

1 Sam 15:23-35 [21]-THE LORD REJECTS SAUL

PRELIMS. We have a very **solemn** passage today! I think it is the last such passage for a while! After this the subject matter seems less awesome! Saul has just shown his true colours. He has refused to fulfill the command of the Lord in killing all the Amalekites and their cattle. He spares them as spoil 'Shame to 'waste' such good material'!

FALSE REPENTANCE

This passage is in God's Word so we must give it - it is for our **learning!** Saul only **appears** to be repentant! "*I have **sinned** for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord*"[24] and **again** in [v30] "*I have **sinned***". But **is** he repentant? There's no word of repentance **until** Sam mentions his **loss** of the **kingdom!** It is 'the repentance of a man who is about to lose everything'!! The Lord has "***rejected you from being king***"[23c]. Up until that time Saul is quiet sure about his innocence "***I have obeyed the voice of the Lord***"[20c]

But every **criminal** is **sorry** about the **consequences** of his actions! Children are very quick to say 'Sorry' when they see the punishment coming! But sorrow does not necessary constitute repentance! Pharoah **said** to Moses he sinned x twice! [Ex 9:27+10:16] Judas **said** he sinned against innocent blood! [Mat 27:4] But their subsequent **behaviour** testified otherwise! Repentance means **amendment** of life!

Saul gives us hints why he sinned! It was the **fear of man!** "***Because I feared the people and obeyed their voice***"[24] **Pilate** too fell at this hurdle "*It should be as **they required***" and **Felix** was "*willing to do the **Jews a pleasure***"!! John Knox it was said, was 'So filled with the fear of **God** that there was **no room** for the fear of man'!!

Saul was also concerned what his **subjects would think!** "***honour me now before the elders of my people***"[30] Amazing how we want to be seen 'important' and 'successful' before our peers! It has been the ruination of many people. Friends, relatives, colleagues are perhaps the biggest means of Xns disobeying the Lord. Satan puts a **fear** in our hearts about what people will think. And often, these very people

would have appreciated and respected our decision! Our relationship with people is **more important** to us than our relationship with God!

Saul's repentance was **ritualistic** more than spiritual! As long as he goes through the 'rituals' of religion, he feels ok. "*return with me that I may worship the Lord*"[25b] 'Come on, lets get to church'! There is a great difference between religion and Xnity! Between ritual and repentance! True repentance is **meeting God face to face!** It is humbly and **ashamedly** admitting our sin and being willing to take whatever God demands by way of chastisement!

Saul seems to be completely **unaware** that he has offended **God**, not just Sam or the people! Saul is appealing to Sam for **pardon!** "*Saul said to Samuel...please pardon my sin*"[25a] **APP** Certainly we must confess and seek forgiveness from people we have sinned against, but it is **chiefly**, yes, chiefly, against God we have sinned. Remember David? "*Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned*" [Psa 51] Paul said to the Corinthian brothers "*You sin against Christ*" when they sinned against their own brothers! [1 Cor 8:12]!

So Sam has to explain to Saul that his sin is against "*the voice of the Lord*" and "*the word of the Lord*"[22,23]! **APP** People today are not enough aware, that their sins really do **affect** and **hurt** God. We are largely 'blind' to the existence of God! Friends, **God is!** God is everywhere! And He is very, very sensitive!

There is also something in mankind that makes him feel better by doing something religious, and that **that** will make atonement for his wrong doing! But no, **we** cannot make atonement for our, or anyone else's, sin! Christ alone makes atonement! It needs to be someone **absolutely perfect** who atones for the sins! Imagine a Banker receiving an payment of £1,000 from someone who owes that Banker £100,000! We're all in debt to God, so none of us can make atonement

Why did Sam at first **refuse** to go with Saul to worship?[26] Because Sam did not believe he was **genuine**. Sam would **never discourage** anyone from worshipping the Lord! Sam **discerned** the spirit Saul

had, self-righteous, proud - not truly repentant. Sam knew the Lord had rejected Saul and that was enough for Sam!

Saul, in his **desperate** state, catches hold of Sam's robe (there must have been a measure of tension!), and the **robe tears!** Sam sees in this a **symbolism** which indicates exactly what is happening in reality - or maybe the Spirit of God spoke to Sam! There are people who have a gift of seeing reality in 'little incidents'! At any rate, Scripture would have us **equate** the tearing of a suit, the symbol of God tearing away a spiritual heritage from someone who despises the Lord.

Note, Sam said "*The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you **this day***"[28] Although God had made that decision that day, it was **years** before it actually took place in history! David did not take over the kingdom for some years! **APP** God does **not enact** his judgments **immediately!** He very often give us time to repent - but if we do not, then be sure His pronouncements of judgments will come to pass!

Sam goes back with Saul obviously with a change of mind! Perhaps considering that Saul's replacement would not be 'installed' for some time yet, he does not discourage Saul from worshiping God. Just as Satan is still the god of this world until the appointed time when Christ will hand the kingdom over to God, so Saul was to 'remain' in charge' until David was raised up! **APP** Many people today who are not 'worthy', are 'in office', in control of important positions - but it is just until God's appointed time for them to be judged!

Sam calls for **Agag** - and we see how the hope of the hypocrite will perish. Agag, this king of wickedness, thinks/hopes "*Surely the bitterness of death is past*"[32] but like Haman, whose hopes were crushed, is in for a great shock! None other than Sam himself puts him to death! It was a **brutal age**, with all its 'accepted norms' just as we have our multi-abortions and think little of it.

Daily Mail yesterday reported a new born baby was deliberately left to die because guidelines state they can only treat babies older than 22 weeks gestation. The baby was 2 days short of that! He needed **more** help than others but legal guidelines prevailed in our society!!!

Surely **God must have** endowed Sam with something ‘special’ for a man like Sam to do such a thing!! Either that or else we have lost all sense of how evil wickedness is! We may feel this is awful stuff, not fit for the Bible or our children to read - but perhaps we have lost all sense of what wickedness really is in the sight of God! Agag was **very wicked** “*your sword has made women **childless***” [33].

“*And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death*”[35a] It’s possible that Saul had committed the **unpardonable** sin! When you commit the unpardonable sin, you **never get the chance**, and you avoid the opportunity yourself, of repenting - you never hear the gospel! You **refuse** any **possibility** to repent! Some Xn theologians believe that such people will never enter a church where the gospel is preached! So, we have another **anthropomorphism!** “*And the Lord **regretted** that he had made Saul king over Israel*” [35c]. God is using human language to describe how ‘hurt’ He feels at Saul’s attitude towards Him! God of course **is grieved** at man’s folly in refusing to believe and to repent.

Samuel of course, is a **true** prophet with a real **heart**. “*Samuel **grieved** over Saul*”[35b] He **knew** Saul, He spent hours with him, he conversed and chatted and **laughed** with him. We all miss people we know and work with - even those we have fallen out with! In the human aspect of things, we can get ‘carried away’ with grief - so much so, that like Sam in the next chapter, God has to **rebuke** us for grieving too much! “*How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel?*”[16:1]! It was Saul’s **soul** that Sam grieved over - because Saul had not **yet died!** Sam was grieved he could no more to **minister** to Saul. Like a **minister** leaving a **congregation** where there are **unconverted** people - he no longer could take them aside and minister to them!

We **must not** take the very solemn messages in this passage to **discourage** us but rather to **encourage** us. This passage means, that if **you** have any **desire** at all towards God, you could **not** possibly have committed the unpardonable sin! God **wants** and **desires** with all His heart that each of us turn to Him for He **delights** in **mercy!**