

Wednesday, August 5, 2020 ▫ Read 1Samuel 15:1–23

Questions from the Scripture text: What does Samuel remind Saul about his kingship (v1)? What then should Saul do? Whom does Yahweh of hosts plan to punish (v2)? Why? What must Saul do, how completely, and to whom, and specifically to what (v3)? What did Saul do to the people in v4? How many were there? Where did they go in v5? Whom does Saul give prior notice in v6? Why? What does Saul do in v7? Whom does he take in v8? What does he do with the rest of the people? Whom and what do Saul and the people spare (v9)? How did they decide what to spare or what to destroy? What comes to Samuel in v10? What does Yahweh say about having made Saul king (v11a)? Upon what basis does He evaluate Saul's kingship? How does Samuel respond? When does Samuel rise in v12? For whom is he looking? But where has Saul been, and what has Saul done? When Saul sees Samuel, what does he say to him (v13)? What does he claim about himself? What does Samuel ask in response (v14)? What does Saul say is the purpose of the animals (v15)? How does Samuel answer him in v16? What does he remind Saul that Yahweh has done for him (v17)? What does he remind Saul that Yahweh has commanded him to do (v18)? What does he say that Saul has done instead (v19)? What does Saul claim in response (v20)? Whom does he blame (v21)? But how does he defend them? What does Samuel say more delightful to Yahweh than burnt offerings and sacrifices (v22)? What does he say is better than sacrifice and the fat of rams? What is rebellion as bad as (v23)? What is stubbornness as bad as? What has Saul rejected? What has Yahweh rejected from what?

vv22–23 control our understanding of this entire passage. God doesn't particularly care for our acts of worship in and of themselves. Ultimately, the value of a sacrifice was that it was one that God had commanded in anticipation of Christ and His cross. Similarly for us today, the value of our worship is that it is mediated by Christ in heaven, upon the worthiness of His righteousness and His sacrifice on the cross.

The problem is that many of us think that we are doing what God wants (v13, 20), and are very sincerely giving God what we think is best (v9, 21). And we think that God likes it.

But if we have added our own ideas to the worship of God, or if we add to His law, this is the Bible's assessment of what we have done: "you have rejected the word of Yahweh." And how dreadful to consider that if this is the case with us, then we can expect to hear, "He also has rejected you from being king."

This is one of the glories of Jesus's forever-kingship. He is the never-rejected King! He is the One who has never rejected the word of Yahweh, but always kept it. And if we rest upon Him alone for salvation, He is *our* forever-King, and His righteousness is *our* righteousness.

But let us not think that this is license to obey. For, our Lord comes to us in Christ, as if to say like v1, "The Lord sent me to be your Redeemer and King. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord." Can we rejoice to be God's and Christ's and not repent and pursue obedience with all our heart?

So, let us rejoice that not only do we have a King who has no sin of His own from which to repent, but also Who is able by His Spirit to work repentance in us, and give that repentance increasing success until He has made us to be like Himself!

What is one area of your worship or your life that you thought was sincerely spiritual and good, but which God's Word has exposed to you as disobedience and rebellion? What is your hope for forgiveness when this happens? What is your hope for doing better when this happens?

Suggested songs: ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH119W "Lord, Let My Cry Before You Come"