multiplied,[2] Oh master, my transgressions are multiplied, and I'm not worthy to look up and see the height of heaven for the multitude of my iniquities. 10 I'm bowed down with many iron bands, so that I can't lift up my head because of my sins,[3] and I have no relief; for I've provoked your anger, and done that which is evil before you:[4] I didn't do your will, and I didn't keep your commandments. I've set up abominations, and have multiplied detestable things. 11 Now therefore I bow the knee of my heart, asking you for grace. 12 I've sinned, Oh master, I've sinned, and I acknowledge my iniquities; 13 but, I humbly ask you, forgive me, Oh master, forgive me, and please don't destroy me with my iniquities. Don't be angry with me forever, by reserving evil for me. Don't condemn me into the lower parts of the earth. Because you, Oh master, are the god of those who repent. 14 In me you'll show all your goodness, for you'll save me, even though I'm unworthy, according to your great mercy. 15 Then I'll praise you forever all the days of my life; for all the army of heaven sings your praise, and yours is the glory forever and ever. Amen.

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1 **RV 1:8 · Note** The Alex. MS. omits You... saved.

2 **RV 1:9 · Note** The Alex. MS. omits Oh master... multiplied.

3 **RV 1:10 · Note** Some authorities omit by reason of my sins.

4 **RV 1:10 · Note** The Alex. MS. omits I did... commandments.