



1 Samuel 15-16

Tape #7084
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By Chuck Smith

CHAPTER 15

Let's turn in our Bibles to I Samuel, chapter 15. We find the prophet Samuel coming to his young protégé, Saul, who was anointed king over Israel. And he declares to him:

The LORD sent me to anoint you to be the king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken unto the voice of the words of the LORD. ["Because you have been anointed as king, listen to what God has to say."]

This is, in a sense, a second opportunity for Saul to follow the commands of the LORD. Saul had failed in the 13th chapter when he had gathered with the people at Gilgal and did not show up at the appointed time. Also, he intruded into the office of the priesthood and offered up a sacrifice, which was not for kings to do - it was only for the priests to do. Samuel rebuked him and told him that he had not obeyed the voice of the LORD: *"He had done foolishly."*

Now Samuel comes with a command from God. And he encourages, or exhorts him, to listen --

Hearken unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

"I repeat:" -- as there are some things that bear constant repeating. Peter, towards the end of his life, was writing his epistle and said, 'I am writing these things unto you, though you already know them. I've told you these things before. Knowing that I am soon to leave this tabernacle, (my body: knowing that I am going to soon die,) I want to write them to you again that you might have them in continual remembrance. I've told you these things a lot of times. I am going to be passing out of the scene pretty soon - so I am going to write them to you - so that, even after I am gone, you have them to continually remind you.'

One of the things that we need to be constantly reminded of, is to listen when God gives us a warning. Don't think that you don't need that. "Thank you God, but that's not necessary. I know that!" God never warns us needlessly. I have always found in the cases where I have stumbled, God has been faithful and has warned me beforehand. I did not heed the warning of the LORD. Every time that I have gotten into a problem, it wasn't that God was unfaithful: He warned me, but I didn't think that I needed the warning. Although I was gracious, and said, "Thank you for warning me," I didn't pay attention to the warning, and that's where I got into trouble. God does not warn us needlessly. God is warning Saul to make sure that - "you obey." *"Hearken to the voice of the words of the LORD."*

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.

As they were coming into the area of Rephidim, the Amalekites, who were a nomadic type of people, attacked them in the rear ranks where the older, feeble people, who couldn't keep pace with a large crowd, (which contained the sickly ones, the weak ones, and the feeble ones) -- in that place of weakness, Amalek attacked with a vicious attack.

Later on in Deuteronomy, as God was giving to Moses the ordinances when coming into the land,

the LORD said, 'When you have been established in the land, and have subdued the enemies around, you have a score to settle with Amalek. I want you to go down and wipe out Amalek. Wipe out his memory from under heaven because of his sneak attack against you.' God said that there will be war with Amalek through all the generations.

Now God is ordering the utter destruction of Amalek. And people oftentimes have difficulty in understanding this command of God. People wonder why God would order them to kill everything: the children, animals, etc. First of all, I don't know why God does all of the things that He does. He doesn't explain them to me. But I do know that if God does make such a command, He has a good reason for making it. I can just be happy there; but some people aren't.

So, may I suggest to you, that the reason that God gave this command was because the Amalekites were very vicious, cruel people. They engaged in extremely vile practices of the worship of their god. They offered up their children as sacrifices to their god. In the course of time they would have destroyed themselves. They were infected, you might say, with a deadly contagious disease that could corrupt mankind. Thus, God is ordering their extermination. For God is using Saul and the children of Israel as His instrument in bringing judgment.

God judged the world before with the flood. He wiped out everyone except Noah and his family, along with any others in the ark. God was judging the world because of the horrible wickedness and anarchy that reigned.

Now the time has come for God's judgment to come upon a race of people -- the Amalekites. God is ordering their utter destruction. God is perfectly justified because He did it.

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 donkeys. And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. And Saul said unto the Kenites, (and the Kenites were also a nomadic tribal group. They were always friendly unto Israel and always helped them. They sent a warning to the Kenites:) Go, depart, get out from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for you showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until you come to Shur, that is the borders of Egypt. And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 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, they [hacked it up good.] Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repented me that I have set up Saul to be king: --

So we have several problems here: first of all, it is obvious that Saul did not complete the command of God in utterly destroying the Amalekites. Not only did he save Agag the king, but he allowed others also to remain alive. As we go a few chapters further in Samuel, we find that David also made war against the Amalekites. So there had to be some that Saul did not kill. Even later than that, at the time of the book of Esther, Hammedatha the Agagite, -- which is the name for the kings of the Amalekites. (Now, even as the Pharaoh was the name for the ruler of Egypt, so Agag was the name for the leader, or ruler, of the Amalekites. It was a title, not a man's name.) Hammedatha was an Agagite, which means he was one of the leaders of the people of the Amalekites.

