

What does the Old Testament tell us about what scriptural leaders accomplished as teenagers?

TEENS IN THE

Although we remember most of the well-known people in the Old Testament because of the things they did as adults, we can sometimes discover hints about what these remarkable people were like in their teens. In fact, discovering the decisions and choices they made while growing up may help you in living your life today. Here are a few examples:



Isaac

Born to Abraham and Sarah when they were in their old age, Isaac was a child of promise. Although the scriptures do not give his exact age, they say he was a “lad” when he accompanied his father Abraham and was prepared to become a sacrifice (Genesis 22:3–19). He learned from his father to follow the Lord’s guidance and show faith; then Isaac’s life was preserved.

Moses

After being discovered as a babe in the bulrushes and taken to the palace to be raised as a prince, Moses received a first-class education (see Acts 7:22). In his teens, he may have been taught to read and write Egyptian.

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC, BY TED HENNINGER, © 1979 IRI; BOY SAMUEL CALLED BY THE LORD, GOD APPEARS IN A NIGHT VISION TO THE BOY PROPHET SAMUEL, BY HARRY ANDERSON, © IRI; RUTH PLEDGES LOYALTY TO NAOMI, © 1990 ROBERT BARRETT, DO NOT COPY

OLD TESTAMENT

Samuel

Samuel was born as a gift from the Lord to his mother Hannah. She promised to give him to the Lord to be raised by the priest Eli. Samuel grew and served, and when he was about 12 years old, he was awakened by the voice of the Lord calling to him in the night (see 1 Samuel 3:4–10). Even as a boy, Samuel learned to listen to the voice of the Lord. This began his preparation to become a prophet.

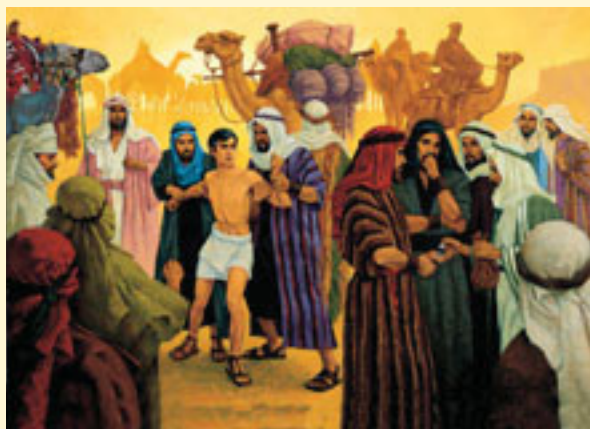
Ruth

Ruth was young when her first husband died. Rather than return to her family, Ruth chose to go with her mother-in-law and accept what she had been taught about the God of Israel. She said to Naomi, “Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God” (Ruth 1:16). Ruth married again and became the great-grandmother to King David, the line in which Jesus Christ was eventually born.



Joseph

Joseph was about 17 when his older brothers sold him to traders who took him as a slave to Egypt. Even in such circumstances, Joseph was blessed. Joseph did a good job for Potiphar, the man who bought him, and everything Joseph



worked at prospered (see Genesis 39:3–4). Joseph continued to work hard and was loyal to his master. Despite false charges and accusations, Joseph eventually rose to become a leader in Egypt second only to Pharaoh. His success put him in a position to help his own family during difficult times.

Daniel

After his family and people were captured and taken to Babylon, Daniel and three friends were brought to serve in the palace of the king. As teenage boys, they refused to eat the sacrificial meat and drink the wine that those in the palace ate. They kept the commandments and were given knowledge and skill. In Daniel 1:20, it says that the king found these four “ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.”

David

David was the youngest of eight sons who lived in Bethlehem. While a boy, he proved his courage by saving his father’s sheep from attack by a lion and a bear. While still a teen, David was chosen by the prophet Samuel to be a king (see 1 Samuel 16:12–13). At first, Samuel thought David’s older brother was the one whom God would choose because he was tall and well-built, but the Lord said to the prophet that it was the boy David who was to be made king. Samuel was told, “The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).



When did the men and women of the Old Testament begin preparing for a lifetime of service to the Lord? From the scriptures we find that it was when they were young. When you are in your teens, you are old enough to learn about the Lord and do His

will. As the prophet Alma said to his son Helaman, “O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God” (Alma 37:35). Instead of waiting until you’re an adult, right now is the perfect time to start living a righteous life. **NE**

Information for this article came from the Bible Dictionary in the LDS version of the King James Bible and from *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Henry Snyder Gehman (1970).

