

Saul 4 - Saul's Second Failure - Rebellious Disobedience and Stubbornness

Although there is much information that leads us to discern the carnal nature of Saul in his reign as king, there are three failures that mark his downfall. It is not that these three failures were the only sins in his life. But these three failures are more directly in opposition toward God, and *God* specifically judged him. We have looked at the first failure in 1 Samuel 13 when Samuel declared the end of his dynasty. We are looking at the second one today in which Samuel declares the end of his reign. His third failure will come later in 1 Samuel 28 when Samuel will declare the end of his life. You can see the downward progression in the path of sin. At first, Saul would not wait on the Lord. Next, he becomes stubborn in his rebellious disobedience which is described as the sin of witchcraft. At the last, he will *pursue* witchcraft and the occult in opposition to and instead of God.

1. Saul's rationalization -

God gave a command to smite Amalek. This was a time of reckoning that had finally come due. Moses had charged Israel to fulfill this judgment when Israel first left Egypt.

Deut 25:17-19 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;

18How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, *even all that were* feeble behind thee, when thou *wast* faint and weary; and he feared not God.

19Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an

inheritance to possess it, *that* thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget *it*.

1Sam 15:1-3 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.

2Thus 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.

3Now 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.

Next, we see Saul's disobedience.

1Sam 15:7-9 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah *until* thou comest to Shur, that *is* over against Egypt.

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

9But 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.

If these people had been permitted to live, they would have caused more trouble in the future than is imaginable. Other Amalekites survived apart from the city of Amalek which Saul destroyed. When you go to the Book of Esther, we will find one of them, Haman, the

Agagite, or descendent of Agag. He tried to exterminate the Hebrew nation and would have succeeded if God had not intervened.

Saul's disobedience was quickly judged by God.

1Sam 15:10-11 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

11It 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's judgment is generally a sad thing. We might rejoice in His righteousness, but it should cause us a sense of grief for those who are judged. Samuel did not shy away from his duty to deliver God's message of judgment, but it was not a joyful thing to do.

Prov 24:17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: **[We should feel grief even for our enemies judgement.]**

Saul wasted no time justifying himself and rationalizing. He spoke up and tried to head off Samuel before anything could be said, but this did not deter Samuel. Then Saul tried to anticipate Samuel's complaint and threw out another diversion.

1Sam 15:13-15 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

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

15And 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; **[Saul didn't even claim God was *his* God.]** and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

He rationalized that he had done what he was commanded...pretty much. If there was anything wrong he was prepared to shift the blame to the people. When Samuel confronted him directly, he bore down on his rationalization.

1Sam 15:18-21 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.

19Wherefore 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?

20And 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.

21But 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.

With rationalization, there is always an element of truth. Saul was told to not spare anything: man nor animal. It was not okay to spare *just* Agag. It was not okay kill all the animals *except* some for sacrifice.

2. Obedience is a matter of the heart -

It is at this point that Saul is rejected

as king. His earlier judgement was only that his reign would not be continued through his descendants, but now he, himself, is rejected. What disqualified him now was direct disobedience.

1Sam 15:22-26 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.**

23For 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.

24And 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.

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

26And 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.

We could easily make the mistake that we are judged when we disobey God, but there is always something deeper than that which is the problem. Samuel identified that problem as the heart attitude. It is easy to obey God outwardly while being in sin inwardly.

Matt 15:7-8 *Ye* hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but

their heart is far from me.

Matt 5:27-28 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

The actual transgression is merely the manifestation of the heart.

Jas 1:14-15 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

People conflate obedience with the result of obedience. Samuel specifically identified that the problem of Saul's disobedience was due to his rebelliousness aggravated by stubbornness. An aggravated offense typically refers to a more severe or intensified form of an offense or crime. It often involves factors that increase the seriousness or gravity of the offense. At the core of Saul's was a rebellious heart. This is why people resist the Gospel. Even while going to church, they want to give themselves to God on *their* terms. Saul thought that by doing something that was *similar*, or *mostly* what God wanted, that that should be good enough. When people are confronted, unless they are willing to repent, their stubbornness will seal their fate.

This is what makes the faith of the centurion so outstanding.

Matt 8:5-10 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, 6And saying, Lord, my servant

lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

10When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

What Jesus identified as the essence of faith was his perspective of authority and his recognition of the authority of Christ. The centurion had nothing to obey so he has no good work that earned him salvation. Our repentance that brings us to salvation involves the recognition that we are rebellious by nature and must submit ourselves to God. Our work then becomes the means by which we can show our submission to God.

3. Not by works -

We are certainly not saved *by* our works.

Eph 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the

Holy Ghost;

We show our faith *by* our works.

Jas 2:14-18 What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

17Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

Although we are not saved *by* our good works, we *are* saved *unto* good works.

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Eph 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

4. Obedience and love -

Fear of judgment should be enough to get our attention. Fear can keep us in line but also lead us to resentment. It might drive us away from sin and then right behavior, but it doesn't provide a right heart, though. Desiring God and His love will lead us to not only to salvation, but then also to good works.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Instead of trying to impress God with our obedience, we simply love Him. This has been expressed as "Love God and do as you please." If you focus only on the idea that we should do as we please, then we might mistake this as endorsing hedonistic indulging ourselves in sin. But if we love God, then what will please us is to live for Him in obedience.

1John 5:2-3 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Living in obedience to God is not grievous. He wants you to have unity in your home. He wants you to have fellowship with His church. He wants you to have resolution when problems arise with other people so you can live in joyful harmony. He wants your life to have an eternal impact on others. He wants you to enjoy peace and health. He wants you to have fellowship with Him and an eternal home in heaven.

In the times we fail God, we are thankful that Jesus has paid the price for our salvation. Salvation is maintained by the fact that Jesus was obedient.

Phil 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

It was by *His* obedience that we were saved. In the times of our disobedience, the love and gratitude we have for what He has done should cause us to get back up and live for God.

Ps 32:9 Be ye not as the horse, *or* as the mule, *which* have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

Don't be a stubborn mule. You might need to give in to God, submit yourself to Him, and ask Him to save you from the judgment of Hell. Or, you might be saved already but are resisting what you know in your heart is right to do. Whatever the case, we need to quickly respond lest we become stubborn in our resistance and miss all that God has to offer.

Just as Saul's rebellion came back to bite him, be sure that your sin will find you out.

Num 32:23 But if ye will not do so [**obey God**], behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

1. Saul's rationalization - Deut 25:17-19, 1Sam 15:1-11, Prov 24:17, 1Sam 15:13-121
2. Obedience is a matter of the heart - 1Sam 15:22-26, Matt 15:7-8 ,27-28, Jas 1:14-15, Matt 8:5-10
3. Not by works - Eph 2:8-9, Titus 3:5, Jas 2:14-18, Eph 2:10, Eph 4:1
4. Obedience and love - John 14:15, 1John 5:2-3, Phil 2:8, Ps 32:9, Num 32:23