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**Rashness And Disobedience (1 Sam. 14:31-15:13)**

**The People Sin (1 Sam. 14:31-35)**

*31 Now they had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. So the people were very faint. 32 And the people rushed on the spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood. 33 Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood!" So he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone to me this day."*

*34 Then Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and say to them, 'Bring me here every man's ox and every man's sheep, slaughter them here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.'" So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night, and slaughtered it there. 35 Then Saul built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD.*

- Recall that Jewish law includes a lot of significant dietary regulations, and one of the most important rules is that blood must absolutely not be consumed.
- Saul's solution was to provide a stone to at least get the animals off the ground.
- Now we see that Saul builds an altar to the Lord for the first time. It's very strange that only now does he do so, after so many years!

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## **A Controversial Lot (1 Sam. 14:36-46)**

36 Now Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and plunder them until the morning light; and let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." Then the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."  
37 So Saul asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him that day. 38 And Saul said, "Come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today. 39 For as the LORD lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not a man among all the people answered him. 40 Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."

41 Therefore Saul said to the LORD God of Israel, "Give a perfect lot." So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped. 42 And Saul said, "Cast lots between my son Jonathan and me." So Jonathan was taken. 43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, and said, "I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand. So now I must die!"

44 Saul answered, "God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan." 45 But the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die. 46 Then Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

- Saul wants to keep pursuing the Philistines after everything that's already happened in this day. Still, the people are willing to keep going.
- Saul was disturbed by God's failure to answer him. This time he wants to seek God when it serves his purpose. But God will not be manipulated.

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- Saul continues on in a confrontational vein by arbitrarily splitting the nation between Saul and Jonathan and the entire rest of the nation. Jonathan is in disbelief at being chosen.
- The people insist that there is no way Saul will kill Jonathan, and Saul gives up and decides that the day is finally over.
- Did God approve of Saul's weird oath and what came of it?

**Saul's Wars And His Kingdom (1 Sam. 14:47-52)**

*47 So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he harassed them. 48 And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.*

*49 The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Jishui, and Malchishua. And the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal. 50 The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. 51 Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.*

*52 Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.*

- This summary of Saul's reign is placed here very oddly, almost as if he had died.
- Saul did accomplish something good for Israel, striking out at Israel's enemies in every direction. It seems that he stopped Israel from being constantly raided by its neighbors on every side.

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- Even in the names of his sons you can see Saul deteriorating. *Jonathan* means “gift of Yahweh.” The second son, *Jishui*, means “he resembles me.” He may also be called *Abinadab*, “my father is noble, or generous.”
- *Malchishua* means “king of wealth.”
- Both of Saul’s daughters will figure prominently in the story of David: *Merab* (“increase”), and *Michal* (*a brook or a stream*).
- The name of Saul’s wife, *Ahinoam*, means *brother of pleasantness* or *pleasantness*. Her father was *Ahimaaz*, which meant *brother of anger*, or *anger*.
- The chapter ends with a sad fulfillment of Samuel’s warnings.

### **A Command To Make War (1 Sam. 15:1-3)**

*1 Samuel also said to Saul, “The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD. 2 Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’”*

- Samuel resurfaces with a serious command to wipe out the Amalekites.
- Is this a just command? Why did God sometimes give Israel these commands?
  - Two reasons: first, God ordered the extermination of *some* Canaanites because they had trafficked with the demonic realm. Of course, biblical skeptics would absolutely not accept this as a proper rationale.
  - Another reason is that the people of Canaan were so evil that He decided to judge them. God had told Abraham that He was waiting 400 years for the Amorites’ cup of iniquity to be full.

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- Amalek was an offshoot of Esau, or Edom, Israel’s brother. The Bible calls Amalek the first of the nations. They were the first to attack Israel after they left Egypt. God commanded the Israelites to deal with them harshly: *“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God. Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.”* (Deut. 25:17-19)
- Amalek represents the flesh.
  - Amalek is always present. God swears that He will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.
  - As long as Moses stayed in prayer to God and held up the staff of God, Israel had the upper hand against Amalek.
  - Their tactics and lack of fear of God are a powerful picture of the flesh.

**Partial Obedience Was Complete Disobedience (1 Sam. 15:4-9)**

*4 So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. 6 Then Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, depart, get down 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. 7 And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 He also took Agag king of the*

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*Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.*

- Saul kindly favors the Kenites, the people of Moses' father-in-law.
- Saul's disobedience is on display. The people spare Agag and all the good things the Amalekites had. This is an insightful picture of how we pamper our flesh.

### **God's Regret (1 Sam. 15:10-13)**

*10 Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, 11 "I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments." And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night. 12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." 13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD."*

- All of a sudden, Saul seems to have gotten religion! Samuel already knew Saul was lying, because God's Word came to Him. Notice the heart of Samuel, the heart of an intercessor. Samuel was grieved and he cried out to the Lord all night.
- Saul had even set up a monument to himself, like the pagan kings did. Now God greatly regretted that He had ever made Saul king.

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