

THRU BIBLE

1 Samuel 15–16 | “God Looks At the Heart”

I. SAUL’S DISOBEDIENCE. (15)

A. (v. 1)

1. **“...The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel...”**

a. The word “me” is emphatic in Hebrew. Literally, it reads, “Me sent YHVH to anoint you.”

1) Cf. [1 Samuel 9:15–10:8](#)

2. **“...now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.”**

a. Saul had already had one major failing that cost him the royal dynasty ([13:8-14](#)). He is not to disobey again.

B. (v. 2)

1. **“Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.”**

a. Cf. [Exodus 17:14-16](#) - “And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi: For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

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- b. “*Amalek*” = descendants from the grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:12, 16; 1 Chron. 1:35-36)
 - 1) The Amalekites were the longtime enemies of Israel (Num. 14:43-45; 24:20; Deu. 25:17-19; Judges 3:13; 6:33; 7:12; 10:12).

- c. “*when he came up from Egypt*” = the Exodus (Ex. 17:8-13)
 - 1) While this happened about 400 years earlier, God remembered it and marked it down (Exodus 17:14-16).

- d. **NOTE:** The Amalekites are about to experience the cursing aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant and the judgment of God.

C. (v. 3)

- 1. **“Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.”**
 - a. “*utterly destroy*” - Heb. *haram* - “*totally devoted to destruction; exterminate*”
 - 1) This is referred to as the “Haram Curse” because the Hebrew word here is *haram*.
 - a) This Hebrew word includes the spoils (Deut. 13:12-18; Lev. 27:28-29; Num. 18:14; 24:20; Deut. 7:2; 12:2; 20:16-18; Joshua

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6:1; 15:21) and refers to a *total destruction*!!

- b. *“and spare them not”*
 - 1) This is truly a Holy War!
 - 2) People oftentimes have difficulty in understanding this command of God.
 - a) I don’t know why God does all of the things that He does. He doesn’t explain them to me. But, I do know that if God makes such a command, He has a good reason for making it! I can just be happy there, but of course some people aren’t.
 - b) So, if you need a reason, here you go: the Amalekites were a cruel, vicious people!
 - i. They engaged in extremely vile practices of worship of their god.
 - ii. They sacrificed their children to their god.
 - iii. God has often used one nation to bring judgment upon another nation because of their evil.

D. (v. 6)

1. ***“And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.”***

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- a. The Kenites were a branch of the Midianites, whose priest was Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law ([Exodus 2:15-22](#); [3:1](#); [4:18-20](#)).
- b. The Kenites (specifically Jethro) provided for Moses the principle of elders and judges to help him oversee the Nation ([Exodus 18:1-27](#)), and they helped them navigate the wilderness ([Numbers 10:29-33](#)) before going into the Land and settling with Israel ([Judges 1:16](#)).
- c. Also, it was a Kenite’s wife that killed Sisera, the enemy of Israel ([Judges 4:11, 17-22](#)).
- d. **NOTE:** The Kenites were favorable to Israel in their history, whereas the Amalekites were evil toward Israel.
 - 1) In other words, the Amalekites were under the cursing side of the Abrahamic Covenant, whereas the Kenites were on the blessing side of the Abrahamic Covenant.

E. (v. 8)

1. **“And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.”**

- a. “all the people” - Only refers to those captured and not every single Amalekite since many escaped ([1 Sam. 30:1-29](#); [2 Sam. 8:12](#)).
- 1) The Amalekites final destruction came later at the hand of the Simeonites ([1 Chron. 4:43](#)).

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- 2) **NOTE:** In Scriptural typology, Amalek is a type of the flesh. There is to be no truce with the flesh and no peaceful coexistence.
 - a) Cf. **Romans 8:12-13** - *“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”*
- 3) **KEY:** We don’t need reformation, but transformation!
 - a) There are always those trying to reform the flesh (i.e. lose weight, stop drinking, etc.), but we cannot reform the old nature! It is corrupt!
 - i. Today, there is a lot of denial of the corrupt human nature. The Bible teaches that man, apart from God, is hopelessly lost and corrupt. The reality is that we have to be born again! We need God to give us a new nature!
 - b) Cf. **Romans 6:3-6, 11** - *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old*

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man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. ... Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

- i. Like the Amalekites, God has ordered the utter destruction of the flesh!

b. “Agag” - Title of the king

- 1) This is not a proper name, but a title like Pharaoh or Caesar.

