

1 Samuel 15 - 16 • God Rejects King Saul/Anoints David

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

Open your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 15. We have some really, really, good stuff to go through tonight. Verse 1, *“And Samuel said to Saul, ‘The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the LORD. (God is about to give Saul a directive and this is it) ² Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt.’”’* (ESV) Now stop there for a moment.

This is really interesting because God says to Saul through Samuel, I've taken note of what Amalek did. This was hundreds of years ago. I don't know how good of a memory you have, but God has an excellent one. And one of the reasons is, is because for Him there's no passage of time. He dwells outside of the constraints of time.

But what He's referring to is the time when Moses was bringing the nation of Israel up from Egypt, through the wilderness, and they were coming to the promised land. And the Amalekites viciously attacked Israel, but they did it in a very cowardly way. They attacked them at their weakest spot.

You have to understand the Amalekites were like guerrilla warfare terrorists of the day. They had no honor. They had no courage. Instead of a frontal attack against the Israelite army, they would attack the stragglers. And that's the kind of people the Amalekites were. They were basically scavengers. And so they would look for some sort of a weak potential to attack an army or people or whatever.

And when the Israelites were making their way to the promised land, the stragglers in the back were the children, and the elderly, and the infirmed. And obviously those people weren't going to put up any kind of a fight. And those are the people that the Amalekites chose to attack.

In fact, I won't have you turn there, but just listen as I read a couple of quick accounts about this. First of all, and I'm reading this just so you know, if you're taking notes out of Exodus chapter 17, it says, *“⁸ The Amalekites came and*

attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. (and listen to this) ⁹ Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.""

You remember this story where Moses would hold his staff up and as long as he held it up, they were gaining the victory against the Amalekites, but when his arms got tired and the staff came down, the Amalekites would begin to take the advantage. And Aaron, his brother, and Hur, not a girl. It was a guy, would come up, came alongside Moses and actually held his— well, first they rolled a big stone and they said, here, sit on this. And they actually held up his arms so that he would keep his arms up until the victory was won. And that's that whole story, but this is this is when that took place. When the Amalekites attacked Israel.

And even Moses, a little bit later on in this passage, Moses spoke to Joshua. It says, *"¹³ So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. (and) ¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, (listen to this) because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven."*

God responded to this cowardly, vicious, terrorist attack and said, I am going to eliminate the Amalekites from under heaven. It's now in our story in 1 Samuel, when God is choosing finally, after hundreds of years of time given to the Amalekites to repent of their sin that God is finally going to bring out His judgment. Aren't you glad God is patient?

But let me just read another very quick section from Deuteronomy this time. Listen to this from Deuteronomy 25. This is Moses now speaking to the Israelites in his final sermon, if you will, to the people before he passes away. He said, *"¹⁷ Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. ¹⁸ When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and attacked all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. ¹⁹ When the Lord your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven. (and then here's the last three words Moses said to the people) Do not forget!"* All right. God hates it when the weak take advantage, excuse me, when the strong take advantage of the weak.

Now, here's the instructions if you look with me in your Bible. Verse 3, the instructions given to Saul. *"Now (He says) go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."* There's two things really that we need to address here.

First of all, this is a judgment that God is bringing upon Amalek for their sin. And it's not just what they did in the Book of Exodus, it's not just what happened there. God is executing His righteous, sovereign choice of judgment over this people for their sinful idolatry, and their unwillingness to repent. And make no mistake about it, God gave them hundreds of years to repent of their sin before bringing judgment. That's the first thing you need to understand.

Second of all, I want you to understand the extent of this judgement. This is not a slap on the wrist. Notice what God said to Saul through Samuel. He said, you are to utterly wipe them out.

And I know that assaults our American sensibilities a little bit. And we might struggle to understand the depth of this judgment being so severe that God says, I want them wiped off the face of the earth. But you have to remember something about this. This is God's judgment, not man's.

Now, here's another question that might come to your mind. So if this is God's judgment, why doesn't He just do it Himself? Why doesn't He just like send a plague? He, think of it. He could do it. When God judged the Egyptians, all the firstborn males died by an angel going through the land who brought death that night to every firstborn male child. Why couldn't God just take care of this apart from the Israelites? I mean, why even involve them?

Well, one of the reasons God is involving His people in this is because there is an issue He brought up here that the Amalekites did attack them on the road, on their way to the land. That was wrong and He's giving them an opportunity to exact that kind of revenge and to be the instrument of His judgment.

