

**The Reunited Kingdom, part 11:
The Reign of Amon
(2 Chronicles 33:21-25)**

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The Reign of Amon (33:21-25)

Amon reigned in Jerusalem for only a short while (643/42-641/40). Little is known about his brief time on the throne except that he was relentless in his wickedness. Amon's reign comes on the heels of Manasseh's experience of restoration and blessing (see 33:14-17). As such, it posed a dreadful possibility to the post-exilic readers. Even after a gracious restoration after exile, infidelity will lead to further judgment.

Comparison of 33:21-25 with 2 Kgs 21:19-24

The Chronicler depended heavily on Kings for his information about Amon. Nevertheless, several variations from Kings occur in his account.

First, the Chronicler omitted the reference to Amon's royal mother (33:21 // 2 Kgs 21:19). This was his practice from Manasseh to the end of his history (see comments on 33:1).

Second, while 2 Kgs 21:21 says that Amon "walked in all the ways of his father," the Chronicler omitted this description and only specified that Amon **worshipped and offered sacrifices to all the idols Manasseh had made** (33:22). As noted in 33:2,9, the Chronicler considered Manasseh's idolatry his worst sin. Amon followed his father's example in the worst way possible.

Third, the most important difference between Kings and Chronicles is the addition of 33:23. There the Chronicler reported that there was one way in which Amon was not like his father. Instead of humbling himself, Amon simply **increased his guilt** (33:23).

Fourth, Chronicles does not mention other sources, the king's burial, or the formal succession of Josiah as found in 2 Kgs 21:25-26. This variation is difficult to understand. The absence of the material may have resulted from the Chronicler's intention to dishonor Amon (compare Ahaliah's death 23:15). Yet, these verses may also have been lost through textual transmission (see

Introduction: Translation and Transmission). The Hebrew translated "... Josiah his son in his place" (2 Kgs 21:24 // 2 Chr 33:25) and "Josiah his son succeeded him ..." (2 Kgs 21:26) is precisely the same in both verses. It is possible that a copyist skipped the content of 2 Kgs 21:25-26 accidentally.

Structure of 33:21-25

The short account of Amon's reign divides into three parts (see figure 59). As the record now stands in Chronicles (without the formal ending of 2 Kgs 21:25-26), Amon's story begins with his rise (33:21) which balances with his dishonorable death (33:24-25). The middle portion of the account (33:22-23) explains why Amon's kingdom ended so abruptly.

Opening of Amon's Reign (33:21)
Amon's Relentless Sins (33:22-23)
Closure of Amon's Reign (33:24-25)
<i>Outline of 2 Chr 33:21-25 (figure 59)</i>

Opening of Amon's Reign (33:21)

The Chronicler repeated the opening verse of 2 Kgs 21:19 which indicates that Amon reigned only two years (33:21). The brevity of Amon's time on the throne fit well with the Chronicler's outlook on divine blessing and judgment (see *Introduction: 28) Healing and Long Life/Sickness and Death*). The obvious contrast with Manasseh's lengthy reign of fifty-five years suited the Chronicler's purpose in portraying Amon as a king whose unceasing rebellion against God brought his kingdom to a swift end.

Amon's Relentless Sins (33:22-23)

The middle portion of Amon's reign focuses exclusively on his sins. The Chronicler began with the language of 2 Kgs 21:20, indicating that he **did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Manasseh** (33:22a; for the Chronicler's use of this evaluative terminology see comments on 24:2). The name Manasseh is repeated three times in these verses because Manasseh's reign served as the interpretative framework for the reign of Amon. This correlation is easily understood in the record of Kings; both Manasseh and Amon are presented in an entirely negative light. As we have seen, however, the Chronicler offered a more balanced assessment of Manasseh. For this reason, the comparison between Manasseh and Amon involved both similarity and dissimilarity.

The first comparison summarizes the content of 2 Kgs 21:21 which reported that Amon **worshipped ... all the idols Manasseh had made** (33:22b). The Chronicler's keen interest in the worship of Israel makes it only fitting that this sin was the Chronicler's central concern (see *Introduction: 4-9) King and Temple*).

The second comparison is one of dissimilarity (33:23). The Chronicler added this element to the account of Kings (compare 2 Kgs 21:21). From the Chronicler's perspective, the key difference between the kings is that **unlike his father Manasseh**, Amon **did not humble himself before the Lord** (33:23; see *Introduction: 18) Humility*). Chronicles emphasizes how Manasseh humbled himself and prayed while in exile (see 33:12). The king's humility led to significant reforms in the later years of his reign (see 33:15-16) and explained how he could have enjoyed such a long reign. Amon, however, never repented of his sins. As a result, he **increased his guilt** and his reign endured only **two years** (33:21).

Closure of Amon's Reign (33:24-25)

The Chronicler derived the last portion of his account from 2 Kgs 21:24. It tells a two step story of conspiracy and counter-conspiracy.

In the first step, Amon's **servants ... killed him in his house** (33:24). This description of Amon's death alludes to the similar circumstances surrounding the demise of Joash (see 24:25). Amon's death in his own home reflected his political impotence and thereby dishonored him.

In the second step, Amon's death left the nation of Judah in political disarray. Those who assassinated Amon became the objects of a counter conspiracy. The Chronicler mentioned **the people of the land** elsewhere (32:25; for the Chronicler's use of this terminology see 1 Chr 5:25; 2 Chr 23:13,20-21; 26:21; 36:1). It would appear, however, that the Chronicler had in mind common people. Whatever the case, the divine judgment against Amon left Judah without an orderly transfer of power (see 21:1; 23:20-21; 26:1; 36:1). Josiah came to power by means of this counter-conspiracy.

As noted above, it is possible that the Chronicler's original text included at least portions of 2 Kgs 24:25-26. Whatever the case, the negative ending of Amon's life left no room for mistaking the Chronicler's perspective. He impressed upon his readers the dire consequences of remaining in rebellion against the Law of God, especially as it pertains to worship. Infidelity itself was not the serious problem facing the post-exilic community. Repentance and humility could remedy that. Continued infidelity, however, was sure to bring swift