

## **King Saul: Doing Almost All of God's Will - 1 Samuel 15:1-23 (NKJV) – March 9, 2022**

**Introduction:** *We have an amazing capacity for self-deception. The first step of every 12-step program is to come out of denial and to recognize one as powerless over the addiction. Jesus spent much of his ministry attempting to show the religious leaders of His day their hypocrisy and pretense (Matthew 23).*



*Perhaps one of the cleverest schemes of the enemy is to convince us that doing most of God's will is enough and that by doing it we will receive God's blessings. King Saul fell into such a temptation. Instructed by God to fight and destroy the Amalekite's, he succumbed to the wishes of his fighting men and did only part of God's command. **Read 1 Samuel 15:1-23.***

1. What message from the Lord does Samuel deliver to Saul, and why? (vv.1-3)
2. How does Saul begin to obey God but later changed his mind? (vv. 4-9)
3. What factors probably contributed to Saul's unwillingness to carry out God's explicit command? (v.12)
4. Why is it so difficult for Saul to realize the seriousness of his sin against God? (vv.20-21)
5. How does Samuel describe Saul's disobedience? (vv.22-23)
6. Why do you think God equates disobedience with idolatry?
7. How does this description differ from the way we view our sin when we do not do all of God's will?
8. What do you learn about the character of God from this text? (vv.10-11, 22-23)

### **Personal prayer and reflection:**

- Why do you think we often settle for doing only part of God's will?
- In what area(s) of your life do you struggle with denial or self-deception?
- What's "burnt offerings" and "sacrifices" do we sometimes offer to compensate for our lack of obedience?
- What difference should these things make in our conduct or attitude when we are tempted to carry out only part of God command?
- Identify one area where you have been content to do almost all of God's will. What steps should you take to follow through with your obedience to God?

**Pray:** Pray God would give you a humble heart to seek and to obey all of God's commands.

**Going Deeper:** Reflect on the beatitudes in **Matthew 5:3-10**. How do they differ from the heart of Saul as seen in **1 Samuel 15**?

**Reflection for my Lenten Journey:** What are some things in my life that I tell myself I need but I really don't? Can I give one or two of them up (at least for the remainder of Lent)?

## 1 Samuel 15 (NKJV) - Saul Spares King Agag

15 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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> Now go and attack<sup>[a]</sup> 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.’”

<sup>4</sup> So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. <sup>5</sup> And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley.

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. <sup>8</sup> He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. <sup>9</sup> 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.

**Saul Rejected as King** -<sup>10</sup> Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, <sup>11</sup> “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. <sup>12</sup> 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.” <sup>13</sup> Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed *are* you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD.”

<sup>14</sup> But Samuel said, “What then *is* this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?”

<sup>15</sup> 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.”

<sup>16</sup> 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.”

<sup>17</sup> 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? <sup>18</sup> 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.’ <sup>19</sup> 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?”

<sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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.”

<sup>22</sup> 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. <sup>23</sup> 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.”

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