God judges situations people in all kinds of different ways. He never enjoys that judgment. He never desires that judgment, but He is a just God, and judgment ultimately comes. And there are times when God uses people to execute His judgment. In fact, government structures are meant to be God's instrument of bringing justice, as Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans in the 13th chapter, and so forth.

So it says here, again, I want emphasize to you again that this directive given to Saul was to obliterate them and leave nothing alive. And that means animals, anything you find, just destroy it.

Verse 4. *“So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah. ⁵ And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley. ⁶ Then Saul said to the*

Kenites, "Go, depart; go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites."

I don't know if you remember or not, but the Kenites were actually descendants of Jethro, who was Moses father in law. And you'll remember when they came up out of the land, Jethro rejoiced when he heard the story. Moses told him the story of how God delivered them from their captors in Egypt and Jethro just was thrilled. And he just, he was like, that is the coolest thing I've ever heard. And he really, he rejoiced, and he blessed them, and so forth.

And now the Kenites who are the descendants of Jethro are not in this judgment. And so Saul says, get away from here because judgment is about to fall. And it says in verse 7, *"And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt."*⁸ *And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction 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 fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction."* Stop there, please.

This is very important that we stop, take a breath, and understand what's actually happening here, because this is critical. There's some pretty serious attitudes that are going on here related to Saul's heart and the heart of his soldiers. And there's some things that you and I can learn about our own attitudes toward the Lord. Just like Saul, just like Saul, how gracious we can be sometimes to give everything to Him that we don't want.

What it basically tells us here in this passage is that they got to the area of Amalek and they pounced upon them, and they destroyed pretty much everything. But they took Agag, the king captive. They didn't put him to death. They brought him, probably as a trophy. And they kept for themselves all of the best. They couldn't bear to destroy it so they kept it. They kept it for themselves.

And, first of all, this is disobedient on Saul's part. It reveals his ultimate attitude toward obedience to the Lord. And God is going to call him on this particular issue. But we look at this sometimes, it's not hard to see myself in Saul. I mean, I look at Saul and I don't want to see myself. The last person I want to see myself in is Saul, but it's not that hard.

I've seen in my years as a pastor a lot of this similar sort of an attitude where we'll talk a lot about how everything I have belongs to God. And we like to

even say that sometimes, hey, everything I have man belongs to God. He gave me everything. I'm just so grateful to God for everything He's given me. He can't have it, but He gave it to me, and I'm really glad. So what do we do? We end up giving things that we don't need or no longer work. We'll give those away. Somebody needs a TV, I got one in the garage. I think it gets one channel. Yeah, give that to you. It's all yours, man. God bless you.

It's interesting, when God called the nation of Israel to give, to tithe, and particularly to offer their sacrifices, He said, I want your best. I want the best that you have. Don't, and think about this if you were a farmer, you got to give an animal. Okay, I got to give an animal. I got to figure out, got to go time to sacrifice. Got to figure out one of the animals. All right. Which one are you going to do this? And well, that one's got a, he's got a big growth on his head. Bring him. That one's got a lame leg, bring it along.

As a farmer, you might kind of think, well, I'm going to, so I'm going to keep the lame and deformed one, and I'm going to take the cream of my crop, the best animal in the pasture, and I'm going to bring that to offer to the Lord. Do you ever think about the, just the dynamic of what that meant for people and how they could easily have an attitude about that? Like, why the best? But that's what God wanted. What you give to the Lord is to be the best.

So it's interesting here that we read that all that was despised and worthless, it's like, yeah, we'll give that to God. Aren't we cool? But everything else that was really nice, they kept for themselves. The only reason they destroyed anything was because it wasn't worth keeping.

I guess the lesson that you and I need to maybe pull from this first few verses of 1 Samuel 15 is, I think just like Saul, sometimes we will obey God as long as it serves us in some way. But as soon as something doesn't serve me, to give that thing away, or to do something like that, or inconvenience myself, suddenly, I'm not so interested in being obedient.

How different from the attitude of David, who is in the very next chapter going to be anointed as a young boy as king over Israel. Although he won't take the throne for many years. How different an attitude from David who would later say. I will never offer the Lord something that doesn't cost me. That was his attitude. That was his heart. I will not give to the Lord that which costs me nothing.

