

“It seemed like a good idea at the time”

The above words have been echoed by countless millions of people who, after finding out their hopes, dreams, and aspirations turned out “slightly less” they had planned on, found they were forced to make decisions which had not even been worthy of consideration before the dilemma they might currently be facing, arose. Usually the problem came up as a result of not fully thinking things through before acting upon a situation. The results of this shortsightedness can be most deleterious.

Case in point: January 15, 1919, in Boston, Massachusetts, the corner of Foster and Commercial streets, witnessed an immense storage vat 90’ high and 282’ in circumference literally “burst open”, spilling its contents of 2 million gallons of raw molasses into the streets of the city. The 27 million pound mass knocked buildings off their foundations. Elevated railways were sheered off from the shards of metal from the tank, and people were drowned and suffocated by the molasses which flowed in a 30’ high wave, faster than people could run. Boston harbor remained tainted for a 5 month period of time.

Final investigations found that the Purity Distilling Company was guilty of shoddy workmanship in the construction of the tank. I am sure that the company’s cost saving corner cutting in the original tank construction gave them cause to regret doing what “seemed to be a good idea at the time” after the 1 million dollar damage assessment was put down.

During his reign as King of Israel, Saul was commanded to completely destroy the Amalekites. He was to take no plunder....He was to destroy everything. Yet he failed to obey what Samuel had relayed to him as the instructions from the Lord. Saul spared the best sheep for sacrifice to God, while destroying all the rest. He was rejected by God as Israel’s King because of this final act of disobedience to God’s instructions to destroy everything. Saul’s saving out the best of the plunder for sacrificial offering tells me that he had not thought the instructions through, and deemed making the sacrifices to be “a good idea at the time”.

In both of the above examples the problem came from failure to obey instructions. The Purity Distilling Company failed to obey construction standards which were set down, cutting corners in order to save money and time. Saul put his own will of making a good sacrificial showing to God by offering up the best of the plunder from the Amalekites as sacrificial offerings ahead of God’s will. In both cases, a case could be made for doing “what seems to be a good idea at the time”. Unfortunately, whether it is to cut costs for company profits, or to offer a good sacrifice to God “what seems to be a good idea at the time” is not a good idea in the long run. Purity Distilling Company lost 1 million dollars as a damage assessment....Saul lost the throne of Israel.

Saul’s disobedience with the Amalekites followed a pattern of putting himself on the throne of his life. He acted foolishly by offering the burnt sacrifice when Samuel was delayed and the Philistines were upon him. This was tantamount to rebellion.

Adam and Eve rebelled against the command of God by partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan deceptively encouraged Eve to partake,

saying it would open her eyes....Adam partook because of Eve’s persuasion. By doing “what seemed to be a good idea at the time”, Adam and Eve, and all of mankind, became pawns in an eternal battle of wills....Between God and Satan. Mankind is the prize. We are concomitantly faced with the daily struggle between right and wrong, good and evil, doing what “seems to be a good idea at the time”, or doing it as God instructs us to do after thought and prayer.

On our own, we do not stand a chance of spiritual success. This is because of the sin which indwells all man. We have all sinned and fall short of God’s Glory and, without the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ, we would justifiably be condemned to spiritual death. But, because of this sacrifice, we are free to partake of God’s offering. Because of this Love Offering, we can prayerfully and obediently “work out our Salvation with fear and trembling” as we avoid the pitfalls of “doing what seems to be a good idea at the time”.

Cornell, James "The Great International Disaster Book" pocket books pp260-261

1 Samuel 15:15

1 Samuel 13:1-15

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

Philippians 2:12