

## Worst Best King Ever!

Good Friday – 04/07/23 – Mt. Calvary Luth.  
Text: 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 Pastor Keith Besel

### Introduction

- ✘ Throughout this season of Lent, in our midweek services, we have reflected upon the so-called “good” kings of Judah. Each week we saw how their service as king pointed us toward and were far surpassed by the glorious reign of Jesus, the Son of David.
  - ➔ Although each one of those kings was clearly imperfect and sinful, still insofar as they ruled with justice and led the people in righteousness, their reigns as king found their perfect fulfillment in our great King, Jesus Christ!

### I. Manasseh – the WORST king of Judah

- ✘ Tonight though, we are not considering one of the “good” kings of Judah. Instead, we turn to King Manasseh; the WORST King Ever!
  - ➔ In the books of First and Second Chronicles, King David is the standard against which all of the other kings are measured. So they are described as either following “in the ways of David” or “abandoning David’s ways”.
  - ➔ We talked specifically about King Jehoram, and how “he walked” in the wicked ways of his father-in-law, King Ahab, doing “what was evil in the sight of the LORD” (2 Chr. 21:6).
- ✘ But as we heard in our Old Testament Reading tonight, Manasseh gets special treatment. Verse two says, “He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel” (2 Chr. 33:2). His deeds are not compared to David or Solomon. They are not even compared to the evil kings of Israel. Manasseh is compared in Joshua 3:10 to the pagan Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites. Under Manasseh, the son of the great king Hezekiah, the one we looked at last night, Judah returned to the same state of wickedness that existed in the land even before the LORD used Joshua to lead God’s people into The Promised Land. And verse nine says that he compares poorly. It says, “Manasseh led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray, to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel”.

### II. He shed innocent blood, destroying the kingdom

- ✘ For most of his 55 years, Manasseh set the ultimate example of unrighteousness and pure evil. Manasseh’s greatest “hits” or more accurately, his “most vile evils” included erecting altars to the false gods of Baal and Ashtoreth, which his father, Hezekiah had torn down.
  - ➔ He worshiped the entire host of heaven – the sun, moon, and stars as gods. He defiled the temple that Hezekiah had cleansed; even erecting altars to the stars and planets in the Temple. Imagine the blasphemy, for example, if we were to build altars to worship the sun and moon right up front here in this sanctuary. Yahweh had demanded that only He and His name was to be proclaimed and worshiped in the Jerusalem Temple. But Manasseh consulted sorcerers and necromancers (i.e. people who claim to communicate with the dead). He even burned his own children on the altars as sacrifices to his idols!
  - ➔ In 2 Kings 21:16 it is written that “Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides the sin that he made Judah to sin so that they did what was evil in the sight of the LORD”.

✘ Is it any wonder then that Manasseh's great evil provoked Yahweh, the God of Israel to anger? In fact, verse 11 tells us that God actually brought the neighboring pagan army of the Assyrians to conquer and capture Manasseh. They did what the pagans were known to do; binding Manasseh in chains and putting a fish hook somewhere in his face, often it was in the nose to lead him away like the wild animal that he was.

→ Verse 10 says that he "paid no attention" to Yahweh when He tried to confront Manasseh about His sin. And so, the LORD did what was needed to bring him under control; allowing him to be wounded and humiliated by foreigners. King Manasseh lost everything and the kingdom of Judah tottered on the edge of collapse.

### **III. Manasseh repents and God forgives**

✘ There, at his lowest point, as a prisoner in Babylon; far away from all of his idols and false gods, King Manasseh finally humbled himself before the God of his father, Hezekiah. Verses 12-13 tell us that Manasseh truly repented of his sins and sought the LORD's favor.

→ By what can only be called a miracle of God – in His great mercy, the LORD "heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom" and now "Manasseh knew that Yahweh was God" (v.13). He restored God's altar in the Temple, but verse 17 tells us that it was still too late for the people of Judah.

→ This is an important lesson for us all; showing how eternally dangerous, wicked influences can be upon us and our loved ones and neighbors. The next chapter in 2 Chronicles (chapt. 34) tells us that God's judgment would no longer depart from Judah. Jerusalem and the temple would eventually be destroyed, which did come about in 587 BC.

✘ But, what about King Manasseh? What could move God to forgive so much evil and sin? Was it that his prayer was so beautifully constructed or his words were overly sincere? Did Manasseh promise God something extraordinary to make up for his sins? We often try to "make a deal" with God; "I'll quit this or that sin, or go to church more often, God, if only You will make me well or not hold this sin against me or...!"

