

Title:                    **MANASSEH**  
**A TROPHY OF GRACE**

Text:                    2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33:10-13

Subject:                *The Grace of God*

Date:                    Sunday Morning — May 20, 2012

Tape #                    AA-59

Reading:                2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 20:1-21:18  
                                  2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33:1-20

Introduction:

Turn with me to 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33 and let me talk to you for a little while about the grace of God. What abundant grace there is in our God! What mercy there is flowing out to sinners from the triune Jehovah of whom the Prophet said “*He delighteth in mercy*”! What efficacy there is for poor needy sinners in the blood and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ! What irresistible power and grace there is in God the Holy Ghost to save sinners! It matters not how high-handed, how indescribably evil, or how brazenly obstinate sinners are, the grace of God so infinitely transcends our offenses that none are beyond the reach of God’s omnipotent mercy and saving grace. Never are these facts more clearly revealed than in the salvation of Judah’s wicked King Manasseh.

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Truly, the fact of Manasseh's salvation by our God, is intended to teach us that "*where sin abounds grace doth much more abound*"!

Manasseh was the monstrously ungodly son of a very godly man. "*Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.*" Never was there a king upon a throne more wretched and vile than Manasseh. Yet, he obtained mercy. He is set before us in the scriptures as an instructive picture and illustration of the grace of God. Today, I want to talk to you about **MANASSEH — A TROPHY OF GRACE**. (Read 2 Chronicles 33:9-13).

(2 Chronicles 33:9-13) "So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, [and] to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel. 10 And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken."

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“11 ¶ 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. 12 And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he [was] God.”

Manasseh’s father was Hezekiah. He began to reign in Jerusalem when he was twenty-five years old. And he reigned for twenty-nine years, doing that which was right in the sight of the Lord. He was not a perfect man, but Manasseh’s father, Hezekiah, was a faithful, godly man who served God upon his throne.

You will remember that Hezekiah was stricken with a fatal disease. When he was about to die, God sent Isaiah the prophet to him to declare, “*Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.*” When Hezekiah heard those words, he

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turned his face to the wall and prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord added fifteen years to his life. But, they were fifteen years of grief. Three years after his health was restored to him, Hezekiah had a son. And that son was Manasseh! I suspect that many, many times Hezekiah went to bed broken-hearted because of Manasseh, and wished he had been content to die rather than live to be the father of such a wretched son.

**How often we pray, not knowing what we pray for!** We may be covetous of some great thing which would prove to be a real curse if we had it. We would be wise to submissively leave our lives to the will of God and seek grace never to resist his will and insist upon our own short-sighted desires. The next time God spoke to Hezekiah, he said, “*Good is the word of the Lord*” (2 Kings 20:19), and quietly submitted himself to it.

**Manasseh’s mother was Hephzibah.** Her name means, “My delight is in her.” Dr. Gill tells us that the Jews have a tradition, passed on from generation to generation that says, “Hephzibah, Hezekiah’s wife,

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Manasseh's mother, was the daughter of the prophet Isaiah." Whether their tradition is true or not, we do not know. But it is not at all unlikely. I am sure that before Manasseh was very old his mother would say, "Call me not Hephzibah. Call me Marah, for the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me." The child, at whose birth she so greatly rejoiced, became her greatest source of pain, sorrow, and shame.

**Manasseh's name means "forgetfulness"**. He forgot the example of his father Hezekiah, the Word of God's prophet, his grandfather, Isaiah, and the counsel of his mother, Hephzibah. And he forgot the Lord his God. But God never forgot Manasseh!

**Proposition:** Manasseh was loved of God from eternity, chosen and ordained to be a miracle and monument of mercy, a trophy of his grace.

**Divisions:** I hold Manasseh before you as an example of what God does for sinners when he saves them by his free grace in Christ. If the Lord will enable me to do so, I want to show you five things revealed in our text:

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1. Manasseh's Horrible Guilt and Sin.
2. God's Gracious Intervention.
3. Manasseh's Brokenhearted Repentance.
4. Manasseh's Restoration by Grace.
5. Manasseh's Usefulness in the Hands of God.

