

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 29TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

CLEAR COMMAND (1 SAMUEL 15:1-9) SAUL'S OBEDIENCE IS TESTED

Samuel told Saul that the Lord sent him to anoint him, and now **the Lord has a clear command that he is to follow.**

- The Lord witnessed the Amalekite's attack on Israel while they were **"tired and weary"** (Deuteronomy 25:17-19) as they fled Egypt. So now, 400 years later, Saul is to lead an attack to **"completely destroy everything they have"** (v. 3).

HARDENED UNREPENTANT HEARTS

The Lord told Moses, **"Write this down on a scroll as a reminder and recite it to Joshua: I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek under Heaven"** (Exodus 17:14).

- **God delayed "His promise" for 400 years, "not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance"** (2 Peter 3:9).

WHO ARE THE AMALEKITES?

They were a **Nomadic group** that resided in the desert between Egypt and Canaan (Numbers 13:29). They showed **unrelenting brutality towards the Israelites by attacking them as they left Egypt.** They later **joined with the Canaanites** (Numbers 14:45), the **Moabites** (Judges 3:12-13), and the **Midianites** (Judges 6:3) **to attack them on separate occasions.**

GOD IS TRUE AND JUST

God promised Abraham in Genesis 12, as He calls him to establish a **"great nation,"** that He would bless those who **bless him and curse those who curse him.**

- Though God was true to His promise and just in punishing the Amalekites, **it was their hatred of the Jewish people and their repeated attacks that led to their ultimate demise.**

DID SAUL OBEY GOD'S COMMAND?

Saul obeyed in attacking, but **his obedience was incomplete and selective.** He allowed the king to live, and they kept the best livestock for themselves. Saul and his men obeyed to the extent that it benefited them.

- **We do not get to pick and choose which commands of God we will honor. Partial obedience is disobedience.**

CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE

We see the **spared Amalekites** again in 1 Samuel 30 **continue to attack and plunder the Israelites for generations** until a group of Simeonites eventually defeats them in 1 Chronicles 4:42-43.

- Haman (an Agagite because he was a descendant of the Amalekite King Agag whom Saul spared) would **connive to have all Jews in Persia killed** by order of King Xerxes.

SELF-DECEPTION (1 SAMUEL 15:10-21)

"I REGRET THAT I MADE SAUL KING..."

Would God do things differently if given the chance? Was a sovereign God surprised by the outcome of Saul? This is like Genesis 6:7, when **God was grieved when He observed the wickedness of humanity.**

- **God is capable of more complex emotions than we are, and though He was in control, God was still hurt by Saul's disobedience.**

"SAMUEL BECAME ANGRY AND CRIED OUT..."

Samuel had a heart like God's, so Saul's disobedience also hurt him.

- To have a heart like God's means that the things that grieve God also grieve us, and the things that please God are also pleasing to us. **Our heart is deceitful and wicked** (Jeremiah 17:9), **so we must allow God to create a clean heart in us** (Psalms 51:10-11).

SAUL MAKES A MONUMENT FOR HIMSELF

Saul doesn't seem grieved over his disobedience. Instead, he seems quite pleased with himself.

- Saul wanted to be recognized and exalted. In his pride, Saul believed he had kept the entirety of what God commanded. **Pride will lead us to a place of self-deception. When we think we are "good," we feel the need for repentance is removed.**

"THEN WHAT IS THIS SOUND..."

Pride and disobedience blinded Saul to his own sin. Saul was oblivious to the evidence of his sin, while it was obvious to Samuel.

- **We must seek the Spirit's help in revealing blind spots. "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way"** (Psalms 139:23-24).

NO ROOM FOR GOD IN SAUL'S HEART

Saul responded by justifying, lying, and blame-shifting. Instead of leading, he blamed those who followed his example.

- Saul said they kept the best so Samuel could sacrifice them **"to the Lord your God,"** revealing a bigger problem: His relationship with God. **In his pride, he removed God as king of his heart.**

OUR SIN MAY BE HIDDEN FOR A TIME, BUT...

Outside of Agag and the sacrifices, **Saul claimed they destroyed the rest.**

- In 2 Samuel 1:8-10, when Saul is killed in battle, it is an Amalekite that claims to deliver the final blow. **When we sin against the Lord, we can be certain that our sins will always catch up with us.** (Numbers 32:23).

REJECTED (1 SAMUEL 15:22-31)

"TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE"

Following God is not void of sacrifices, but **for a sacrifice to be accepted, it must be offered with complete obedience.**

- An acceptable sacrifice is a broken spirit, a repentant heart (Psalms 51:16-17), and giving our bodies to His service (Romans 12:1). **Religious practices without obedience are empty rituals before the Lord.**

THE CORRELATION WITH DIVINATION (1 SAMUEL 28:7-9)

The term Samuel uses for rebellion means to press one's case. Samuel is referring to Saul's attempts to justify and excuse his actions. **He equates his actions to the sin of divination.**

- Saul's rebellious heart was no different than someone **rejecting the God of knowledge in an attempt to gain knowledge by other means.**

DEFYING GOD BY ENACTING OUR WILL

Samuel equates Saul's defiance of God (by trying to force a certain course of action) to idolatry.

- Essentially, **Saul was trying to manipulate God with the best of Amalekite's livestock, the same way pagan idolators would offer sacrifices to deities in hopes they would bless them.**

GENUINE REPENTANCE?

Only God knows Saul's heart and if this was genuine repentance.

- He seems to confess that **he allowed the fear of men to trump his fear of the Lord, so he obeyed their voice.** This could have been just **another attempt to blame others and justify one sin with another.**

SAUL REQUESTS TO BE HONORED BEFORE ISRAEL

Saul shows the depth of his pride, that he is only concerned with his image, and he again refers to Samuel's God. Samuel reluctantly returns with Saul, who **"bowed down to the Lord."**

- Whatever the motivation was for this step towards God, **His mind was made up and unchanging.** Saul rejected God's word, and God will reject him as king of Israel.

REGRET (1 SAMUEL 15:32-35)

SAMUEL CARRIES OUT GOD'S WILL

God's command against the Amalekites still stood, so Samuel did what Saul failed to do.

- Samuel returned home to Ramah, and Saul returned to Gibeah. Verse 35 says **Samuel never saw Saul again,** but in 19:22-24, Saul visits Samuel at Naiioth. **Samuel never again viewed Saul as king, and until his death, he mourned him.**

CALLED TO BATTLE

- God called His covenant people to battle as instruments of judgment against the Amalekites. Under the new covenant, we are still called to battle, but **our battle is spiritual** (Ephesians 6:12).
- God has not called us to be instruments of judgment but **instruments of salvation** (Romans 6:13).