

## Lesson 29: God Gives Israel a King

Up to this point in this series, we've seen where the Israelites were living in the land of Egypt and the Pharaoh turned them into his slaves. They worked long hours making bricks and pulling heavy stone to build the pyramids. They were not treated well. As God had told Abraham in Genesis 15, the Jews (God's chosen people) would live as slaves in Egypt for over 400 years.

Then we saw where God sent His messenger Moses to Egypt and delivered His people from slavery. God promised the Israelites that He was going to take them to a land where they would live as His people. God gave Moses laws for His people to follow and these laws are known as the Ten Commandments. God's laws made the Israelites unique and separate from all their surrounding neighbors.

As they kept the Ten Commandments and made the daily sacrifices in the tabernacle, they were honoring and glorifying God and it was evident to all the surrounding peoples that the Israelites were special and what made them special was that God was their ruler and king.

But now we come to a point in the history of Israel where they want to be like all their neighbors. They want a king that they can see. God had given them leaders to whom they could go to for help and it was God who had protected them and provided for them, but now we see the Israelites wanting to be like everyone else. They had been set apart by Almighty God to be his special chosen people and now they are wanting to be average, or normal.

That's what it's like for Christians sometimes...we want to so identify with the world around us that we make compromises and we give in to temptation and sin and do the things that everyone else is doing just so we can "fit in." And that's what was going on with Israel at this point—they wanted to "fit-in"—they wanted a king that other neighboring tribes could see and respect.

Before we go any further, let's review Lesson 28: Israel's Unbelief & God's Deliverances & Judgments

### QUESTIONS for REVIEW:

1. Why didn't the ten spies think that Israel would be able to enter Canaan?  
*a. Because they saw the giants and the walled cities.*  
*b. Because they did not believe God's promise that He would give them the land.*
2. Why did Joshua and Caleb think that Israel could enter Canaan?  
*Because they believed God's promise that He would give them the land.*
3. What are we calling God if we do not believe His Word and trust in Him? *We are calling God a liar.*
4. Will God accept anyone who does not believe what He says? *No, all who do not believe God will go to everlasting punishment.*
5. What was God's punishment on the Israelites because they did not believe His promise to give them the land? *God said all who did not believe Him would die in the wilderness. They would not enter Canaan.*
6. Who did God say would enter into the Promised Land?  
*a. Caleb and Joshua, because they had believed God.*  
*b. The children of the Israelites.*
7. What should the Israelites have done when they needed water? *They should have trusted in the Lord.*
8. Why did the Lord say that Moses and Aaron would not enter the Promised Land?  
*a. Because they did not trust and obey Him and thereby honor Him as holy and perfect before the people. Instead they showed their own anger.*

*b. Because Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it as God had instructed him.*

9. What did the Lord do to punish the Israelites for their unbelief? *The Lord sent poisonous snakes which bit and killed many people.*

10. Who, like a snake, has “bitten” all people and brought death into the world? *Satan.*

11. How did Satan bring death to all people? *Satan led Adam and Eve to sin against God so that they, and all of us, would die.*

12. What did God tell Moses to do to save the Israelites from death? *The Lord told Moses to make a serpent out of brass and put it on a pole.*

13. What did those who had been bitten by a snake have to do in order to be healed? *They had to look at the snake on the pole.*

14. Did the snake of brass have magical power to heal those who looked? *No.*

15. Who healed those who looked? *The Lord did.*

16. Did they deserve to be healed? *No, they were sinners and deserved to die.*

17. Why did the Lord heal all who looked? *a. Because He is loving, merciful, and gracious.*

*b. Because they believed His promise and looked at the brazen serpent just as He commanded.*

18. Did anyone who looked at the snake on the pole die? *No, God always does what He promises.*

## **A. Introduction**

God showed His people His love and power as He led them through Moses to their Promised Land. He promised His people if they obeyed His laws they would live a life of peace and would experience His blessings.

The Israelites settled into the land that God gave them and He gave them leaders who they could go to if they needed help with any difficulties they had. These leaders would ask God for wisdom and He would give the leader the right answer to the problem.

## **B. God’s People Demand a King**

Whether God’s people realized it or not they had a mighty King who ruled over them and kept them safe from their enemies. They could not see Him but He was never far from them because He spoke to them through His messengers.

### **1 Samuel 8:4-9 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah;

<sup>5</sup> and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."

<sup>6</sup> But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.

<sup>8</sup> "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also.