### MANASSEH'S GUILT

First, in order for us to appreciate what God did for him, I want us to see **Manasseh's horrible guilt and sin**. It would be impossible for our minds to conceive a more vile, wretched man than Manasseh. His crimes were daring and deep. His guilt was shameful and aggravated. As I describe Manasseh's sin, I hope that we will each draw the proper parallel between ourselves and him. (Read vv. 1-7).

(2 Chronicles 33:1-7) “Manasseh [was] twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem: 2 But did [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he built again the high places which

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Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. 4 Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be forever. 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. 7 And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever.”

**Manasseh made it his business to undo all the good that his godly father, Hezekiah, had done.** He seemed determined to tear down everything Hezekiah had built, oppose everything he had taught, and

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overturn everything he had established. That which Hezekiah built for God, Manasseh destroyed. That which Hezekiah destroyed in the name of God, Manasseh rebuilt.

**Illustrations:** I have known a good many like Manasseh. — Ronald C. — Charlie J.

Some of you who appear to be determined to cast aside everything your parents have taught you from your youth up. You treat your father's God, his Word, and his grace with utter contempt. When you sin in such an extraordinary manner, you incur extraordinary guilt.

- You sin against extraordinary light!
- You have been the object of much prayer.
- You have been faithfully instructed.
- You have been raised in the house of God.

**Manasseh's sin was aggravated by the fact that he chose to follow the worst of examples.** He was raised in the house of Hezekiah, a devoted, godly, faithful man. Even if Isaiah was not his grandfather, as the Jews' tradition tells us, Isaiah, the prophet of



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God, was a regular household guest. But when he looked for a man after whom to pattern his life, he chose Ahab, a man who died under the wrath of God (2 Kings 21:3).

“For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.” (2 Kings 21:3)

**Manasseh devised schemes of wickedness more outlandish than any who had gone before him.** His wickedness was not drunkenness, theft, murder, or adultery. His wickedness was godless religion — Idolatry! But worse still, it was idolatry performed in the temple of God, in the name of God!

Bad as Ahab was, he never did the things Manasseh did. This man worshiped all the hosts of heaven. He set up the images and altars of pagans in the house of God. He insulted God to his face.

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**Illustrations:** Images, Crosses, Pictures, Stained glass, etc.

**Manasseh made his children pass through the fire.**

That is to say, he passed his son through the red hot arms of the pagan god, Molech, that they might belong to him forever. How many there are who have done the same thing in our day! You take your sons and daughters and cause them to pass through the arms of the gods of this world, and teach them to be devoted to them forever.

- Materialism
- Greed
- Fashion
- Popularity

**While he forsook the worship of God, Manasseh became an ardent follower of demonic religious superstition** (v. 6).

(2 Chronicles 33:6) “And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt

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with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.”

As in our day, Manasseh had those in his day who claimed to have contact with the dead, soothsayers, astrologers, fortune tellers, palm readers, etc. And he was devoted to them. **He would not hear the prophet of God, but gladly heard the enchantments of wizards.** He would not seek the counsel of the Lord, but anxiously sought the advice of the dead. He would not hear the Word of God, but intently hearkened to the astrological charts. He would not worship at the altar of the Lord, but reverently bowed to stumps, animals and stones!

**This man, Manasseh, led the whole nation into idolatry.** Being the king, he had a position of great authority and influence. And he used his power and influence to lead men and women away from God. He was not content to sin. He had to have others with him in the performance of his wicked deeds. — **What will it be like to meet those in hell who you have led down the road to destruction?**

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**And Manasseh persecuted and murdered God's saints** (2 Kings 21:16).

“Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing [that which was] evil in the sight of the LORD.” (2 Kings 21:16)

He rebelled with both hands against God. When God sent messengers to reprove him for his sin, he became enraged by it. Tradition tells us that he had Isaiah the prophet (his own father-in-law?) sawn in halves for daring to reprove him. Whether that is so or not, we do not know. But we do know that he made the streets of Jerusalem to run with the blood of God's saints, who refused to follow his devices.

As we shall see, though Manasseh was forgiven, though he was saved by God's free grace in Christ Jesus, washed in the blood, justified and sanctified, his wickedness and the consequences of his wickedness were visited upon his children and his

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children's children unto the third and fourth generation (2 Kings 23:26-27; 24:1-4). In the fourth generation, after the death of Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah, when Jehoiakim was king, God sent Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Judah and Jerusalem, carrying the children of Israel into Babylonian captivity, because of Manasseh's sin.

