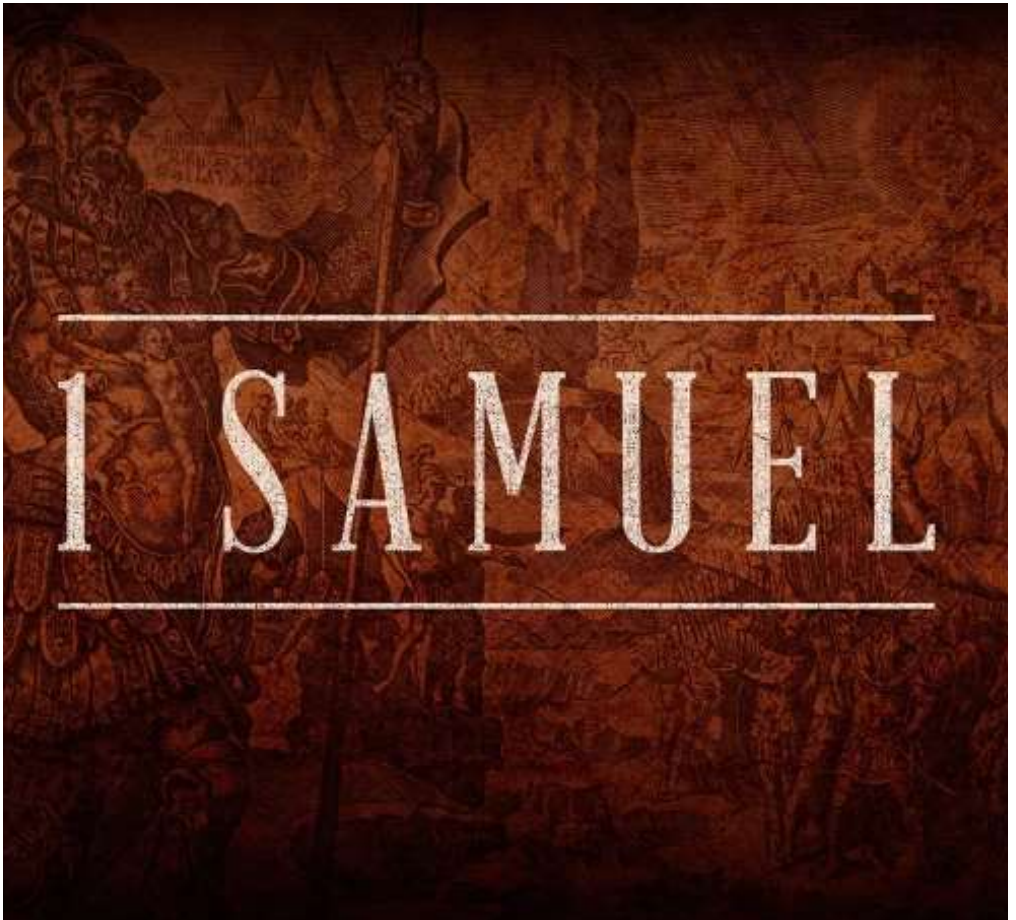


# Let's Worship God

3rd-8th August 2020

1 Samuel



# 1 SAMUEL

## **Monday - 1 Samuel 15 - A Nation-Shaking Day**

Imagine a day that shakes our nation to the core: a climactic, defining, history-making, paradigm-altering day. A day when the nation's leaders failed to do something they were mandated to do, and were subsequently forced out of office, to be replaced by an as-yet-unknown figure. A day when a potential instrument of peace, stability, and prosperity was dealt a hammer blow. Fundamental realities change and nations round about take notice as we step into the unknown. A time of turmoil, turbulence, and testing. The closest thing we've experienced is possibly the morning the Brexit vote was announced. Remember all that you felt that morning - the magnitude of events and the uncertainty of the future. That gives us an insight into the events of chapter 15.

The leader the people have chosen is rejected and forced from office. God calls time on the reign of his anointed king (messiah). He will be replaced by an as-yet-unknown figure. Saul could have been an instrument of peace, stability, and prosperity. Instead, fundamental realities shift and God's people step into the unknown. It heralds a time of uncertainty, fear, turbulence, and change. How would their harvest yields do? Would their investments hold value? Would their land and borders be safe? Who would lead them?

We ask the same questions today in a time of uncertainty, fear, turbulence, and change. How will the harvest of our labours do (i.e. income)? Will our pension investments hold? Are our borders safe from 5G snoopers and terrorist infiltration? Who will lead us? This chapter, though dark, has help and comfort for God's people in nation-shaking days.