F. (v. 11)

1. **“It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments...”**

a. “repenteth” - Heb. *nacham* - “to regret; to be sorry; to suffer grief”

- 1) The root word in Hebrew is “to sigh” or “breathe strongly”.
- 2) **PROBLEM:** This is a difficult passage because it seems that God is changing His mind. However, in **1 Samuel 15:29** God says that “*He is not a man, that He should repent,*” and in **Malachi 3:6** God says, “*For I am the Lord, I do not change.*” Also, in **Hebrews 6:17**, God demonstrated the “*immutability of His counsel*” by swearing an oath. Does God change His mind or doesn’t He?

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- 3) **ANSWER:** God does not change His mind ([1 Sam. 15:29](#)), His will, nor His nature ([Malachi 3:6](#); [James 1:17](#)), but He does change His course of action if the circumstances change! In this case, God is expressing deep emotional sorrow because Saul’s disobedience and the trouble it would bring upon Israel.
- a) The language used here in this passage is called anthropomorphic, or man-centered, language. It is a figurative way of describing an Infinite God from the perspective of finite man.
 - b) If someone were to change their mind, it is either because there is new information, or the circumstances changed which would require a different attitude or action.
 - c) We know that God is Omniscient ([Psalm 147:5](#)) and cannot learn new information, so the only way that God’s attitude could change is if the circumstances changed, which would then require a different attitude or action from God.
 - d) **NOTE:** It was Saul’s actions of disobedience that changed God’s attitude towards him, for God said, *“For he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments.”*
 - e) **KEY:** God did not change, but it was Saul who changed!
- 4) From a human perspective, it seems that God changed His mind about Saul, however, from the

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Divine side it was God’s plan to make a dynasty of David.

2. **“...And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.”**

- a. **Q** = What is your reaction to ungodly politicians or leaders?...
- 1) Most of the time we get angry and post angry meme’s, but when’s the last time you cried unto the Lord for them all night?
 - 2) Cf. **Titus 3:1-2** - *“Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.”*
 - 3) Cf. **1 Peter 2:13-17** - *“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.”*

G. **(v. 13)**

1. **“...Blessed be thou of the LORD:...”**

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- a. Saul is couching his disobedience in spiritual terms.
 - 1) Some people use spiritual jargon to sound spiritual, but it’s just to try and cover up their disobedience.
 - a) Anybody can say, “Hallelujah! Bless God! Praise the Lord!”
 - 2) Just because a person uses spiritual jargon does not mean that the person is right-on with the LORD. They could be using spiritual jargon while they are lying to you.

2. ***“...I have performed the commandment of the LORD.”***

- a. Saul told Samuel the exact opposite of what God told Samuel (v. 11).

H. (v. 15)

1. ***“And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.”***

- a. In this verse, Saul makes TWO BIG MISTAKES:
 - 1) He shifted blame onto others (“for the people spared”).
 - 2) He justified his sin for “righteous” cause.
 - a) When faced with the evidence, he used a spiritual-sounding excuse! “Oh, we did it to give to the Lord!”

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- b) I believe that spiritual excuses are the most blasphemous of all excuses!!
 - i. Someone will say, “Oh, the Lord told me and showed me _____” as an excuse to cover up their actions. Blasphemy!
 - ii. **KEY:** God does not lead you to do anything that is contrary to His Word! God would never lead a person to disobey His commands.
- c) This kind of excuse is like saying, “Well, I robbed the bank, but I’m going to tithe 10% to the Lord!” Stupid.

I. (v. 23)

1. **“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry...”**

- a. “*witchcraft*” - Heb. “*divination*”
 - 1) *Witchcraft* and *divination* were capital crimes (Deut. 18:9-22).
 - 2) In the eyes of the Lord, a rebellious heart is just as evil witchcraft.
- b. “*stubbornness*” - Heb. “*pushing; insubordination; arrogance*”

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- 1) If you dig your heels in and disobey God, it is like idolatry because He is not your God, you are!
 - a) If you are *stubborn* toward God, you are putting yourself in the place of God, thus idolatry!
- 2) **Q** = What will happen if you are *insubordinate* towards your boss at work?... Fired!

2. “...***Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.***”

- a. God previously removed the Dynasty from Saul (**1 Sam. 13:13-14**), but He did not take the throne from him, which was reaffirmed here (**15:1**). However, from now on, Saul is no longer king of Israel from God’s perspective!
 - 1) Though physically on the throne from man’s perspective, Saul is considered a usurper from God’s perspective.

J. (v. 35)

1. “***And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death:...***”

- a. Samuel never sought out for Saul again, but later on we see Saul seeking out Samuel (**1 Sam. 19:23-24**), though Samuel makes no efforts to come see Saul.

