

## Sunday Night Message

September 1, 2019

### *Saul's Rebellion*

Topics – Saul; Jonathan; Samuel; Rebellion; Amalek

Series – *1 Samuel*

Text – 1 Samuel 15

### Introduction

In chapter 14, we left Saul and Jonathan after Jonathan's victory against the Philistines. Jonathan and his armourbearer took it upon themselves to attack the massive army, numbering tens of thousands (1 Samuel 13:5), of the Philistines that was gathered together in Michmash. Remember, the entire army of Israel at this time numbered only six hundred men, and with the exception of Saul and Jonathan, they were not equipped with swords. This was a completely impossible situation. Jonathan found a sliver of ground between two cliffs and was able to sneak in behind the Philistine army. The Philistines panicked, thinking that they were being attacked by a huge army. They fell apart, and ran, and even began to kill each other in the confusion.

Saul had absolutely nothing to do with the initial battle, but he did jump in on chasing down the enemy as they were on the run back toward Gaza. This is similar to what we will see later on in chapter seventeen, when once again Israel is facing the Philistines; this time with their nine-foot giant Goliath leading the way. Saul was hesitant to attack him also, but he let a young man named David do his fighting for him.

Here in chapter fifteen, Saul is given a commandment from the Lord through the prophet Samuel to slaughter the Amalekites. He was commanded to wipe them out completely: every man, woman, and child, and even all of the livestock. The order given by God was not a pleasant one, but it was plain, and Saul almost obeyed all that the Lord told him to do. Almost. The part that Saul neglected to do was called rebellion by Samuel, which Samuel said was a sin that was equal with witchcraft.

**Preaching Point** – What small part of God's command are you choosing not to do? What "little thing" have you left unfinished, undone? What seemingly insignificant task that the Lord has clearly revealed to you, are you in rebellion in due to lack of full obedience?

What "small thing" are you doing, or allowing, or committing, that you know displeases God.

### I A Clear Command (vs. 1 – 3)

Illustrate – Lester Roloff was asked if he was troubled about the parts of the Bible he didn't understand. He said it was the parts of the Bible that he did understand that troubled him.

A God told exactly what He wanted him to do (v. 3).

B God even told him why He wanted it done (v. 2).

Note – He doesn't always tell us why. He doesn't have to. But we still need to obey.

The Amalekites were descendants of Esau. Amalek was Esau's grandson (Genesis 36:12). The Amalekites became the enemy of Israel.

See Exodus 17:8 – 16

*"And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever."* (Numbers 24:18-20)

See also - Deuteronomy 25:17 – 19; Judges 6:3 – 5

Possibly, God was not just dealing with the Amalekites based upon what they had done in the past, but He also knew the problems that Israel would have with them in the future.

Again, it does not matter why God wanted this done, it only matters that it was a clear command, and it needed to be obeyed.

Sometimes what God asks us to do doesn't make any sense to us.

Sometimes what God asks us to do isn't politically correct.

## **II A Qualified Compliance (vs. 4 – 9)**

Note v. 3 – Saul's army is a little larger here. These were probably people that he drafted for this particular campaign. Notice, he isn't taking any chances. He is bringing an army of 210,000.

Note v. 6 – He lets the Kenites leave. The Kenites were descendants of Moses father-in-law (Judges 4:11). The Kenites apparently treated Israel well when they came out of Egypt.

Note – vs. 8 – 9 – Saul spared Agag the king, and he didn't slay the livestock as he was commanded.

God wants complete compliance. God demands absolute adherence to His clear commands.

## **III A Stern Scolding (vs. 10 – 23)**

Note – v. 11 – God repented – see also v. 29. Is this a contradiction? God does not make mistakes, but He will change a course of action based upon the actions of people. Wiersbe states:

When the Bible speaks about the Lord "changing His mind" or "repenting," it is using human language to describe divine truth. God knows the future, including our responses to His commands, and God is never at a loss to know what to do. He does change His actions in response to what people do, but this has nothing to do with His changeless nature or attributes. Jonah announced that Nineveh would be destroyed, but the city repented and the Lord withdrew the judgment. From the human point of view, God

seemed to change His mind, but not from the divine point of view. God is always true to His nature and consistent with His attributes and plans. Nothing catches Him by surprise.<sup>1</sup>

Notice also Samuel grieves over this. He really wanted Saul to succeed.

Notice v. 12 – “he set him up a place” – according to some scholars that phrase conveys the idea of Saul setting up a monument, presumably for himself. The Hebrew word, “yad,” can mean “a monument.”

Notice v. 13 – Saul claims to have obeyed the Lord’s command – at least some of it. There is no doubt in my mind that Saul knew he was at least partially disobeyed God, yet he stated that he obeyed.

Sometimes people who are disobedient justify their disobedience.

Sometime they actually deceive themselves into thinking they are OK.

Notice vs. 14 and 15 – After being called out for keeping the sheep that He was told to slaughter, Saul blames the disobedience on the people, and then justifies it by stating that they were only kept for the purpose of sacrifice.

Notice vs. 17 – 19

First, he tells him to “stay!” that means shut up and listen.

Then, Samuel exposes the root of Saul’s problem – pride.

Pride is a big problem for all of us as well.

*"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)*

*"Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom." (Proverbs 13:10)*

Satan wanted to be like the most high (Isaiah 14:12 – 15)

Eve fell because of pride – she wanted to be like God, knowing good and evil.

*"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." - (Proverbs 8:13)*

Saul was very prideful; he was very insecure. He will become insanely jealous and insecure later regarding David later on.

Notice in v. 22 – Saul once again, justifies his sin, and blames in on the people.

Everything rises and falls upon leadership.

Notice v. 23 – the Lord is not interested in your religious ritual, especially when it is done with a sinful heart. The Lord wants our obedience.

See - Psalm 40:6 – 8; 50:7 – 15; 51:16 – 17; Isaiah 1:11 - 17

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Successful*, “Be” Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor/Cook Communications, 2001).

#### IV A Reluctant Repentance (vs. 24 – 35)

It seems as if Saul is not truly seeking God's forgiveness, He just wanted to be seen by the people as right with God (Notice v. 30).

The result of all of this is that God rejects Saul from being king, and He will soon anoint Saul's replacement.

