

Preached at GBC on 1/1/23
"Grace For The GUILTY"

II Chron.33:1-20; II Kings 21:1-18

Our Lord's **MISSION** and **MESSAGE** were **SINGULAR**, meaning they both had **ONE EXPRESS PURPOSE** – "*For the Son of Man is come to **SEEK** and to **SAVE** that which was **LOST**.*" The angel declared to Joseph concerning Mary, his espoused bride – "*Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name **JESUS**: **FOR HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS**.*"(Matt.1:20,21) So every action in Christ's life as God-man - from His birth, to His works, to His words, to the miracles He performed, to His vicarious death and resurrection as the Substitute and Surety of those sinner's given to Him in the everlasting covenant of grace - were performed by Him to accomplish God's purpose – to "**SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS**." During His earthly ministry our Lord didn't waste time just flippantly traveling here and there, but moved with absolute purpose to **SEEK** out His sheep, call them by name, and draw them to Himself - "*And [Jesus] entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, [there was] a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that [way]. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.*"(Lk.19:1-5); "*And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with [his] journey, sat thus on the well: [and] it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.*"(Jn.4:4-7); "*I am the good shepherd, and know my [sheep], and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: **them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd.***"(Jn.10:14-16) Here's the **MILLION DOLLAR QUESTION** – How does Christ **CALL HIS SHEEP**? He speaks to them **CONCERNING HIMSELF**, i.e., He declares in their hearing that He is indeed "**THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**". No other message is **NECESSARY**, and **NO OTHER MESSAGE** will do any sinner any good. Like our Lord, our **MISSION** and **MESSAGE** is **SINGULAR** – "*And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*"(I Cor.2:1,2); "*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*"(Gal.6:14) Our Lord calls on us to do **EXACTLY** what He did – direct men and women's minds to the **ONLY RIGHTEOUSNESS** by which God can "**justify the UNGODLY**", even the righteousness of God – "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for **IT IS THE POWER OF GOD** unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*"(Rom.1:16,17); "*For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved **IT IS THE POWER OF GOD**.*"(I Cor.1:17,18) Lost, self-righteous, religious sinners scorn this message, convinced that sinners need something more – that sinners need to be told **WHAT TO DO** and **HOW TO LIVE**

in order to “get saved”. **IS THAT REALLY THE CASE?** Is that really what guilty, defiled, God hating sinners need to hear? That brings me to this wonderful story of God’s Grace to the **GUILTY** as seen in the life of Manasseh.

Let me start by encouraging you to go read this week **II Kings 16** through **II Kings 21**, and then read **II Chron.27** through **II Chron.33** concerning these three kings, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and **MANESSAH**. Ahaz, Hezekiah’s father, was a **WICKED** king, who stopped all worship of Jehovah – **II Chr.28:1-4**. His son, Hezekiah, Manessah’s father, reigned in Ahaz’s stead, and unlike his evil father Ahaz, Hezekiah did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, turning Judah back to the worship of **JEHOVAH ALONE** – **II Chr.29:1-7**. About **15 years** before Hezekiah’s actual death, he was sick to the point of death. The Lord sent the prophet Isaiah to Hezekiah, and told him plainly – **“Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.”** After Isaiah left Hezekiah’s presence, Hezekiah prayed to the Lord, asking the Lord to graciously spare Him, and the Lord heard his prayer and spared him – **You can read about that in II Kings 20:2-6**, Three years later, Hezekiah’s only son Manessah was born. So for **12** of those **15 years**, Manessah was under and actually witnessed the leadership and godly behavior of his father King Hezekiah. I think we can assume, that like Adam and Eve taught Cain and Abel about the true and living God, Hezekiah instructed this young boy who would later be king. Manessah had the privilege of witnessing his father’s dedication and high regard for the sacrifices and worship of Jehovah God. **I’d be willing to say that when it came to these all important spiritual matters Hezekiah gave Manasseh no option.** This was just wise parenting and true love of one who knew the Lord. As believing parents, we should follow Hezekiah’s example – **ELABORATE**. **But here’s the thing:** Hezekiah’s example, as well as his teaching and instruction fell on the ears of a young child who was **“dead in trespasses and sin”**, **having absolutely no effect on Manessah. That’s why we read II Kings 21:1-18.** This man Manessah was the complete opposite of his father. **This guy was EVIL.** Think about all those things he did in the temple, causing Judah to sin! **Here’s what’s so amazing about all of this** - Other men burned strange fire before the Lord, and what did Jehovah do to them **INSTANTLY** – **“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.”**(Lev.10:1,2) Korah resisted the priestly office of Aaron, and God did a new thing, opening the earth and swallowing them alive. King Saul consulted the witch of Endor, revealing himself to be one in the gaul of bitterness. Still other Old Testament Kings did evil before the Lord, and God predestinated them them to continue in their evil, prospering greatly in the world until their demise. Yet this man Manessah does infinitely worse than all these, willfully sinning with a high hand in the face of God, yet God didn’t immediately destroy him. **That made me wonder – WHY? In answer to my own question, these verses popped into my mind** – **“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”(Rom.5:20); “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, [Saying], Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”(Rom.4:3-8)**

