

“Never too Late”  
2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-20  
(Preached at Trinity, October 23, 2022)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Hezekiah’s fifteen-year extension on life has come to an end and his son, Manasseh, succeeded him to the throne. He was only twelve years old but he reigned for 55 years. His father was a righteous king. Did he follow in his footsteps? What we read is a huge disappointment. His life is recorded plainly. “He did evil in the sight of the LORD.”
2. We should presume he was raised in righteousness. After all, Hezekiah was a righteous king. Perhaps he was spoiled, doted upon. Hezekiah had been given a 15 year extension and now God has given him an heir. The young prince would have been given his every desire. And then at the age of 12, his father died. Sadly, before the principles of his father could be tested by the maturity of adulthood. We have to assume that since he was only 12 he had advisors. If so, they were godless men. But we can’t absolve Manasseh from his responsibility. His reign lasted a long time.
3. Manasseh’s reign was particularly evil. He forgot all the righteous deeds of his father. Amazing is his name – in Hebrew his name means “Forgetfulness.” And he surely forgot the righteous reign of his father. Manasseh’s reign carried on the tradition of the kings of the Northern Kingdom that God destroyed through the invasion of the Assyrians. The text tells us he followed the pattern of the pagan nations.  
**2 Kings 21:2 NAU** - "according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel."  
4. Like Ahaz before him, under his leadership Israel became more wicked than the nations God had driven out before them.  
**2 Kings 21:9 NAU** - "Manasseh seduced them to do evil more than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel."  
**2 Kings 21:11 NAU** - "having done wickedly more than all the Amorites did who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols;"
  - A. He erected altars for the worship of Baal. He even made his sons pass through the fire as human sacrifices. He practiced witchcraft and sorcery.
  - B. He persecuted the righteous  
**2 Kings 21:16 NAU** - "Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another"  
The rabbis believed it was at this point that the prophet Isaiah was sawn in two.<sup>1</sup>
  - C. God sent prophets to warn them but they mocked them and would not heed their warnings.  
**2 Chronicles 33:10 NAU** - "The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention."

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<sup>1</sup> Cyril J. Barber, *The Books of Kings: The Righteousness of God Illustrated in the Lives of the People of Israel and Judah*, vol. 2 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), 495.

5. The only relief we get from reading of his wickedness is reading of his death.  
**2 Kings 21:18 NAU** - "And Manasseh slept with his fathers and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza, and Amon his son became king in his place."  
 And even then, we don't find any relief from the evil. He is succeeded by his son Amon who continued the wickedness.  
**2 Kings 21:19-21 NAU** - "Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. <sup>20</sup> He did evil in the sight of the LORD, as Manasseh his father had done. <sup>21</sup> For he walked in all the way that his father had walked, and served the idols that his father had served and worshiped them."
6. As we've seen frequently, the author of the Kings is often short on details. Sometimes we walk away with an incomplete picture of the king.  
 For example, we read of Asa's foot problem but we're not told why. We are told of Uzziah's leprosy, but we are not told why.  
 In both of these cases, the author leans towards giving a positive description of the king without disclosing all of their sin. We've had to go to the Chronicles to get the full picture.
7. But now, we find the opposite in the biography of Manasseh. There is no doubt Manasseh was evil. There is no doubt his wickedness exceeded most of Israel's kings and was even more wicked than the pagan nations who did not know God.  
 But the author of Kings does not give us the good news of his later repentance.  
**2 Chronicles 33:10-13 NAU** - "The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. <sup>11</sup> Therefore the LORD brought the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze *chains* and took him to Babylon. <sup>12</sup> When he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. <sup>13</sup> When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God."  
 The historian Josephus described his repentance: "When [Manasseh] was come to Jerusalem, he endeavoured, if it were possible, to cast out of his memory his former sins against God, of which he now repented, and to apply himself to a very religious life. He sanctified the temple and purged the city, and for the remainder of his days he was intent on nothing but to return thanks to God for his deliverance."<sup>2</sup>
8. Tonight, I want to set this blessed hope before you. I title tonight's sermon, "Never too Late." It's never too late to repent of our sin and turn to Christ. We often use the expression, "Where there's life there's hope." Only when we leave this life are we beyond the reach of the Gospel.

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<sup>2</sup> Cyril J. Barber, *The Books of Kings: The Righteousness of God Illustrated in the Lives of the People of Israel and Judah*, vol. 2 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), 497.

