

1 Samuel 15 - Saul's Disobedience; The Lord Rejects Saul; Samuel Executes King Agag

III. Samuel and Saul narrative (8:1—15:35)

(8) Saul's partial obedience in destroying Amalek causes God to reject him as King (15:1-35)

1 Samuel 15

(8) Saul's partial obedience in destroying Amalek causes God to reject him as King (15:1-35)

1 Then Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD.

1 Then Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD.

1 Samuel told Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people, Israel. Now listen to the words of the LORD.

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.

- God is directing Saul through Samuel, so for Saul to disobey what Samuel said was tantamount to disobeying God

2 This is what the LORD of armies says: 'I will punish Amalek *for* what he did to Israel, in that he obstructed him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.

2 Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek *for* what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.

2 This is what the LORD of the Heavenly Armies says: 'I'll punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, when he set himself against Israel in the way, as they were going up from Egypt.

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.

- About 400 years before the time of Saul, God said that He intended to completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven (Ex 17:14; Deut 25:17-19)

— In the days of the wilderness wandering, Israel was savagely attacked from the rear by the Amalekites (Num 14:45)

— God would give Saul one more chance to prove himself, this time by utterly destroying Israel's old enemies, the Amalekites

— The Amalekites were descendants of Esau (Gen 36:12; 1 Chr 1:36), linked to the Edomites. They were nomads who lived mainly in southern Canaan and the Sinai.

3 Now go and strike Amalek and **completely destroy** everything that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

3 Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

3 Now, go and attack Amalek. Completely destroy all that they have. Don't spare them, but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, both ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

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.

- The time had now come, so Samuel commanded Saul to destroy the Amalekites totally, that is, to "place them under the ban (*herem*) of holy war" (Cf. Deut 7:2-6; 12:2-3; 20:16-18)

- "...completely destroy" - *heherim*, "utterly destroy"; there is no question what the will of God involved

— The term occurs 7x in this passage (v3,8,9 [2x], 15,18,20) showing that God's will was clear and that Saul's disobedience was not an oversight

— God tells Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites because:

(1) they had centuries to repent, and didn't

(2) they knew of God and coming judgment (i.e. Rahab)

(3) Israel was God's chosen people, and God was protecting His people from paganism, because He knew that if the Amalekites survived, they would entice the Israelites into their paganism.

— God had withheld His punishment to the full extent of grace and mercy for many generations

4 Then Saul summoned the people and counted them in Telaim: two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah.

4 Then Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah.

4 Saul summoned the people and mustered them in Telaim, 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men from Judah.

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 the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the wadi.

5 Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley.

5 Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley.

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

6 But Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, get away, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they went up from Egypt." So the Kenites got away from among the Amalekites.

6 Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

6 Saul told the Kenites, "Withdraw from the Amalekites so that I don't destroy you with them, for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they departed from Egypt." So the Kenites withdrew from the Amalekites.

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

- Saul mercifully warned the Kenites to evacuate before the war

— The Kenites were ancestors from Midian, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah (Gen 25:2)

— They had been friendly to Israel (Ex 18:9,10,19; Num 10:29-32)

— There may have been a treaty between the Israelites and the Kenites

- Saul proceeded to do the bidding of Samuel, but not entirely:

7 Then Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah going toward Shur, which is east of Egypt.

7 So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt.

7 Saul attacked the Amalekites from Havilah to Shur, which is east of Egypt.

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

8 He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and completely destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

8 He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

8 He captured alive Agag king of Amalek, but he completely destroyed all the people, executing them with swords.

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, the oxen, the more valuable *animals*, the lambs, and everything that was good, and were unwilling to destroy them completely; but everything despicable and weak, that they completely destroyed.

9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

9 Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle—the fattened animals and lambs—along with all that was good. They were not willing to completely destroy them, but they did completely destroy everything that was worthless and inferior.

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.

- Saul's criteria for what he killed was not part of God's command, but his own judgment
- When Saul saw the fatness of the Amalekite sheep and cattle, and when he considered the enhancement of his own glory and prestige in bringing back Agag, king of Amalek, as prisoner, he could not resist returning them as public exhibits of his leadership

- That this was Saul's intent is clear from v12, which speaks of Saul's erecting a monument to his own honor

- Again, Saul was confused of his role under God's sovereign rule (Cf. v38-39)

- Saul set his will against the orders of his Commander. He was not willing to destroy everything God told him to.

