

Message #33

I Samuel 15:1-11

There was a poll taken among medical doctors concerning their most annoying patients. Turns out the most annoying patient is one who does not follow orders. It has been estimated that 90% of people who go to a doctor do not follow the counsel and advice of the doctor. The vast majority of people leave half-empty pill bottles; they don't follow through with promises such as exercise, diet, tobacco and alcohol. They don't regularly return for checkups. Doctors say those kinds of patients are the most annoying.

This kind of annoyance is also an annoyance to God. There is nothing more annoying and detestable to God than for one who specifically knows what His word says to do and then refuses to do it. That not only annoys God, but God eventually gets fed up with this person.

If ever there is a Biblical case study of this kind of person, it is Saul. Saul has a history of not fully obeying God and eventually it will cost him his entire kingdom.

What we see here is this:

SAUL WILL EVENTUALLY LOSE HIS KINGDOM BECAUSE HE REFUSES TO OBEY GOD COMPLETELY WHEN HE SPECIFICALLY KNEW GOD'S WORD AND WILL.

When we specifically know the word of God and we refuse to obey it, we are putting ourselves, by our own choices, on a course of disaster. The disaster will be sent directly from God. Just because a person is in some privileged position of leadership, does not mean God cannot and will not pull the plug on that. He can and He will. This is a warning to every one of us.

There are four important historical narrative observations we want to see:

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #1 – Samuel communicates a specific assignment from God to Saul. **15:1-3**

You don't find Saul speaking much to God or Samuel, but God was speaking to Samuel and through Samuel. God would give Samuel an understanding of His word and Samuel's job was to communicate that word. In this case it was to Saul.

Now Saul was the king and as king, he could become somewhat puffed up and power crazed. Many politicians become like that. They are puffed up and proud of themselves and don't think they need God or His word.

Saul was moving in that direction, so Samuel was commissioned by God to go to Saul to reveal His specific word and program.

God revealed to Samuel that He had a specific job He wanted Saul to do. So Samuel went to Saul to inform him of it.

In **verse 1**, Samuel reminds Saul of two important realities:

Reality #1 - God used Samuel to anoint Saul as king. **15:1a**

Samuel is reminding Saul that he was the one who was sent by God to anoint Saul as King over His people Israel. Samuel had anointed Saul privately (10:1) and Samuel had commissioned Saul publicly (10:24). Saul seemed to forget who it was that really put him into office.

Reality #2 - Saul needs to listen to Samuel who communicates God's word. **15:1b**

It does not matter how important one becomes religiously or politically, the fact is, one who is a wise leader will realize he needs to listen to the word of God that is communicated by a man of God.

A person's status or success does not ever replace this need of knowing God's word. Every man who will be blessed by God needs to be under the authority of the word of God. Nothing replaces a leader sitting and listening to God's word being communicated by a minister of God. In this case Saul was hearing it from the prophet, Samuel.

In the course of history, many powerful men have recognized the tremendous value of being taught the word of God:

George Washington, the 1st President of the U.S., said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

John Adams, the 6th President of the U.S., said, "So great is my veneration of the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society."

Charles Dickens, the English Novelist, said, "The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world."

Andrew Jackson, the 7th President of the U.S., said, "That book sir is the rock on which our republic rests."

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the U.S., said, "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through his book."

Horace Greely, the New York newspaper Editor who said, “Go west young man” said, “It is impossible to mentally or socially enslave a Bible-reading-people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom.”

Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the U.S., said, “I ask every man and woman in this audience that from this day on they will realize that part of the destiny of America lies in their daily perusal of this great book.”

Douglas MacArthur, the American General, said, “Believe me sir, never a night goes by, be I ever so tired but I read the Word of God before I go to bed.”

Herbert Hoover, the 31st President of the U.S., said, “The whole of the inspiration of our civilization springs from the teachings of Christ and the lessons of the prophets. To read the Bible for these fundamentals is a necessity of American life.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th President of the U.S., said, “To read the Bible is to take a trip to a fair land where the spirit is strengthened and faith renewed.”

Donald Trump, the 45th President of the U.S., said, “Numerous states introducing Bible literary classes, giving students the option of studying the Bible. Starting to make a turn back? Great!”

Now Samuel went to Saul and he said God wants me to specifically reveal two messages to you:

(Message #1) - What God was going to do. 15:2

The first point Samuel communicates to Saul is this is coming from the “LORD of hosts” (Jehovah Sabaoth). This message is coming to you from the God who sovereignly reigns over everything in heaven and on earth.

What Samuel tells Saul is that this sovereign God is going to punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when she was coming out of Egypt on their way to Mt. Sinai and the Promised Land.

Now the Amalekites were “nomadic descendants” of Esau (Gen. 36:12). They made a living by raiding and stealing. When Israel was weak and weary, while traveling to Egypt, the Amalekites attacked her (Deut. 25:17-19) and a major war broke out at Rephidim (Ex. 17:8-13). God promised that one day He would destroy the Amalekites and the time had now come for God to do just that with Saul (Deut. 25:17-19).

