

## Lesson 9: The Loss of a Crown, First Samuel 15

### Introduction (Recap)

Pursuing rewards, and specifically crowns, is the theme of First Samuel. We have seen three comparisons of people who have pursued rewards in various ways:

- **Brides:** Peninnah compared to Hannah
- **Priests:** The sons of Eli compared to the son of Elkanah (Samuel)
- **Kings:** Saul compared to David

### What is involved with the pursuit of a crown?

- **There are right and wrong kings with whom to align yourself when pursuing a crown.** Israel throws off God as King and turns their allegiance to the lesser human king with disastrous consequences. Saul will deny the LORD's headship over him and so become disqualified. We, too, have to consider who we acknowledge as headship over us. Christ is our king-to-be in a future kingdom, and yet in this current earthly kingdom another king reigns. We can become disqualified when we shift alliances and align ourselves under the wrong king.
- **There are right and wrong crowns to pursue.** Do you seek a perishable one or an imperishable one? Is what you are pursuing of earthly value in the eyes of men or heavenly value in the eyes of God?
- **There are right and wrong reasons for pursuing a crown.** Do you pursue the crown for your own glory and the building of your own kingdom or for God's glory and the building of God's kingdom?
- **There are right and wrong ways to pursue crowns.** You cannot flail about aimlessly, without vision or restraint. It takes self-control and discipline to achieve the crown and claim the full reward in the kingdom. It requires bringing your carnal nature into submission even as you push back the influence of the external carnal culture around you. Pursuing a crown requires patience, self-control, obedience, and knowing how to fight a good fight.

**Pursuing crowns is a reflection of our belief that we will be co-heirs with Christ as part of our glorification in the kingdom.** The Lord has promised to extend the glory of royalty to us if we endure even as Christ endured.

*"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." - Romans 8:16-17*

*"This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us." - 2 Timothy 2:11-12*

Notice that living with Him is separate from reigning with Him. The first is the act of faith and identification that gives us salvation and citizenship. The second is an act of endurance through trials that is part of the sanctification process. It is rewarded with the crown and the right to reign.

**There is an endurance test that must be passed to attain the crown**, and that endurance test is what we encounter during the sanctification process.

*"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."* - James 1:12

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness . . ."* – 2 Timothy 4:7-8

*"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer . . . Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."* - Revelation 2:10

**Crowns can be earned, but they can also be lost in the course of the journey.**

*"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world . . . Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."* - Revelation 3:10-11

*"And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."* - 1 Corinthians 9:25-27

If you do not believe that your salvation, once attained, is permanent and guaranteed, then you can interpret these verses to mean you can lose that salvation and citizenry.

If you believe that salvation is permanent, then being disqualified doesn't mean that you have lost your citizenship. It only means you have lost the right to reign as royalty.

**Read First Samuel 15:1-9.**

1. When was the last time we saw Samuel in the text?
2. Who are the Amalekites and what is Israel's history with them?
3. Who are the Kenites?
4. What did Saul do and not do? (v7-9)

**Read First Samuel 15:10-35.**

5. God says that He regrets (Hebrew: *naham*, to sigh heavily) making Saul king. What does a heavy sigh communicate?
6. What is Samuel's reaction? (v11)
7. How does Saul greet Samuel when he gets to Gilgal? (v13)

8. What reason does Saul give for bringing back spoil from the war? (v15)
9. How does Samuel deal with Saul's rebellion? (v16-19)
  - a) Calls him out immediately, forcefully, and with authority.
  - b) Establishes who is the authority.
  - c) Puts the blame back on Saul where it should be.
  - d) Lays out a very clear case of what was expected.
  - e) Asks "why."
10. How does Saul respond? (v20-21)
11. What does Samuel mean by "to obey is better than sacrifice"? (v22-23)
12. Why is rebellion like the sin of divination (witchcraft) and stubbornness like iniquity and idolatry?
13. How does Saul try to avoid the judgment? (v24)
14. Why does Saul want Samuel to return with him? (v25)
15. How does Saul try to keep the throne? (v27-29)
16. Didn't Saul already lose the kingship already in Chapter 13? How is it different this time?
17. Saul makes one last appeal to Samuel. Why does Samuel relent? (v30)
18. What does Agag think will happen when he approaches Samuel? (v31)

The Hebrew word **naham** is used four times in this section of Chapter 15. Note how the context changes the meaning of the word:

*"I greatly **naham** [regret] that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments . . ." (v11)*

*". . . 'The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor **naham** [relent]. For He is not a man, that He should **naham** [relent].'" (v29)*

*". . . Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD **naham** [regretted] that He had made Saul king over Israel." (v35)*

The word **naham** means "to sigh heavily," but the action that follows affects the translation.

#### Application: How to Lose a Crown

If Saul is our example of how to lose a crown, how can we lose our crown?



GAD

REUBEN

MOAB

EDOM

↓ MIDIAN

• Gilgal?

BENJAMIN

• Gibeah

JUDAH

• Carmel

KENITES

AMALEKITES

PHILISTINES

↓ WILDERNESS OF SHUR