<sup>9</sup> "Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them."

At this time in the Israelites' history God's leader over His people was Samuel. Samuel obeyed God and led His people faithfully. Because Samuel was getting old he allowed his two sons to be judges or leaders over the people in Israel. Samuel was still the main leader and he was the last judge of Israel.

God's plan was to send a Deliverer into the world. He chose the Jewish people to be His people. From the Jewish people the Savior would be born. It was important for His people to be set apart or different than the other nations who did not love and fear God.

Is it any different today as believers. In many ways, we are so similar to the Israelites. When we believed in the Messiah, the Savior God promised to send, He set us apart from those around us who do not love and fear God. God's purpose in setting us apart is so others can see His power and be drawn to His Son Jesus through our lives so they can be saved.

### C. God's People Reject Him As Their Sovereign Ruler

**Theme:** God is loving, merciful & gracious

Let's turn back to 1 Samuel 8. When Samuel heard the request of these men his heart was broken.

Samuel felt rejected when these men asked for an earthly king. He went to the Lord and poured out his heart. Let's look again at God's answer to Samuel's prayer in [1 Samuel 8:7-8](#),

<sup>7</sup> The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.

<sup>8</sup> "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also.

The people were not rejecting Samuel but were rejecting their very own King of Kings. They had wicked, disobedient hearts and wanted to be like the unbelieving people that lived around them

James 4:4 says: "You adulterous peoples, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."

### D. Samuel Tells Them What Life Will Be Like Under a King

**Theme:** Man is a sinner. He needs God and is helpless to save himself.

God told Samuel to warn them of what life with an earthly king would be like. He warns them about the downside of kings.

#### 1 Samuel 8:10-18 (NASB)

<sup>10</sup> So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king.

<sup>11</sup> He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place *them* for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots.

<sup>12</sup> "He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and *some* to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

<sup>13</sup> "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers.

<sup>14</sup> "He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give *them* to his servants.

<sup>15</sup> "He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants.

<sup>16</sup> "He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your

donkeys and use *them* for his work.

<sup>17</sup> "He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants.

<sup>18</sup> "Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

Samuel obeys and tells the people what would happen to them when an earthly king ruled over them.

**Here's what Samuel told the Israelites would happen to them once they chose a man to be their king:**

- Their king would force all their young men to be in his army.
- He would force some of them to do his plowing and harvesting as well as make his weapons for war and build his chariots.
- Their king would take their daughters to make perfume and to do all his household chores like cooking and baking.
- Their king would take the best fields, olive groves and vineyards in Israel and give them to his servants.
- Their king would take a tenth of what they produced to give to his servants.
- Finally, their new king would take the Israelites male and female servants along with the strongest and finest young men to do his work, and he'd take their donkeys as well.

And as usual, the people don't listen, and in the end, they get what they ask for.

**Theme: God communicates with man.**

**Theme:** God is everywhere all the time; He knows everything.

God knew would happen to His people when an earthly king ruled over them. These were not things that God as their King did to them and He knew that one day they would realize the mistake they made in asking for an earthly king.

**CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE:** Let's look at the chronological timeline. Notice that this is occurring around 1000 BC.

**And Saul will be followed by David, then his son, Solomon and the rest of the kings**

## **E. Saul's Coronation**

God informs Samuel that a young man who is looking for his father's donkeys will come to him for information. When he does, Samuel is to anoint the man as king.

Samuel gathers the people together and choose a king by casting lots, or by the roll of the dice.

### **1 Samuel 9:1-2 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> There was a wealthy, influential man named Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. He was the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, of the tribe of Benjamin.

<sup>2</sup> His son Saul was the most handsome man in Israel—head and shoulders taller than anyone else in the land.

**Theme:** Man always looks on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.

The people were happy with the choice of Saul. He is described as tall and handsome, but looks can be deceiving, and the central theme in the Books of the Kings is that a person's value stems from inner qualities. After becoming king, Saul starts out well—he defeats most of Israel's enemies, but then things take a turn for the worse.

Even before he became king, Saul was a national hero. He led the daring raid to rescue the Tablets of the Ten Commandments from the Philistines, who had captured them along with the Ark. After he became king, in his short two-and-a-half-year reign, he freed the Jewish people of all their enemies except the Philistines. It remained for David to ultimately triumph over the Philistines and destroy them, but the army that Saul built laid the foundation for that military victory.

