

A Miracle of Grace

2 Chronicles 33

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

“Grace is the dimension of divine activity that enables God to confront human indifference and rebellion with an inexhaustible capacity to forgive and to bless.”¹ Does this mean that God would have forgiven the likes of Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Vlad the Impaler, Pol Pot, Saddam Hussein and Ivan the Terrible had they repented of their evil deeds? Surely God’s justice would demand eternal damnation for the rapes, tortures and genocides these men had committed? It is hard enough to imagine the thief on the cross in paradise much less those who have committed such atrocities! And yet if we do not believe that the blood of Christ atones for all types of sins then we as Christians are left in a gloomy pit of despair² wondering if our thoughts, words and deeds constitute the “unpardonable sin” that despite our cries “will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come” (Matthew 12:32). The following sermon is going to trace the sins, discipline, repentance and God’s gracious forgiveness³ of one of the most evilest kings Judah ever had in order to provoke hope in our hearts that God is full of grace and is always willing to forgive those who confess with a repentant, contrite heart!

Hezekiah’s Life and Grace

Hezekiah was king of Judah from 715-687 B.C.E. He took over the throne from his father Ahaz at the age of 25 (2 Chronicles 29:1). Unlike his great-great-grandfather David⁴ Ahaz did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord (28:1). He worshipped the Baals, burned sacrifices in the Valley of Ben Hinnon, sacrificed his children in the fire and did other detestable practices of the Canaanite nations (28:2-3). Despite the wicked example his father set when his son Hezekiah came to power, he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He reformed Israel’s religion by removing the high places, shattering sacred pillars, cutting down the Asherah poles (31:1-3) and refurbished and purified the temple (29:15).⁵ God prospered Hezekiah (31:21) and even sent an angel to defeat Sennacherib king of Assyria when he threaten to attack them (32:20-23). Hezekiah who became highly regarded by all nations soon became proud⁶ and the Lord struck him with an illness (31:24) of which Isiah said would be fatal (2 Kings 20:1). In response to his punishment Hezekiah repented and God forgave and granted him

¹ Gilbert Bilezikian, “[Grace](#),” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 898.

² C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Miracle of Grace](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 147.

³ Mark J. Boda, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1-2 Chronicles*, vol. 5 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 406.

⁴ Marc Z. Brettler, “[Ahaz \(Person\)](#),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 106.

⁵ Jonathan Rosenbaum, “[Hezekiah King of Judah](#),” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 190.

⁶ Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, vol. 15, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1987), 259.

another 15 years to his life (20:6) and blessed him with great wealth and many building projects (32:27-30).⁷

Parents of Evil Children

In the third of the last fifteen years of his reign God granted Hezekiah a son, Manasseh.⁸ The Psalmist said, “children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from Him” (27:3). After having two beautiful children I can honestly say that they can be “the joy of our hearts and the flowers of our homes.”⁹ Upon Manasseh’s birth I can only imagine the joy and relief in Hezekiah’s heart that an heir to the throne had finally been born! While his future occupation was secured, i.e. king of Judah, Hezekiah probably also hoped in his heart that the religious reforms that he had started would continue and be perfected under his son’s rein. While Hezekiah hoped to pass on his love for God to his child, Manasseh took after his grandfather Ahaz and did evil in the sight of the Lord. Manasseh’s name rightly signified “forgetfulness”¹⁰ for he chose to forget that God was the source of the nation’s blessings but instead chose to chase after the gods and creeds of the very nations that God destroyed for their sins when Israel entered the promised land!¹¹ Had Hezekiah known about his son’s evil passions and propensity to go against the Lord¹² Spurgeon suggests he might have gladly succumbed to his illness rather than be the father of the vilest king of Judah’s history.

