

1 Samuel Chapter 15 Commentary

1Sa 15:1 ¶ "Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. 2 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. 3 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."

Samuel is sent to Saul with another commandment, which will be another test of Saul's faithfulness to God. God reminds Saul that he had him anointed as king over Israel, and now demands that Saul hearken to his word. Samuel reminds Saul: Amalek did injustice to Israel, when they were on their wilderness journey, and now God is going to punish them for this sin, by utter destruction. They are not to take any spoils of war, because this is a mission of vengeance, from God, upon a nation that mistreated his people.

Do you see the prophetic picture of the end of time? Consider, who is going to the eternal heaven? Those for whom Christ died. Who is not going to the eternal heaven? Those who have fought against God and God's people. Their destruction at the final judgement will be utter destruction. They will be utterly removed from the heart and mind of all of God's people. There will be no sin in heaven and the utter destruction of the unsaved people will be eternal death in the lake of fire.

What, of earthly riches, are you going to carry to heaven with you? Nothing at all. Wherefore, utterly destroy all your lust for the things of the world. Remember the three sins which encompass all sin on earth? **1Jo 2:16 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."** This reminds us that the action of sanctification is an ongoing purpose in our lives as Christians. As we grow in grace and knowledge of God, we are to purge more and more sinful lust from our lives. Do not misunderstand, you cannot eternally remove sin from your life because this is the finished work of Jesus, but you can refrain from temptations and remove yourself farther and farther from those temptations.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for salvation by grace and the eternal remission of sins you have provide us.

4 "And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. 6 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. 7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. 8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."

Saul gathers his army and sets out to make war. When he comes to a city, wherein dwell the Kenites with the Amalekites, he sends the Kenites word to leave or be destroyed. He acknowledges that the Kenites have shown kindness to Israel when they came out of Egypt. The Kenites depart and Saul makes war on the Amalekites and destroys them, but not utterly as prescribed by God.

Saul spared Agag the king of the Amalekites, the best of the flocks, and the best of their possessions. Everything that was not clean they utterly destroyed, which tells us they did not take any of the false gods and idols of the Amalekites. Israel is also to be blamed, but Saul is the king and should have set the example, and ordered utter destruction, explaining to the people that God said to take no spoils of war from the Amalekites.

Saul has now taken a "**thou shalt**" of God and turned it into "**defiance of God**," which is direct affront to God. This is a principle of the flesh nature against which we must always guard. It is our spiritual warfare as Christians. It is in our very nature to covet those things that seem valuable to us in our fleshly hearts and minds. It is also a reminder that if we do the "**thou shalts**" of God, the "**thou shalt not**s" will go away into nothingness.

10 ¶ "Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, 11 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. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night. 12 And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it

was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal."

God sees that Saul disobeys the specific commandment he has given him. God tells Samuel: I am sorry that I made Saul king, because he continues to be disobedient to me. God is telling Samuel: I gave Saul a second chance to prove his faithfulness to me and he has failed. This is why God is sorry that he made Saul king, because Saul is disobedient.

Notice, this grieved Samuel, and he prayed for Saul all night. Why does this grieve Samuel? Samuel knows that God had made Saul into a new person and that he is a child of God. It is sorrowful to Samuel that one of God's children has fallen from in sin.

Samuel goes to meet Saul, but Saul, knowing he has disobeyed the commandment of God, takes a path to avoid meeting Samuel. Samuel is told what Saul has done and goes to where Saul is. Have you ever noticed, in your own life, when we do not what we should, how we may try to avoid meeting God's people? We may even avoid going to church meetings until we can persuade our consciences of our innocence.

13 "And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. 14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 15 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."

Saul acts like he has done nothing wrong and greets Samuel by telling him: I have done what God commanded. It is our flesh nature to immediately say, we have not sinned when we are trying to justify our actions. Samuel, in return, asks why he hears sheep bleating and oxen lowing? Saul tells Samuel: the people spared the best for sacrifices **"to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God,"** trying to shift blame from himself when we are told in verse nine above that Saul and the people spared. Herein, we see the natural mind creating an excuse to make themselves look good for disobeying God. This displays the very flesh nature of man, who from the Garden of Eden has always tried to blame someone else for their disobedience to God.