Well, obviously you can't do stuff like this without God hearing about it. Look at verse 10 in your Bible. It says, *"The word of the LORD came to Samuel: ¹¹ 'I*

regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me (that's key right there) and has not performed my commandments." And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the LORD all night."

He pulled an all-nighter, you guys, in prayer. We've already, we've seen the heart of Saul here, now we see the heart of Samuel. He hears that Saul hasn't been faithful. And he prays all night long. He's so burdened. His heart is so broken.

"¹² And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal." And there you have the heart of Saul. Not only is he disobedient to the Lord, he wants to build a monument to himself in his disobedience.

"And Samuel came to Saul, (verse 13) and Saul said to him, "Blessed be you to the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD." ¹⁴ And Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?""

It's crazy sort of a situation if you can imagine this happening. Immediately, Saul is just, he's just arms open, hey, bless you Samuel, glad you came down. We've got victory here. I have been obedient to the Lord my God. Samuel's like, really? And what about these animals that I'm hearing? What's all that?

Pride. Listen, pride makes us blind to the sin that's going on in our hearts. Okay. Pride, and that is what Saul is dealing with here, makes us blind to the sin that is going on in our hearts. In other words, we can't see it when pride is standing in the way. We can't see it.

I've done what I was supposed to do. What was I speaking another language to you, Saul? The Lord very clearly said to you, obliterate all the people, all their belongings, get rid of it, destroy it. It is devoted to the Lord. In fact, it's one Hebrew word that describes. devoted to the Lord. And it's a very common sort of thing. It's referenced many times throughout the Bible. Saul knew exactly what it meant, and he determined not to do it.

I want you to see, though, how Saul responds, because this is classic excuses. Look at verse 15, *"Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction."* Did you catch that?

First of all, the first thing he said is, he deflects the blame by saying they did it. Oh the people, they're hard to control. He's the king. Don't give me this garbage Saul. He immediately says, well, they brought them from the Amalekites, but they only brought them to sacrifice to the Lord. So now he's going to try to give it a sacred religious sort of a twist so that it sounds okay.

Listen, disobedience is disobedience. Even when you try to make it sound like you did it for the sake of God. And that's what he's trying to do here. Oh, we just did this so that we'd have some animals to sacrifice. That's why we did it. It was, it's all part of the, just the whole obedient thing. We're being completely obedient. We're just doing it. Just a little twist here on things. It's just crazy.

Samuel he just can't even deal with it. Verse 16, *"Then Samuel said to Saul, '(just) Stop! (will you just stop? He says, listen) I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night.' And he said to him, 'Speak.'"*

¹⁷ *And Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own eyes, (or the actual, that should read better, though you were little in your own eyes) are you not the head of the tribes of Israel?"*

You remember when Saul started off, he did appear little in his own eyes. Remember when they wanted to crown him king? He hid from the people. He hid among the baggage. He started off very small in his own eyes and God made him head of the tribes of Israel.

And he says, *"The LORD anointed you king over Israel. ¹⁸ And the LORD sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'* ¹⁹ *Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD?"*

And that is where the Lord zeros in on what is going on here. *"Why ...did you not obey...?"* And look what He says he did. And He asks, He does it in the form of a question. *"Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"*

Now this is pretty clear sort of a confrontation. God has made it very clear what the offense is here. I told you what to do. I told you to destroy everything. You decided to pounce on the plunder instead and keep some for yourself. Why did you do that? All right.

Look what Saul responds. Look how he responds. ²⁰ *And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the mission on which the*

LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction.” Did God tell him to bring the king back? Do you remember reading anywhere that God said, oh, by the way, bring the king back?

In the course of saying, I have been obedient. He's saying, I did. I did exactly what God told me to do. I went, I fought against the Amalekites. I brought the king back. Now, wait a second. Do you hear what's coming out of your mouth? Do you hear that you're talking out of both sides of your mouth? You said on the one hand, you've been obedient, and then you admitted that you were disobedient. What exactly is going on here?

And then he says again, in verse 21, *“But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.”* Again, he tries to whitewash it by saying, we're going to do it for God. We did it for the Lord.