Saul was charismatic and physically gifted, as well as extremely tall and handsome (1 Samuel 9:2). He was charitable and selfless. Tradition records that he gave his fortune away to poor people. He specialized in helping pay for the needs of poor brides-to-be. When he went to war he paid the soldiers out of his personal treasury, not public funds.

## F. Saul Takes Matters Into His Own Hand & Disobeys God

**Theme:** Man can come to God only according to God's will and plan

**Theme:** God's Timing is perfect. He is never late, always on time.

Patience is a virtue and in 1 Samuel 13, we read where Saul is about to engage their arch enemies, the Philistines, in battle. Samuel, Israel's last judge, tells Saul to wait for him to return before offering a sacrifice. Saul waits, but then becomes nervous as he sees the troops growing restless. Feeling that he can't wait any longer, he offers the sacrifice himself. At that very moment, Samuel arrives, and Samuel is upset and deeply disturbed by what Saul has done.

Let's read about this in **1 Samuel 13:1-15 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned for forty-two years.

<sup>2</sup> Saul selected 3,000 special troops from the army of Israel and sent the rest of the men home. He took 2,000 of the chosen men with him to Micmash and the hill country of Bethel. The other 1,000 went with Saul's son Jonathan to Gibeah in the land of Benjamin.

<sup>3</sup> Soon after this, Jonathan attacked and defeated the garrison of Philistines at Geba. The news spread quickly among the Philistines. So Saul blew the ram's horn throughout the land, saying, "Hebrews, hear this! Rise up in revolt!"

<sup>4</sup> All Israel heard the news that Saul had destroyed the Philistine garrison at Geba and that the Philistines now hated the Israelites more than ever. So the entire Israelite army was summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

<sup>5</sup> The Philistines mustered a mighty army of 3,000 chariots, 6,000 charioteers, and as many warriors as the grains of sand on the seashore! They camped at Micmash east of Beth-aven.

<sup>6</sup> The men of Israel saw what a tight spot they were in; and because they were hard pressed by the enemy, they tried to hide in caves, thickets, rocks, holes, and cisterns.

<sup>7</sup> Some of them crossed the Jordan River and escaped into the land of Gad and Gilead. Meanwhile, Saul stayed at Gilgal, and his men were trembling with fear.

<sup>8</sup> Saul waited there seven days for Samuel, as Samuel had instructed him earlier, but Samuel still didn't

come. Saul realized that his troops were rapidly slipping away.

<sup>9</sup> So he demanded, “Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings!” And Saul sacrificed the burnt offering himself.

<sup>10</sup> Just as Saul was finishing with the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet and welcome him,

<sup>11</sup> but Samuel said, “What is this you have done?” Saul replied, “I saw my men scattering from me, and you didn’t arrive when you said you would, and the Philistines are at Micmash ready for battle.

<sup>12</sup> So I said, ‘The Philistines are ready to march against us at Gilgal, and I haven’t even asked for the LORD’s help!’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering myself before you came.”

<sup>13</sup> “How foolish!” Samuel exclaimed. “You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. Had you kept it, the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.

<sup>14</sup> But now your kingdom must end, for the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart. The LORD has already appointed him to be the leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD’s command.”

<sup>15</sup> Samuel then left Gilgal and went on his way, but the rest of the troops went with Saul to meet the army. They went up from Gilgal to Gibeah in the land of Benjamin. When Saul counted the men who were still with him, he found only 600 were left!

So, not only did Saul overstep his boundary as king, because the sacrifice was supposed to be done by a priest, but the fear that precipitated the action demonstrates that he doesn’t believe that God is the one who gives Israel its victories. As a result, Samuel tells Saul that his days as king are numbered.

## **G. Saul Demonstrates How Not to Obey God**

**Theme: God is faithful; He never changes.**

**Theme: God communicates with man.**

Because the Amalekites had attacked the Israelites unprovoked during their wanderings in the wilderness under Moses, God commands the Israelites to attack and kill all of the Amalekites—men, women, children, and even livestock.

Let’s read what happens **1 Samuel 15:1-31 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> One day Samuel said to Saul, “It was the LORD who told me to anoint you as king of his people, Israel. Now listen to this message from the LORD!

<sup>2</sup> This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has declared: I have decided to settle accounts with the nation of Amalek for opposing Israel when they came from Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> Now go and completely destroy the entire Amalekite nation—men, women, children, babies, cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys.”

<sup>4</sup> So Saul mobilized his army at Telaim. There were 200,000 soldiers from Israel and 10,000 men from Judah.