Herein, is a warning to the child of God. What God says to do, do it with all your heart, mind, and soul, because your love of God is to be greater than your love of self, as seen in: **Mr 12:30 "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."**

Did you notice how Saul said, **"to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God?"** Saul, using this language, implies God is your God, but he is not my God. A reminder to us: Often, we need to stop and assess our lives to be sure that God is our God, and not just some fleeting thought in our minds. We need to affirm to ourselves that we are the children of God by the Word of God. We need to manifest that we are children of God in all our talks and actions, as seen in: **Heb 10:22; 19 ¶ "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."**

16 "Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. 17 And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? 18 And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. 19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?"

Samuel tells Saul to listen to me and hear me clearly. He reminds Saul that God anointed him king when he was little in his own eyes, seen in: **1Sa 9:21 "And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest**

of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?" Samuel continues and tells Saul: God gave you a specific commandment to utterly destroy the Amalekites and all they possess. Samuel asks: Why did you not obey God? Why did you covet the spoils over God's commandment? Samuel tells Saul: you have committed a great evil in the sight of God.

When we get out of the way of God, we often need to be reminded of who we are and who God is. We need to be reminded that God chose us, and we did not choose God. We need to be reminded that we are totally depraved, and lost in sin, without God in our lives. We need to be reminded that God expects us to be obedient to him, and any diversion from obedience to God is sin in our lives, of which we need to repent and beg God's forgiveness. We need to remember: God is always true and faithful to his word.

A picture easy to understand is when you are born again, you are commanded to leave off the sins of the flesh nature, and to do the things commanded of the new spirit of Christ in you. If you try to hold onto some former sin, you previously enjoyed in the flesh, you have failed to fulfill the new commandment of God. Suppose you were a drunkard, a thief, a liar, adulterer, and such like, before the new birth. If you continue this lifestyle after the new birth, you have rejected the commandment of God. This is only few examples of a multitude of sins of disobedience, which Satan will continue to tempt your flesh nature with. God explains this perfectly in: **Jas 2:10-11; 10 "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. 11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law."**

20 "And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal."

Saul now shows his flesh nature, in the full, by blaming the people and declaring that I have done what God told me to do. Saul continues his speech and traps himself with his own speech. How? Notice, Saul said, **"I have done all"** and then said, **"I have saved Agag the king alive."** Herein, he has trapped himself in his own words, and does not see his disobedience. Saul is still trying to justify self and shift blame on the people.

The same is true when a Child of God has fallen in sin. They cannot see their sin, or see it and choose to ignore it. They try to make excuses for their actions, along with shifting all the blame they can to others, and all the time they are entrapping themselves and deepening their rebellion against God. Remember, an old preacher defined an excuse as **"a reason wrapped up in the skin of a lie."** We should not need excuses, but rather, we need godly reasons to justify all of our actions.

Dear God, help us to clearly see the error of our ways, and to make full, and complete, confession of our failures and sins unto thee. May we be as King David, **"a man after God's own heart,"** who, when confronted with his sins, immediately confessed to God and sought forgiveness from God.

22 "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

Samuel cuts straight to the root of the sin and declares: God has no pleasure in the sacrifice of things which God has demanded be destroyed. God rejoices in humble and obedient hearts and minds. God sees rebellion against him the same as he looks upon witchcraft, which is sin because it is the work of evil spirits. God declares that stubbornness, which is manifested in choosing self-will over **"thus saith the Lord,"** is sin and idolatry. How can this be, you ask? When you refuse to do the **"thou shalt"** of God, you are telling God, I am bigger and smarter than you, and I know what is best, wherefore, you have made yourself into an idol, instead of acknowledging the Kingship, of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Samuel tells Saul: because of this sin against God, God has rejected you from being king over Israel. This is telling Saul, God will no longer support you in carrying out your duties of being king over Israel, and at his appointed time he will remove you from the throne.

