

Making Promises

Part 6: The Kingdom

Review

- Saul took refuge at Migron with only six hundred men, while the Philistines were camped mainly at nearby Micmash. Jonathan, however, slipped away and with only his armor bearer attacked a Philistine detachment near Micmash, killing about twenty men.
- Saul had put his army under an oath not to eat until God gave Israel victory, so his men were famished to the point of fainting. Jonathan ate honey because he had not heard his father's command, and the people slaughtered the animals that were left behind and ate them without properly draining the blood.
- Saul took this to mean that someone had angered Yahweh by violating the oath. Casting the sacred lots, he discovered the guilty party to be his own son Jonathan. Only the pleas of the people restrained Saul from killing Jonathan.

Enemies of Saul

- As a concluding summary of the work of Saul, the narrator gives us an overview of his accomplishments. Whether he turned east (Moab, Ammon), southeast (Edom), northeast (Zobah), or west (Philistines), he succeeded in war, he defeated enemies, he delivered Israel, and he expanded **the kingdom of God** through the nation of Israel (**1 Sam. 14:47-48**).
 - ▶ Although the historical account of Saul's military victories is impressive, the negative tone of the preceding chapters shows that Saul had begun to fail in that he did not submit to the **covenant God**. And for the Bible covenant obedience matters far more than vocational achievement.
- The enemy causing the biggest trouble for Saul was the **Philistines**. Not only were the Philistines firmly installed in such areas as Beth Shan in the Plain of Jezreel, but they also had managed to construct and occupy **fortifications** in the very midst of Israel's heartland, only a few miles from Saul's capital of Gibeah (**1 Sam. 10:5**).
 - ▶ It was not until the days of **David**, after 1000 BC, that the Philistines were contained within their original pentapolis of cities: Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza.
- Another enemy of Saul of an entirely different character and circumstance were the **Amalekites**. They were enemies of Israel who joined themselves to whoever was in a position to do Israel harm. The forefather of these tribes, is identified as

a grandson of Esau (**Gen. 36:12**).

- ▶ With the investiture of Israel's first king, the time had come, in the purposes of God, for the Amalekite problem to be settled once and for all (**1 Sam. 15:1-3**). Ironically, the destruction of the Amalekites would contribute to **Saul's undoing** as well.

Rejection

- At the beginning of chapter 15, the word of the Lord that came to Saul through the prophet Samuel was that he was to listen to **the voice** of the Lord, and **strike** and **devote to destruction** the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they came up out of Egypt (**1 Sam. 15:1-3; Ex. 17:8-16; Deut. 25:17-19**).
 - ▶ So Saul went down with 210,000 men and warned the **Kenites** before attacking the Amalekites so that they might live. These people were descendants of Moses father-in-law Hobab, and showed kindness to the Israelites when they were journeying through the wilderness (**1 Sam. 15:4-6; Judg. 4:11; Num. 10:29, 32**).
 - ▶ Saul strikes down the Amalekites and devoted the people to destruction. However, **he spared** Agag the king, the best sheep, oxen, fattened calves, and all that was good (**1 Sam. 15:7-9**).
 - ▶ When Samuel got to the camp at Gilgal, he heard the **voice** of the sheep and oxen (**1 Sam. 15:14**), a voice that proved that Saul had not listened to the voice of the Lord (**1 Sam. 15:19**). Nonetheless, Saul, self-defensive as ever, protested that he did obey the "voice" of the Lord (**1 Sam. 15:20**).
 - ▶ It is evident that Saul was intending to use the animals for **sacrifice**. However, Samuel reminds Saul that the Lord requires obedience to his voice over sacrifice (**1 Sam 15:22-23**). Saul confesses that he has sinned by listening to the voice of the people (**1 Sam. 15:24**).
- Kingship was part and parcel of God's program to demonstrate and effect his sovereign rule over creation. The king was to be the **achiever** and **maintainer** of order under God, to whom he was responsible to listen.
 - ▶ Saul nonetheless remains an enigma, for not only had Yahweh permitted him to reign, albeit as a concession to the people, but Yahweh also informed him that had he not failed in respect to **listening to the voice** of the Lord, Saul would have founded a dynasty that would rule over Israel forever (**1 Sam. 13:13**).
 - ▶ Saul's failure lay in his appropriating to himself priestly prerogatives that may have been associated with **pagan kingship** and that, without specific divine sanction, were inappropriate to him or any king of Israel.

Part 6: The Kingdom

<p>1 Samuel 14:47–48</p>	<p>47 When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned he routed them. 48 And he did valiantly and struck the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.</p>
<p>1 Samuel 10:5</p>	<p>After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying.</p>
<p>Genesis 36:12</p>	<p>(Timna was a concubine of Eliphaz, Esau’s son; she bore Amalek to Eliphaz.) These are the sons of Adah, Esau’s wife.</p>
<p>1 Samuel 15:1–3</p>	<p>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. 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. 3 Now 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.’ ”</p>
<p>Exodus 17:8–16</p>	<p>8 Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. 9 So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.” 10 So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses’ hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. 14 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.” 15 And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord Is My Banner, 16 saying, “A hand upon the throne of the Lord! The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”</p>
<p>Deuteronomy 25:17–19</p>	<p>17 “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you came out of Egypt, 18 how he attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. 19 Therefore when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies around you, in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget.</p>

<p>1 Samuel 15:4–6</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Judges 4:11</p>	<p>Now Heber the Kenite had separated from the Kenites, the descendants of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far away as the oak in Zaananim, which is near Kedesh.</p>
<p>Numbers 10:29</p>	<p>And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the Lord said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the Lord has promised good to Israel."</p>
<p>Numbers 10:32</p>	<p>And if you do go with us, whatever good the Lord will do to us, the same will we do to you."</p>
<p>1 Samuel 15:7–9</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>1 Samuel 15:14</p>	<p>And Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?"</p>
<p>1 Samuel 15:19</p>	<p>Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the Lord?"</p>
<p>1 Samuel 15:20</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>1 Samuel 15:22–23</p>	<p>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. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king."</p>
<p>1 Samuel 15:24</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>1 Samuel 13:13</p>	<p>And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.</p>