

2 Chronicles 33 — “Manasseh: The Worst of the Worst Saved & Forgiven -- All Of Grace!”**Introduction:**

“Grace can pardon our ungodliness and justify us with Christ's righteousness; it can put the Spirit of Jesus Christ within us; it can help us when we are down; it can heal us when we are wounded; it can multiply pardons, as we through frailty multiply transgressions.”
—John Bunyan (1628-1688)

This chapter is on the ‘WONDER OF GOD’S MERCY’!

THESIS — See what happens to the “worst of the worst” [*what happens when a terrorist enters the Temple?*]

I. GOD-DEFAMING WICKEDNESS (1-9)

A.V.2-6 - the active rebellion & wickedness

B.V.7-8 - the climactic blasphemy (carved image in Temple)

C.V.9 - summary

Structure of the Chapter: note the middle element!

A. Opening of Manasseh’s reign (1)

B. Manasseh’s Heinous Sins (2-9)

C. Manasseh’s Exile and Restoration (10-13)

1. Manasseh Ignores God (10b)

2. Manasseh taken captive from Jerusalem (11)

Manasseh prays for deliverance (v.12)

2. Manasseh brought back to Jerusalem (13a)

1. Manasseh Acknowledges God (13b)

B. Manasseh’s Extensive Restorations (14-17)

A. Closure of Manasseh’s reign (18-20)

II. GOD-IGNORING STUBBORNNESS (10)

1. He had such light from his Father [Hezekiah]

2. He had such light from the prophets [repent!]

What happened to the prophet Isaiah?

According to the Jewish Talmud Isaiah’s last words: I dwell among a people of unclean lips.” Then Manasseh sawed Isaiah in half.

III. GOD-INFLICTED SHAMEFULNESS (11)

Bound with a “hook” — shameful and humiliating and ‘*animal-like*’.

IV. GOD-GIVEN HUMBLENESS (12-13)

God’s **grace** is great!

V.13 - God heard!

His grace is:

- Available
- rich/plenteous
- Immediate
- Sweet
- Satisfying
- Powerful
- Psalm 51.1; Joel 2.13! & Eph 2:3-5

Verse 13: “The God who never changes is moved by the entreaty of men!”

V. GOD-HONORING REPENTANCE/HOLINESS (14-20)

A. Manasseh’s conversion & change **enfleshes what real repentance & true change & real regeneration is like:**

1. Rebuilding — the walls (14)
2. Removing (foreign gods) (15)
3. Reestablishing (the altar of God in the Temple) (16)

4. Reordering (the people to worship Yhwh (16b-17)

The story of Manasseh is the story of every saint!

1. UNSPEAKABLE **SINFULNESS** [we've sinned greatly!]
2. UNDESERVED **GRACE & MERCY** [God lavishes undeserved pity]
3. UNDETERRED **HUMILITY & REPENTANCE** [respond in humility, repentance]
4. UNDISTRACTED **HOLINESS & PIETY** [seek to live for God, obey Him!]

Manasseh's Son: AMON [the stubborn son] — **vv.21-24**

- Thankfully: this is a mercifully short account of this *corrupt king*.

All of this shows us:

TWO MEN. TWO RESPONSES. TWO DESTINIES

Conclusion:

The Gravestone of John Newton:

JOHN NEWTON, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy.

A hymn that John Newton wrote [to the tune of: When I survey the wondrous cross]:

Poor, weak and worthless though I am
I have a rich, Almighty Friend
Jesus, the Savior, is His Name
He freely loves, and without end.

He ransomed me from hell with blood
and by his power my foes controlled
he found me wandering far from God
and brought me to his chosen fold.

He cheers my heart, my needs supplies,
and says that I shall shortly be
enthroned with him above the skies
O what a friend is Christ to me!

"This is faith: a renouncing of everything we are apt
to call our own and relying wholly upon the blood,
righteousness and intercession of Jesus."

— John Newton

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Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
 grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,
 yonder on Calvary's mount out-poured,
 there where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

***Grace, grace, God's grace,
 grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
 grace, grace, God's grace,
 grace that is greater than all our sin.***

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide,
 what can avail to wash it away!
 Look! there is flowing a crimson tide;
 whiter than snow you may be today.

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,
 freely bestowed on all who believe;
 you that are longing to see his face,
 will you this moment his grace receive?

Now Why This Fear?

Now why this fear and unbelief?
 Has not the Father put to grief
 His spotless Son for us?
 And will the righteous Judge of men
 Condemn me for that debt of sin
 Now canceled at the cross?

***Jesus, all my trust is in Your blood
 Jesus, You've rescued us
 Through Your great love***

Complete atonement You have made
 And by Your death have fully paid
 The debt Your people owed

No wrath remains for us to face
 We're sheltered by Your saving grace
 And sprinkled with Your blood

How sweet the sound of saving grace
 How sweet the sound of saving grace
 Christ died for me

Be still my soul and know this peace
 The merits of your great high priest
 Have bought your liberty
 Rely then on His precious blood
 Don't fear your banishment from God
 Since Jesus sets you free.

Jesus Lover of My Soul

Jesus, lover of my soul,
 Let me to Thy bosom fly,
 While the nearer waters roll,
 While the tempest still is high.
 Hide me, O my Savior, hide,
 Til lifes storm is past;
 Safe into the haven guide;
 Receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none,
 I helpless, hang on Thee;
 Leave, oh leave me not alone,

Support and comfort me.
 All my trust on Thee is stayed,
 All help from Thee I bring;
 Cover my defenseless head
 In the shadow of Thy wing.