- Saul's obedience was selective and partial

- In 1 Sam 30, an armed force of Amalekites attacked and destroyed Ziklag...disobedience has consequences

This battle with the Amalekites evidently happened about 25 years after Saul began reigning, which was 23 years after God rejected Saul's dynasty following his disobedience at Gilgal (13:1-15). Thus, Saul apparently served as king about 23 years between God's rejection of his dynasty and God's rejection of him personally.

10 Then **the word of the LORD** came to Samuel, saying,

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

10 This message from the LORD came to Samuel:

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

- "...the word of the LORD" - occurs only 3x in 1 & 2 Sam (here; 2 Sam 7:4; 24:11)
— In all cases it refers to an important message of judgment that God sent Israel's king through a prophet

11 "I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was furious and cried out to the LORD all night.

11 "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night.

11 "I regret that I made Saul king, because he has turned away from following me and has not carried out my commands." Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the LORD all night.

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.

- God regretted that He made Saul king because of Saul's actions

— The regret did not come because God felt He made a mistake in calling Saul. From a human perspective, this verse shows God's emotion in regards to Saul. It expresses Samuel's description of God's emotions rather than God's actual actions, since God does not regret (Cf. v29).

12 Samuel got up early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was reported to Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal."

12 Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal."

12 Samuel got up early in the morning to meet Saul, but Samuel was told, "Saul went up to Carmel to set up a monument for himself. Then he turned around and traveled on to Gilgal."

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.

- What a startling act of pride, to set up a monument to himself...

— The monument did not honor God, who gave Saul the victory

— When Moses defeated the Amalekites, he built an altar (Ex 17:15-16), but when Saul defeated them, he erected a monument for himself to commemorate the victory (Cf. 2 Sam 18:18)

13 So Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD."

13 Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD."

13 Samuel approached Saul. "May the LORD bless you," Saul said. "I've carried out the LORD's command."

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.

- Consistent with his view of his own behavior, Saul claimed to have obeyed God; however, he was only partially obedient

— God regards partial obedience as disobedience (Cf. v19)

— Like many people today, Saul sought to redefine reality. He desired to exalt his opinion over truth and to deceive people by demanding they accept and honor him for how he identified himself on his own terms. But he could not deceive God or Samuel.

14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the bellowing of the oxen which I hear?"

14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

14 Samuel said, "Then what is this bleating of sheep in my ears and the lowing of cattle that I hear?"

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

- When Samuel approached Saul, the king lied to him and told him he had obeyed God's Word. Just about the time Saul's sins found him out, for the noise of the animals gave him away.

15 Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the LORD **your** God; but the rest we have completely destroyed."

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

15 Saul replied, "They brought them from the Amalekites. The people spared the best of the sheep and cattle to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God, and the rest they completely destroyed."

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.

- "...your" - interesting pronoun to use; God was evidently Samuel's God, but not Saul's God (Cf. v30)

- Rather than confess his sin, Saul tried to justify his disobedience by claiming that the animals were brought as a sacrifice to the LORD (v13,15); he will also argue that they were brought because of the insistence of the soldiers (v20-21)

— He failed to take responsibility for his actions and blamed the people instead

16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop, and let me inform you of what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak!"

16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait, and let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak!"

16 "Be quiet!" Samuel said. "I'll tell you what the LORD told me last night."

Saul told him, "Speak."

16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

- God and Samuel loved Saul too much to allow his self-deception to remain unchallenged

17 So Samuel said, "Is it not *true*, though you were insignificant in your own eyes, *that* you *became* the head of the tribes of Israel? For the LORD anointed you as king over Israel.

17 Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were *made* the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel,

17 So Samuel replied, "Is it not true that though you were small in your own eyes you became head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed you king over Israel?"

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?

- Saul was genuinely humble before his anointing (Cf. 9:21), but when he became king, he viewed himself as the ultimate authority in Israel

— This prideful attitude led him to disobey the Law of God

18 And the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and completely destroy the **sinnners**, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are eliminated.'

18 and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.'

18 The LORD sent you on a mission: 'Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they're destroyed.'

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.

- "...sinners" - habitually wicked people

19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Instead, you loudly rushed upon the spoils and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD!"

19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"

19 Why didn't you obey the LORD, but grabbed the spoil and did evil in the LORD's sight?"

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 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, for I went on the mission on which the LORD sent me; and I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have completely destroyed the Amalekites.

20 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

20 Saul told Samuel, "I did obey the LORD. I went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, I brought Agag king of Amalek, and I completely destroyed the Amalekites.

