

My Favorite Thing About SAMUEL, KINGS and CHRONICLES

1st Samuel 8:4-5

May 01, 2021

My Favorite thing about Samuel, Kings and Chronicles is a consistent theme from beginning to end ---- **Our Choices Matter.**

Each book shows, step by step, the failure of the Chosen People and their leaders to maintain their side of the covenant with God. Any political / military / economic achievements are completely overshadowed by spiritual choices: Samuel's choices --- Israel's choices --- Saul's choices --- David's choices --- Solomon's Choices, etc., etc., etc.,

Samuel

The government of Israel was administered by the judges in the name of God and by His authority.

Samuel was the last Judge of Israel. By all accounts, he was a great judge and the nation prospered under his wise control, but he was a lousy father. He made choices regarding the training of his son's which allowed for the cultivation of obvious character flaws. They disregarded the Laws of God. They lined their pockets in less than honorable ways, including the taking of bribes. They perverted the justice system.

1 Samuel 8:4-5 - So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵ They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

Israel

The truth is Israel didn't want to live under the authority of God anymore and they were looking for any excuse to get rid of the "judge" system. Unfortunately, Samuel's parenting choices and the abuses of his sons gave them that excuse and they jumped at it --- "Give us a king!"

Samuel felt rejected, but God told him, *"The people have not rejected you; they have rejected me, so give them what they do want, but first, tell them what having an earthly king is going to look like."* {1 Samuel 8:7-17}:

- He'll take your sons to fight his battles and work in his fields
- He'll take your daughters to work in his household
- He'll take your best fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his favorite servants
- He'll take a 10th of your seeds and vineyards and give those to his favorite servants too.
- He'll take your male and female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use them for HIS service.
- He'll take a 10th of your flocks and herds and you, yourselves will become his servants

Israel made their choice and demanded a king anyway.

Saul

Saul had the qualities **people** value when considering a king --- he was tall and good looking, but he lacked character. After he was chosen king, the people went looking for him --- he was hiding in a pile of luggage. Not a great sign of things to come, but oh, well.... Here's your king! Long live the king!

Here is a summary of Saul's catastrophic choices:

Ch 13 – Saul makes an unlawful sacrifice.

Saul was told to wait for Samuel at Gilgal. When Samuel was late arriving, he chose to make the sacrifice in Samuel's place, which was not lawful for him to do. When caught red handed, Saul made the excuse that the people were afraid, so he'd forced himself to offer the sacrifice. As a result, the days of his kingdom were numbered.

Ch 15 – Saul spares Agag

God gave Saul explicit instructions to completely destroy the Amalekites – leave nothing – because of their great sin. However, Saul chose to spare king Agag and the best of all the animals. He was so proud of what he had done that, before returning to Gilgal, he had a monument to his own awesomeness set up at Carmel. Things did not go well after Samuel arrived at Gilgal and Saul was rejected as king.

Ch 28 – Saul consults a medium.

The days of Saul's reign were coming to an end. Israel and the Philistines were again at war. Saul was desperate because he was afraid and God had gone silent, so, he chose to seek instruction elsewhere. The night before the big battle he found a medium and consulted the "spirit" of Samuel instead – once again violating a direct command of God:

Leviticus 19:31 - Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 20:6 - I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.

The next day, Saul and 3 of his sons were killed in battle on Mount Gilboa.

Choices Matter!! Saul's visit to the Witch of Endor tells us all we need to know about choices. Saul had made a habit of making choices that moved him away from God and in the end, he switched allegiance altogether. What a sad and unnecessary end.

David

For many years David chose a path of trust and service to God. Often, he would consult God about what he should do --- God would speak --- David would listen and obey {**2 Samuel 5:22-25**}. This made David very successful in all that he did. That changed in **2 Samuel 11**....

It was war season, but David was at home, bored probably, so he wandered up on the balcony to have a look around..... he saw a woman having a bath --- a beautiful woman.

David had a choice to make - stay around and watch or turn around and leave.... He stayed. That one choice and the choices that followed nearly destroy him and his kingdom:

- Bad choice 1 – Staying when he should have left.
- Bad choice 2 – Sending for her for the purpose of sleeping with her even though she was married --- to one of his Mighty Men.
- Bad choice 3 – Trying to cover up the sin when he was told she was pregnant --- and when that didn't work,
- Bad choice 4 – Ordering her husband's execution.
- Bad choice 5 – Pretending like nothing had happened and hoping no one would notice.

