

Day 280 - SATURDAY: November 4th

1 Samuel 15

1 Samuel 15:1–35 NKJV

Samuel also said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'

" So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. Then Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. He also took Agag king of the

Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night. So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD." But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said

to him, "Speak on." So Samuel said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?" And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal." So Samuel said: "Has 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 heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king." Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and

obeyed their voice. Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD." But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent." Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD. Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel

mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

The UCG reading program states: “God had given instructions through Moses that the attack on Israel by Amalek during the first weeks of their journey from Egypt (see Exodus 17:8–16) should be avenged (Deuteronomy 25:17–19). Israel has finally grown strong enough to do this, and Samuel instructs Saul to carry out the mission. The destruction is to be complete, including the animals.

The Kenites had a generally peaceful relationship with Israel. Moses’ father-in-law is called a Kenite (Judges 1:16). Jael, who killed Sisera in the days of Deborah the judge (Judges 4:11, 17–22), was married to a Kenite. And apparently there had been other favorable encounters with Israel, prompting Saul to encourage them to escape before the fighting starts (1 Samuel 15:6).

Saul carries out a successful attack on the Amalekites. But he is “unwilling to utterly destroy them,” leaving alive their king and the best of the livestock (verse 9). Interestingly, Saul maintains that he has obeyed God (verse 20). He does blame the people for keeping the livestock. Yet this was in

his power. He could have ordered the livestock destroyed. But it evidently made sense to him to preserve the livestock for sacrificing to God. And the statement that this was Saul's reason was apparently not a lie—as lying is not what Samuel criticizes him for (though Saul's apparent self-deception that he had obeyed God in the matter would fall under the category of lying).

Samuel's answer in verses 22–23 is an important one for us today. Obedience supersedes any attempt to honor God. And He cannot be honored with disobedience. If God has forbidden something, we cannot honor Him with that thing. Yet people try to do this all the time in the world around us. For instance, God says not to use pagan worship methods in an attempt to honor Him (see Deuteronomy 12:29–32). But people use holidays that originated in paganism, like Christmas and Easter, in an attempt to do just that. Some people even think this is obedience to God. But it isn't. No matter how sincere, this is actually dishonoring God because it is disobeying Him. When people knowingly do this, it is rebellion and, as Samuel told Saul, is on par with witchcraft and idolatry. If you want to truly honor God, then do what He says—obey Him. (To learn more about the pagan origins of Christmas and Easter, request or download

our free booklet [\*Holidays or Holy Days: Does It Matter Which Days We Keep?\*](#))

Although God had already stated that Saul's dynasty would not continue (1 Samuel 13:13–14), this latest act of rebellion causes Saul himself to be rejected as king. God will anoint someone else instead. Samuel refuses to have anything more to do with Saul, but Saul persuades Samuel to honor him one more time before the elders. Samuel finishes the execution God had ordered Saul to fulfill. And then he returns home, never to go to see Saul again—although Saul will later come to see him one last time in pursuing David (see 19:18–24).” [END]

Verse 17 – This verse clearly demonstrates that Saul at one time was humble, but had not remained that way.

Verse 23 – Notice that God hates witchcraft and idolatry but that rebellion and stubbornness are put on an equal level. Rebellion and stubbornness must be rooted out of our lives. How many problems have we seen even in church history due to these two sins?