

KING SAUL GETS A BAD RAP

What is the message, when you hear a sermon, do a study or read a commentary about King Saul? He was a bad king. He performed an illegal sacrifice at Gilgal, he consulted a witch and he tried to kill David.

What about David? He was a good king. He committed adultery with a married woman and then had her husband killed.

I have even heard commentators say “God made a bad choice when he chose Saul”.

Let us look at what was going on with God’s chosen people before Saul became king. There were 12 tribes in a loose confederation. Often at war with each other. The people of Israel were not a nation. Several tribes were subservient to pagan nations.

By the way David was not even born when Saul was chosen by God to be king.

Saul went on to reign as king over Israel for 42 years. David does not come to Saul’s court until about 30 years after he becomes king. In Saul’s first 30 years as king, he brings the tribes together into a nation, drives out foreign armies and enjoys several short periods of peace. All of this occurs before any mention of David.

Saul was the perfect choice for the time and task. What were the times? They were times of unrest, unbelief, and fractured relations between the tribes of Israel. Everyone did their own thing, had their own “house-gods”. What was the task? It was to bond the fractured federation of tribes into a nation by removing the yoke of bondage from the people. And yes, Saul was the perfect choice for the task. By the standards of the time Saul was a good man, he just wasn’t a Godly man. He knew about God, he believed in God, but he had not developed a personal relationship with God. His knowledge about the traditions of worship got him into trouble. He had the knowledge of God but not a heart for God.

So, what was the difference between Saul and David?

Saul never “got it”. Saul accepted the “JOB” because Samuel told him that God had chosen him. I do not believe Saul ever really, knew who God was. For some reason He could not repent, he did not know how to ask for forgiveness. He never recognized his failures as sin.

David, on the other hand, knew God. David had a spirit filled life with that knowledge. He understood repentance. He was human and like Saul, was subject to temptation. When confronted about his sin he acknowledged it and repented.

Both Saul and David accomplished the tasks given them by God. Saul’s family did not retain the throne of Israel and David did not get to build the temple