And the interesting thing is that Amalek is used in Scriptural typology as a type of the flesh, the flesh

life. God declares of the flesh life that you are going to have war with it through all generations. There is no truce with the flesh. There is no peaceful coexistence. There is a battle that's going on. The flesh and the spirit are always contrary. There is a war that is going on inside of every believer: whether or not I am going to yield to the flesh or the spirit. It is a battle over the supremacy in my life. Will I be ruled over by my flesh? Or by the spirit? This battle will continue as long as I am in this body.

"We who are in this body grown, earnestly desiring to be free: not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon:" our new body. As long as I am in this body, I have a warfare. Paul also said, *"We with all of creation groan and travail together until now. Waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, to the redemption of my body."* I am looking forward to my new body. A body that will not seek to rule over me. Right now, I have a problem with the body drives and body appetites. They are there: created by God, and natural. There is nothing wrong with them as long as they are kept in their proper place. They were intended to serve me, not rule over me.

Yet, so many people are ruled over by their body appetites. That comes through the perversion of the body appetites. The way God created them: they are good and wholesome, they are healthy and necessary. But man perverts them. And then it has a way of getting a hold of him and enslaving him. It is vicious in its attack against us. It seeks to bring us into subjection.

God says, in concerning the flesh life, *that we, by the spirit, should mortify*, or put to death, *the deeds of the flesh*. We are always on some kind of reformation program. "I am going to lose weight: I want to try and bring my flesh under control," - always hoping to conform. But it isn't a reformation that we need, it's a transformation that we need. We need to be born again, not to reform the old nature. There are always those who are looking for a little bit of good that they might fan the flickering flame. They are trying to bring into beauty and glory, the 'great you' that is in you - that needs to be discovered. We find a lot of denial of the corrupt human nature. The Bible teaches that man, apart from God, is hopelessly lost and corrupt. *"The heart is deceitful, and desperately wicked: who could know it?"* We have to be born again, and transformed. The old nature: we have to reckon to be dead, crucified with Christ, so that the body of sin might no longer reign as king over you.

Amalek, being a type of the flesh, was ordered by God to utter destruction. Saul's failure to do so created problems for his descendants years later. Haman, the Agagite, came to the king of Persia. He offered him a bribe, which he received, to set a day in which every Jew in the kingdom could be killed. (The children celebrate Purim, which was the day that was established for the Jews by all of those in the kingdom of Persia. If you killed a Jew, you could take his spoils.) God interceded through Esther, and the command was countered that the Jews were able to defend themselves. So the Jews were able to defend themselves, and so they survived.

It was Haman, the Agagite, --the flesh that came back and almost destroyed Israel. It is really a 'destroy,' or 'be destroyed' thing when we are dealing with our flesh. We should reckon it dead, crucified with Christ, or it will rise up to destroy us. I think of the tragedy of how many lives have been destroyed by the flesh. So many people even today all around us are being destroyed by their flesh. Families are being destroyed by the flesh. Marriages are being destroyed by the flesh. If you don't bring the flesh to the cross and reckon it to be dead, it will rise up to destroy you and things around you. Therefore, God said, *"Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."*

Back to the children of Israel: the celebration of Purim was like celebrating Halloween for the Israelis. The kids all dressed up in costumes. Many of the little girls dress as Esther. The boys dress as Haman. They have plays - and whenever Esther comes they cheer, but shout, "boo" for Haman. They still carry on the drama of this special day in their history. We saw all the costumes for sale when we were there.

They will be celebrating in a few days.

Look at this statement: *"It repented me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he has turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments."* Look down at verse 29: *"And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent."* In one verse it says that God told Samuel, *"It repents Me."* In another verse it says that, *"God is not a man that He should repent."* Whenever the Scriptures speak about, "it repented God," we are prone to think of it in the New Testament usage of the word "repent:" which means to change. God is eternal, and changes not. He is immutable. In Numbers, we read, *"God is not a man, that He should lie; nor the son of man, that He should repent: hath He not said it, and shall He not make it good?"*

Our problem is one of semantics. We are trying to describe and define the actions of an eternal and infinite God with human language. Thus, we have to use language because that's all we have. It is impossible to confine God to the human language; or actions of God to the human language. But all we have is human language to describe Him. Thus, there is a break down. We are forced to describe the actions of God, and things of God, by using human terms. Because there is an apparent kind of change in attitude towards Saul by God, we have to use the terms that we know. As I pointed out in verse 29, the Scriptures declare that God does not repent nor change. *He is not a man that He should repent.* It is just a word that we have to use to describe the activities of God. Thus, the seemingly inconsistency is not at all inconsistent.