Manasseh’s Evil

Manasseh became king at age 12 and ruled for 55 years,¹³ the longest reigning king of either Judah or Israel.¹⁴ Even though he came out of a godly home Manasseh had an ungodly hatred for God!¹⁵ Whatever his “father built up for God” he not only pulled down¹⁶ but became so wicked that the Canaanite nations had nothing on Manasseh, he far surpassed their evil.¹⁷ Even though the first of the Ten Commandments was to have no other god but YHWH (Exodus

⁷ Mark J. Boda, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1-2 Chronicles*, vol. 5 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 403.

⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Miracle of Grace.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 145.

⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Miracle of Grace.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 146.

¹⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Miracle of Grace.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 146.

¹¹ C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Miracle of Grace.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 147.

¹² C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Miracle of Grace.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 146.

¹³ Carl D. Evans, “[Manasseh, King of Judah.](#)” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 496.

¹⁴ Louis C. Jonker, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, ed. W. Ward Gasque, Robert L. Hubbard Jr., and Robert K. Johnston, *Understanding the Bible Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 281.

¹⁵ Farrar, Steve. *Finishing Strong* (p. 146). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

¹⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, “[A Miracle of Grace.](#)” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 147.

¹⁷ Farrar, Steve. *Finishing Strong* (p. 148). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

20:3-5), Manasseh chose to reset up the Asherah poles in high places and erected altars to Baal (33:3). Not being content with just worshipping neighboring gods, he imported from Assyria and Babylon worshipping the hosts of heavens (33:3),¹⁸ which was specifically prohibited in passages such as Deuteronomy 4:19, 17:3.¹⁹ Despite knowing that Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu were executed by God for offering strange fire in His temple (Leviticus 10:1-3), Manasseh decided to “insult God to His face”²⁰ by setting up altars to foreign gods inside His temple²¹ to “breed the evil of idolatry and poison the nation with the sin of idolatry (1 Sam. 15:23; cf. Ex. 20:3–4).”²²

As heinous as the above list is, it is not yet complete! Manasseh sacrificed his children in the fire in the Valley of Ben Hinnom (33:6). As the people worshipped the Canaanite god Moloch²³ they worked themselves up into a frenzy and then got as close as they could to the fiery idol and then tossed their first-born sons to their death on the idol’s white-hot hands.²⁴ Manasseh sacrificed his eldest son so that he might forever belong to this “fiendish deity.”²⁵ His despise for the Lord went even further by making a league with the devils.²⁶ He practiced divination and witch craft, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spirits (33:6). He wanted to know everything he could about the unknown future but not from God but from the Devil! It was almost as if he was willing to draw the Devil near and make a covenant with hell so that he might not only know the future but also anger God in the process!²⁷ “Tradition says that he sawed the prophet Isaiah in halves for daring to reprove him (Hebrews 11:35) and made Jerusalem swim in the blood of those he executed that did not participate in his evil ways (2 Kings 21:16)!²⁸ Manasseh ran the “wickedest, bloodiest, and most rebellious race against God he possible could and did more to lead Judah away from God than another king had ever done!”²⁹

Manasseh’s Judgement and Repentance

¹⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 148.

¹⁹ Mark J. Boda, [Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: 1-2 Chronicles](#), vol. 5 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 405.

²⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 149.

²¹ John D. Barry et al., [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), 2 Ch 33:4.

²² Andrew E. Hill, [1 & 2 Chronicles](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 614.

²³ George C. Heider, [“Molech \(Deity\).”](#) ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 895.

²⁴ Farrar, Steve. *Finishing Strong* (p. 150). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

²⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 149.

²⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 150.

²⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 150.

²⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 151.