### **Questions**

1. What are you uncertain and fearful about?
2. Where are you experiencing turbulence and change?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Ask God to speak to you this week from this chapter in the midst of turbulence and change, fear and uncertainty.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

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." 1 Samuel 15:22

**Praise: Psalm 46:1-6 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# 1 SAMUEL

## **Tuesday - 1 Samuel 15:1-3 - The Judgement God Reveals**

Saul is given a task from God through his prophet. The King of the universe, the LORD of Hosts, asks the king of Israel to carry out his judgement on the Amalekites. The Amalekites were nomads of the southern desert who were now to be "devoted to destruction". This is almost a technical phrase, describing the giving over of things to God. It happened to cities like Jericho during the conquest - plunder was given to God, not kept for self, and captives were killed, not enslaved. It is spelled out in verse 3 and was as brutal as it sounds.

Is this ethnic cleansing, as many critics of Christianity would say? Remember its place in history and God's story. Israel were to be an island of holiness in a sea of paganism, worshippers of the unseen God surrounded by idol worshippers. They were to be pure worshippers, while all around worshipped with great sexual immorality. This destruction was to protect and promote their purity. But there's more here - these two peoples had history. The Amalekites had attacked the tail and stragglers as the people left Egypt (Exodus 17:8). For picking off the weary and faint they were to be "blotted out" (Deuteronomy 25:19).

This is not ethnic cleansing, but 'ethic cleansing'. They are not being destroyed because they are Amalekites, but because they are sinners. God gave them 300 years to repent, and now they are to be killed because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). This is just punishment, after much patience. And the sobering thing is that this is what we all deserve - we are all sinners like the Amalekites. We are all under this judgement.

Let your mind linger on verse 3 and picture how this would play out in an Amalekite settlement. It's awful, isn't it? This is a glimpse of the horrors of Hell. Do you think the glimpse of "child and infant not spared" is awful? The judgement of Hell will be far worse. These people were not innocent. What we see here is justice, justice that each of us deserves.

### **Questions**

1. How should we respond to this glimpse of the seriousness of sin?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Ask for a hatred of sin, give thanks for undeserved mercy, and plead for salvation for lost loved ones.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

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." 1 Samuel 15:22

**Praise: Psalm 137:4-7 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# 1 SAMUEL

## **Wednesday - 1 Samuel 15:4-26 - The King God Rejects**

In verses 7-9 Saul carries out God's judgement, to a degree. He was told not to spare them (verse 3), yet, "Saul spared" (verse 9). What did he spare? He did the hard part - destroying the people. He also destroys the worthless junk. However, he spares the best. This is outright disobedience to God's command. Samuel is given another message which makes clear God's judgement on Saul and the reason why: "he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments" (verse 11).

Once again, it is not a good picture that we get of Saul. Maybe his intentions are good in helping the Kenites, descendants of Moses' father-in-law who had been a help to the people through their history. But his head is turned by the spoils of war - here is greed trumping obedience. In verse 23 he is building a monument to himself - there is pride also. His words in verse 13 reveal his heart. He claims to have performed the commandment of God. God spoke very clearly the previous night to Samuel saying that Saul had not performed his commandment. Saul directly contradicts the Word of God. This gets to the root of the problem: Saul will not listen to and obey the Word of God - verse 19. Despite Saul's continued defence Samuel lays out his heart issues in verses 22-23: worship ritual without obedience, rebellion, presumption, and rejection of the Word of the LORD.

Hear it again in verse 26 - rejection of the Word of the LORD. God does not want your outward conformity, worship rituals, tithes, and attendance. He wants a listening ear and obedient head, hands and feet. How often we attend church, sit at the Lord's Table, or listen through family worship, then get up and do the very thing we know God does not want us to do. Rebellion like this is as evil as witchcraft (verse 23). To obey is better than sacrifice.

### **Questions**

1. Is Saul treated unfairly by God?
2. Does he lose the kingdom over a small sin?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that we would have hearts wholly given over to listening and obeying.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

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." 1 Samuel 15:22

**Praise: Psalm 119:22A - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# 1 SAMUEL

## Thursday - 1 Samuel 15:10-35 - God's Regrets

Saul, the asked-for king, the king after their own heart, the 'have it your way' king, who would fight their battles and save them, has failed. He failed because his way was the way of disobedience, rejecting God's Word (verses 23 & 26). God states twice that he regrets making him king (verses 11 & 35). How can God regret something? Does he make mistakes? Did he not know it would turn out this way? What about verse 29 - did the proofreader miss something?

God knows all things perfectly and does all things perfectly. Here he is communicating in ways we can understand. Verse 29 does not mean God is emotionless, but his emotions are different from ours. His emotions are his activity in the world, not his response to it. God is grieved because Saul has changed and Saul's relationship to him has changed. God is now acting toward Saul in a different way: he is grieved by his lack of obedience and saddened by his sin. But God does not change - what we see of him changes, and what he seems to be to us changes. It's a bit like white light. When light passes through a prism we see the colours of a rainbow. The light hasn't changed; we just see it differently (through a prism). God doesn't change; we just see him differently as he acts in time.