Thou, O Christ, are all I want,
 Here more than all I find;
 Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
 Heal the sick, and lead the blind.
 Just and holy is Thy Name,
 I am all unrighteousness;

False and full of sin I am;
 Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
 Grace to cover all my sin;
 Let the healing streams abound;
 Make and keep me pure within.
 Thou of life the fountain art,
 Let me take of Thee;
 Spring Thou up within my heart;
 For all eternity.

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Baal, god worshipped in many ancient Middle Eastern communities, especially among the Canaanites, who apparently considered him a fertility deity and one of the most important gods in the pantheon. As a Semitic common noun baal (Hebrew ba'al) meant “owner” or “lord,” although it could be used more generally; for example, a baal of wings was a winged creature, and, in the plural, baalim of arrows indicated archers. Yet such fluidity in the use of the term baal did not prevent it from being attached to a god of distinct character. As such, Baal designated the universal god of fertility, and in that capacity his title was Prince, Lord of the Earth. He was also called the Lord of Rain and Dew, the two forms of moisture that were indispensable for fertile soil in Canaan. In Ugaritic and Hebrew, Baal’s epithet as the storm god was He Who Rides on the Clouds.

Asherah —

Asherah, along with Astarte and Anath, was one of the three great goddesses of the Canaanite pantheon. In Canaanite religion her primary role was that of mother goddess. In mythological texts from the Late Bronze Age (c. 1550–1200 b.c.e.) city-state of Ugarit, she is called “the creatress of the gods”;

In recent decades, Archaeology in the land has shown many cultic centers where Yahweh and his Ashram were worshiped.

Some Lessons from the Chapter:

1. the danger of religious pluralism — there IS the Truth.
2. the availability of objective truth — it’s available by God in His Word
3. the need for inter-generational instruction — teach the next generation
 - a. it is a sad thing for children of godly parents to turn aside from that good way of God in which they have been trained.
4. the lesson of past history — learn from the past (Amon didn’t)
 - a. Worship may be corrupted and it is a disease in the church and it may be quick to relapse into again when they seem even to be cured.
5. the place of fervent prayer — Manasseh was heard & won.
6. the god of this world is undeniably powerful — he blinds men’s minds and he has a great power over those who are led captive by him.

The Prayer of Manasseh [see 2 Chron 33:18-19]*Background:*

An apocryphal book (in the Catholic Bible, but not in the Jewish/Christian Bible). In this book, we are most likely dealing with a pseudepigraphical [writing in the name of another; pseudonymity] work produced under Manasseh's name many centuries after his death. It was probably composed by a Greek-speaking Jew. The author’s use of phrases from the Septuagint/LXX [Greek translation of our Old Testament] suggests a date for the original composition in the intertestamental period. Note the thoroughly biblical knowledge of Manasseh and his comprehensive language speaking of God, His character and attributes, and His salvation!

David A. deSilva writes: "The petition for forgiveness (vv. 11-13) begins with a beautiful image of humility of heart: 'I bend the knee of my heart.' This stands in marked contrast with the hubris that Manasseh displayed in his earlier disregard for God's prohibition of idolatry. Another acknowledgement of sin, 'I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned,' is poetically balanced by the supplication 'Forgive me, O Lord, forgive me' (vv. 12-13). The petition concludes by identifying God as the 'God of those who repent' (v. 13), which is an original

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way of describing God, a fine counterpoint to the 'God of the righteous' (v. 8) and an expression of the conviction that the God of all does not cease to be God of those who fail to walk in God's way. As their Creator and as the One who stands ready to forgive and restore those who humble themselves and turn aside from sinful ways, God remains 'their God.'" (Introducing the Apocrypha, p. 299)

The Prayer:

¹ Lord Almighty, God of our ancestors,
 God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,
 and their righteous children,
² you made heaven and earth
 with all their beauty.
³ You set limits for the sea
 by speaking your command.
 You closed the bottomless pit,
 and sealed it by your powerful
 and glorious name.
⁴ All things fear you and tremble
 in your presence,
⁵ because no one can endure
 the brightness of your glory.
 No one can resist the fury
 of your threat against sinners.
⁶ But your promised mercies
 are beyond measure and imagination,
⁷ ^abecause you are the highest, Lord,
 kind, patient, and merciful,
 and you feel sorry over human troubles.
^bYou, Lord, according to
 your gentle grace,
 promised forgiveness to those
 who are sorry for their sins.
 In your great mercy,
 you allowed sinners to turn
 from their sins and find salvation.
⁸ Therefore, Lord,
 God of those who do what is right,
 you didn't offer
 Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
 who didn't sin against you,
 a chance to change their hearts and lives.
 But you offer me, the sinner,
 the chance to change my heart and life,
⁹ because my sins outnumbered
 the grains of sand by the sea.
 My sins are many, Lord; they are many.

I am not worthy to look up,
 to gaze into heaven
 because of my many sins.

^{9b} Now, Lord, I suffer justly.
 I deserve the troubles I encounter.
 Already I'm caught in a trap.
¹⁰ I'm held down by iron chains
 so that I can't lift up my head
 because of my sins.
 There's no relief for me,
 because I made you angry,
 doing wrong in front of your face,
 setting up false gods
 and committing offenses.

¹¹ Now I bow down before you
 from deep within my heart,
 begging for your kindness.
¹² I have sinned, Lord, I have sinned,
 and I know the laws I've broken.
¹³ I'm praying, begging you:
 Forgive me, Lord, forgive me.

Don't destroy me along with my sins.
 Don't keep my bad deeds
 in your memory forever.
 Don't sentence me to the earth's depths,
 for you, Lord, are the God
 of those who turn from their sins.
¹⁴ In me you'll show how kind you are.
 Although I'm not worthy,
 you'll save me according
 to your great mercy.

¹⁵ I will praise you continuously
 all the days of my life,
 because all of heaven's forces praise you,
 and the glory is yours
 forever and always.

Amen.