Ellen White {PP 723}: It was when David was walking in the counsel of God that he was called a man after God's own heart. When he sinned, this ceased to be true of him until by repentance he returned to the Lord..... Though David repented of his sin and was forgiven and accepted by the Lord, he reaped the baleful harvest of the seed he himself had sown. The judgments upon him and upon his house testify to God's abhorrence of the sin.

God's providence had preserved David against all the plottings of his enemies, and had been directly exercised to restrain Saul. But David's transgression had changed his relation to God. The Lord could not sanction iniquity. He could not exercise His power to protect David from the results of his sin as he had protected him from the enmity of Saul.

There was a great change in David himself.... His influence was weakened.... His authority in his own household, his claim to respect and obedience from his sons, was weakened.... His evil example exerted its influence upon his sons, and God would not interpose to prevent the result. He would permit things to take their natural course...

Choices Matter!! David made his choices based on instant gratification --- the here and now --- but the consequences of those choices would have a catastrophic impact on him and those around him for years to come.

Solomon

In **Deuteronomy 17:14-20** God gave Israel instructions regarding kingship:

- **DO NOT** to acquire war horses from Egypt or rely on their power.
- **DO NOT** have multiple wives because they will lead your heart away from fidelity to God and worship idols.

- **DO NOT** acquire wealth (silver and gold) because it will make you proud and insensitive to the needs of your people.
- Copy by hand the teachings given by God and read them all the days of your life. In this way you will remain humble before God and will not oppress His people.

According to Scripture, Solomon was the wisest man to ever live and Israel prospered under his reign {1 Kings 4:20-34}. However, he began to make choices that led him away from God and down a path of ruin. Ruin for himself and ruin for the nation, from which they would never recover:

- He loved luxury and went to Egypt for his horses {1 Kings 4:26 and 10:14-29 and 2 Chronicles 1:14-17}.
- He introduced a national tax system, which included forced labor {1 Kings 5:13}.
- He had 700 wives and 300 concubines {1 Kings 11:1-3}.
- He built altars and worshipped the gods of his wives {1 Kings 11:4-8}.

Solomon failed to make God the center of his life. Everything God instructed the kings **NOT TO DO** – Solomon chose TO DO.

1 Kings 11:11 - So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.

After the death of Solomon, the United Kingdom would come to an end, because of choices. In the years to come Judah and Israel would have many kings. Some were chosen by God, but others were not.

Hosea 8:4 - They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold, they make idols for themselves to their own destruction.

Some kings would make wise choices, but most would not.

Of the 20 kings of Israel, only 1 did right/evil – 19 did evil. The fall of Samaria in **722 BC**, marked the end of the Northern Kingdom after a tragic history of little more than 200 years.

Of the 19 kings and 1 queen of Judah, 4 did right, 4 did right/evil and 12 did evil:

- Rehoboam chose to listen to bad counsel = the kingdom was divided.
- Joash only made good choices as long as Jehoiada, the priest was alive.
- Uzziah chose to violate the priestly roles = he was confined as a leper the rest of his life.
- Ahaz chose to offer his son to Molech.
- Hezekiah chose to show the Babylonians all his wealth = the Babylonians took notes.
- Zedekiah chose not to listen to Jeremiah's counsel and revolted against Babylon = Judah and Jerusalem were destroyed

Judah outlasted Israel by just 136 years, finally being destroyed by Babylon in **586 BC**. They had every opportunity to learn the lessons Israel had refused to learn. They chose not to listen. They chose not to learn. They chose not to repent. They chose destruction.

Ezekiel 33:11 - Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'

We have been granted free will and the ability to choose. We choose love, trust and obedience or we choose rebellion, distrust and disobedience. We decide who will be the guiding force in our lives and those choices have eternal consequences.

At the end of the movie *"Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade"*, finding the *"Holy Grail"* wasn't as straight forward as Indy thought. There were many to choose from ---- all led to death except 1. The baddie chose a beautiful and ornate grail – things ended badly for him. The old knight turned to Indy and said,



Then he added,



Matthew 7:13-14 - Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Choose wisely.....