²⁹ Farrar, Steve. *Finishing Strong* (p. 146). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

Since Manasseh and the people would not listen to God (33:10) He had the “Assyrian king send his captain, one Tartan, to besiege Judah until it was devastated.”³⁰ The judgement that God executed upon Jerusalem and Judah was so intense “that the ears of everyone who heard of it tingled” (2 Kings 21:12).³¹ Manasseh was captured and led away in humiliation³² with a “hook in his nose and with bronze shackles” (33:11) and was placed in a dark and dreary dungeon, fed just enough bread and vinegar to keep him alive.³³ We are then told that this very same man who never thought of God except to defy Him humbled himself in that prison and with a contrite and truly repentant heart³⁴ was able to cry out “Abba Father” (Galatians 1:6-7) because he came to “the Lord is God” (2 Kings 13)! The man who murdered people, defied God by worshipping devils was not only forgiven³⁵ but was released from prison and permitted to return to his homeland as its king!³⁶ Upon his return he removed the foreign gods and restored the altar of the Lord (33:15-16). “The conversion of King Manasseh ranks second in dramatic impact only to the experience of Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3–6).”³⁷

Keys to Obtaining God’s Forgiveness and Grace

The reason why I told you about Manasseh’s sins, repentance and merciful deliverance is to outline the means of obtaining mercy when one sins against a holy God. The first key to obtaining grace and mercy is to repent. When a person disobeys and rightly God’s justice has begun to avenge one’s crimes through divine punishment, what is one to do to be pardoned and forgiven?³⁸ God has always known that making humanity in His image (Genesis 1:27) with a free will meant all would sin and fall short of His glory (Romans 3:23) so He provided repentance as the means to make things right with Him. Repentance is not merely seeking a path to escape God’s wrath, but as puritan Thomas Watson stated it must be the “vomiting of the soul”³⁹ that happens when one confesses wrongdoing and experiences a change of heart that no longer enjoys but is repulsed by the sin one has committed. Like Manasseh true repentance

³⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 151.

³¹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 151.

³² Andrew E. Hill, [1 & 2 Chronicles](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 615.

³³ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 151.

³⁴ Andrew E. Hill, [1 & 2 Chronicles](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 615.

³⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 154.

³⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 153.

³⁷ Andrew E. Hill, [1 & 2 Chronicles](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 615.

³⁸ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 152.

³⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“A Miracle of Grace.”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 154.

comes from a thankful heart⁴⁰ for having received unmerited mercy and brings forth fruits of deeds in keeping with a renewed desire to please God.⁴¹ True repentance unlocks the floodgates of God's mercy and forgiveness⁴² because Christ has already paid the penalty for our sin (John 3:16; Romans 6:23) and secured us Christians the privilege to boldly approach God's throne (Hebrews 4:16) and have a close, intimate relationship with Abba, our Father!

The second key to obtaining grace and mercy is to believe one can be forgiven. Sometimes we foolishly think that our sins are so heinous that they are unpardonable. We live day in and day out with the guilt and shame of our sin⁴³ with the mistaken belief that God's justice demands we are not to be forgiven but remain estranged forever from an intimate relationship with Him. From reading that God forgave the extensive sins of Manasseh hopefully one has rightly concluded that there is no sin that the blood of Christ cannot wash clean and make as whiter than snow (Isaiah 1:18)! Once one has repented the weeping and lamentation is to turn to pure joy of having been forgiven.⁴⁴ Too often when God asks us to do something in His kingdom "those old sins rise up and slap us down, squashing our spirits flat as roadkill on the interstate."⁴⁵ Like the 2,000 pound elephant that can be held by a ten pound stake,⁴⁶ remembered, forgiven sins are often a yoke that breaks our neck of service to a holy God. If God can forgive the vilest king of all Judah's history and appoint him to serve in His kingdom then he certainly will do the same for you!

⁴⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Miracle of Grace.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 155.

⁴¹ Farrar, Steve. *Finishing Strong* (p. 157). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

⁴² Farrar, Steve. *Finishing Strong* (p. 157). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

⁴³ C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Miracle of Grace.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 147.

⁴⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, "[A Miracle of Grace.](#)" in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 62 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1916), 152.

⁴⁵ Farrar, Steve. *Finishing Strong* (p. 162). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

⁴⁶ Farrar, Steve. *Finishing Strong* (p. 160). The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.