

David and the Good Kings of Judah

1 Kings 15:5

Nutshell: 1 Kings 15:5 contains a formula used to evaluate kings throughout Kings and Chronicles. We will follow the good kings today. Do the exceptions to their uprightness affect our view of David's evaluation?

I. Context: David's indecision after the Bathsheba incident.

II. Text

1 Kings 15:5 *in* that David did that which *is* upright in the eyes of Yahweh, and he did not turn aside from all that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

Review

- A. The Book of Kingdoms, our 1 & 2 Sam + 1 & 2 Kings, is the story of Israel's kings, beginning with the prophet Samuel, who anointed both of the first two kings, Saul and David
 1. Samuel warned Israel vs. having a king, 1 Sam 10:19, Hos 13:11
 2. **Saul** demonstrated *man's* kind of rule. God previewed *His* version of king through **David**, 1 Sam 13:14
- ✿ B. 1 Kings 15:5 says David kept God's commands *except* in the Bathsheba incident. This provides a 'game-changer' hermeneutic.
- C. David was God's chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for later kings of Judah, 2 Kings 14:3
 1. David was anointed king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2, then **Israel**, 5:1-5.
 2. Trouble between the two begins in 2 Sam 2:12-32.
- D. **DAVID'S WAITING BUSINESS AS KING***
 1. Conquer Jebus (Jerusalem), where Goliath's head was, 1 Sam 17:54
 2. Retrieved the Ark from its 'wanderings', 6:1-19;

- tragically wrongly, 1 Chron 15:2; then rightly & joyfully
3. Build a permanent form for the Tabernacle, the Temple.
 - ★ 4. God chose **Abraham** to bless all nations. Now He chose **David's** line to bring forth the King of all nations
 5. 1 Sam 20:14 oath in 2 Sam 9. *OBLIGATIONS CAUGHT UP.
- E. David's sin and its consequences
1. David murdered to cover adultery, Ch 11. Now David, though forgiven, *would see continued violence*, ch 12
 2. David's son died, *not*, per Deut 24:16, as a cohort. He was 'replaced' by Solomon/ Jedediah, "adored" by God.
- F. Chap 13, Amnon deceived everyone and raped his half-sister Tamar
1. Tamar's brother Absalom counseled her to keep quiet on the matter (declining legal recourse?)
 2. He awaited his opportunity and killed Amnon, then fled to his grandad, king in Geshur
- G. *Today, we'll look at the good kings of Judah to compare their evaluations to David's. Will their exceptions lead us to consider David having more exceptions to his uprightness than the one listed in 1 Kings 15:5?*

Kid-speak: Who are we studying about from the Bible today? King David.

Outline:

- I. Review of Our Five Main Points
 - II. How David's Evaluation is Composed Differently
 - A. Other kings: intro to their history. Not with David.
 - B. David being presented as a standard
 - III. "All God Commanded," "All the Days of his Life"
 - IV. A Midpoint in David's Life, 2 Chron 17:3
 - A. Greater uprightness before Bathsheba
 - B. But still not turning from God's commands afterwards
 - V. A Look at the Chart and Its Explanatory Sheet
- H. **So far**, we concluded (with help from commentators) that:
1. Firstly, "we all stumble in many ways," Jms 3:2a
 - a. This included David *in* his uprightness. The upright are still, by nature, those who stumble.

- b. But there is *a stumbling that is not sinning* (besides the presence and influence of our sin nature), Jms 3:2b
 - c. David stumbled, as all do, fell hard once and paid for it dearly
2. Secondly, 1 Kings 15:5 is a *commendation*
- a. Saying that David sinned like mad seems wildly at odds with 1 Kings 15:5, yet that is probably the common view today
 - b. God sought a man “for Himself, according to His heart,” speaking of David. Will someone like that sin every time they turn around, or only as an exception to their blamelessness?
3. Thirdly, the false vs. true witness issue in 1 Sam 21 seems to be the critical fork in the road. Until that point, commentators generally find no fault in David.
- a. Last time we examined David’s purposeful misinformation in 1 Samuel 21. It only made sense as a scheme to protect Ahimelech.
 - b. Accusing David of lying at that point lowers him significantly, a mere cad, lying to get food the priests would have given him anyway
 - c. We looked at 3 other instances of purposeful misinformation with David, none of which fit the definition of false witness
 - d. We researched the Law on false witness. The Hebrew midwives didn’t falsely testify, though giving purposeful misinformation

Kid-speak: How do we know what’s right and wrong?

Partly, God gave us a conscience, but mostly, we have to find out what’s right and wrong from the Bible.

