

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 8



SAUL'S REBELLION

Scripture Text: 1 Samuel 15:1-35

After Saul's experience in Lesson Six, one would assume he would have learned his lesson, but he did not. In the lesson today we see that Saul was little affected by God's warning.

How often people disappoint us! Again and again, when we put our trust in men, they fail us miserably. If ever there seemed to be a good security risk, Saul was that one. Yet, underneath all these excellent qualities, there were weaknesses of character which, when given a chance to show themselves and develop, completely overpowered the man and sent him to his ruin.

As we behold the tragedy of Saul, we should pray that God will give us strength to overcome the fleshly tendencies in our own lives so that they will not control us and lead us to certain destruction. One falls by gradual steps. We must watch and pray.

MEMORY VERSE: *Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

—1 Samuel 15:22b

The Lord's Command to Saul

1 Samuel 15:1-9 When Israel journeyed from Egypt to Canaan, the Amalekites attacked them. God said then, **I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven (Exodus 17:14)**. Now in accordance with that vow, He through Samuel commands Saul to **utterly destroy** them, both people and animals. **And he took Agag, the king ... alive** – only partial obedience. **But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the animals, and would not utterly destroy them** – only partial obedience. The Lord demands complete obedience.

The Lord's Report to Samuel

1 Samuel 15:10-12 **Saul is turned back from following me.** Here, as at times before, God makes it plain that to refuse to obey the man of God is, in fact, disobeying God. It was a sad tragic report. Because He could not use such a one, the Lord said, **It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king.** Notice how Samuel cared and took it to the Lord in all-night prayer, no doubt praying for a turnaround in the situation.

Saul's Excuses

1 Samuel 15:13-21 With a heavy heart after a sleepless night, Samuel **rose early to meet Saul**. Saul had returned from battle, purposely avoiding Samuel by using a roundabout route to Gilgal. **And Saul said ... I have performed the commandment of the Lord. What meaneth them,** asked Samuel, **this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?** This would not have been heard had Saul been fully obedient.

Saul sought to justify his actions in Samuel's sight by giving six excuses: 1. He gave a friendly, complimentary greeting **Blessed be thou ...** 2. He said that he had acted correctly – **I have performed ...** 3. He continued dodging blame by placing it on others – **the people spared ...** 4. He pointed to the good end in view –

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to sacrifice unto the Lord ... 5. He subtly suggested that it conformed to Samuel's own desires – it was **thy God** they would worship, and 6. He drew attention to the good in his action – **the rest we have utterly destroyed**. These are marks of a guilty conscience. His covering was too thin. He had no hiding place.

All the sacrifices in the world will not atone for one act of disobedience. If we are not wholly surrendered to God and to His will in love and obedience, all the external adornments of religion will not help us to gain His approval. This is gained only through godly sorrow, which leads to repentance.

The Verdict

1 Samuel 15:22-33 Samuel was a spokesman for God. As such, he declared God's supreme regard for obedience over works of worship. **Rebellion and stubbornness** are among the greatest of sins. To rebel against God's way opens our lives to the complete control of Satan, one of which is **witchcraft** – the practice of witches, sorcery, enchantments, and being controlled by evil spirits. This is devil possession which requires more than repentance to be free from. When the condition exists in one's life, he must be liberated from the devil's power before he has liberty to freely pray in a repentant attitude. These were Saul's sins. This was the tragic depth to which Saul fell. He wanted his way rather than God's way. Because of this God could not use him. He rejected Saul as king.

How did Saul come to this? Backsliding is always tragic. What are some of the steps which caused his fall? 1. Lack of a fear of God. 2. Lack of faith and humility in his heart. 3. He trusted his own judgment and strength more than God's. 4. He feared the people more than God. 5. He was reluctant to confess and own his sin.

The Results

1 Samuel 15:34-35 Samuel came no more to see Saul. This broke that line of communication between the Lord and Saul. From that time on, Saul would get no answers to his prayers, no leadership from God. **Samuel mourned for Saul**. Samuel mourned for Saul even after their relationship was severed. Why? Because it was more than a human love; it was a divine love. This love causes caring for people. It causes it to matter whether they are saved or not, whether they overcome temptations, or whether they backslide or not. **Romans 5:5** tell us where such care comes from.

The fact that Samuel came no more to see Saul was not from anger but from uselessness. He had no more messages for him. It would have been disloyal to God to give recognition to one whom He had rejected. We must be very careful of our attitude toward one whom God has rejected. **The Lord repented ...** God never sins or makes a mistake. He knew beforehand what Saul would do (**Isaiah 46:9-10**). He gave him the choice, and Saul made the wrong choice. Because of Saul's change God sorrowed and had to turn to another course. This is the meaning of repentance.

JUST A THOUGHT

“The security of the nation rests upon the stability of the home.”

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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