Saul has not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

The thing that I am impressed with in the text here is Samuel's great love and attachment towards Saul. Even though he has been a disappointment and a failure, Samuel still had a deep love for him. When God came to Samuel and said, 'Hey, Saul's blown it. He didn't obey me and wipe them (the Amalekites) out:' Samuel is grieved over Saul's failure. All night long he cries unto the LORD. It really teared him up. The failure of this man that God had chosen to be king over Israel really hurt Samuel. *"All night long he cried unto the LORD."*

And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul has come to Carmel, --

Carmel is down just South of Hebron in the area of Iraq, which would be near Beersheba. Samuel was going to go down to Carmel to meet him, but he was told that Saul had gone past there and that he was headed towards Gilgal, near Jericho. Samuel just took the canyon from Ramah on down to Gilgal to meet Saul.

And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD. [Saul couches it with spiritual terms.]

There is a fellow on the Mount of Olives, in Israel: he was an extremely proficient pick-pocket. He would come up to you and say, "Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, brother!" And he would give you a hug. In a few moments you would find out that your cross pen is missing. You see, he couches it with spiritual terms: "Praise the LORD! Are you from California? Praise the LORD! Bless God." He is praising the LORD because he is going to have a new pen in a moment.

Because a person uses spiritual jargon does not mean that the person is right-on with the LORD. Often times they use it to cover themselves. Don't be taken-in just because someone is always saying, "Bless God," "Hallelujah," or "Praise the LORD." A person can use spiritual jargon while they are lying to

you.

Here is Saul using spiritual jargon: “*Blessed be thou of the LORD.*” Then he tells a lie: “*I have done all that the LORD commanded me to do.*”

What then is this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen I hear? 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.

Here, Saul is in disobedience to the commandment of God, lying about himself. Then, when faced with the evidence, he uses a spiritual excuse; which I believe are the most blasphemous of all excuses -- “Oh, the LORD told me and showed me--” that’s blasphemous. God does not lead you to do anything that is contrary to His Word. God would never lead a person to disobey His commands. Saul is using this flimsy excuse, “Oh, we thought we would bring the nicest ones back to sacrifice them to God.”

Then Samuel said unto Saul, wait a minute and listen, I want to tell you what God said to me last night. And Saul said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When you were little in your own sight, we you made the head over the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel. And the LORD sent you on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed. Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but flew upon the spoil, and did evil in the sight of the LORD? [He had his commands, yet disobeyed.] Saul said unto Samuel [and he is still persisting, not repenting. He insists that he did what God told him to do.] Yes, 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. [This is another lie.] The people took of the spoil, of the sheep and oxen, which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

Now, had he known the Law, Deuteronomy chapter 13 - you are not to sacrifice any animal that has been raised in a pagan environment. This was considered an unclean thing. Read the last of this chapter. Had he known the Word of God, he would have known that this excuse would never pass.

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 hearken [or, listen to God] is better than the fat of rams.

The important thing to know in the Scriptures: all the way through you can find parallel passages where God is more interested in your obedience, in your following Him, than in your making sacrifices to Him. The thing that God is interested in is in your submission to His Lordship and authority in your life. “*To obey is better than any offering of sacrifices.*” David, in Psalm 51, said, “*Sacrifices and offerings thou delightest not; a broken and a contrite heart, you will not turn away.*” God will be more pleased with your attitude and brokenness towards Him than your offerings and sacrifice. Don’t use them to try and cover your sense of guilt. Too many people have tried to sort of bribe God and buy their way out: “Yeah, I cheated the guy; but I tithed from the money I made off of them.” It doesn’t balance. “*To obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken is better than the fat of rams.*”

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

He had rebelled against the Word of God. He was stubborn in insisting that he had done the right thing. Rather than repenting, confessing his sin, he continued to maintain his innocence.

[The LORD said,] *Because you have rejected the Word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king. And Saul said unto 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.*

Now here is a shallow confession of sin. I really don't think it was sincere. But he, again, is giving excuses: "The people - they sort of forced me. I feared the people. I obeyed their voice."

The Bible says that, *"the fear of man brings a snare: but whoso puts their trust in the LORD shall be safe."* Soon, we are going to find how the fear of man brought a snare to David. We are going to find David before Achish, the king of Gath. We are going to see him slobbering all over his beard, and scrabbling on the wall, acting like a madman. *"The fear of man brings a snare."*

Here, Saul declares, "It was the fear of the people that caused me to do this." *"The fear of man brings a snare: and whoso puts their trust in the LORD shall be safe."*

Now therefore, I pray, that you will pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD. And Samuel said unto 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. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold of his skirt and his mantle, and it tore. And Samuel said unto him, The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, that is better than you. [So as Samuel began to leave, Saul grabbed hold of the old man, and his robe ripped. Samuel says, "So God will rip the kingdom from you."] And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that He should repent. [That is, the edict of God is going to stand. "You are through, Saul, as far as God is concerned, from being the king."] Then he said, I have sinned: yet honor 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. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD. Then said Samuel, Bring 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. And Samuel said, As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. Then Samuel went back to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah. And Samuel did not come anymore 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. [Again, that word "repented" is used to describe the fact that God has now rejected him. It is a poor use of the word, but it's language, and we have to live with it.]