Look at II Chron.33. All the years I've studied the Scriptures, I always read and was keenly aware of Manasseh's wickedness, and had actually read both these chapters. A daily devotion I read on **Heb.11:13** – "*These all died in faith*" brought me to take a closer look at this man Manasseh's life. **William Mason made this statement:** "Heaven is a house full of the miracles of Christ's free-grace," one said. There is the **once idolatrous Manasseh**; the murdering, adulterous David; the persecuting Saul; the Christ-denying Peter, etc. O my God, shall wretched I be there? Yes, if I die in the faith of Christ. **My vileness, sinfulness, and unworthiness do but, as it were, qualify me for Christ and his free grace. Christ, by his free grace, qualifies me for heaven.**" What astonished me when I actually studied these verses this is that somehow I missed or overlooked what is recorded of this **GUILTY SINNER** in our text - "*And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken.*" **Who "SPAKE" to Manasseh?** The "**LORD**" spoke to Manasseh. In this matter of salvation, the **LORD** calls His sheep by name. The "**LORD**" that spoke to Manasseh, is the same "**LORD**" that spoke to Adam, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, and King David. King David called this **LORD** his "**ROCK**" – "*The LORD [is] my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, [and] my high tower.*"(Ps.18:2) **Consider this:** Manasseh's grandfather Ahaz was just as evil and sinful as Manasseh, yet the **LORD** never spoke to Ahaz, only purposed and determined his destruction as a "*vessel of wrath fitted for destruction*". **Think about this event:** The Lord speaks to Manasseh and to his people, **yet they wouldn't listen.** Did the Lord just let Manasseh go his own way? **NOT ON YOUR LIFE. Paul (Saul of Tarsus) stated it this way** – "*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected [us], and we gave [them] reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened [us] after their own pleasure; but he for [our] profit, that [we] might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*"(Heb.12:6-12) When Manasseh didn't **HEAR** the Lord speaking, the **LORD SPOKE** by His loving hand of chastisement to this "*vessel of mercy prepared before unto glory.*" – "*Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom.*"(Vss.11-13D) What effect did this hand of the Lord have on this wicked rebel? The **NATURAL** mind which is "*enmity against God*" would have rebelled even more. But when the Lord calls His sheep by name, "*they hear HIS VOICE, and come unto Him, and HE GIVES THEM ETERNAL LIFE.*" **Notice what our text records of this great sinner** - "*Then Manasseh KNEW that the LORD he [was] God.*" That word "*knew*" is the Jewish word which makes reference to the most intimate of relationships between a man and a woman – "*Adam KNEW Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain.*"(Gen.4:1) When we consider this in light of Christ's High Priestly prayer in **Jn.17:3**, it becomes all the more clear what occurred in Manasseh's life – "*This IS life eternal, that they might KNOW Thee, the ONLY TRUE GOD and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*" How did Manasseh **KNOW** the **LORD**? He knew, understood, and believed Him to be the God who justifies the **UNGODLY, JUST LIKE ABRAHAM.** Manasseh had no hope in anything he had done – **HE WAS**

UNGODLY - He had **NO RIGHTEOUSNESS** – **HE WAS WITHOUT HOPE** – He was a **KING** who had **EVERYTHING** this world could afford, but in reality he was one who **HAD NOTHING** of any **ETERNAL VALUE**. But by God’s free grace for the guilty, **MANASSEH now possesses** everything – This guilty, vile, hopeless sinner was made “*the righteousness of God in Him*” – “*Blessed [is he whose] transgression [is] forgiven, [whose] sin [is] covered. Blessed [is] the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit [there is] no guile.*” (Psalm 32:1,2) Are **YOU A SINNER** this morning? Can you draw comfort from this for your weary soul? **I KNOW I CAN!** If God’s free grace can make this evil man the “*righteousness of God*”, the same God can do the same for me as well. This same Lord did the same for the **THIEF ON THE CROSS** – “*This day you’ll be with me in paradise.*”

As I said at the beginning of this message, lost, religious, self-righteous sinners who scoff at the message of God’s free grace, insist that sinners need to be taught how to live. The history recorded here of Manassah, as well as the message set forth in the remainder of God’s Word, **CLOSES THEIR MOUTHS** forever on this subject – **Vss.14-20. LISTEN UP:** The **LAW and the priesthood** had not been able to constrain or compel Manasseh to do what was right in the sight of the Lord. The law could do **only one thing** – “*For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, [was] not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law [be] heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: BECAUSE THE LAW WORKETH WRATH.*” (Rom.4:13-15a) The **LAW** can only reveal man’s sinfulness and hold them accountable for it – “*The wages of sin [are] DEATH*”. But what the **LAW** could not do for Manasseh or any other guilty sinner, the Savior, Surety, and Substitute for His people, the Lord Jesus Christ, **ACTUALLY DID** – “*The wages of sin [are] death, BUT THE GIFT OF GOD [is] ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.*” (Rom.6:23) This wicked, defiled, guilty sinner – **Manasseh** - one whose character and conduct was reprehensible and deviate, is now like that Gadarene demoniac, clothed, in his right mind, and sitting at the feet of Jesus. He is “*an ISRAELITE INDEED, in who is NO GUILE.*” If we could speak to Manasseh today, he’d tell us he was unworthy of God’s grace and mercy, and fully deserved death. But he’d also tell us the Lord His righteousness had graciously given him eternal life – **DO YOU UNDERSTAND THIS?**

But one last thing: Nowhere in this narrative is Manasseh told how to **DO RIGHT, i.e., HOW TO LIVE. GO BACK AND READ IT!** But the love and grace of God compelled him to do all these things that were right. We see the same in Zacchaeus – “*And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw [it], they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore [him] fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, *forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*” (Lk.19:5-10) Manasseh was “*a son of Abraham*”, and the same Son of man who came to “*seek and to save that which was lost*”, saved him and arrested him in his rebellion. **The Lord God does the same for all that are His.** The Scriptures are **FILLED** with the trophies of God’s free grace. The religious world may mock and scorn it, but those who know of God’s free grace,*

understand the magnitude of God's love and mercy to them, **and knowing it**, they seek to love Him in return – "*We **LOVE** Him, because **HE FIRST LOVED US.***"

I don't know about you, but I needed this message of God's unchanging love and mercy to me as a guilty sinner. I hope He will bless this to our encouragement and commitment to Him.