And Samuel responds, this is so important. *“²² And Samuel said, “Has 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 listen than the fat of rams.””*

The Jews got to a place in their religious culture where sacrifice became the quick and easy answer. You mess up, sacrifice. You do something you shouldn't have done, sacrifice. Yeah, I know I, did what I shouldn't have done, but you know, hey, got to sacrifice. Just bring up a sacrifice because God loves those sacrifices. All we got to do is take Him a sacrifice. I don't know what it is with sacrifices. Something about blood. I don't know. He likes it. Just kill an animal. I can probably sacrifice a sheep or two for having my fun. That'll be okay.

You understand that attitude? You think we could ever do anything like that as Christians. Oh, yeah. I have done it myself and I have talked to other believers sat down, looked them in the eye, confronted them with their actions. I remember one lady well, boy I tell you, the boldness was, just it just shivers. I told her, she was doing something that was very clearly against the Word of God. I told her, she said, well, God's just going to have to forgive me. Do you know? That's the attitude. That's it right there.

Well, isn't He in the forgiving business? I mean, isn't that what He does? That's what we read about: *“...confess... (your) sins, he is faithful...just...(and will) forgive us...cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:9) I remember the promise. Oh, and I'm going to take advantage of that promise. But you see the

difference of the attitude here? The attitude is I'm going to do what I want to do. I don't have to repent. I don't have to obey. All I got to do is go to Him and go, I'm sorry.

You ever try that with your parents when you were a kid? I decided I was going to try that one time. I was going to try deceiving my dad. And next time I did something I knew deserved a good old fashioned whooping, I was just going to just feign sorrow cause I wasn't really sorry. It was too fun. I had a blast. Don't let anybody ever tell you that sin isn't fun. It's a kick. Yeah. Sin is fun. Ruin your life, make you miserable, but it's fun. I mean, while you're doing it. And I was having fun, and my dad decided he was going to punish me, and so I just instantly went into this emotional puddle. I'm sorry, Dad! He didn't care cause, you can smell that kind of insincerity a mile off, can't you?

We just, well, the reason we got these things here, actually no, it's wrong that you'd be mad. The reason all these animals are here is we just wanted to sacrifice to God, so here's a good thing. We're doing good so you need to apologize. Samuel comes back, listen, Saul, obedience is better than sacrifice. And I think the Lord would say the same thing to you and I. Obedience is better than confession.

Sometimes we think it's easier to confess in the morning and ask for forgiveness than to obey. Because after all, God's in the forgiving business and so that's what He does. Since that's what He does, I'll just take advantage of it. That's wrong. God wants us to have hearts of obedience. Say, Father, I want to please You. I want to live my life in a way that's pleasing to You.

Can you see the tug of war that's going on here with Samuel and Saul? Do you see this? Samuel goes to Saul. What did you do? I was obedient. No, you weren't. Look, what are all these animals doing here? Oh, we just, the people brought them. We just, we did it for God. What about this Agag? Did God tell you to bring Agag? We brought Agag. I was obedient. Do you see this going back and forth?

Samuel is telling him what he did and Saul deflects it. He just deflects it. He will not accept it. He will not accept culpability for his actions. Do you see that attitude? Listen, that's what lost Saul, the kingdom. That's what lost him the kingdom. That's it, right there.

And when God said, I will raise up a man after My own heart, referring to David, He was referring not to a man who didn't sin, because David was a good sinner. I mean, he knew how to sin, but he also was broken over his sin. David

did some really stupid things during his lifetime, but when he was confronted, he never once deflected it, even when he wasn't sure if judgment was coming his way, he accepted it as judgment.

Do you remember when his son Absalom tried to wrestle control of the kingdom out of his hands? And so David got his family together and they just got their belongings and they just had to run for their lives. And there was a man of Benjamin who watched king David and his family walking along this ravine area. He stood above them and showered them with dirt and rocks and cursed at David all along. You man of blood, this is God, this is God doing this to you. And he just threw...

Have you ever had dirt showered on you? Anybody ever have just dirt clods and rocks thrown at you? And finally, one of David's men, who had plenty of ability, walked up to David and said, give the word and I'll go cut his head off. And it would have been that easy. And as I read that passage, I want David to go. Yes, that's what my flesh wants. I want to hear David go, I'll, look the other way you go. And then have the story say, and David's mighty man took his sword out of its sheath, and crawled up from the ravine, and lopped off the man's head. And that's the end of the story. But that's not what happened.