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2. ***“...nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.”***

a. Again, there was not change in God’s character (v. 29), but there was a change in Saul’s conduct that required the corresponding change in God’s reaction to him. Because God does not change, He must always bless obedience and curse disobedience.

b. **SUMMARY OF SAUL’S CAREER:**

1) His striking appearance (9:2) only led to pride (18:8).

2) His initiative (11:7) eventually gave way to rebellion (15:23; 20:32).

3) His bravery (13:3) led to recklessness (14:24).

4) He goes from being Spirit-empowered (11:6) to being demonized (16:14).

a) **KEY:** Saul was a man that had a lot of potential and started out well, but ended up badly.

II. THE ANOINTING OF DAVID. (16)

A. (v. 1)

1. ***“And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite:...”***

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- a. *“Jesse the Bethlehemite”*
 - 1) Jesse is from the Tribe of Judah, the grandson of Boaz and son of Obed ([Ruth 4:18-22](#)).
 - a) Jesse’s grandfather Boaz was married to Ruth the Moabitess, and his great-grandfather Salmon was married Rahab the harlot.
 - 2) Since Jesse’s family was from Bethlehem since his grandfather Boaz was from there ([Ruth 1:19; 2:1-4](#)).

2. *“... for I have provided **Me** a king among his sons.”*

- a. This king is the one that was God’s choice, in contrast to Saul who was the people’s choice ([8:4-9](#)).

B. (v. 2)

1. *“And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me...”*

- a. On the route from Ramah to Bethlehem, Samuel would have to go through Gibeah, where Saul was headquartered, and he knew that Saul would take Samuel’s action of anointing another king as treasonous.

2. *“...And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.”*

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- a. Secrecy is not the same as deceit. There is a difference from telling a lie and concealing the truth to one who has forfeited the right to know.
 - 1) Cf. **Matthew 10:16** - Jesus demonstrated this principle when He said, *“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.”*
 - 2) We are not always obligated to tell all about all we know, especially when matters of life and death are concerned.
 - a) **Illust.** - Your wife might ask you, “Does this dress make me look fat?” You might not want to tell the truth because it’s a matter of life and death!!

C. (v. 10)

- 1. **“Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.”**
 - a. The SEVEN SONS listed:
 - 1) Eliab. (v. 6-7; 17:13; 1 Chron. 2:13)
 - a) Also called *Elihu* (1 Chron. 7:18)
 - 2) Abinadab. (v. 8; 17:13; 1 Chron. 2:13)
 - 3) Shammah (v. 9; 17:13; 1 Chron. 2:13)
 - a) Also called *Shimeah* (2 Sam. 13:3, 32), *Shimma* (1 Chron. 2:13; 20:7) and *Shimea* (2 Sam. 21:21).

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- 4) Nathaneel. (1 Chron. 2:14)
- 5) Raddai. (1 Chron. 2:14)
- 6) Ozem. (1 Chron. 2:15)
- 7) An unnamed son. (1 Chron. 2:15)
 - a) This may indicated that he died early, or some other reason, but we are not given his name in the Scriptures.

b. Jesse also had TWO DAUGHTERS:

- 1) Zeruah. (2 Sam. 17:25; 1 Chron. 2:16)
 - a) She is the mother of David’s nephews that have major roles in his life: Abishai, Joab, and Asahel.
- 2) Abigail.¹ (2 Sam. 17:25; 1 Chron. 2:16-17)
 - a) She was married to “Jether the Ishmeelite”, also known as “Ithra an Israelite” (2 Sam. 17:25),² and mother to Amasa, which then was the nephew of David.

D. (v. 12)

1. ***“And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.”***

¹ Not to be confused with another Abigail, Nabal’s wife who would eventually become David’s wife after being a widow (1 Sam 25).

² These words are basically the same except for one letter in the Hebrew.

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- a. David’s OUTWARD APPEARANCE:
 - 1) “*ruddy*” - Heb. *admoni* - “*red; reddish*”
 - a) This means that David had red hair and fair skin.
 - 2) “*beautiful countenance*” - Heb. “*beautiful eyes*”
 - 3) “*goodly to look to*” - Heb. “*good-looking; attractive*”

E. (v. 13)

1. “***Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren:...***”

- a. The purpose of anointing in this context is never publicly stated, yet Samuel knows that David is being anointed king in Saul’s place.
- b. There is no reason to assume that anyone knew the reason for the anointing.
 - 1) In the O.T., there was anointing for a variety of reasons.
- c. This anointing came at around the age of 15 years old.
 - 1) David came to the throne at age 30 (2 Sam. 5:4) and ruled for 40 years (2 Sam. 5:4-5; 1 Chron. 29:26-28), which means he died at 70 years old.
 - a) **NOTE:** We know from history that Solomon began his reign in 970 B.C., thus that was

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the year David died. That means that David was born in 1040 B.C.