9. This is not to deny election or reprobation. The title of this sermon is not presuming upon the grace of God, nor does it deny the progressive hardening of the human heart.
- A. Multitudes have repeatedly and increasingly hardened themselves against the Gospel. They have had countless opportunities to repent but have continued to resist. Their hearts grow progressively hardened towards the Gospel. Paul described it as storing up wrath.  
**Romans 2:5 NAU** - "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"
- B. There are those whom God has given over to their wickedness. We read of Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas.  
**1 Samuel 2:25 NAU** - "But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death."
1. Their hearts became more and more hardened so that they finally became beyond repentance. It is a terrifying thing that a man can continue defying God and finally be given over to his sin. We call it God's judicial hardening. We can see it clearly with Pharaoh.  
**Exodus. 10:1 NAU** - "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them,"
  2. W. G. Blaikie of the Church of Scotland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century wrote: "Hophni and Phinehas experienced the fate of men who deliberately sin against the light, who love their lusts so well that nothing will induce them to fight against them; they were so hardened that repentance became impossible, and it was necessary for them to undergo the full retribution of their wickedness."<sup>3</sup>
  3. Bunyan's man in the iron cage should always be terrifying to read: "I sinned against the light of the word, and the goodness of God; I have grieved the Spirit, and he is gone; I tempted the devil, and he is come to me; I have provoked God to anger, and he has left me: I have so hardened my heart, that I cannot repent."<sup>4</sup>
- I. It is never too late to turn to Christ
- A. No one is too great a sinner that Christ is insufficient
1. It is said that Manasseh was more wicked than even the pagan nations. He had hardened his heart against God's prophets.  
**2 Chronicles 33:10 NAU** - "The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention."
    - a. God judged Manasseh and brought the Assyrians against him. He was led away in chains with a hook through his nose. Some under God's judgment become even harder and curse God. Their wickedness is unabated. But others, under the kindness of God, are humbled and they cry out in repentance. Such is the case with Manasseh.

<sup>3</sup> Davis, D. R. (2000). *1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart* (p. 34). Scotland: Christian Focus Publications.

<sup>4</sup> Bunyan, John, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell Publishing), page 27.

- b. **2 Kings** gives us no indication that Manasseh repented. Only the gravity of his sin.  
**2 Kings 21:16 NAU** - "Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; besides his sin with which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD."
  - c. But the author of 2 Chronicles records Manasseh's repentance. Manasseh cried out to God and God heard his prayer and restored him.  
**2 Chronicles 33:13 NAU** - "When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God."
- B. There is no sin so great that God cannot forgive.
- 1. For those who cry out to God in humble repentance they find a God gracious and ready to forgive. It is never too late to repent and we are never beyond God's forgiveness.  
Matthew Henry writes of Manasseh's repentance: "Let not great sinners despair, when Manasseh himself, upon his repentance, found favour with God."<sup>5</sup>
  - 2. It is said that the very breath of the Apostle Paul was hatred towards Christ and His people.  
**Acts 9:1-2 NAU** - "Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, <sup>2</sup> and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."
  - 3. Paul referred to himself as the "chief of sinners" and yet, he found repentance and forgiveness.
- C. God commands all men to repent  
**Ezekiel 33:11 NAU** - "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"
- 1. Jesus came to save sinners. None are so wicked that He cannot save them.
  - 2. No one should resist coming to Christ because they feel they are too wicked.
  - 3. God is able to forgive them in Christ and cast their sins far from Him  
**Jeremiah 31:34 NAU** - "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 611.

- II. We can find forgiveness in Christ. In the atonement of Christ our sins are forgiven as if we had never sinned.
- A. But sometimes, our sin can become so egregious that the earthly consequences can't be undone.
1. We can find forgiveness, but still suffer the temporal consequences of our sin. Murderers remain in prison. Those that have diseases resulting from years of sexual perversion still suffer under their affliction. Broken homes remain fractured. Miss-trained children go their way living out their corruption.
  2. Manasseh turned from his sin and reinstated God's worship. But Israel had reached the tipping point. God's wrath would not be appeased.
  3. Josiah would soon follow as king and his righteousness was unsurpassed. And yet, God's wrath upon Israel was not turned away.  
**2 Kings 23:25-26 NAU** - "Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him. <sup>26</sup> However, the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath with which His anger burned against Judah, because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him."  
 As the Babylonians reigned down vengeance we read:  
**2 Kings 24:3 NAU** - "Surely at the command of the LORD it came upon Judah, to remove *them* from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done"
  4. Dale Ralph Davis: "perhaps 2 Kings 21 doesn't mention the matters noted in 2 Chronicles 33 because they didn't make much difference."<sup>6</sup>  
 He adds: "A healthy spiritual legacy seldom flows from a late and sudden conversion but from the practice of lifelong and attractive godliness."<sup>7</sup>
- B. One of the aspects of our regeneration is a heart to recognize we deserve whatever suffering that our sin has brought.
1. I've heard professing Christians cry out, "I don't deserve this!"
  2. We need to remember, we live in a fallen world that is pockmarked with the ravages left behind by sin.

#### Conclusion:

1. We are not guaranteed deliverance from the temporal consequences of our sin, but we have confidence that in the eyes of God, He remembers our sin no more.  
 This is the blessed comfort enjoyed by God's people.
2. Those who turn to Christ find rich mercy. No one is beyond His grace.  
 Matthew Henry: "Deny not to thyself that which God hath not denied to thee; it is not thy sin, but thy impenitence, that bars heaven against thee."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Kings: The Power and the Fury*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 310.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 2 Ch 33:1.