What an awful sentence to hear pronounced against you. It reminds me of the scripture in: **Mt 7:21-23; 21 ¶ "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."** What a great warning to be mindful of fulfilling the "**thou shalt**" of the bible, lest we hear this sentence of eternal death pronounced to us. Remember, if we are not rejoicing to do the "**thou shalt**" of the bible, we have a problem, and we need to assess our lives to see what is wrong. Why? God tells us plainly his commandments are not grievous in: **1Jo 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."** Wherefore, if God's commandments are grievous to us, we should note that we have a sin problem that we need to correct.

24 ¶ "And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD."

Saul, hearing this death sentence of his kingship, begs for forgiveness. He now acknowledges that he has sinned against God, and Samuel, but still tries to shift the blame to the people, thus, he is not owning his sin.

This is why we are given commandment in scripture, to remove from the church fellowship those who will not humble themselves and continue in their sins. Sometimes, the death sentence is the only thing that will humble our hearts and bring about repentance. However, that does not always work, as we see here that Saul is not truly repentant but is only sorry that he has gotten caught. How do we know that Saul is not truly repentant? Because he is still trying to shift the blame to the people and does not say: I have no excuse, I have sinned against God.

Saul also recognizes; he needs Samuel to worship with him, else, the people will know that God has rejected him, and will lose their confidence in Saul as king over Israel, which is why he begs Samuel to worship with him.

26 "And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. 27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. 28 And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. 29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent."

Samuel, knowing that Saul is not truly repentant, refuses to return with Saul. Simply put; Samuel is saying: God has rejected you, and therefore I must reject you also, or I will not be blameless before God. The same is true in church fellowship. We cannot maintain fellowship with persons living in ungodliness and willful sin.

Saul, as Samuel turns to leave, grabs Samuel mantle and tears it, in desperation to save face before the people. Samuel tells Saul that God has rent the kingdom from him and given it to another. Samuel reminds Saul that God is not a man, and he does not lie about what he is going to do.

What a great warning to observe the "**thou shalt**" of the bible, to keep an humble heart and mind before God, and not turn to idolatry. What a sad consequence for such sins.

30 "Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God. 31 So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD."

Saul, in the deep throws of defeat, finally admits "**I have sinned**" and begs Samuel to go with him to worship God before Israel. Notice, Saul says "**that I may worship the LORD thy God**." Saul is still not claiming God as his God, but he realizes that he must worship God, before the people with Samuel, to maintain favor and status with the people. Saul understands now that he is destined to lose kingship over Israel.

Samuel, the good priest that he is, does as requested. Why? Because Saul has finally admitted that he has sinned. We are told that Saul worshipped the Lord.

The lesson for us in Christian duty: when one has rebelled in sin against God, and it must go to the point of giving the death sentence, removing them from church fellowship, even then, if they truly repent, they are to be

received again with joy in restoration of fellowship. ***Ga 6:1 ¶ "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."***

32 ¶ "Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. 33 And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. 34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel."

Samuel then calls for Agag and cuts him to pieces before the Lord. Samuel completes the killing of the Amalekites with this deed, for he is the only person that was saved alive.

Samuel goes to his own place and never goes to see Saul again. Samuel, in trueness to the priest office, does mourn for Saul, who has fallen from fellowship with God.

A lesson for us: when we have backsliders in the church fellowship, true Christian faith and love, will cause us to mourn for them, and plead to God for their true repentance and return to fellowship, if it be God's will. We are reminded that disobedience to God is known by God, and it puts a barrier, to our fellowship, and the joy of God's salvation, in our lives. True repentance, and confession of our sin unto God, is the only means of the restoration of communion with our heavenly Father.

May almighty God, in his infinite wisdom and mercy, forgive our sins, fill us with humility before him, and keep us safe in the land of promise he has given us, the Church of Salvation by the Grace of God, established by Jesus Christ. We especially thank our Saviour, for his finished work of eternal forgiveness of sins, and the surety of our eternal life. Praise and glory to God for his mercy and grace. Amen!