(2 Kings 24:1-4) "In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets. 3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD came [this] upon Judah, to remove [them] out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; 4 And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon."

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**GOD’S INTERVENTION**

Manasseh was a monstrous man! No man in history ever did so much evil in such a short time as Manasseh. But Manasseh was marked out by God from eternity, chosen as an object of his grace, and predestinated to an inheritance with the saints in glory. Manasseh was a hell-bent rebel. But God had sworn from eternity, *“I will be his God; and he shall be my child.”* And the purpose of God must stand. Aren’t you glad?

So, in the second place, let me show you **God’s gracious intervention** to save this monstrously wicked man. How I thank God for intervening grace! God would not leave Manasseh alone. He would not leave his chosen one to his own devices. He would not allow him to be damned by his own free will.

**First, the Lord sent his Word to his chosen one.** — *“And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken”* (v. 10). — You can mark this down: — **When God is determined to**

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**save a sinner, he will cause that sinner to hear his Word.** We are not told what was said to Manasseh, or who the preacher was. But it is not hard to imagine that the prophet who confronted him was Isaiah, the man of God. And it is not hard to imagine what Isaiah said to him.

- He rebuked him for his wicked deeds.
- He told him the meaning of the holy place and the Lord's sacrifice (Isaiah 53).
- He called upon him to repent to turn to the Lord (Isaiah 45:20-22; 55:1-8).

**I can see Isaiah going into the King's court** while the King of Judah sat on his throne, or going into the Temple at Jerusalem, the House of God, while Manasseh was engaged in his religious wickedness with the Word of God for this wicked, wicked man.

(Isaiah 45:20-22) “Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye [that are] escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god [that] cannot save. 21 Tell ye, and bring [them] near; yea, let them take counsel together:

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who hath declared this from ancient time? [who] hath told it from that time? [have] not I the LORD? and [there is] no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; [there is] none beside me. 22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else.”

(Isaiah 55:1-8) “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Wherefore do ye spend money for [that which is] not bread? and your labour for [that which] satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye [that which is] good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. 3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, [even] the sure mercies of David. 4 Behold, I have given him [for] a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. 5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation [that] thou knowest not, and nations [that] knew not thee shall run unto



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thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.”

“6 ¶ Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8 For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD.”

Manasseh would not hearken to the Word of God. He was proud, rebellious, unbroken. But God was not done with him yet. His Word will not return to him void (Isaiah 55:11).

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11)

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For this great kindness Manasseh had his father-in-law, God's Prophet Isaiah sawn asunder!

**Next, the Lord graciously brought Manasseh down to the gates of death by the hand of his providence.** — *“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”* (v. 11).

Determined to make Manasseh a trophy of his grace, God stirred up the king of Assyria against him, caused Manasseh to be vanquished and carried down to Babylon in fetters in humiliation and sorrow. The judgment that God brought upon Manasseh and his kingdom were so horrible that to hear them described makes our ears tingle.

**NOTE:** Afflictions alone will never work repentance. But afflictions attended with God's Word and the gracious operations of his Spirit on the heart are effectual tools of grace (Psalm 107:10-16).

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“10 ¶ Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, [being] bound in affliction and iron; 11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: 12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and [there was] none to help. 13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, [and] he saved them out of their distresses. 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. 15 Oh that [men] would praise the LORD [for] his goodness, and [for] his wonderful works to the children of men! 16 For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.” (Psalms 107:10-16)

**NOTE:** Child of God, do not despise the providence of God. When afflictions come, learn to “*hear the rod, and him that appointed it*” (Micah 6:9). Whatever the affliction is that you suffer, if you are God’s, it is for your good, his glory, and the welfare of his kingdom.

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**Manasseh had great reason to adore God for the loss of his empire, for the cruel bondage and torment he experienced in Babylon, for the galling fetters and loathsome dungeon! Had it not been for these things he would be today in chains of darkness in hell!**

- Before God lifts, he humbles.
- Before he exalts, he abases.
- Before he clothes, he strips.
- Before he sets your feet upon the rock, he will bring you down to the pit.
- And God knows how to bring sinners down!

