

Kings and Chronicles ©

David Bennett November 2007

The books that make up Kings and Chronicles are a good illustration of how God allows us free will and the consequence of rejecting God. Even though the Jews were *the chosen people* they still had the ability to rebel and turn away from God. Their rejecting God was always because of a choice they made on their own, influenced by their own desires, not because they were predestined to reject Him.

The books of 1st & 2nd Samuel, 1st & 2nd Kings and 1st & 2nd Chronicles gives the history of the nation of Israel from its first king through division and eventual collapse of the kingdom.

We read in 1st & 2nd Samuel the people asked for a king to lead them and Israel's first king was Saul. Saul turned against God as we see in 1 Samuel 13:1-18 where we are told that Saul had violated God's commandment doing as his own heart desired. Samuel tells Saul that if he had remained faithful to God that his kingdom would have been established forever. Was that an idle promise on God's part? I do not think so. God basically said "if you do "X" then "Y" will be the outcome, but if you don't do "X" then "Z" will be the outcome." Saul had a choice and he chose to reject God.

Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." 1 Samuel 13:13-14

Upon Saul's death David became king and eventually moved his capitol to Jerusalem. King David was certainly not perfect and did many things he shouldn't have but he never rejected or turned away from God. King David confessed and repented of his sins and when he was punished by God he remained a man after God's own heart.

Then we see in the second chapter of 1st Kings that upon David's death Solomon became king of Israel. This is another good example of God *choosing* someone and of *free will* to accept or reject Him.

[King David said] "...Of all my sons--and the LORD has given me many--he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. He said to me: 'Solomon your son is the one who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. I will establish his kingdom forever if he is unswerving in carrying out my commands and laws, as is being done at this time.'"

And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever." 1 Chronicles 28:5-7;9

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Notice how God has chosen Solomon and makes promises to him. However, there are caveats to the promise. David and Solomon are told these things will happen *if he is faithful*. In addition David cautions Solomon he must serve God wholeheartedly and if he doesn't, God will know. David tells Solomon *if he forsakes God* that the LORD will reject him forever.

While Solomon was wise he certainly was not “a man after God's own heart” as David had been.

Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land...For now I have chosen and sanctified this house... if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom...'

"But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and this house?' Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.' " **2 Chronicles 7:12-22**

1 Kings 11:4-8 tells us that Solomon's wives "turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David." Solomon followed the goddess Ashtoreth and the god Milcom. The Scriptures tell us Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord. Then Solomon built a high place for the gods Chemosh and Molechon on the hill east of Jerusalem.

*The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. 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. Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. **1 Kings 11:9-12***

After Solomon died the kingdom was split into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah (Jerusalem and the temple Solomon built were in Judah).

In the list below we see that the kings either “*did evil...*” or “*did what was right in the eyes of the LORD.*” The scriptures tell us that many of the kings caused their people to sin* and turn from

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the LORD. Nowhere does it say that God made the kings do evil things nor did He cause the people to sin and turn away from Him.

A few kings were good while a smaller number were exceptional. The exceptional kings experienced revivals during their rule.

...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14

Kings of Israel

<u>Kings of Israel</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Verse</u>
Jeroboam	made two golden calves and false altars	1 Kings 12:20
Nadab son of Jeroboam	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	1 Kings 15:25-26
Baasha son of Ahijah	evil in the eyes of the LORD	1 Kings 15:3-34
Elah son of Baasha	Bad	1 Kings 16:6
Zimri (killed Elah)	doing evil in the eyes of the LORD	1 Kings 16:10;18-19
Tibni (rival to Omri)	Bad	1 Kings 16:21-22
Omri (had Tibni killed)	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	1 Kings 16:23
Ahab son of Omri	did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him.	1 Kings 16:29-30
Ahaziah son of Ahab	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	1 Kings 16:40;51-52
Joram son of Ahab *	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 3:1-3
Jehu	slew the prophets of Baal but did not turn to the prophets of God	2 Kings 9:3
Jehoahaz son of Jehu *	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 13:1-3
Jehoash son of Jehoahaz *	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 13:10-11
Jeroboam II son of Jehoash *	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 14:23-24
Zechariah son of Jeroboam *	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 15:8-9
Shallum (killed by Menahem)	Bad	2 Kings 15:10;13
Menahem son of Gadi *	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 15:17-18
Pekahiah son of Menahem *	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 15:23-24
Pekah son of Remaliah *	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 15:27-28
Hoshea son of Elah	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 17:1-2