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.

- Saul continued to call partial obedience total obedience

— He again placed responsibility for taking some spoils on the people, but the king was responsible for the people's actions

— Saul is classically trying to justify his mistakes to escape blame and punishment

21 But the people took *some* of the spoils, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things designated for destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

21 But the people took *some* of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

21 The people took some of the spoil—sheep, cattle, and the best of what was to be completely destroyed—to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

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.

- Once more, Saul resorted to excuses: "They" (the people) saved the animals, but "we" (himself and the leaders) have utterly destroyed the rest

— He had rebelled against the Word of the Lord, then tried to make up for his disobedience by sacrifices

22 Samuel said, "Does the LORD have as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than a sacrifice, *And* to pay attention is *better* than the fat of rams.

22 Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams.

22 Samuel said, "Does the LORD delight as much in burnt offerings and sacrifices| as in obeying the LORD? Surely, to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams.

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.

- But Samuel responded with a statement of principle that is timeless in its application: To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

23 "For rebellion is as *reprehensible* as the sin of **divination**, And insubordination is as *reprehensible* as false religion and idolatry. Since you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king."

23 "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king."

23 Indeed, rebellion is the sin of divination, and arrogance is iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected this message from the LORD, he has rejected you from being king."

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.

- "...divination" - witchcraft

— Saul's departure from carrying out God's will via His explicit instructions (rebellion) presumes to control the future course of events, just as divination does

— It amounts to insubordination, that puts the disobedient person in God's place, which is a form of idolatry

- God will now begin to terminate Saul's rule as Israel's king; God had previously told Saul that his kingdom (dynasty) would not endure (13:14)

Saul had substituted talking in place of doing (v13), excuses in place of confessions (v15,21), and sacrifice instead of obedience (v22).

24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for **I have violated the command** of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice.

24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice.

24 "I've sinned," Saul replied to Samuel. "I've broken the LORD's command and your word, because I was afraid of the people and listened to them.

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.

- "...I have violated the command" - *abarti*, overlooked; to pass over

— Saul only admitted that he overlooked some small and relatively unimportant part of what God had commanded because he feared the people

— What God called rebellion, Saul called an oversight

— The Lord's conviction led Saul to confess sin, but he still blamed others as the cause

— Saul became king because of the voice of the people (Cf. 8:9,22; 12:1), and he was rejected because he listened to the voice of the people (instead of listening to God)

25 Now then, please pardon my sin and return with me, so that I may worship the LORD."

25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."

25 Now, please forgive my sin and return with me so I may worship the LORD."

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

- Saul begged Samuel to forgive him and return with him to worship the Lord, but the consequences of his actions could not be undone

26 But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

26 But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

26 Samuel told Saul, "I won't return with you because you have rejected the message from the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

- Samuel refused to accompany Saul because Saul had refused to accompany God

- Saul knew his disobedience was why God had rejected him as king

Most of us like to think that however serious our disobedience, once we repent of that sin, we are forgiven and experience no real loss. The Scripture teaches that genuine

repentance always meets forgiveness, but it does not teach that there are no losses. Actually, every reflective Christian knows of permanent losses that are the result of our failure to live up to God's ideals for our lives.

27 Then Samuel turned to go, but *Saul* grasped the edge of his robe, and it tore off.

27 As Samuel turned to go, *Saul* seized the edge of his robe, and it tore.

27 As Samuel turned to go *Saul* seized him by the corner of his robe, and it tore.

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

- When Samuel was about to leave *Saul*, the king confessed his sins, but his confession did not impress the prophet

— True confession involves more than saying "I have sinned"; it means repentance and true sorrow for sin

- The hem of a garment identified the social status of the person who wore it

— *Saul* tearing Samuel's hem, he symbolically (and possibly intentionally) seized the prophet's authority

— Samuel interpreted this action as symbolizing the wrenching of the kingdom from *Saul* (Cf. 1 Kings 11:29-33)

28 So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.

28 So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.

28 Samuel told him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel away from you today, and he has given it to your neighbor who is better than you.

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.

- As Samuel turned away, *Saul* held to his robe and ripped it, and Samuel took this as a prophecy that the kingdom would be torn from *Saul* and given to another (*David*), who would become the most famous king in human history.

29 Also the Glory of Israel will not lie nor change His mind; for He is not a man, that He would change His mind."

29 Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."

29 Moreover, the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind, for he's not a man that he should change his mind."

