

A Study of I Samuel
The Desiring for a King

Saul and Agag

Chapter 15

God's Commandment Concerning Amalek (15:1-5): Long before the time of Saul, in the days of the wilderness wanderings Israel had been savagely attacked from the rear by the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-16). Therefore, God swore that He would avenge their evil deed:

Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it. (Deuteronomy 25:17-19)

Amalek's time had come. Saul is commanded to "utterly destroy all they have" (1 Samuel 15:2-3). This would be Saul's last chance to prove himself.

Saul's Disobedience (15:6-9): Saul was commanded to spare the Kenites since they had shown kindness to Israel in the wilderness wandering (vs. 6 cf. Ex. 18:9-10 Jethro was a Kenite, Judges 1:16).

Saul's reason for his disobedience in sparing Agag is pride, it would seem that Saul could not resist the desire to parade King Agag around as his prisoner of war for this own honor and prestige (see vs. 12).

Saul and the people spared the "best" and the "good" of the livestock, only destroying that which was "vile and refuse".

Samuel's Confronting of Saul (15:10-23): The word of the LORD came unto Samuel saying, "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." The LORD saw all that Saul did in battle that day for the eye of the LORD are in every place beholding the good and the evil (vs. 11 cf. Prov. 15:3).

The phrase in verse 12, "...he set him up a place..." is indication that Saul spared king Agag to set him up as a public exhibit of his victory. Whatever be the case Samuel meets up with Saul at Gilgal and upon his arrival Saul emphatically declares, "I have performed the commandment of the LORD." (13) Samuel's response to Saul is a subtle way of saying, "you liar" (14).

Saul tried to justify his disobedience by claiming that the animals were brought as a sacrifice to the LORD (15). He will also argue that it was the people that "took of the spoil" (21).

Samuel mentions one overriding reason for Saul's rebellion, " And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight ..." Pride had entered into the life of Saul to cause him to do "evil in the sight of the LORD" (17-19).

Samuel's response is timeless in its application, "...to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of the rams" (22).

Saul's rebellion was as the sin of witchcraft and his stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry (23). Saul had put out from among the people wizards as well as those that had familiar spirits (see I Sam 28:9). However, Saul's life will degrade to the point of consulting a witch, one that has a familiar spirit (I Sam. 28:7).

Saul's Desperation (15:24-31): One need only to read these verses to see the desperation of Saul. Saul confesses his sins (24) but this did not revoke the judgment of the LORD (25-26). As Samuel turns to leave Saul, Saul laid hold upon the skirt of his mantel and it rent (27). Samuel used this desperate act to reconfirm that the LORD will "rent" the kingdom from Saul this day (28).

Saul desire for a good reputation moves Saul to request Samuel to worship with him before the elders and the people of Israel of which Samuel does (30-31). This, however, will be the last time Samuel will walk with Saul.

The Death of Agag (15:32-35): Saul will still be recognized as Israel's king for about another 15 years even though he was deposed by the LORD at this time (16:1). Samuel kills king Agag before the LORD in Gilgal (32-33). Saul and Samuel retreat to their respective hometowns never to cross paths again, apart from Samuel being brought up from the afterlife (1 Sam. 28: 14).

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Chapter 16

David's Anointing (16:1-13): The LORD having rejected Saul as king moves to choose another king, the LORD doing the very thing He said He would do, "The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, *that is* better than thou." (15:28). The man that will be chosen will be a man after God's own heart, David the son of Jesse (Acts 13:22). The kingly lineage will move from the tribe of Benjamin to the tribe of Judah as was prophesied (Gen. 49:10).

Saul is not fairing well from this point onward; the spirit of the LORD has departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the LORD has troubled him (see 16:14). Because of the state of Saul Samuel is worried that Saul would have him killed if Saul finds out that he is going to Jesse to anoint one of his sons to be king (16:1-2). However, the LORD provides a means for Samuel, telling Samuel to go to Bethlehem to sacrifice to the LORD and to invite Jesse to join him (2-3).

Upon calling the sons of Jesse to the sacrifice Samuel looks upon Jesse's sons and sees Eliab and wrongfully assumes he is the chosen one (6). The LORD underscores a truth found throughout scripture, the LORD looks not on the countenance of a man or the height of his stature but at the heart (7).

Having all seven of Jesse's sons pass before Samuel, Samuel asks are there any other sons of which Jesse tells of his youngest son attending to the sheep in the field (8-11).

David is chosen by God, "this is he" (12). David is the eighth son of Jesse. Eight is new beginnings, thus God is starting anew. David was a red-haired youth who was beautiful to look upon (12). However, looks are deceiving for David was able to protect the sheep he was over, slaying a lion and a bear (17:34-36). He was a man of war (16:18) and would be known as one all the days of his life (I Chron. 28:3).

From this day forward the spirit of the LORD came upon David and it departed from Saul (13 cf. 14).

Saul's Evil Spirit (16:14-23): The life of Saul deteriorates from this moment on. Saul will have an evil spirit trouble him until his remaining days. Saul's demeanor was noticeable to all, for his servants said unto him, "Behold now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee." (15). The solution given to Saul was music (16). There is a lot about music and its power in the spiritual realm even its ability to place one in a hypnotic state in which one can receive a spirit.

Saul agrees with his servants and commands them to go and search out a man that can play well. The man chosen to play before Saul is none other than David, the son of Jesse (17-18).

David is delivered unto Saul and would become Saul's armorbearer playing before Saul whenever an evil spirit rose upon him (19-23).