What David said was, no, let him curse, for maybe the Lord has called him to curse. And if it's the Lord, I'm not going to fight what God has to say to me. No matter who it comes through, I'm not going to fight it. Sometimes I just don't get David. I mean, I just can't relate. My flesh is just still so alive. I can't understand that kind of humility, that kind of soft heartedness that doesn't retaliate. Anyway.

But Saul is the exact opposite. Look what Samuel goes on to say in verse 23. He says, *"For rebellion is as the sin of divination,..."* And your Bible may say, *"witchcraft."*

Do you know why Samuel said that? Because Saul was hard on the witches in the land. There were diviners in the land. There were mediums and spiritists. And the Bible says, Saul put them out of the land. He purposely set out to cleanse the nation of Israel from all the diviners, and the witches, and the mediums. And they knew it. They knew that if it came out publicly that they did that sort of thing; talking to the dead, raising the dead to speak, or whatever, the spirit of the dead, they knew that Saul would come in swiftly with punishment that was severe. They knew it.

You remember at the very end of Saul's life, he will actually stoop to going to a medium himself when the Lord fails to answer him and his prayers. And the woman that he talks to try to act as a medium, will even say, hey, don't you know, Saul has put all the mediums out of the land. So it was common knowledge. Saul was tough on witches and he liked to think that the witches were the bad people. And they were, but he liked to think we're the good people.

We do that, don't we? We get this, we, they, kind of a thing going on. And then there's they, here's they, there's scum. And, but if there's this, there's us. Yeah. We're good. Isn't no we, they. We like talking about them. But us?

Look what Samuel says again to Saul, your rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. In other words, on a scale of severity, these witches, Saul, that you despise and that you have rid the land from, your rebellion is the same in God's eyes. That's what Samuel is saying.

And he even says, *"...and presumption (look at this) is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king."*

²⁴ Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. ²⁵ Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the LORD."

But if he just would have stopped. If he just would have stopped with, *"I have sinned, ...I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD."* If he just would have stopped there, but he just had to keep talking. Number one, he says, *"I feared the people and (I) obeyed their voice."* People, that's an excuse.

He's the king. He doesn't have to be afraid of anybody. He's the king. His word is law in the land and everybody knows it. You don't follow Saul's commands, you're in trouble. This is just nothing but an excuse.

Have you ever had somebody apologize but throw out all the excuses in the world at the same time? Doesn't it ruin it? I mean, doesn't it just ruin it? I'm really sorry, but. No, but nothing. And that's what Saul is doing. I'm really sorry, but I was just afraid of the people and they're big. Bible already told us Saul was bigger than all of them, he was a head taller than all of them, and he was the king. And then he goes on to say, *"please pardon my sin and return with me..."*

Now this is where Saul begins to talk about what's going on in his heart as far as how he is viewed by the people. Return with me. “...*return with me* (he wants to be seen with Samuel) *that I may bow before the LORD.*” There's an interesting sort of a statement here. He says, “*that I may bow before the LORD.*”

What is unspoken, but what Bible scholars believe that Saul is actually suggesting to Samuel, is that he come with him to sacrifice these animals that they brought from the Amalekites. That's what he is essentially suggesting. I'm really sorry. I shouldn't have done it, the people were just, they scared me, but why don't you just come, and we're going to have a roast. We're going to sacrifice all these animals. So why don't you come with me? I mean, because I'm sorry and just come with me, okay? Won't you? Please?

And what he's essentially attempting to get Samuel to do is to come along, and buy his presence, to put his stamp of approval on the situation. It's like, okay, Samuel, just between me and you, I'm really sorry, but you know what? Let's just, let's go, because the sacrifice is going to get started pretty soon. And you don't want to miss it. It's going to be good, because it's for your God, dude. And so let's go.

“*And Samuel (says in verse 26) ...to Saul, “I will not return with you. (in other words, I am not going to put my stamp of approval on this thing) For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.”* ²⁷ *As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt (or the edge) of his robe, and it tore.* ²⁸ *And Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.* ²⁹ *And also the Glory of Israel (and he's referring to God now) will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.”*”

Or is that last versus given in the NIV if you have one of those in front of you. “*He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.*” What Samuel is saying to Saul is, you're out, he's in, and God's not going to change His mind. In other words, all of the weeping and wailing in the world is not going to change what God has determined to do.

Verse 30. Look what, look at Saul. And “*Then he said, “I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may bow before the LORD your God.”* ³¹ *So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul bowed before the LORD.*” Look at that. I have sinned, yet honor me.