Kings of Judah

<u>Kings of Judah</u>	<u>Outcome</u>	<u>Verse</u>
Rehoboam son of Solomon	his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD	1 King 11:43
Abijah son of Rehoboam	his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD	1 Kings 14:31;15:3
Asa son of Abijah	did what was right in the eyes of the LORD	1 Kings 15:9-11
Jehoshaphat son of Asa	did what was right in the eyes of the LORD	1 Kings 22:42
Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat	did evil in the eyes of the LORD.	2 Kings 8:16-17
Ahaziah son of Jehoram	did evil in the eyes of the LORD.	2 Kings 8:25;27
Athaliah (mother of Ahaziah)	wicked woman (2 Chronicles 24:7)	2 Kings 11:1
Joash (also called Jehoash)	did what was right in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 12:1-2
Amaziah son of Joash ¹	did what was right in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 14:1-4;6
Azariah (Uzziah) son of Amaziah	did what was right in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 15:1-5
Jotham son of Uzziah	did what was right in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 15:32;34
Ahaz son of Jotham	did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 16:1-3
Hezekiah son of Ahaz	did what was right in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 18:1-3
Manasseh son of Hezekiah *	did evil in the eyes of the LORD; Later repented and returned to the LORD.	2 Kings 21:1-2 2 Chronicles 33:10-13
Amon son of Manasseh	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 21:19-22
Josiah son of Amon	did what was right in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 22:1-2
Jehoahaz son of Josiah	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 23:31-32

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Jehoiakim (Eliakim) son of Josiah	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 23:36-37
Jehoiachin on of Jehoiakim	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 24:8-9
Zedekiah (Mattaniah)	did evil in the eyes of the LORD	2 Kings 24:18-19

¹ This verse says Amaziah did not put the sons of the assassins to death in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the LORD commanded: *“Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins.”*

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An excellent summary of 1 and 2 Kings can be read in **2 Kings 17:7-28**. Read the entire passage. It clearly states the kings and their people were punished because they rejected God and worshiped other gods, provoking the LORD to anger. If their rejecting God was preprogrammed by God I doubt if He'd have been angry.

*...The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: “Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets.” But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God. They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, “Do not do as they do,” and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do... **2 Kings 13-15***

Notice above it states *“They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, “Do not do as they do,” and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do.”* But they didn't follow God's desires and commands. Was it because God created the people to disobey His own commands? Nope! Could the people resist God because God was not sovereign and they were as strong or stronger than God? No, they were able to resist God because He made them with free wills and the ability to accept or reject Him.

Because the people had the free will to accept or reject God they had to live with the consequence of their rebellion.

*The king of Assyria deported Israel to Assyria... This happened because they had not obeyed the LORD their God, but had violated his covenant... They neither listened to the commands nor carried them out. **2 Kings 18:11-12***

The fact that not everything is set permanently in stone and that God listens to us and sometimes will change things He says are going to happen (He wasn't wrong when He said it) illustrates that not everything is planned to every detail and unalterable as it's being played out.

*In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, “This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.”*

*Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, “Remember, O LORD,*

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*how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly.*

*Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: “Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you...I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria...’”* **2 Kings 20:1-5**

In **2 Kings 21:1-16** you can read how Manasseh, king of Judah “*did evil in the eyes of the LORD....He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them... He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced sorcery and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking God to anger.*

Previously the LORD said to both David and Solomon, “*In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my Name forever. I will not again make the feet of the Israelites wander from the land I gave their forefathers, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses gave them.” But the people did not listen. Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites. ”*

Then in **2 Kings 22:8-13** we see again why God was angry, and it wasn't because the people did precisely what He created them to do: “*Great is the LORD's anger that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written there concerning us.”*

Some kings repented and turned back to God, “*The king [Josiah] stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD... Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did--with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses.”* **2 Kings 23:3; 25**

In conclusion, I & II Kings and I & II Chronicles reveal that God has certain expectations for those who follow Him and that we are given the option via free will to follow Him or not. We have the ability to disappoint and anger God. We also see that God does things to get our attention which is also evidence for free will. Otherwise He'd have made us to be obedient preprogrammed robots. What was predestined was God's plan of salvation through the saving grace made available to us through the death, burial and resurrection of His son, Jesus. When we accept the gift made available by God and Jesus we are not earning our salvation, that was done by Jesus. All we have to do is accept the gift. Like the kings of Israel and Judah and their people the choice to accept or reject God is before us.