<sup>5</sup> Then Saul and his army went to a town of the Amalekites and lay in wait in the valley.

<sup>6</sup> Saul sent this warning to the Kenites: “Move away from where the Amalekites live, or you will die with them. For you showed kindness to all the people of Israel when they came up from Egypt.” So the

Kenites packed up and left.

<sup>7</sup> Then Saul slaughtered the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur, east of Egypt.

<sup>8</sup> He captured Agag, the Amalekite king, but completely destroyed everyone else.

<sup>9</sup> Saul and his men spared Agag's life and kept the best of the sheep and goats, the cattle, the fat calves, and the lambs—everything, in fact, that appealed to them. They destroyed only what was worthless or of poor quality.

<sup>10</sup> Then the LORD said to Samuel,

<sup>11</sup> "I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has not been loyal to me and has refused to obey my command." Samuel was so deeply moved when he heard this that he cried out to the LORD all night.

<sup>12</sup> Early the next morning Samuel went to find Saul. Someone told him, "Saul went to the town of Carmel to set up a monument to himself; then he went on to Gilgal."

<sup>13</sup> When Samuel finally found him, Saul greeted him cheerfully. "May the LORD bless you," he said. "I have carried out the LORD's command!"

<sup>14</sup> "Then what is all the bleating of sheep and goats and the lowing of cattle I hear?" Samuel demanded.

<sup>15</sup> "It's true that the army spared the best of the sheep, goats, and cattle," Saul admitted. "But they are going to sacrifice them to the LORD your God. We have destroyed everything else."

<sup>16</sup> Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! Listen to what the LORD told me last night!" "What did he tell you?" Saul asked.

<sup>17</sup> And Samuel told him, "Although you may think little of yourself, are you not the leader of the tribes of Israel? The LORD has anointed you king of Israel.

<sup>18</sup> And the LORD sent you on a mission and told you, 'Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, until they are all dead.'

<sup>19</sup> Why haven't you obeyed the LORD? Why did you rush for the plunder and do what was evil in the LORD's sight?"

<sup>20</sup> "But I did obey the LORD," Saul insisted. "I carried out the mission he gave me. I brought back King Agag, but I destroyed everyone else.

<sup>21</sup> Then my troops brought in the best of the sheep, goats, cattle, and plunder to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

<sup>22</sup> But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.

<sup>23</sup> Rebellion is as sinful as witchcraft, and stubbornness as bad as worshiping idols. So because you have rejected the command of the LORD, he has rejected you as king."

<sup>24</sup> Then Saul admitted to Samuel, "Yes, I have sinned. I have disobeyed your instructions and the LORD's command, for I was afraid of the people and did what they demanded.

<sup>25</sup> But now, please forgive my sin and come back with me so that I may worship the LORD."

<sup>26</sup> But Samuel replied, "I will not go back with you! Since you have rejected the LORD's command, he has rejected you as king of Israel."

<sup>27</sup> As Samuel turned to go, Saul tried to hold him back and tore the hem of his robe.

<sup>28</sup> And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to someone else—one who is better than you.

<sup>29</sup> And he who is the Glory of Israel will not lie, nor will he change his mind, for he is not human that he

should change his mind!”

<sup>30</sup> Then Saul pleaded again, “I know I have sinned. But please, at least honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel by coming back with me so that I may worship the LORD your God.”

<sup>31</sup> So Samuel finally agreed and went back with him, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

Israel attacks the Amalekites just as God ordered and Israel is victorious, but Saul disobeys God by keeping the Amalekite king, Agag, alive, as well as some of the best livestock. When Saul sees Samuel approaching after the battle, Saul exclaims, “Behold, I have done all that the Lord has commanded!” Now, just for future reference, ‘Don’t ever lie to a prophet of God’. Samuel replies, “then what is this bleating of sheep that I hear?”