This is a man who built a monument to himself. Yeah, I know I've sinned, but come on, honor me in front of the people. Come with me and honor me. ³¹ *So Samuel turned back after Saul, (but not to honor him) and Saul bowed before the LORD.*”

(but) ³² *...Samuel said, “Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites.” And Agag came to him cheerfully.*” The New King James says, “cautiously,” the NIV says “confidently.” But we know what it means because it goes on in verse 32 to say that “Agag... (was saying to himself), “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” (in other words. I think I'm good to go) ³³ *And Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.*” Wow!

I prefer the way the NIV simply says, “*Samuel put Agag to death.*” But that is a softening of what the Hebrew says because what the Hebrew says is pretty close to what the ESV reads here, and many of the other translations, like the New American Standard, and so forth. He hacked him to pieces. Yeah. Aren't you glad you aren't watching a movie of this thing?

³⁴ *Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul.* ³⁵ *And Samuel (look at this) 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.*”

Chapter 16. *“The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”* ² *And Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.”*”

Now that tells you how bad things have gotten. Here's a man who everyone respected and honored for his position as priest, prophet, and judge in Israel. And yet he knows that Saul is so far gone by this time, that if word gets to him that he has gone to anoint a successor to the king to the throne of Israel, that Saul will have him put to death.

“And the LORD..., (responds and says) “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” ³ *And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you.”* ⁴ *Samuel did what the LORD commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?”* ⁵ *And he said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.*

Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before him.” ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD (this is important, if it isn’t underlined in your Bible, maybe it should be. For the LORD) sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.””

I remember when I had an interesting example of this many years ago. And one of my kids was very small. I won’t tell you which one, but she was probably, it was one of the girls. Okay, I just said she. That reduces it from four to two. So as far as I’m going with you. Don’t try to get it out of me.

Anyway, we were watching the Miss America pageant. She was about three years old. And of course, one by one, these women who are dropped at gorgeous, come parading across the platform. And they were doing the interview portion of the pageant and they were talking. And this one girl who of course was gorgeous, began to talk and my little girl said, she’s a Christian. And I said, why do you say that, honey? Cause she’s beautiful. And of course that was just the heart of a little girl.

And I remember thinking to myself, yeah, that’s not too far off from the way the rest of us think. I mean, we might not go around saying he’s a Christian just cause he’s handsome or she’s a Christian cause she’s beautiful, but we do judge people by the outside. We do look at them and we make judgments based upon their appearance. And the mistake that my little daughter made at the time is a mistake that many of us make.

It’s a mistake that Samuel made and he’s rebuked for it here when he looks at Eliab and God’s like, no, you know what? I already had a really tall guy and he didn’t work out. So you know what? We’re moving on here. But He says to him, I do not see people like you see people. I look at the heart. Look at the heart. That will either be really distressing to you or comforting.

God sees the heart. God sees your heart. There’s nothing that God doesn’t see in you. Aren’t you glad for the blood of Jesus because if we get to know our hearts even just a little bit, it’s pretty scary. It’s a pretty scary sort of a thing to look into yourself and find all that darkness there. And all that evil, frankly, that resides within our sinful nature. I mean, it’s dark in all of us. There’s not, and

some of us may express it a little bit more than others, but it's in all of us. In that sinful nature, that Adamic nature, that fallen Adamic nature.

And when you finally, as a Christian, are allowed to see that yourself. You begin to wonder how in the world can God even abide my presence? I'm surprised He doesn't literally vaporize me on the spot. And were it not for the grace and mercy of God, He would. Simple as that.

I love it when people talk about God and they'll say, I just feel so unworthy. And I go, it's because you are. And that's not what.... Their eyes get big. What? Yes. Yes, you are completely 100 percent unworthy of God and His mercy and His goodness and His blessing. Did you think you deserved it? Did you think you deserved His blessing?

And then they get to thinking about it. Hey, I guess you're right. I don't deserve anything do I? No, nothing. You deserve hell. You don't get it. You don't get hell. You get heaven, but you don't get heaven because you deserve it. You get it because He's good and He forgave you of all that black junk. That's why. Oh.

So forget about this I don't deserve stuff. You never did. That's where grace comes in, right? You know what? You can't accept God's grace until you understand what it is. It is undeserved favor. Otherwise we're sitting around going, where's God's grace. And they're talking about like God's grace like they deserve it, which is an oxymoron. It comes when you don't deserve it because you don't deserve it, right? I deserve nothing. Anyway, God looks at the heart.

