



Lesson 68

THE LORD REJECTS SAUL

Story Elements

- **Text:** 1 Samuel 15:1-35
- **Setting:** approx. 1050 B.C.
- **Main Characters:** God, Saul, Samuel, and Agag
- **Plot:** Saul disobeys the command of the LORD, resulting in the termination of his dynasty.
- **Key word(s):** “ _____ ” (vv 19, 20, 22, 24)
- **Climax:** “*And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?*” (vs. 14)

Destruction Required (15:1-3)

1. (vv 1-3) Samuel summoned Saul to instruct him on what the LORD had revealed as Saul’s next task as king.
 - a. Saul was commanded to annihilate the Amalekites. The Amalekites, a nomadic desert people, were marked by God for destruction because of their attempt to destroy the Hebrews as they made their _____ from Egypt. (cf. Exo. 17:14)
 - b. The annihilation required that no person be spared for _____, and nothing be spared for _____.

Disobedient Rebellion (15:4-16)

2. (v 4) At Telaim, Saul gathered an army of over _____ soldiers and marched to a city of the Amalekites.
3. (vv 5-9) After warning the Kenites to flee, the Hebrews destroyed the Amalekites. Saul disobeyed the command to “utterly _____” the Amalekites by sparing Agag and keeping the best of the plunder.
4. (vv 10-11) God told Samuel that Saul had failed to destroy the wicked, saying, “It _____ me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.”
 - a. When confronted with his disobedience, Saul once again made excuses, blaming his failure on the people’s desire to use the plunder for _____ (vv 15, 21)
 - b. Samuel reproved Saul for his excuse and said, “ *Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to _____ is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*”

Difficulties Resolved

5. **Q:** How can a merciful God order the destruction of a people?

A: We must understand the purpose of Israel as a nation – to bring the _____ to save the world. The Amalekites were a people bent on destroying Israel, and thereby preventing the Messiah. This truth is emphasized when we realize that hundreds of years after Saul's failure, a descendant of the Amalekites (Haman) plotted the annihilation of all Jews (see Esther 3:1). A relative of Saul (Mordecai) saved the Jews from complete destruction.

6. **Q:** If Saul destroyed the Amalekites, how did he die at the hand of one (2 Sam. 1: 1-12)? And if Samuel destroyed Agag, how did he have any descendants (e.g., Haman)?

A: While Saul's destruction of the Amalekites was extensive, it was not _____ (1 Sam. 15:7). David would later battle the Amalekites, and it would be an Amalekite that would take Saul's life. Also, it is possible that Agag was not a proper name, but a title, like Pharaoh or Abimilech. So, it is probable that Haman was a descendant of a later king of the Amalekites.

7. **Q:** What was the purpose of Samuel's gory execution of Agag?

A: Samuel's zealous actions were in obedience to God's command for the annihilation of the Amalekites, and they are also shown in contrast to Saul's casual disobedience; it also serves as an illustration of what our attitude should be to our sin – zealous _____.

Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

Application

8. (v 24) Saul excused his disobedience by claiming that he “feared the people and _____ their voice.” Whenever we fear men more than we fear God, trouble is sure to follow.

Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: But whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.

Answer Key

Key word(s): “obey” • 1. a) exodus; b) pity, plunder • 2. 200,000 • 3. destroy • 4. repenteth; a) sacrifice; b) obey • 5. Messiah • 6. complete • 7. combat • 8. obeyed