Saul did see Samuel once more, and we will get to that when we deal with the witch of Endor. There, Samuel comes back in a seance.

CHAPTER 16

And the LORD said unto Samuel, [and he is mourning over Saul] How long are you going to mourn over Saul, seeing that I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? now fill your horn with oil, and go, I will send you to Jesse the BethIehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hears of it, he will kill me.

Now Saul was a very temperamental and rash person. He was of a violent temper. Samuel fears the temper of this man: *"If Saul hears that I have gone down to anoint one of the house of Jesse, he will kill me."*

So the LORD said, Take a heifer with you, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.

And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do: and you shall anoint to me him whom I name unto you.

Here is an interesting thing: God is commanding Samuel. Because of his fear of Saul killing him, if he finds out that he has gone down to anoint another king, God tells him, 'Hey, go down and offer a sacrifice, taking a heifer with you. If anybody asks you what you are doing, then tell them that you are going to offer a sacrifice to the LORD. Then invite Jesse and his family to come to the sacrifice.' Which was truthful, but yet it was couching the real truth.

There is a question often asked, "Should I tell the whole truth, when I know that the whole truth will hurt and destroy?" Sometimes when people feel guilt over some action that they have done, and they feel that it is necessary to confess this sin to the one who is unaware of it, many times the confession does more damage than the sin itself. If we were brutally honest and told everything, then there would be no marriage that would stand: if you really told people what you were thinking at all times. There are times when we are having disagreements, we are thinking things that should not be expressed aloud. Why hurt or damage a relationship? Some things, or many things, are sometimes better left unsaid. You can do a lot of damage with your tongue.

So Samuel did that which the LORD spoke, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Do you come in peace? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart. [God sees what's in your heart, and that is what is important to Him.] Then Jesse called Abinadab, [his second son] and he came before Samuel. And the LORD said, Neither has the LORD chosen this one. So Jesse made Shammah [the third son] to pass by. And he said, Neither has the LORD chosen this. Then, Jesse made all seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, the LORD has not chosen these. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Do you have any more sons? And he said, There remains yet the youngest, and, behold, he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said to Jesse, Send and fetch him: for I will not sit down till he comes here. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, ['red haired' in the Hebrew] and withal of the beautiful countenance, and goodly [this word means 'handsome'] to look to.

David was of fair complexion, that goes with the red hair. And that "goodly to look," or "beautiful countenance," is referring to his eyes, in the Hebrew. He had beautiful eyes. Just a good looking person.

And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose, and went back to Ramah. [So, can you imagine David, this little kid, come out - and there is this old man with a horn of oil? As David stands before him, he takes and pours his oil over David's head, and God's Spirit comes upon his life.] But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

Here is another difficult problem: how about an evil spirit of the LORD? There are a couple of solutions. Number one: God puts a wall of protection about His people. If you remember, Satan was complaining to God about this wall that He had around Job, "You've put a wall around him, and I can't get to him. Take the wall down, and we will see what the guy is really made of." This *evil spirit of the LORD* could be that God removed that wall of protection by Saul, and thus, gave opportunity for the evil spirit to

attack. It could be declared to be an “*evil spirit from the LORD,*” in that, it was allowed by God to begin to vex him; manifesting himself in uncontrollable temper tantrums.

Or, in another sense, (but don’t judge this before you have a chance to think it over:) Satan is a servant to God. That is, he serves the purposes of God under regulated conditions. And God uses him as he deals with our lives. God allows him to test us in order that we might see the truth about ourselves. So in a broad way, as God is ruler over the whole universe, He also rules over Satan. Satan can only, as far as God allows him to, go and do only what God allows him to do. In a way, he does serve God and the purposes of God.

An evil spirit from the LORD began to trouble him. Let our lord now command your servants, which are before you, to look for a man, who is a skillful player on the harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and you will be well. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. And then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a beautiful person, and the LORD is with him. [So these are the qualifications of David. He was a skillful player of the harp, he was a valiant person, he was a man of war though he was still a child. David was prudent in matters, a comely person, and the LORD was with him.] Wherefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, Send me David your son, which is with the sheep. And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and came before him: and David loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer.

The little boy brought before the king had a tremendous position. Surely David was awed by the whole thing, and loved Saul - which remained. David had a love and respect for Saul that was really commendable; though Saul sought to kill him.

And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he has found favor in my sight. And it came to pass, that when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

So begins this relationship between David and Saul - which will rapidly deteriorate. We will see this in the next chapter.