**Illustrations: *The Prodigal, Onesimus, Gomer***

**While Manasseh was in the dungeon in Babylon, God's Word was brought home to his heart by a mighty work of grace (vv. 12-13).**

“12 And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to

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Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he [was] God.” (2 Chronicles 33:12-13)

### MANASSEH’S REPENTANCE

Third, I want you to see Manasseh’s brokenhearted repentance. Read verses 12-13 again. Here is a miracle of grace indeed! Proud Manasseh is broken. The heart of stone is melted. The persecutor is praying. — “*When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers*” (v. 12).

- He confessed his guilt (1 John 1:9).
- He justified God in his judgments (Psalm 51:4).
- He poured out his soul to God in fervent prayer.

### MANASSEH’S RESTORATION

As soon as Manasseh turned to the Lord his God in repentance, God turned to Manasseh in mercy. So fourth, I want you to see Manasseh’s restoration by grace (v. 13).

- God brought him up out of the pit.

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- God brought him back to Jerusalem. — The Mercy-seat. — The Place of Atonement! — The Place of Reconciliation!
- God brought him back to his throne. — “*Kings and Priests unto God!*”
- God made himself known to Manasseh by his work of grace in him, revealing himself to his chosen.

## MANASSEH’S USEFULNESS

Fifth, I want you to see Manasseh’s usefulness in the hands of God. When God saves a man, things are never the same again. When Manasseh returned to Jerusalem, he made it known to everyone that the hand of God had touched him.

- He destroyed his idols, tore down their altars, and cast them out of the city. — “*And he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast [them] out of the city*” (v. 15).

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- **He repaired the altar of the Lord and restored the worship of God.** — *“And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel”* (v. 16).
- **He commanded all of Judah to serve the Lord God** (v. 16).
- **He told everybody what God had done for him by his grace** (vv. 18-20).

“18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they [are written] in the book of the kings of Israel. 19 His prayer also, and [how God] was intreated of him, and all his sin, and his trespass, and the places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled: behold, they [are] written among the sayings of the seers. 20 So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they

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buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.” (2 Chronicles 33:18-20)

- **And Manasseh was the man through whom Christ the Redeemer came into the world.** He was the great grandfather of Joseph (Matthew 1:10-18), the husband of Mary and the great grandfather of Zorobabel (Luke 3:23-27), who was the great grandfather of Mary, the mother of our Lord.

**Illustration:** *Predestination and Prayer* — Hezekiah’s prayer (2 Kings 20) was ordained of God and brought to pass according to God’s eternal purpose of grace for the salvation of his elect. Had he not recovered from his fatal disease Christ would not have come into the world!

**Application:**

1. Providence makes no mistakes.
2. Grace always prevails.
3. God our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is able to save and willing to save the very chief of sinners.



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See Manasseh yonder in glory in shining white,  
seated among the saints with Christ. There he sits,  
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to join him soon as another trophy of grace. How  
about you?

‘Twas battered and scarred,  
And the auctioneer thought it  
Scarcely worth his while  
To waste his time on the old violin,  
But he held it up with a smile.

“What am I bid, good people,” he cried,  
“Who starts the bidding for me?”  
“One dollar, one dollar, Do I hear two?”  
“Two dollars, who’ll make it three?”  
“Three dollars once, three dollars twice,  
Going for three!”

But, no.  
From the room far back a gray bearded man  
Came forward and picked up the bow,  
Then wiping the dust from the old violin  
And tightening up the strings,

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He played a melody, pure and sweet  
As sweet as the caroling angel sings.

The music ceased and the auctioneer  
With a voice that was quiet and low,  
Said “Now, what am I bid for this old violin?”  
As he held it up with the bow.

“One thousand, one thousand, Do I hear two?”  
“Two thousand, Who’ll make it three?”  
“Three thousand once, three thousand twice,  
Going and gone,” cried he.

The audience cheered,  
But some of them cried,  
“We don’t understand.”  
“What changed the worth of the old violin?”  
Swift came the reply.  
“The Touch of the Masters Hand.”

And many a man with life out of tune  
Battered and scarred by sin,  
Is auctioned cheap to a thoughtless crowd  
Much like that old violin

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A mess of pottage, a glass of wine,  
A game and he travels on.  
He is going once, he is going twice,  
He is going and almost gone.

But the Master comes,  
And the foolish crowd never can quite understand,  
The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought  
By the Touch of the Masters' Hand!

Amen.