

SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE AND REJECTION

BIBLE TEXT: I Samuel 13:5-14; 15:1-35

LESSON 206 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Samuel 15:22).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Samuel 13:5-14

⁵ And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven.

⁶ When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

⁷ And *some of* the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

⁸ And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

⁹ And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

¹⁰ And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

¹¹ And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

A Philistine Invasion

King Saul ruled well for one year, and all Israel was satisfied. But in the second year came trouble. The Philistines, the enemies of Israel, amassed a great army of 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and more foot soldiers than one could count, and came to attack. What could the Israelites do in a clash with such a foe? Even though the people had the king they wanted, to lead them into battle, they were frightened and hid in the woods and in caves. How much better it would have been if they had trusted God.

God had promised that He would help Israel's king if all His people would walk carefully before Him. Samuel had continued to make sacrifices for them and teach them the will of God, and they had tried to obey. Now that the Philistines were coming against Israel there was a great need for sacrifices and prayers to God for help, and King Saul and his army gathered at Gilgal where Samuel was to come to intercede for them.

Impatience

Samuel had promised that he would come to Gilgal within seven days, but when he waited until the last day to arrive, the soldiers became discouraged, and some went home. Saul did not trust God to work out their problems for the good of the Israelites; and when he saw his army becoming smaller and smaller, he decided he would have to do something himself. Rather than wait for Samuel to offer the sacrifice, Saul took it upon himself to do the duties of a priest.

No sooner were the sacrifices completed than Samuel came. He could feel the disobedience of Saul, and he asked, "What hast thou done?" Saul began to make excuses: the Philistines were ready to fight them, and his soldiers were leaving; Samuel was late, so Saul had forced himself to do what he thought was necessary to prepare his men for battle.

Never Too Late

This was God's business, and He knew how much time He had. Saul would not have needed to worry if he had trusted to God's wisdom. God would not have let him down but would have moved for them in plenty of time. How impatient man often is when waiting upon the Lord -- but He is never too late!

Jesus taught that lesson to His disciples when He was called to the bedside of Lazarus. "When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was" (John 11:6). His followers might have wondered why He did not go immediately, for Lazarus might die before He arrived.

Lazarus did die before Jesus came, but it was not too late to do what the Lord wanted to do. Jesus wanted to perform a miracle to the glory of God, which would teach the people that He was the Author of life, He was the resurrection from the dead. He proved that He could raise the physically dead as well as the spiritually dead. He purposely had come when the people thought it was too late.

Michmash;

¹² Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

¹³ And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

¹⁴ But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.

1 Samuel 15:1-35

¹ Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee *to be* king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

² Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

³ Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

⁴ And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.

⁵ And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

⁶ And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children

Inheritance Lost

Perhaps Samuel had purposely waited, to see what Saul would do. He was greatly disappointed in Saul's foolish haste. He loved Saul as the anointed of God, and Saul had begun his reign well. Why had he so soon turned from the commandment of God? If he had been faithful God would have established his kingdom forever. His son would have been the next king, and then his grandson, and on down the generations until Jesus would have been born into their family to be the everlasting King.

Think what one disobedience cost Saul. He did keep the kingdom during his lifetime; but his family was, by this willful act, cut off from being the royal line of Israel's rulers. The hope of the Messiah coming through their family was lost forever.

A Man After God's Heart

Samuel said to Saul: "Now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee."

Another Chance

There came a day when Saul had an opportunity to make up for his unfaithfulness. God gave him a great task to perform. All that God gives us to do is important, although we may not see the far-reaching effects that will come from our faithfulness to what may seem to us a very little duty. Saul was sent with an army of the Israelites to destroy the Amalekites. It was not just a scrimmage with a heathen neighbor who might prove bothersome. It was the judgment of God upon a nation which had caused much trouble for God's people more than 400 years before.

When the Israelites had come out of Egypt the Amalekites came upon them from behind and had destroyed the people who were weary with the march and were lagging.

God had seen the treachery of the Amalekites, and had told *Moses* to write it in a book so that the Israelites would not forget it. And He added, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus 17:14). When Moses was giving his final instructions to Israel he said: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it" (Deuteronomy 25:17-19).

