

Lessons from the Kings #2

The historical books of Samuels, Kings, and Chronicles are full of lessons from which we can draw wisdom and warning. These studies will be drawing various lessons from throughout that period, roughly from 960 – 586 BC. Instead of going through in historical order and picking apart everything as we go, we will look more topically at subjects and then draw illustrations from many of the kings.

Review from last week:

Observation 1: Good kings often fell into sin later in life

General Lesson: That we must take care never to let down our guard, and think that we are somehow past any danger of falling into sin.

Lesson from Solomon: We must beware of evil alliances, especially in marriage.

Lesson from Asa: We need to remember God's faithfulness in the past and not trust "in the arm of the flesh". Also we must be able to receive godly correction, and respond by repentance and seeking God.

Lesson from Joash: We must develop personal spiritual strength, and not always rely on others (parents, pastor, friends) to guide us.

Lesson from Uzziah: We must especially beware of pride, or presuming a calling which we do not have.

Lesson from Hezekiah: Besides pride, we must also beware of forgetting God's past mercies.

Lesson from Josiah: Make sure you really have a direction from the Lord before doing something major.

Observation 2: On the contrary, even wicked kings occasionally repented, or at least humbled themselves enough to avoid immediate judgment.

- 1 K. 21:17-29 – Even Ahab, as wicked as he was, received a measure of mercy. When he heard the horrible judgments to come upon his house because of his idolatry and his sin against Naboth, "he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. ... Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house."

This sounds similar to Jonah and Nineveh. God spoke judgment against the city but they repented, so God temporarily held back the judgment.

- 2 Chr. 33:11-17 – Manasseh was the worst of all the Judean kings (2 K. 21, 2 Chr. 33:1-10), and yet when judged by God and taken personally to Babylon, he humbled himself greatly and prayed. God had mercy on him and restored him to kingship in Jerusalem. Manasseh then took away the altars and false gods from the temple and around Jerusalem, and "threw them outside the city". He restored the Lord's altar and commanded Judah to serve the Lord.

Lesson 1: It often takes judgment, or adverse circumstances, to wake people up and bring them to repentance.

It is often during the hard and frightening times of life that we come to the end of self-reliance, recognize not only our weakness, but our sin, and come to Christ.

Saul on the road to Damascus – "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Lesson 2: We must not think that we or others are “too far gone” to repent. God is merciful and will respond to those who genuinely turn from their sins. Don’t stop praying for those God has put on your heart.

Who would we likely consider to be too far gone? Moslems, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, LGBTxyz, Bill or Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama? Nothing is too hard for God. Obviously most of these people will never come to Christ, but are we satisfied to just write them all off in our minds as being beyond redemption? Would we really want them to be saved, or are we really desiring for them to go to hell and “get what they deserve”?

We do not know the mind of God, apart from listening to, and praying according to the prompts we get in the Spirit. I have heard that many Moslems really are coming to Christ, with persecutions, so we need to be praying for them. Even some LGBT types are being granted repentance to life. Will we allow our natural aversion to their sin and lifestyle prevent us from praying for their deliverance? Can we have Christ’s compassion on those who are lost in those “big sins”? If we think it was easier to save us, who were only “a little bad” compared to those who are “really bad”, it shows we view our own salvation more as a reformation of character, and not as it is in truth, God granting life to us when we were DEAD in trespasses and sins.

Lesson 3: Our own personal repentance cannot always wipe out the effects of our sinful life, on our children or country.

Unfortunately, Manasseh’s personal repentance and subsequent efforts could not erase the effects of his previous idolatry. His own son Amon returned to the idolatry of Manasseh’s early reign, and incurred more guilt. A few generations later, Judah was still being judged for the evils that occurred during the reign of Manasseh. 2 K. 24:1-4 – The Lord sent Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians against Judah to destroy it. “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; And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon.”

So there is a warning for us. You may perhaps find a place of repentance for sin, but that doesn’t change the hard results of your sinful life – i.e., a bad marriage, or a child out of wedlock, or a long prison term for killing someone while driving drunk. We should consider these things before falling into bad behaviors. Come to Christ now, give your life wholly to him, and LISTEN to him.

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