He is not a man to feel regret like we do. We see something and regret stirs in us - we can't help it; it acts on us. But God is not acted on by emotions, he acts. He sees a situation and he chooses to feel regret. And when he sees Saul, the disobedient king, he chooses to feel regret. From one perspective, it has all gone horribly wrong. It was meant to be glorious, he was meant to rescue the people and they were meant to prosper. He was meant to rule righteously and teach the people obedience, that they may be more like God. Disobedient Saul cannot lead the people in obedience - he is rejected.

### Questions

1. How would you explain verses verses 11 and 35 to a child or young Christian?

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for an unchanging God, who steps into our world to act to rescue us.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

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." 1 Samuel 15:22

**Praise: Psalm 102:22-25 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

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# 1 SAMUEL

## **Friday - 1 Samuel 15:17-35 - The King God Requires**

This has been a dark and fairly hopeless chapter, the climax of failure. Obedience is the great need of God's King, because it is the great need of God's people. How crushing to see Saul rejected for his disobedience. But there is one glimmer of light. Saul pleads with Samuel and grabs his coat, ripping it. Samuel teaches Saul an object lesson - the kingdom will be torn from him and given to one who is better than he is (verse 28). We'll be introduced to him in chapter 16, David, the king of God's choosing, the king after God's own heart. David will be better than Saul - he will not offer mere external conformity, nor partial obedience, but full obedience from the heart. His rule will bring glory, peace, prosperity, and triumph.

However, David would mar his character with acts of disobedience, and would eventually die (the wages of sin), leaving Israel in need of a new king to be obedient. His son Solomon would try to be better than he, but with his many wives and idolatry, would fail. His son Rehoboam would try and fail, and every son in David's line, until Jesus. At last, here was a King who would offer heart obedience and full obedience. He was the beloved Son, with whom the Father was well pleased (Matthew 3:17).

But Christ gave up that acceptance to be rejected by his Father. He gave up his obedience to take others' disobedience, and to give his obedience to those who needed it. Think of Saul hearing those words of rejection in verse 26; then think of Jesus hearing them, figuratively, on the Cross. Rejected, not for his own disobedience, but for his people's disobedience. He was enduring the terrible judgement prefigured by the Amalekites. Saul is the king rejected for his own disobedience. Jesus is the king rejected for our disobedience, bringing us the obedience we need, so that we might never be rejected.

### **Questions**

1. Compare and contrast Saul and Jesus.

### **Prayer Points**

1. Give thanks for a King who deals with our disobedience and gives us the obedience we need.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

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." 1 Samuel 15:22

**Praise: Psalm 24:all - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# 1 SAMUEL

## **Saturday - 1 Samuel 15:32-35 - Agag...**

Agag the Amalekite was an inveterate enemy of God's people. He and his people had been a constant thorn in Israel's side, destroying families, orphaning children, causing mothers untold tears (verse 33). Samuel hacks him to pieces. Note that it is "before the LORD" (verse 33). This is not blood lust, nor cold retribution. This is a holy killing. Samuel is fulfilling God's judicial sentence.

It's not the most soothing of passages, but the slaying of God's enemies never is. It is a bloody, gruesome, and messy job. Just as it was at the Cross, where Christ hacked Satan, our great enemy, to pieces figuratively. Though it's gruesome, let the fullness of the foreshadowing sink in - the enemy of God's people is not given merely a flesh wound, nor an honourable defeat. He is utterly destroyed. The enemy of our souls, the roaring and prowling lion, who slings fiery darts from the shadows, the liar and the Father of lies - he has been defeated at the Cross. Agag's death may not be polite reading, but it is a graphic image of what Christ has done for us through the Cross and empty tomb. As we leave this week and prepare for another Lord's Day, remind yourself that the tomb is empty and the enemy is defeated. Your worries, doubts, despairs, and lusts are defeated.

And that brings us full circle to Monday's thoughts. In days of uncertainty, turbulence and unknowns, we have victory over our enemy. God's better King has defeated our great foe and is Lord of all. There may be turbulence, seismic shocks, uncertainty, and hardship. But our souls are safe and our Saviour provides.

## **Questions**

1. What enemies do you need to remind yourself that they are defeated?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Ask God to give you an increasing sense of victory over your defeated foes - lusts, worries, fears, temptations.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

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." 1 Samuel 15:22

**Praise: Psalm 39 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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If you have any queries please contact - [rpchurchscotland@gmail.com](mailto:rpchurchscotland@gmail.com)