- e. We noted that the Ten Words themselves focused on Justice, not factuality as the hinge of false vs. true witness, using complementary words for “false” in the two versions of the Ten Words
- f. We realized that Solomon gave us a grid for testing true vs. false witness in Prov 14:25. Info that’s saves lives is true witness. Therefore, factual info that leads to unjust death is false witness.
- g. We ended with a list of incidents in the Bible where God

commanded misinformation, obviously doing so righteously. We also listed people giving righteous misinformation, both to save innocent life *and* to take the lives of the wicked

h. Finally, we remembered Jesus speaking approvingly of David in the 1 Sam 21 incident.

4. Fourthly, the phrases “did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes” and “did not turn aside” were formulae repeated with other kings. That’s where we are today.
 - a. Today we’re comparing other kings with similar phrases
 - b. Do the phrases leave room for any number of sins?
5. Fifthly, the phrase “all the days of his life” is peculiar to David. We’ll start here today.

I. Overall Comparison

1. Survey the initial evaluation of the other 8 good kings (see chart companion sheet)
 - a. The common phrase is a variations of, “did right in the eyes of Yahweh.”

Kid-speak: The Bible says that God saw what David did as right. It also says that about a few other kings of Judah. How many others? 8.

- b. Several of them contain the common error of the high places not being removed. Perhaps since that error was common, it became part of the initial evaluative ‘formula’.
- c. But if the king had a slipup down the line, it’s not included in the initial evaluation, whereas David’s is
- d. That’s because David’s history isn’t recorded after his evaluation, as with the other kings
- e. David’s evaluation is actually part of wicked Abijam’s evaluation- how Abijam *wasn’t* like David, who lived 60+ yrs. earlier
- f. So we get David’s whole evaluation all at once
2. David’s evaluation follows the general template of Abijam, 1 Kings 15:3:
 - a. a comparison to another king/ kings;
 - b. a description of honoring God or not.

3. The 8 good kings follow the same general mold
 - a. With frequent reference to David
 - b. David is held up as the standard of kingly behavior, obviously minus his sin
- J. David is the only one described as faithful to God “all the days of his life”
 1. Having listed the exception, the chronicler seems to be removing other smudges on his record
 - ★ 2. Though we find a potentially crucial phrase in Jehoshaphat’s evaluation in 2 Chron 17:3
 - a. Jehoshaphat walked “in the first ways of his father David”
 - b. This seems to divide David’s life in two parts: his first ways and his latter ways
 - c. The dividing point would most logically be at the Bathsheba incident
 - d. It is after Bathsheba that we see (greater) indecision in David
 - e. To the point of sinning? 1 Kings 15:5 would indicate not.

Kid-speak: We know that David sinned real bad one time. In the rest of his life, how long did he obey God? It says “his whole life.”

- f. Though we would want to be decisive rather than indecisive, indecision in itself is not a sin; only if making a decision was the only way to avoid *personal* error (since, even in our indecision, we are not accountable for the decisions of *others*)
- K. Next time, we’ll consider 2 Sam 24 and 1 Chron 21, David taking a census
 1. David confesses to sinning greatly
 2. Does this contradict 1 Kings 15:5?

IV. How does this relate to Christ?

David is held up as the ideal king. Others followed him and excelled him in certain ways. Yet Christ is the only true King of God. David and all the good kings longed for His day.

Now that He has come, we should be longing for His

return, seeking to walk as His servants, through our many stumbles.

- V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”) God’s evaluations seem rather ‘forgiving’. Be encouraged that if we are sensitive of conscience over our godliness, we probably have an adjustment for our imbalance (stumbling) built into God’s evaluation, cf., Ps 103:14.

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- VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong? How have I lost righteousness?**

Am I grateful for God’s commendation of David, hoping only to be AS likeminded to God? (Without the mess-up)

- VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”): **How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**

I will adjust my own evaluations of myself and others by God’s very loving yet exacting measurements and judgments.

- VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**  
Lord, thank You for a Son of David without sin, a king who loves me and has become my brother. May I always listen to Him.

Vision: David’s evaluation in 1 Kings 15:5 is placed uniquely relative to his recorded history; however that does not seem to put ‘wiggle room’ in “all He commanded” nor “all the days of his life.”

God clearly spoke *ongoing* judgments for David’s one, great sin, 2 Sam 12:10-14. To be upright in God’s eyes during those judgments is commendable, even though he did not walk according to his “first ways.”

It is comforting to see God’s general commendations for kings who stumbled *and fell* at their latter end.

However, we also see those who were commended for how they started, but who ended, it would seem, altogether fallen.

Hence, the evaluations of these kings and their histories are, like all of Scripture, tools to convict us and to inculcate the fear of God in us.

At the same instant, we are taught to lean on this God, who longingly scans the earth to find those “with their heart complete toward Him,” 2 Chron 16:9 (Pg 1 of Companion Sheet, column 2.)

