

Notes and Quotes

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King Saul, 1 Sam. 15

First Samuel tells the story of three men. As the story unfolds, a significant period of change comes to pass for the nation of Israel. Samuel, Saul and David are the key figures in this era.

The story of Saul is tragic, and this episode in 1 Sam. 15 is part of that tragedy.

King Saul is told by Samuel what God expects him to do: *Attack the Amalekites for what they did to Israel; destroy everything; do not spare them. "Put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys,"* (see 1 Sam. 15:1-3).

Saul begins to get the army ready for this campaign (v.4), moved the Kenites out of the way (vss. 5-6), then launched the attack (vss. 7ff).

As you read the account of the attack, at verse eight, you immediately see the problem. He "took Agag alive," sparing him and "the best of the sheep and cattle . . . everything that was good,"

being "unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed," (1 Sam. 15:7-9).

You know what God thought of this? He said, "I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions," (1 Sam. 15:10).

What does this tell us? (1) It is foolish for us to think we can edit God's commands according to our judgment. (2) Such "editing" usually favors us; Saul and his men kept "everything that was good!" (3) Obedience to God must match what He said; incomplete obedience is disobedience. Verse 11 says Saul "turned away from" the Lord.

Don't let that simple heart of obedience to God slip away!

"Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience which leads to righteousness?" Rom. 6:16