2. “...and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.”

a. “David” - Heb. “*Lover; Beloved*”

F. (v. 14)

1. “But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.”

a. “evil” - Heb. “*harmful; distressing; bad; sad*”

b. “spirit” - Heb.

c. “troubled” - Heb. “*terrified; terrorized*”

1) God uses demons for His own purposes, and here He allows a demon to torment Saul.

2) Demonic torment in the life of Saul included the following manifestations:

a) Manic depression. (1 Sam. 16:14-23)

b) Insecurity.

c) Periods of intense gloom. (1 Sam. 16:14-23)

d) Homicidal tendencies for no reason. (1 Sam. 18:10-11; 19:9-10)

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- e) Delusions of plots and conspiracies.
- 3) **NOTE:** Christians in the New Testament cannot be demon-possessed.
 - a) Cf. [John 14:20, 30](#); [1 John 4:4](#); [5:18](#); [1 Corinthians 6:14-16](#); [Ephesians 1:21-22](#); [2:6](#); [6:12](#); [Colossians 1:27](#); [James 4:7](#)
 - b) Pastor Chuck Smith: ““What about these experiences of Christians having demons cast out of them? What are the voices that name themselves, the writhing on the floor, and the regurgitation? I don't know. I'm thankful that, since I don't engage in these unscriptural practices, I don't have to explain them.”³
 - i. There are those that will give names to demons like lust, hatred, liar, gluttony, envy, fear, and jealousy! However, Paul classified those as “*works of the flesh*” ([Gal. 5:19-21](#)), which he told us to “*put off all these*” ([Col. 3:8](#)) and by the Spirit “*mortify the deeds of the body*” ([Rom. 6:3-14](#); [8:13](#)). We are never commanded to cast them out!

G. (v. 18)

1. ***“Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man,***

³ Excerpt From: Chuck Smith. “Answers For Today.” Apple Books. <https://books.apple.com/us/book/answers-for-today/id1338885175>

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and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.”

- a. This servant describes David as:
 - 1) A great musician - “*cunning in playing*”
 - 2) A valiant warrior.
 - a) David hadn’t fought any battles yet, but it could be the stories of him fighting a lion and bear got out (1 Sam. 17:34-36).
 - 3) A great speaker and singer - “*prudent in matters*”
 - 4) A handsome person.
 - 5) The Lord being with him.

- b. **NOTE:** This is the providence of God that this servant knows David and that he knows David’s skills. The Lord will use these events to bring David into the king’s court and begin the natural process of transference.

H. (v. 21)

1. “And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer.”

- a. David doesn’t just become the court musician, but he becomes Saul’s personal attendant.

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- b. Saul’s palace has been discovered by excavations in Gibeah (modern Tell el-Fūl⁴).⁵
- 1) The palace measures 169’ x 114’, which was a structure of 19,266 square feet.
 - 2) There were 4 towers on each corner for defenses.

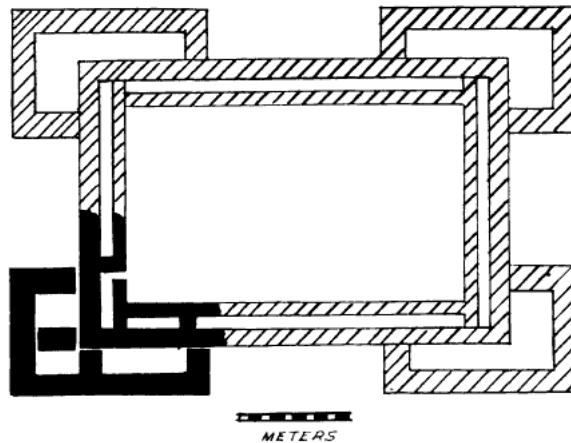


Fig. 14. Reconstructed outline plan of Fortresses I and II. The preserved part of Fortress I is shown in solid black.

I. (v. 23)

1. ***“And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”***

- a. I always think it’s a good idea to turn on worship music when you’re feeling down or discouraged.

⁴ Tell el-Fūl means “Hill of Beans”, also known in Hebrew as *Givat Shaul*, lit. “Hill of Saul”
DMS 31° 49’ 24” N, 35° 13’ 52” E
Decimal 31.823333, 35.231111

⁵ https://www.jstor.org/stable/3210972?seq=4#metadata_info_tab_contents
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