In response, Saul claims the soldiers took the livestock, which is another lie, and besides, the animals are for sacrifice. At this point, Saul has told three lies to the man of God—three lies and you’re out! Neither God nor Samuel is happy with Saul’s lies and pretense and Samuel declares:

“Does the Lord delight in burn offering and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice! To give attention is better than the fat of rams.” -1 Samuel 15:22

**Consider this:**

Aren’t we in some ways like Saul. we hate to throw things away, especially if they’re still good and still work and have some value. There have been times that I wanted to save that which others considered to be garbage. In fact, one time I saw where my neighbor had put a Keurig coffeemaker out next to their garbage to be picked up as trash. I came home and told my wife and daughter that it was in its original carton and looked like it had never been used. They both looked at me like I was crazy and said, “Well, what are you waiting for—go get it!” So I go in my car and drove across the street to the house on the corner, and pulled up alongside this Keurig in its original box sitting at curbside waiting to be picked up and hauled away as trash. I looked around because somehow I felt strange doing this, picking up someone else’s trash. I brought the Keurig home, and we inspected it. It was brand-new, never used—even had the original warranty. That was about 2 yrs ago, and we’ve been using it ever since.

So, I can identify with someone like Saul who feels that something is too good to throw away or destroy. What troubles him is seeing perfectly good things destroyed. He has no trouble killing the Amalekite men and women, and even their little children. He finds it difficult, however, to kill their king, Agag. He has no problem slaughtering all of the marginal cattle, but he can’t stand to throw away the prime USDA Grade A beef and lamb.

I think we may safely assume that Saul’s sparing of Agag, along with his sparing of the best of the flocks and herds of the Amalekites, is really self-serving. Saul certainly gains a measure of popularity for allowing the Israelites to have a good sacrificial meal with the Amalekite animals. After all, this not only means they can feast on the meat; it also means they do not have to sacrifice their own animals. Sparing the life of Agag probably provides Saul with a trophy of his prowess and power.

When Agag sits at Saul’s table, he is much like a stuffed moose head, mounted and prominently displayed in a hunter’s den.

Here's one more thing to consider. Remember in v 22 when Samuel replies to Saul, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams."

That is a powerful statement and it resonates today in so many ways. I could be stealing little bits of money from my company on a regular basis—small amounts which add up after awhile. And God is telling me to repent and give the money back and make it right. I don't want to do that because I've gotten used to the extra money in my bank account, but I am still convicted that what I'm doing is wrong—so I decide to give extra money to charity as well as participate as chairman of my company's favorite charity to raise half a million dollars. And guess what, with my help and support, we raise almost a million dollars to feed starving children in Africa. Now, that ought to make God smile and wipe out my sin of stealing the little bits of money here and there from my company, right? Wrong. God says to me, through the voice of Samuel, that "Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams, or a million dollars raised for charity." That's not going to cut it with God. He wants me to deal with the main issue of obedience in my life on the one thing that he's shined a spotlight on—and that's stealing. Nothing else will suffice. I can't substitute one thing for another. God says, "Stop stealing and make it right. Give the money back." To obey is better than sacrifice.

Remember Abraham and Isaac. Abraham was told to offer up his son Isaac on the altar. Probably the hardest thing a parent has ever been asked to do. His only son which he had waited so many years, and now he is being asked by God to kill Isaac as a sacrifice to God? Abraham is our example that to obey is better than sacrifice. God wanted Abraham's heart, and God did provide another sacrifice instead of Isaac, but Abraham went into this thing believing that even if he killed his son, Isaac, God could raise him up and bring him back to life.

#### **Here's what we learn about Saul's disobedience:**

1. **Saul's disobedience is committed by his partial obedience.** Disobedience sometimes occurs in bold, blatant forms, such as Adam and Eve's disobedience regarding the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. But here, Saul sins by failing to obey God's commandment to the letter. Saul does most of what God instructs him to do through Samuel, but he does not obey completely. Samuel sees this incomplete obedience as sin.
2. **Saul's disobedience is religious in nature.** Saul's disobedience is perceived and represented as obedience. I don't know how Saul justifies saving Agag's life. It does not appear very religious to me. But Saul is masterful at camouflaging his sin regarding the best of the Amalekite flocks. He says he and the people spared the best of the flocks to sacrifice to the Lord. Now, they may have indeed intended to do this, but their motivation is probably self-serving. The slaughter of all the cattle, as God has commanded, would be a sacrifice too, but the people will not be able to eat any of it. Sparing the animals as they do and then sacrificing them to God accomplishes at least two things. First, the people get a free meal at God's expense. They are able to share in the sacrificial meal (2:12-17; 9:11-25). And second, they are able to sacrifice these cattle to God in place of their own, thus avoiding any real sacrifice on their part. The point is that Saul's disobedience has a pious veneer, but at its core, it is self-serving sin. Thus, Saul's actions are hypocritical, appearing to be pious when they are pagan.
3. **Saul's disobedience is not taken seriously enough by Saul.** Saul is slow to accept responsibility for his sin, as exposed by Samuel. Even when Saul confesses his sin, he lays some of the blame

off on the people and then tries – too quickly for my liking – to “move on” to the blessings of God, hoping to sidestep divine discipline. This is especially apparent in verses 24-33. In a sense, Saul is saying something like: “O.K., O.K., so I messed up. I admit it. Now, can we get on with my life. I want you to stay with me and worship with me, so that my image is not tarnished before the people.” In effect now, as in the sin of partial obedience, Saul is more concerned with the people’s opinion of him than of God’s estimation of him. Saul wants to put his sin behind him without hating it, without putting it away from him.

