

# What Led To King Saul's Disobedience?

1 Samuel 15:1-23

## ***Introduction:***

- A. The historical accounts in the Bible aren't just myths, legends, fables, or fairy tales to teach people a lesson. Those who accept the Bible as God's word believe that they really happened just as they are recorded. At the same time, they're not just curiosities of history. God included them in His word because they illustrate important principles of truth that the Lord wants us to learn.
- B. We find a classic example of disobedience to God in the actions of Saul, first king of Israel. After receiving clear instructions from the Lord through the prophet Samuel, Saul disobeyed God. Like Saul, we need to learn the dangers of disobedience. But Saul was guilty of other things that brought about his decision to disobey.
- C. So, let's consider what led to king Saul's disobedience.

## ***I. Not Counting His Blessings - v. 1***

- A. All the good things in Saul's life, including his anointing as king over Israel, were gifts from God; likewise, all our blessings are gifts from God - Jas. 1:17
- B. Therefore, we should live with thankful hearts for all that the Lord does for us - Eph. 5:20
- C. Unthankfulness is always the beginning of a dark way of life - Rom. 1:21-25
  - 1. If Saul had daily counted his blessings and praised God for His good gifts, it's doubtful if he'd so negligent in his duty toward the Lord.

## ***II. Indifference To What God Calls Evil - vs. 2-3***

[God reminded Saul about all the evil which the Amalekites had done to the Israelites when they came out of Egypt. Saul's hatred of their evil should have had a profound effect upon his perception of things and stirred within him a zeal to respond appropriately to the enemies of God.]

- A. In all ages, but especially today, too many people, including some who profess to be Christians, are mixed up

as to what's evil or what's good and have become indifferent to what God calls evil - Isa. 5:20

- B. Only the Bible can define what's truly good and evil, and once we've learned to view matters as God does, we must hate that which is evil - Rom. 12:9
- C. Then, when we've determined what's evil before God, we must abstain from it - 1 Thess. 5:21-22
  - 1. Are we indifferent to sins that the world propagates as acceptable?
    - a. Homosexuality
    - b. Sexual immorality
    - c. Unscriptural divorce
    - d. Abortion
    - e. Gambling
    - f. Profanity
    - g. Immodesty
    - h. Dancing
    - i. Etc.
  - 2. King Saul didn't hate the evil of the Amalekites enough to carry out God's orders fully

### III. *Respect Of Persons* - vs. 4-9

- A. Saul was told to destroy ALL the Amalekites, but he showed respect of persons by sparing their king
  - 1. Showing respect of persons may seem proper to man, but God's ways and man's ways are not alike - Isa. 55:8-9
- B. Having respect of persons can sometimes lead us to fear men and fail to do Christ's will - Jn. 12:42
- C. Therefore, we should desire to please God more than respect men - Gal. 1:10
  - 1. Rather than showing respect of persons toward king Agag
  - 2. Saul should have respected God and obeyed His will instead.

#### IV. *Believing The End Justifies The Means* - vs. 10-15

- A. In direct violation of God's command, Saul allowed the people to bring back the choice animals for sacrifice, in effect creating a loophole to justify his disobedience—like the Pharisees - Matt. 15:4-6
- B. Saul's philosophy here is "the end justifies the means, and it is condemned by Paul - Rom. 3:8
- C. The valuable lesson seen here is that service to God is vain when not offered on His terms - Matt. 7:21-23
  - 1. Yes, God commanded sacrifice, so Saul's excuse may have sounded good on the surface
  - 2. But God didn't want the sacrifices of disobedience then just as he doesn't want the service of disobedience now
  - 3. For this reason, many religious works rendered today are futile
  - 4. Saul needed to learn that the end never justifies the means.

#### V. *Being Deceived* - vs. 16-21

[It appears by Saul's answer to Samuel that the king thought he actually had obeyed God. If he did, it was because he allowed himself to be deceived. Sometimes today we allow ourselves to be deceived about various things.]

- A. Our companionships - 1 Cor. 15:33
- B. Our actions - Gal. 6:7
- C. Our words - Jas. 1:26
  - 1. Satan, the archenemy of mankind is called the deceiver of the entire world - Rev. 12:9
  - 2. For this reason, the Scriptures contain many warnings against being deceived
  - 3. We can prevent such deception in our lives if we'll trust in God and obey His truth, as Saul apparently failed to do.

## VI. *A Failure To See Sin As Sin* - vs. 22-23

- A. Samuel is telling Saul that his sin was as bad as if he'd committed witchcraft or idolatry
  - 1. The lesson here is that sin is sin because all sin transgresses God's law - 1 Jn. 3:4
- B. Now, Saul evidently didn't think his actions were as bad as witchcraft or idolatry, but God doesn't categorize sin - Jas. 2:10
- C. And all sin has consequences attached, just as Saul was rejected as king because of his sin - Rom. 6:23
  - 1. Saul didn't seem to equate his actions with sin
  - 2. However, what determines sin isn't what man thinks about it but what God thinks about it
  - 3. This is a simple but powerful lesson
  - 4. When we start classifying sins as "little" or "big," we become as guilty as Saul!

### ***Conclusion:***

- A. Saul's example of disobedience is recorded so that we might learn from it. God commands were clear and understandable. His disobedience was the result of his lack of faith which allowed him to be guided by his fears and pride.
- B. The example of Saul illustrates two important facts: 1) Obedience to God is essential for salvation (Heb. 5:8-9) and 2) Disobedience will be punished (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
- C. Have you obeyed? And are you continuing to obey?