

Discovering why
DAVID
was a man after God's own heart.

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Why DID God consider David a man after His own heart? Did God fashion his heart to be like His? Was David programmed that way and just could not help the way he was born? Was he a perfect man that always did everything right?

Digging into the history written about David, and studying the Psalms that he composed, gives us great insight into possibilities of why he was considered a man after God's own heart.

A Nation that Rejected God

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 1:3, 2:12-36, 4, 8, 2 Chronicles 15:2

God's Treasured Possession—In Hebrew, there is a special word called ***Segullah*** (pronounced seh-goo-LAH) which means “treasured possession”. It’s meaning is described like this: a king—as the ultimate ruler of his kingdom—owns everything. But what he valued most would be kept in his treasure chest. These prized belongings were considered his ***segullah***—his treasured possession. (As a teacher, do you have something that is a treasured possession to you that you could show?)

God, as the KING of kings, the One who owns the earth and everything in it—also had a treasured possession. Only it was not gold or silver or things...it was a nation—the nation of Israel. God had freed Israel from slavery in Egypt (show picture labeled Lesson 1-1), led them in the desert where He gave/taught them righteous laws (1-2). He took care of their physical needs—gave them food from heaven, and shoes that never wore out. God taught His people how to worship Him, and the Israelites built a tabernacle—a place to worship God—according to God’s plans (1-3). After 40 years in the wilderness, God brought Israel into the land He promised them—Canaan (1-4). Canaan was a good land flowing with milk and honey. They set up the tabernacle in the promised land where they were to come and worship Him. God gave them vineyards that they did not plant, and houses that they did not build in this beautiful land. This is what God did for His ***segullah***—His treasured possession.

Priests that went bad. As Israel settled into their new homes in Canaan, enjoying the rich blessings the land provided, God became less and less important to them. There was a priest named Eli, (1-5) who had two sons. Their names were Hophni and Phinehas, and they also served as priests. Priests were set apart by God to be His special servants. They were the religious leaders and they were to help the people as they brought their sacrifices and offerings to God. They showed contempt for God by taking part of the sacrifices people were bringing to God by force and keeping it for themselves. Plus, they were sleeping with the women who were coming to serve God. None of these things honored God. And it made a mockery, or joke, of the priesthood.

One day, Hophni and Phinehas took the Ark of the Covenant onto the battlefield with them. (1-6) The Ark of the Covenant was a wooden chest with a special lid on it, all covered with gold. It had rings on the sides with long poles in those rings. It was NEVER to be touched, and only to be carried. The Ark of the Covenant stayed in the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle, and only the high priest could go into this special room one time a year, and in a very specific way. But Hophni and Phinehas brought this holy ark onto the battlefield. These two reckless sons of Eli died in battle that day and the Ark of the Covenant was taken by the enemy. When Eli heard that his sons were killed and that the ark was captured, he fell backwards off his seat and broke his neck—for he was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

In time, the Ark came back to Israel. But instead of putting it in the tabernacle, it stayed in someone’s house. (1-7) Samuel, who grew up around Eli, judged Israel and would pray for the Israelites when they went out to battle.

Rejecting God as their King. Samuel grew old and appointed his sons as judges over Israel. But his sons were not honest like Samuel—they perverted justice and took bribes. The people did not want Samuel’s sons to judge them (1-8) and they said to Samuel, “Give us a king to judge us like all the nations.”

This displeased Samuel and he prayed to God about it. God told Samuel that they “have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.” But God wanted Samuel to listen to them and solemnly warn them (1-9) and show them what an earthly king would do to them. Tell them a king will take their sons and daughters to serve him, and he will take the best of their fields, vineyards, and orchards. He would take a portion of their grains, servants, donkeys, and flocks and they themselves would even become slaves to the king. They will cry out to God because of their king and God would not answer.

But even after this warning, they refused to obey Samuel and requested a king so that they would be like all the nations. They wanted a king who would go and fight their battles. And God listened to their pleas, and He gave them a king.

When God was leading them in the desert, He knew the time would come when His people would ask for a king, and He had Moses write down these rules for the king: Deuteronomy 17:14-20

- He could not be a foreigner.
- He must not acquire many horses or go to Egypt to get horses
- He must not acquire many wives—lest his heart be turned away.
- He must not acquire excessive silver and gold.
- And he was to write for himself a copy of the law, read it and learn to fear God by keeping God’s laws and by doing them.

(1-10) And Samuel anointed their first earthly king. His name was Saul.

This is where Israel (God’s treasured possession) was spiritually. The Ark of the Covenant remained in a house instead of a tabernacle—their worship of God was not as God commanded. They had rejected God as their KING—the One who had blessed them over and over, and had asked for a poor substitute: a man. The Israelites needed help to get back on the right track!

For younger students, you may want to leave off the section on the priests.

Help the students learn these definitions.

DEFINITIONS:

segullah	Hebrew word meaning “treasured possession”
priest	Men set apart by God to be His special servants. They offered the peoples’ sacrifice to God that He commanded.
Ark of the Covenant	A wooden chest with a special lid, covered completely with gold, and was to be in the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle. It was holy and not to be touched.
contempt	Willful disobedience or open disrespect for God’s law.

Help reinforce these facts:

- Israel was God’s Treasured possession.
- Israel rejected God as their king and asked for a man instead.
- An earthly king would take their sons and daughters to serve him, the best of all they had and would take them as slaves.
- Israel’s first king was Saul.