

# God Rejects Saul as King

I Samuel 15:1-35

Introduction:

- It has been a while, but tonight we are picking up on our study in I Samuel. This is a very pivotal chapter, and story in Israel's history and there are many lessons and applications for us as well.

## I. **BATTLE AGAINST THE AMALEKITES- V. 1-7**

- a. Go and smite/defeat! V. 3
- b. V. 3- utterly destroy- These are very difficult words to read, and are hard to comprehend in our modern mindset.
  - i. Some readers are bothered not by Saul's incomplete obedience, but by God's harsh command!
  - ii. We live in such a shielded and safe western culture, so it is hard for most of us to think of war, and how these cultures interacted in those days
  - iii. However, if we put ourselves in their historical context we can understand the reasoning behind a command such as this
  - iv. God often used Israel to punish the other sinful nations
    1. Genesis 12:1-3 tells us that God chose Israel to be His special nation and consequently, those nations that opposed or abused Israel came under special judgment.
    2. They were pagans who had attacked God's people
  - v. It is a just vengeance- judgment of God
  - vi. V. 2-3- The people of Amalek were actually the provocateurs because they attacked Israel when they were weak and vulnerable back in Exodus 17:8-16, Deut 25:17-19
  - vii. I Samuel 15:18, 33 this generation of Amalekites had not changed!- they were essentially given 300 years to repent! He is slow to anger!

- viii. Utterly destroy-is the idea of putting them under the curse
- ix. What would have happened had the children been allowed to live? The children would grow and have an obligation to come and seek revenge upon Israel.
- c. By the way, God's vengeance is a comfort to His children! God did not forget that they had killed, trampled and harmed his people. He does not overlook those who oppress His children
- d. Perhaps we cannot truly understand this as we should- but suffering people always have recognized this! Rev. 6:9-10
- e. Though God no longer calls His people to take up arms as instruments of His judgment, it does not mean that God has stopped judging the nations. "But we cannot suppose, for a single moment, that the judgment of the nations is to be altogether relegated [appointed] to that final day. Throughout the history of the world the nations have been standing before Christ's bar. Nineveh stood there, Babylon stood there, Greece and Rome stood there, Spain and France stood there, and Great Britain is standing there to-day. One after another has had the solemn word – depart, and they have passed into a destruction which has been absolute and terrible." (Meyer)
- f. There are times when we must take up arms spiritually and defend God's Word! (II Cor. 10:4)
- g. Christians are too soft in this area today

## **II. SAUL'S INCOMPLETE OBEDIENCE- V. 5-9, 14**

- a. This chapter begins with the theme of listening-obeying. Saul fails in this regard
- b. He was to utterly destroy, which he did not fully do- v. 8-9
- c. V. 10-11- God repenting- sorrowful, grieved
- d. V. 14- Saul caught red-handed!
- e. But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord: Saul first insists that he is innocent. But he is so self-deceived he can say, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord and then

immediately describe how he did not obey the voice of the Lord saying that he brought back Agag king of Amalek.

- f. V. 13, 20-21- Saul's claim, "I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites" is plain evidence of the depth of his self-deception. There was an Amalekite right in front of him whom was not utterly destroyed.
- g. V. 15, 20-21-: After insisting he is innocent, Saul then blamed the people for the sin. His statement was a half-truth that was actually a whole lie. It was true that the people took of the plunder. But they did so by following Saul's example (he spared Agag king of Amalek), and with Saul's allowance (because he did nothing to stop or discourage them).
- h. V. 10-11- God was sorry/repentant, but Saul was not!
- i. V. 11- Samuel was greatly distressed because his heart was clearly invested in God's kingdom
  - i. Are we likewise distressed and burdened for God's church? For God's plan for the nations in establishing His kingdom?
- j. Samuel rightly emphasizes that our formal worship is vain if we are not living an obedient life, external devotions are nothing without internal submission.
- k. V. 23- Saul's sin is likened to witchcraft and idolatry-
  - i. We must recognize the root of sin- not just its nice surface and polite exterior
  - ii. V. 22-23- Disobedience from God's point of view
  - iii. To reject God's word is to reject Him as God, and King!
  - iv. "All conscious disobedience is actually idolatry, because it makes self-will, the human I, into a god." (Keil and Delitzsch)
- l. The danger of half-hearted, careless discipleship- lukewarm Christianity
- m. Postponed obedience is also disobedience
- n. "The first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom but its Master".
- o. Someone once said, "It is a great deal easier to do that which God gives us to do, no matter how hard it is, than to face the responsibilities of not doing it."

### III. SAUL IS REJECTED AS KING- V. 10-35

- a. Gilgal was the place the kingdom was renewed (11:14-15) Saul's dynasty was lost (13:7-15), and now where Saul's kingship was rejected (15)
- b. V. 24, 29 God's repentance is paradoxical, Saul's repentance is superficial
  - i. God repents over His will or deeds, not over sin
  - ii. Is used to show regret and God's grief
  - iii. Anthropomorphism- Attribute human forms or characteristics to God
- c. God is not a nonchalant God
  - i. He is not "you win some, you lose some"
  - ii. He is not fickle and emotionless
- d. V. 29- God is both the consistent God of v. 29, and the sorrowful God of v. 11 and 35- He is worthy of our praise!
- e. Saul's shallow repentance showed he did not fully grasp the weight of what he had just done-illustr- sorry doesn't fix the broken lamp
- f. V. 30- Saul was more concerned about appearances/politics/saving face than holiness
- g. V. 26- How sad, Saul was now isolated from Samuel- signifying his isolation from God. Loss of fellowship is a sad thing, when God leaves us alone.
  - i. No more counsel, no more commands, no more direction from God's word, no more encouragement
  - ii. An unbearable silence
- h. So Saul was rejected from being king. Yet it would be almost 25 years before there was another king enthroned in Israel. Saul's rejection was final, but it was not immediate. God used almost 25 years to train up the right replacement for Saul.
- i. Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today": Saul's desperate action provides a vivid object lesson on how the kingdom was torn away from him
- j. (1Sa 15:32-33) Samuel carries out God's will.

- k. Samuel was willing to get his hands dirty doing the unpopular thing
- l. Believers will not be rejected, but our worship and service to God can be!

Conclusion:

- Many have felt the sad effect of fallen preachers, Christian leaders, etc.
- Pray for our missionaries, and for our Christian leaders here in our church
- Pray that we keep tender hearts of obedience, and that we have transparent, total repentance when we fall