The Amalekites had had all those years to repent and to fear God, but they had not repented. Now God was sending Saul to bring judgment on the Amalekites. Saul had the opportunity of destroying 400-years' accumulation of sin — but he failed.

Respect of Persons

Saul and his army began the destruction of the Amalekites, as commanded; but there were so many choice sheep and cattle that Saul decided it was a shame to destroy them all, and he saved the best of them. And then there was King Agag, an important person, perhaps of great wealth, and to him Saul showed mercy. God had told them to fight this enemy until they were "utterly" destroyed. Agag was one of the sinners, and was

of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

⁷ And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah *until* thou comest to Shur, that *is* over against Egypt.

⁸ And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

¹⁰ Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

¹¹ It repenteth me that I have set up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

¹² And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

¹³ And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

¹⁴ And Samuel said, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

¹⁵ And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

¹⁶ Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the

included in the condemnation.

In God's Word we read: "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:9, 10). So far as obedience to God is concerned, Saul might as well not have killed anyone as to have spared the king. He had had respect of persons, and had offended perhaps only in one point; but what did that prove him to be? God's Word declares he was "guilty of all." He was as much condemned as if he had broken all the commandments.

Excuses

God told Samuel of Saul's disobedience, and Samuel felt so grieved that he cried and prayed all night. When he went to meet the returning army in the morning, the first words Saul said to Samuel were, "**I** have performed the commandment of the LORD." He knew better; he knew he had not done all the will of God, but tried to make Samuel think he had faithfully obeyed the Lord.

We often see backsliders who have failed to obey God in all things, and yet they go on with a profession of Christianity and try to prove that they are doing the will of God. But the one thing they lack has caused the Spirit of God to depart from them, and they are as guilty as any sinner who never pretends to serve God.

If Saul had indeed obeyed the commandment of God, as he said, what then was the bleating of sheep and the lowing of the oxen which Samuel heard? If the backslider is doing the will of God, why do we see things in his life that are not Christlike? It is impossible to live up to the teachings of the Bible unless we have the Spirit of God in us. And if the Spirit has departed through one disobedience, the works of the devil will soon begin to show themselves. King Agag and the cattle and sheep were before Samuel to prove that Saul had not obeyed the commandment of God.

Saul tried twice to tell Samuel that it was the people who had taken of the spoil. When he was caught in his sin he wanted to put the blame on someone else. Then he tried to say that it was for a good cause -- to sacrifice unto the Lord. But it was useless to offer such lame excuses. God wanted obedience above everything. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Saul's Disgrace

Finally Saul admitted he had sinned, but he did not repent. He asked Samuel to return with him to offer sacrifices unto the Lord, so that the people would not know that he was in disgrace.

There was no compromise in Samuel. He was ready to destroy every bit of sin. *He* called for King Agag and cut him into pieces, giving him the full judgment God had measured out for him.

Although Samuel had loved Saul, and he mourned over his rejection, yet he never took any more part in his reign. Samuel was sorry for Saul as a backslider, and prayed for him; but Samuel, while he lived, never went to see Saul again.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Israel have a king?
- 2 How did the people feel when the Philistines came to war against them?
- 3 What did Saul do when Samuel was late in coming to Gilgal?

LORD hath said to me this night.
And he said unto him, Say on.

¹⁷ And Samuel said, When thou *wast* little in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

¹⁸ And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

¹⁹ Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

²⁰ And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

²¹ But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

²² And Samuel said, Hath 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 hearken than the fat of rams.

²³ For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

²⁴ And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

²⁵ Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.

²⁶ And Samuel said unto Saul, I will

4 What condemnation did Samuel give him for his foolish act?

5 What would God have given Saul if he had been faithful?

6 What was the other chance Saul had to fulfil God's commandment?

7 How well did Saul carry out the commands of God?

8 What excuses did he make?

9 What condemnation did Samuel repeat to Saul?

not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

²⁷ And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

²⁸ And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou.

²⁹ And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he *is* not a man, that he should repent.

³⁰ Then he said, I have sinned: *yet* honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God.

³¹ So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

³² Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.

³³ And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul.

³⁵ And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.