There are three critical observations we want to make here:

1) The promise God made to destroy the Amalekites was originally made somewhere near the year 1446 B.C., which was near the date of the Exodus. The time that He is actually fulfilling this promise is 1010 B.C. at the time of Saul.

What this actually means is that from the time God promised to destroy them as a punishment until He actually does it will be a gap of over 400 years. More than likely the Amalekites thought God forgot about it. They were not interested in being right with God and they probably figured nothing bad is going to happen. God was just joking.

All need to learn a lesson here; God never forgets a promised penalty and just because He doesn't carry it out immediately it will be carried out eventually.

These Amalekites did not use their time to repent and by their lack of repentance they kept the judgment of God simmering. Paul said if we judge ourselves we will not be judged, but if we don't judge ourselves, we will be judged.

God is a patient God and is slow to anger, but He does anger and He does fulfill His judgment words. God never forgets about a promised pay-back judgment and neither should people. People are going to go to heaven or hell. People will earn and lose rewards.

2) The thing that was so detestable to God is that they arrogantly attacked God's people when they were run down. I cannot help but think of the N.T. truth that if one destroys the temple or church, God will destroy him (I Cor. 3:17).

Now the severity of the judgment is seen in that God would destroy the men, women, children, babies, ox, sheep, camels and donkeys. Some have said how could God do this? The answer is because this is just reciprocity to what they did to His people.

The Bible teaches in both the O.T. and the N.T. that vengeance is God's and He will repay, not He might repay. He will repay. The penalty fits the crime. God settles scores justly. Every now and then some catastrophe hits some part of the country or world and people will say why would God permit that? Well, in most cases we do not know, but we may be assured God knows and it may be for some reciprocal reason that occurred many years prior.

3) God never forgets about the sin or the penalty due for the sin and He will not forgive it until the penalty has been paid. One may sin against God and think they are getting away with it. God says I will track you down. If you do not judge yourself and repent, I will track you down.

(Message #2) - What God wanted Saul to do. 15:3

God's assignment to Saul was to carry out His judgment and strike down the Amalekites. He was to strike down every person and every animal.

This was not a real positive assignment, but it was God's assignment and he needed to carry it out. He needed to see it through and get it done.

To Saul this was just another battle, but to God this was a fulfillment of a promise.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #2 – Saul prepares to carry out the assignment. 15:4-6

It is interesting that God identifies Himself as “the LORD of hosts,” which means He could have used angels to destroy the Amalekites, but He would use His people led by Saul to do it.

God can use earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, famines, plagues, sicknesses, fires and diseases to carry out any judgment He wants, but He often chooses to use His people (i.e. Rev. 2:18-23).

Saul starts off good. According to **verse 4**, he got his soldiers together. There were 200,000 soldiers from eleven tribes of Israel and another 10,000 soldiers from Judah. They met in “Telaim” which was probably a site near the Negev in the south in Judah.

According to **verse 5**, they traveled to a city of Amalek. It is not specifically named which city, but it was a known city at the time. They went and set an ambush in the valley. What this means is that they were up on the side of the hill looking down into a ravine in a valley. They were perched and ready for attack.

Verse 6 says that Saul ran into some Kenites, but he let them go. The Kenites were nomadic Midianites (Num. 10:29; Judges 1:16). Moses' father in law was a Kenite (Judges 1:16). The Kenites had been kind to Israel and they accompanied the Israelites on their march as far as Jericho (Judges 1:16).

They were friends of Israel and so Saul let them go and told them not to go down to the Amalekites or they would get caught in the cross fire and killed.

Just as God remembers those who mistreat Israel, He also remembers those who are supportive and kind to Israel. Several hundred years later, God gives His reward to those who supported Israel.

At this point Saul looks good. He is organized, obedient, aggressive, logical and decisive.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #3 – Saul partially obeys what God told him to do. 15:7-9

Saul started fighting against the Amalekites and was winning. He was defeating them all to the north, south, east and west.

But **verse 8** says he captured Agag “alive.” **Verse 9** says he spared the best sheep, oxen and lambs. Anything that was good they kept. They destroyed anything that didn't look like it wasn't worth anything, but they kept the other stuff.

So what we have here is a case of partial obedience. Saul is not fully obeying God. He had no right to spare anyone or anything. He is playing by his own rules and not God's word.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #4 – God revealed to Samuel His disgust of Saul. **15:10-11**

God came to Samuel and said I regret the fact that I made Saul king. I hope God does not ever say that about us. I regret the fact I saved him. I regret the fact that I chose him, he will not obey Me. If God ever does say that about us, we are in big trouble.

God can and will remove people. He will remove leaders who are not faithful.

Samuel was broken-hearted. He wept, but that would not change what God was going to do.

When one specifically knows God's will and does not obey God's will or partially obeys it, he is setting himself on a very dangerous path that is heading to serious negative consequences.