→ It was none of that. There is nothing that could ever make up for the great sins of Manasseh. That's the thing about God's mercy; it simply flows freely for every repentant soul. No matter what the sin; no matter when the repentance; the unfathomable greatness of God's mercy flows abundantly and equally for both David and Manasseh at the ends of their times as king.

### **IV. Even the most grievous sins forgiven in Jesus**

✘ But you see, that great mercy must still come at a cost. Somewhere, somehow the price for disobeying God; the price for every single sin ever committed by every man, woman and child to live on this earth must be paid. Satisfaction must be made to God. Jesus said in Matthew 5:48, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

→ But here's the deal. No imperfect person can ever fully pay for his/her own sins, because any sacrifice or punishment that they would endure would still be imperfect on account of his/her sinful nature. So, only a perfect sacrifice by One whose very nature is perfect could atone for Manasseh's sins. And there would never be enough bulls or goats in all of Judah; in the entire world to pay for his iniquities.

✘ So it is for every one of us here tonight as well. Only a perfect, sinless sacrifice could atone for our sins too. I know, maybe your sins or my transgressions are not as public as Manasseh's were, but still, there is nothing you or I can offer either. Not all the blood of beasts could wash away the stain and guilt of our sin. Manasseh's prayer or your greatest prayer ever will ever be good enough!

- Only Jesus, the ultimate Son and descendant of Manasseh was perfect. Only He has sinless blood coursing through His veins. Hebrews 4:15 in our Epistle Reading confirms it: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” Yes, Jesus shed His own innocent blood on the cross for yours and mine and the sins of the entire world!
- He had no need to pay for His own sins. So, only Jesus could take upon His shoulders the sin of the whole world. That includes Manasseh’s sin for offering his own children to Baal or the sun god; for the blood of children killed in warfare; for children’s lives snuffed out before birth for no other reason than convenience here in our time today; for children who starve because of our greed and indifference.
- Yes, the precious blood of Jesus that was spilled for the innocent Jewish blood shed by Manasseh, was even shed for the spilling of Jewish blood by Hitler and the German Nazis and the many wicked anti-Semites who are still among us today.
- ⊗ Does that last one make you cringe? I get it, but if you don’t believe me, just look at how the blood of Jesus poured from His body paid for the sins of the thief one cross over. He’s the one to whom Jesus promised in response to that man’s confession of faith, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Lk. 23:43).
- Yes, God’s blood flowing from the person of Jesus Christ paid for the sin of setting up idols in God’s holy Temple and for pagans who worship earth and heaven rather than the Creator, and for idolaters throughout history who worship money and success and forget the only Giver of all good things.
- ⊗ Although Jesus sought relief from His Father, praying earnestly in Gethsemane that He might be spared from the cup of God’s wrath against sin, it was the Father’s will that Jesus suffer for the evil inside Manasseh and us alike. It was the right time for the sin of the world to be taken away. The hour had come for the Son of Man to be lifted up and glorified. And hanging there, nailed to the cross, Jesus would now bear the title printed above His head, “King of the Jews”.

## **V. Jesus: the BEST King Ever!**

- ⊗ According to the Bible, after the sacrifice of His Son, God the Father restored His holy Temple. It was not the temple in Jerusalem; that has been permanently destroyed as of 70 AD. That temple no longer has any use, for the temple of Jesus’ body is alive and well today and forevermore. In that temple, Jesus continues to offer us His free, underserved gift of forgiveness in the blessed Sacrament of His body and blood. It is in His name; the name of Jesus that you and I continue to worship to this very day.
- Yes, the ultimate Son of Manasseh, Jesus Christ is the BEST King Ever! Not only does He lead His people in righteousness, He gave us His own righteousness as an exchange when He took our sins upon Himself.
- So, whatever our sins; however long we’ve been distant or apart from His body; no matter how close or far away we are to death, Jesus’ sacrifice that we remember here tonight has moved our God to the fullest display of His mercy. THE King of Judah, Jesus has established an eternal kingdom of righteousness for all who believe in Him alone for the forgiveness of their sin.
- ⊗ So, on this holy night, confident as Hebrews 5:9 says, that Jesus, in His perfect sacrifice, “became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” in faith, we now bow in humility and praise and we give thanks that the almighty LORD has showered us with His mercy and has covered our sins completely in the holy, precious blood of His Son, Jesus; the BEST King Ever! Amen.