

THE RISE AND FALL OF A NATION



Lessons from Israel's first kings

The Downfall of a king



GOD GIVES A CLEAR COMMAND

¹Samuel said to Saul, “I am the one the Lord sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the Lord. ²This is what The Lord Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. ³Now go attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.’” 1 Samuel 15:1-3



SAUL DISOBEYS GOD

⁸He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. ⁹But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs – everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed. ¹⁰Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: ¹¹“I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.” Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the Lord all that night.



SAUL SET UP A MONUMENT TO HIMSELF

¹²Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, “Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.”



HE LIES ABOUT OBEYING GOD

¹³When Samuel reached him, Saul said, “The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.” ¹⁴But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?” ¹⁵Saul answered, “The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.”



HE MAKES EXCUSES AND BLAMES OTHERS

²⁰“But I did obey the Lord,” Saul said. I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought Agag back their king. ²¹The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.”



SAUL IS CONFRONTED BY SAMUEL

²²But Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. ²³For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.” ²⁴Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated the Lord’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. ²⁵Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord.” ²⁶But Samuel said to him, “I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel!” ²⁷As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore. ²⁸Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors, to one better than you.



PARTIAL OBEDIENCE IS DISOBEDIENCE

1. Where have I obeyed God.... almost?
2. And am I willing today to move from partial obedience to wholehearted surrender?

