

# The Jewish Kingdom - Lesson 15

## The Rejection of Saul

After the victory against the Philistines, Saul continues to lead Israel in to battle against the many enemies around them. At arguably the height of his power, Saul makes a critical mistake in not completely obeying God's command and the results are disastrous for him.

### 37. Saul's Campaigns - I Samuel 14:47-48

- Fresh from the victory over the Philistines, Saul presses against the many enemies of Israel that surrounded them. This overview bridges the war with the Philistines we saw previously in chapter 14 and the war against the Amalekites we will see in chapter 15.

### 38. Saul's Family and Fighters - I Samuel 14:49-52

- This passage is more informative than chronological, but we will place it here and keep the order found in the Scriptures.
- Saul has six recorded children sons by his wife Ahinoam ("pleasantness").
  - Jonathan ("whom the Lord gave") - eldest son
  - Ishui ("quiet"), also called Abinadab ("father of a vow") in I Chronicles 8:33 - son
  - Melchishua ("king's help") - son
  - Ishbosheth ("man of shame"), also called Eshbaal ("man of Baal") - son
  - Merab ("increase") - eldest daughter
  - Michal ("who is like God?") - youngest daughter
- Saul also would have two sons by a concubine named Rizpah ("a hot stone") according to II Samuel 21:8
  - Armoni ("inhabitant of a fortress")
  - Mephibosheth ("destroyer of shame") - different from the man in II Samuel 9
- Also note the appearance of Saul's cousin Abner as leader of this army.

### 39. The War Against the Amalekites - I Samuel 15:1-34

- The Amalekites were a nomadic tribe that roamed the southern part of the Holy Land. We believe them to be descendants of Esau (Genesis 36:12). Though not much space is given to them in the Scriptures, they were some of the fiercest enemies of Israel. Most famous is the Battle of Rephidim (Exodus 17:8-16), but we also see them fighting against Israel with the Caananites (Numbers 14:45), the Moabites (Judges 3:13), and the Midianites (Judges 6:3). In Deuteronomy 25:17-19 we find that God instructed Israel to avenge themselves against the Amalekites.
- This passage is one that critics of the Bible and Christianity love to go to. How could a loving God command the extermination of an entire nation? I think the answer is in who the Amalekites were. Since they were descendants of Esau they had a long standing animosity against God's people. We see them battling and

harassing Israel, using tactics that even today would be frowned upon in warfare. I think there is much lost to history that also led to this. This step was never taken against other of Israel's enemies, including the Philistines. God gave them centuries to repent of their evil. We can even see the results of Saul's disobedience in the descendants of the Amalekites that survived. We see echoes of this people as late as Esther's time (Esther 3:5-6) as Haman as described as an Agagite after the king of Amalek, Agag.

- vs. 4 - Telaim was in the tribe of Judah.
- vs. 6 - the Kenites were the people of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. They were allies of Israel and had been worshippers of the true God before the Exodus.
- vs. 6 - It must also be pointed out that this warning would have been a final chance for repentance for the Amalekites.
- vs. 8-9 - Saul didn't kill Agag and the best livestock. I think Saul killed the people he met in battle or found in settlements along the way, but certainly some people survived. We'll meet these people again.
- vs. 9 - Why spare Agag? Probably to parade him as a trophy. This was usual in the ancient world.
- vs. 11 - God repenting is not that He did anything wrong, but in that he is changing course in His actions.
- vs. 13 - Perhaps Saul in his own mind felt that he had obeyed God. (Proverbs 21:2)
- vs. 15 - Saul blames the people. Another sign of his weak leadership.
- vs. 15 - Another thing to point out is the "wrong thing in a right way" excuse that Saul will use here and in verse 21. They may have not utterly destroyed, but it was for an offering!
- vs. 17 - "little in thine own sight" - see Proverbs 6:16-17, 16:16. Saul had once been humble, but his own pride and headstrong way would be his demise.
- vs. 20 - Um, how can you utterly destroy the Amalekites and leave their king alive?
- vs. 22 - I think this is one of the most important verses in the Old Testament.
- vs. 23 - Saul will remain king for a number of years, but God is through with him.
- vs. 24 - Too little, too late, too insincere. Blames the people again.
- vs. 32-33 - Samuel steps in to finish the job.
- vs. 34 - A sad end to a tragic chapter.