

## God Ultimately and Definitively Rejects Saul as King Because of His Disobedience in not Fully Destroying the Amalekites

1 Samuel 15:1-35

- God finally and fully rejects Saul as king because of his disobedience with the destruction of the Amalekites. This is a major point of emphasis in the story of God establishing his king to reign and rule in righteousness, and particularly speaks to us about how we view God's character, the magnitude of his word, and our obedience to it.
- I. The account's primary emphasis is Saul's disobedience to God's command, and God definitively rejecting him, and how this relates to the scope of God's plans.
    - Chp. 12 - God's mercy after Israel's sin in asking for a king, and conditions. Chp. 13 - Unlawful sacrifice; not taking seriously the authority of God's word. Chp. 14 - Foolish oath and consequences; pride, vengeance, jealousy.
  - A. Vs. 1-3 - God commands Saul to devote the Amalekites to destruction.
    - This seems harsh, but the Amalekites have been and still are wicked, as are the rest of the Canaanites, as is all of mankind. God is righteous in his judgment. We are grateful for the gospel.
  - B. Vs. 4-9 - Saul defeats the Amalekites, but spares the best of the livestock and the king.
    - **Vs. 4-5** - Saul summons the people in Telaim (Probably southern border of Judah.), two hundred thousand on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah (Directly adjacent. Fewer?), and they lay in wait in a valley close to the city of Amalek (Very southwest portion of Israel.). Saul does something commendable in **vs. 6**, when he allows the Kenites who apparently lived among the Amalekites to depart so they don't get destroyed, since they showed kindness to Israel as they came out of Egypt (Moses's father-in-law was a Kenite, and he helped Israel). **Vs. 7-9** describe the victory over the Amalekites and how Saul devoted them to destruction, but also emphasizes that he and the people spared Agag the king and kept as spoil the best of the livestock and "all that was good (The emphasis is on both Saul and the people disobeying by not utterly destroying everything)."
  - C. Vs. 10-11 - God informs Samuel of Saul's turning from following him in this decisive act of disobedience.
    - The LORD says to Samuel, "I regret that I have made Saul king (We will examine what this means later [Vs. 29 - No regret.]. The Hebrew word can mean "regret" or "feel grief or sorrow." God is genuinely sorrowful as he sees Saul's sin.), for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments (Two points of emphasis.)." Samuel's angry, and cries to the Lord all night (His anger may be a combination: The LORD, Saul, the situation. So may be his pleading: Saul, Israel, situation, himself? One thing is clear: he takes no pleasure in Saul's failure, nor in what he faces.).
  - D. Vs. 12-21 - Samuel confronts Saul with his sin and the Lord's word, and Saul justifies his actions.
    - **Vs. 12** - Samuel goes to meet Saul in the morning and is told Saul set up a monument for himself in Carmel and went to Gilgal (The emphasis on the monument. Progression toward this from chp. 11 and Nahash and credit to God.). **Vs. 13** - Samuel comes to Saul, and Saul says, "Blessed be you to the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord (Almost as if he is convinced his version of "obedience" is correct.)." **Vs. 14** - Samuel asks why he hears livestock. **Vs. 15** - Saul says, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people (Vs. 9 - Saul and people.) spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the Lord your God (We were right to keep them, for we're going to use them for the Lord...), and the rest we have devoted to destruction."
    - **Vs. 16** - Samuel says, "Stop! I'll tell you what the Lord said to me this night." Saul tells him to speak. **Vs. 17** - Samuel says, "Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel (Trajectory. Privilege. Responsibility. Source.). **Vs. 18** - And the Lord sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' (Clarity and expectation of complete obedience.)." **Vs. 19** - Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord (What Saul presumed upon and minimized God considered non-negotiable. His word carries weight, is not arbitrary.)?"
    - **Vs. 20-21** - Saul persists, emphasizing what he did do, and blaming the people again: "I've obeyed the voice of the Lord. I've gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me. I've brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I've devoted the Amalekites to destruction. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal ("Right reasons!". Gilgal.)." Read vs. 3. No exceptions. God was clear, no matter how Saul tries to justify and maneuver.
  - E. Vs. 22-23 - Samuel's words centralize the emphasis: God has rejected Saul because he has rejected God's word. Ritual, presumption, and subjective interpretation of God's word are meaningless when you rebel against him and his word.
    - **Vs. 22** - And Samuel said, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams (Presumption and empty ritual vs. honoring God and his word.)." **Vs. 23** - For rebellion is as the sin of divination (Chp. 28.), and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry (Assuming. Subjectivity. Self-serving.). Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king (This is it.