“Then Jesse (verse 8) called Abinadab (let's try the next one) and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, (no, no, no) “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, (nope) “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”¹⁰ And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.”¹¹ Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, (well) “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.”” He probably stinks and we don't see him much because he's just out there with the animals. You don't want to bring him in, he'll ruin your appetite.

“And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.”¹² And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.”¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him (and look at this) in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.” I want you to stop and just take note of something that's rather interesting about this passage.

It doesn't record for us here that Samuel told David what the anointing was. It doesn't say, now he may have, I don't know. But it doesn't say here that Samuel said, you anointed of the Lord, are the next king over Israel, because you know what, it's going to take 20 years before he actually comes to the throne. Okay. Isn't that crazy?

God rejected Saul and allowed him to stay on the throne for another 20 years. And Samuel, or excuse me, David, is going to be prepared for the throne over that 20 years. But not prepared in a way that you might think he doesn't go to school from the standpoint of like book learning, and learning how the etiquette of a king, and what kings eat, and how they walk, stuff like that.

He's going to learn it on the run. He's going to learn it in caves and holes in the ground. And he's going to be on the run for most of those years. Not all of them, but most of those years, he's going to be on the run from Saul because Saul is going to be hunting him down like a dog. And it is on the run that David is going to learn how to be a man of compassion, a man of grace, a man of forgiveness, a man of faith, and a man of peace.

“¹⁴ Now (it goes on to simply say that) the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, ... ” Right after we're told that David was anointed and the Spirit came upon him. *“...the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him.”* And some people might read this and go, no, wait, just a minute, shouldn't that say a harmful spirit from Satan?

Listen, we forget something, we Christians. God is sovereign. It's not a good guy, bad guy thing, where you got God who's the good guy, and He's got His angels, and you got Satan, he's the bad guy, and he's got his demons, and they fight. And you never know who's going to win, could be Satan one day, could be God the next day, you never really know. It's just there's this battle going on, and there's a lot of spiritual warfare happening. And you just got to put up with it, and boy, you better hope we pray because then we can give God's angels strength, and they can maybe win for the day, and so forth. That's not the deal.

Listen, when it says that God is sovereign, it means He's sovereign. And that means there is nothing and there is no one over Him. That means He is over God. You with me? No one tells God what to do. No one. Satan doesn't snicker without God's permission. Listen, remember what Jesus said to Peter on the night that he would betray Him? When Peter was shooting off his mouth about, I'm not going to desert You, I'll never, I'll go to my death for You. And Jesus said to Peter, this very night Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. (Luke 22:31) And that whole process of the denial of the Lord was a sifting process that was

orchestrated by the enemy, but listen, sovereignly allowed by God because He's sovereign.

And listen, God is either sovereign. You can't be kind of sovereign just like you can't be kind of omnipotent. You either are or you aren't. If you're omnipotent, then you are the strongest there is, and there is none beside you. If you are sovereign, it means you are overall and there is no one over you or above you. And the Bible says very clearly, God is both. And so even Satan, even his demons, they're under God's direction.

There's a lot of things I don't understand about it, and I don't pretend to, but I know this, God is sovereign. That I know. And to call this an injurious spirit from the Lord is not an incorrect title because God is sovereign and that's why it can say it that way.

Behold now a harmful spirit. Okay. Saul's servants, verse 15. *“And Saul's servants said to him, “Behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you. ¹⁶ Let our lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will be well.””*

What a great suggestion. I say fire that guy. Yeah, I'm serious. Really? You have a demonic spirit that's harassing you and the best we're going to do is help you to cope? Really? Is that good advice? You know what the best advice would be? Behold, Saul, there's a harmful spirit that comes upon you from the Lord, I think you need to repent, dude. I think you need to get right with God. I think you need to come to God on your knees and repent, but you know what? We're past that. We're past that. And the only thing they can suggest for Saul is let's try to make you comfortable in your disobedience.

“¹⁷ So Saul said to his servants, “Provide for me a man who can play well and bring him to me.” ¹⁸ One of the young men answered, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the LORD is with him.” ¹⁹ Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me David your son, who is with the sheep.” ²⁰ And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them by David his son to Saul. ²¹ And David came to Saul and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. ²² And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, “Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight.” ²³ And whenever the harmful spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him.”