

'The Rise of the Kings Series'

Sermons in the Book of 1 Samuel

Message 22 - 'The Consequences of
Disobedience'
1 Samuel 15:1 - 23



The demise of Saul's reign and his final judgement will provide the backdrop for the rise of God's man, David. The Lord grants to Saul the opportunity to be faithful and obey Him once more, to prove himself, but Saul fails, lies about his failure, and there are consequences to his sin. Saul would always make excuses rather than acknowledge his sin, the time when we do see a type of confession, it is only to keep face with the people, rather than repent before the Lord. It didn't matter what it was, Saul always found a way to blame someone else, concerned for his image, and position with the people rather than pleasing God. We can see:

1. The Sovereign Decree of God (v1-3) - The Amalekites descended from Esau and they were the enemy of the Jewish people. The natural reaction to God's decree from people is that they find this hard to accept. How could God whose compassion is over all the world he made give such a decree? As one commentator explains, *'To begin a response... First, it is horrid. Second, our claim is only that Scripture is true, not that it is sanitised. Third, Yahweh's vengeance should not be repudiated but praised if it is virtuous vengeance, that is, if it is just vengeance. Yahweh contends that his vengeance on Amalek is just.'* There was the agenda of the Amalekites, as we have mentioned, who sought to destroy Israel by attacking them just after they had left Egypt. Our passage makes its clear that their wickedness had endured. Samuel refers to them as sinners in v18, and then later in v33 announces Agag's war crimes as the basis for his execution. The question also needs to be asked, is not the Lord slow to anger by giving them three hundred years to repent? What lessons can we learn from this? Obviously, God's justice, sovereignty, and faithfulness to His people are all evident. But, actually, in this occasion, there is great comfort for the Lord's people. The Lord does not forget how his enemies have sought to oppress and destroy His people. To preach the full Gospel, the true Gospel, there has to be the proclamation of the Lord's deliverance for His people, but the day of vengeance/judgement for His enemies.

2. The Stubborn Disobedience of Saul (v4 - 9) - Saul was given clearly God's command and Word, he now had to complete the work that the Lord had given him. Saul was not careful to be faithful to the Lord's command. Everything that was vile and worthless he destroyed, but that was not the command of the Lord. He even allowed King Agag to live, and he allowed his soldiers to save 'the best' of the flocks and herds. Surely that in itself is a ridiculous concept, 'the best', how can what the Lord has condemned possibly be the best? Saul chose to do what he thought was best instead. When we serve the Lord in a manner pleasing to Him, it involves being faithful and obedient to His will, and doing what He has given in the right way, at the right time, and for the right motive.

3. The Sad Duty of Samuel (10 - 23) - The Lord comes to Samuel and reveals what has taken place before the army returns home. Samuel mourns over Saul, and would do for the rest of his days, but he also cries out unto the Lord. Samuel is thrown into turmoil with so many huge issues to comprehend, not least a consideration of the future, as it seems the nation is in a worse state than ever, and Samuel is torn. Samuel gives us a vital lesson, when we are struggling with issues, it is wise to get alone with the Lord and pour out your heart into His safe and everlasting, sovereign hands. Samuel takes no pleasure in having to deal with such a situation, but he comes faithfully. Saul deceived himself in thinking he could deceive Samuel, and such was his confidence to pull it off that he continued to lie to Samuel despite Samuel knowing the truth. Saul then blames the soldiers for sparing the spoils, but surely as their King and commander they were following his orders? Samuel's reaction is firm and authoritative. 'Be Quiet!' or 'Stop!' This could have suggested that Saul was turning away, but certainly Samuel silenced him. Samuel had a message from the Lord, and Saul was to listen. As Samuel confronts Saul, Saul begins to argue and deny that he had done wrong. It is at this point that Samuel expounds an eternal truth, God couldn't accept the sacrifices as legitimate, but the more important issue was the obedient heart. The sacrifice he demands from us is a broken and contrite heart. Sacrifice without obedience is empty religious ritual.



Penzance Baptist Church

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Pastor Jonathan Stobbs