The defining moment. God's people desperately need God's word, to know him, and when the one who is to be their leader won't submit to it, and him, it's tragic.)"

F. Vs. 24-31 - Saul's half-hearted admission of sin confirms the lack of weight he puts on God's word.

- 2:30 - "I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever... Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed."
- **Vs. 24** - Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice (Half true. Excuse.). **Vs. 25** - Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me (Show support) that I may bow before the Lord (His minimizing sin makes him think he can still get out of this. Bowing could be before the people [vs. 31.], or in an offering to "give him another chance.>")" **Vs. 26** - And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel (Final.)." **Vs. 27-28** - As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore. And Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you (Illustration of magnitude.)."
- **Vs. 29** - And also the Glory of Israel (Vs. Saul!) will not lie or have regret (Nu. 23:19 - God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?), for he is not a man, that he should have regret (His word is definite and final. He is completely different than man, and God's regret is different than man's. He feels sorrow and is grieved that Saul has turned out as he did, but never thinks a decision he has made is a mistake. This is the biblical record, and good. Ps. 139:16 - in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. Is. 46:9-10 - I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose;')."
- **Vs. 30-31** - Saul says, "I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the Lord your God." So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the Lord (He has admitted his sin while thinking he can keep up appearances. Samuel's mercy.).
- **Vs. 32-33** - Samuel says to bring Agag to him. Agag comes to him cheerfully, thinking "the bitterness of death is past." Samuel says, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the Lord in Gilgal (Before the Lord. Gilgal. Shocking, yet obedient.).

G. Vs. 34-35 - The story comes to a definitive end with Samuel departing from Saul, never to see him again.

- **Vs. 34** - Samuel goes to Ramah. Saul goes to Gibeath. **Vs. 35** - Samuel didn't see Saul again until the day of his death, but grieved over him. And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel (Marker. Rest of book.).

II. This is revealing to us important realities about how we view God's character, the magnitude of his word, and our obedience to it.

A. We continue to emphasize this is part of the larger picture of raising up his king, near and far, to reign and rule in righteousness.

B. God places high value on complete submission to the authority his word, and also takes disobedience to it very seriously.

1. His way is right and good all the time.
2. No one perfectly obeys his commandments, and that is why the gospel is necessary, initially and continually.
3. As believers, we, by his grace, have the responsibility and ability, though we will never do it perfectly, to hold highly the goodness and authority of his word.

C. God is sovereign, yet his emotions of sorrow and grief, and all other emotions, though not like ours, are real.

D. Saul is a poignant reminder of the gravity of not submitting to the authority of God's word.

1. Selfishness and pride is underneath lack of submission to the authority of God's word.
2. Partial obedience is not enough.
3. Deciding we need to add to or take away from what God says, because of circumstances, or "knowing better," or anything else, is foolish and futile.
4. We can be in a place where we think we're obeying him but we're not.
5. We must not blame others when we fail to submit to the authority of God's word.
6. Ritual does not necessarily mean we are submissive to his word.
7. How we respond to reminders that we are not being submissive to God's word is crucial.
8. Half-hearted repentance is meaningless.
9. God's grace is available and enough when we fail and as we pursue submission to the authority of his word.