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

- This verses seemingly poses a problem in light of other passages that say God changed His mind (Ex 32:14; Num 14:12,20; 1 Chr 21:15)

— I believe he meant that God is not fickle (He does not change His mind back and forth or randomly)

— However, God does sometimes relent (change His mind) in response to the prayers of His people or when they repent (Cf. Jer 18:7-10; 1 John 1:9)

— But when He determines to do something, He follows through (Cf. Jer 14:11-12). He is initially open to changing His mind about how He will deal with people, but He does not remain open forever. He is patient with people, but His patience has its limit.

— When God issues a decree that is plainly intended as irrevocable, as in the rejection of Saul, then there is no possibility of that decree being rescinded (Cf. Num 23:19)

— The language "changed His mind" or "does not change His mind," when applied to God, is anthropomorphic (describing God in human terms). Obviously God does not have a mind or brain as humans do, since He is a spirit being. Anthropomorphic (human form) and anthropopathic (human feeling) expressions indicate that God is like human beings in these comparisons.

Does God Change His Mind?

When Saul failed to destroy the Amalekites, Samuel rebuked him for his rebellion and declared that the Lord had rejected him as king (v23). Saul pled for forgiveness, but Samuel repeated the Lord's decision (v24-26). Samuel then added these words: "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you. And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind" (v28-29).

Saul's behavior, as recorded in 1 Sam 14-15, makes it clear that he was on thin ice. He did nothing that would motivate *Yahweh* to change His mind about the earlier prophecy; in fact his folly and disobedience cause one to anticipate the worst. When Samuel went to confront him at Gilgal a second time, any earlier ambiguity was removed. Samuel's rejection of Saul's plea for forgiveness shows that this second rebuke is in fact a decree, as does the temporal marker "today" (v28). The concluding words, emphasizing that the Lord will not lie or change His mind (v29), formally mark Samuel's declaration as unconditional. The verb "to lie" here means "to retract." The Lord had decreed Saul's demise and nothing could alter His decision.

See notes on Ex 32:14, Num 23:19, Ps 110:4. Also see note on v11.

30 Then *Saul* said, "I have sinned; *but* please honor me now before the elders of my people and before *all* Israel, and go back with me, so that I may worship the LORD **your** God."

30 Then he said, "I have sinned; *but* please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God."

30 "I've sinned," Saul said. "But please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me so I may worship the LORD your God."

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.

- Saul was more concerned about how he looked instead of what God thought; he wanted a good reputation, but he did not want true character

- "...your" - interesting pronoun to use, implying that God was not *his* God (Cf. v15)

- Saul wanted to maintain control and to receive the glory; he wanted Samuel to honor him so that he would not lose face with the people

— Rather than having a heart to please God, as David did, Saul only obeyed God when he felt that it was to his advantage to do so

31 So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

31 So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

31 Samuel returned, following Saul, and Saul worshipped the LORD.

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

- Samuel consented to worship with Saul, likely because he realized that Saul was still king

— He may have done so out of personal concern for Saul, or out of concern for the nation if it became known that God had rejected Saul

32 Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is gone!"

32 Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

32 Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of Amalek to me."

Agag came to him in fetters, saying to himself, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

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 But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel cut Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

33 But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

33 Samuel said, "Just as your sword has made women childless, so your mother will be childless among women." Then Samuel cut Agag into pieces in the LORD's presence in Gilgal.

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.

- Samuel proceeded to obey God and kill Agag, as Saul should have done

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went to his house in Gibeah of Saul.

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

- The departure of Samuel and Saul to their respective home towns pictures them going their separate ways

— They had little in common since their relationship with the Lord was so different, so they never saw each other again (until Saul's death, v35)

35 And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, though Samuel mourned for Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

35 Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

35 Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul, and the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

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.

- Though still recognized by the people as their king for about 15 more years, Saul was deposed by the LORD right then (Cf. 16:14)

— The finality of it all was not missed by Samuel, for from that day Samuel never visited the king again

— The estrangement between Samuel and Saul represents that which now existed in permanent form between the Lord Himself and the disobedient king

— Though God had permitted Saul to reign in response to the demand of the people, that very concession now grieved the heart of the LORD.

Saul lost his best friend, he lost the Lord's blessing, and he lost the kingdom. From now on, he would be on a dark, winding road that would end with him becoming a castaway and being slain by one of the very Amalekites he refused to destroy (1:13). Agag also had a son that was spared: which will also lead to Haman of Esther! (Cf. Esther 3:1).