4. **Saul’s sin is hypocritical.** If you remember, Saul is a man who will not tolerate anyone who fails to carry out his commands, even when they are foolish and detrimental. In chapter 14, Saul’s son, Jonathan, inadvertently violates Saul’s command not to eat anything until evening. Jonathan has not heard this command as he is too busy fighting the Philistines, but Saul is determined to put him to death for this disobedience and would have done so if the people had not refused to let it happen (14:36-46). Now, when it comes to Saul’s obedience to the command of God, he is amazingly lenient on himself. Disobey God? Maybe. Disobey Saul? Never!

**New theme: God demands obedience rather than religious acts or sacrifice.**

As Samuel turns to leave, Saul grabs his robe, tearing it. Samuel interprets this symbolically: God will “tear” Saul’s kingship from him. Demonstrating that he still cares more about his own reputation than obeying God, Saul begs Samuel to stay and honor him “before the people.” Surprisingly, Samuel agrees, but first he must take care of some unfinished business. Summoning the Amalekite king. Samuel delivers some pre-death trash talk that would make even Brad Pitt blush: “Just as your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women!” Then Samuel kills the Amalekite king with a sword. Although Saul has now lost God’s favor, and the backing of Samuel, he remains king for some time. But, to borrow from expressions in the Bible, “the writing is on the wall” and “his days are numbered” (Daniel 5).

## **Next Lesson 30: The David the Shepherd Boy**

### **Questions for Review:**

1. Why did the people want a king? **Because they were tired of being “special”—they wanted to be like everybody else, like all the nations around them. They wanted a king that they could see.**
2. Why was Saul chosen? **Because he was tall and good-looking.**
3. Did the people reject God as the King? **Yes**
4. Was Saul a good choice as a king? Why or why not? **No, Saul cared more about how he looked in the eyes of man than in the eyes of God. Saul had a half-hearted obedience to God. In many ways, Saul was religious and wanted to look good outwardly, but God did not possess his heart.**
5. What were some of the things that Samuel told the people would change if they had a king?
  - **Their king would force all their young men to be in his army.**

- He would force some of them to do his plowing and harvesting as well as make his weapons for war and build his chariots.
  - Their king would take their daughters to make perfume and to do all his household chores like cooking and baking.
  - Their king would take the best fields, olive groves and vineyards in Israel and give them to his servants.
  - Their king would take a tenth of what they produced to give to his servants.
  - Finally, their new king would take the Israelites male and female servants along with the strongest and finest young men to do his work, and he'd take their donkeys as well.
6. How does God measure a man or woman? By their looks or what? **God looks upon the heart.**
  7. Is God ever late? **No.**
  8. Why was Samuel angry with Saul for not waiting and for going ahead and offering the burnt offering and sacrifice by himself? **Because that was the responsibility of the priest. Saul had not been anointed as a priest and was showing his disobedience, impatience and lack of trust in Samuel who was God's anointed priest and judge.**
  9. When Israel attacks the Amalekites and they are victorious, what are the three lies that Saul tells to Samuel?
    - a. **I have done all that the Lord has commanded.**
    - b. **Saul claims that his soldiers took the livestock.**
    - c. **The animals are for a sacrifice**
  10. 1 Samuel 15:22, "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as much as \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ ? What are the missing words? **"...as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord."**
  11. What are three things we learn about Saul's disobedience to the Lord's command?
    - a. **It was partial obedience. Saul did most of what God commanded, but not all.**
    - b. **Saul camouflages his disobedience as being religious. He saved the livestock to offer for sacrifice to God. He had spared the best of the livestock to offer his people a free meal at his expense and to look good and benevolent in their eyes.**
    - c. **He doesn't take his disobedience seriously. After confessing his sin, he wants to move on to receiving the blessing of God, sidestepping the issue of discipline.**