

Episode #609 Judges 46 – Samuel and Saul

I. In the book of Judges, we have a brief record of the early history (the first centuries) of the history of the land of Israel. We see the leaders God chose, judges, who ruled under Jehovah, the King. Through the lives and work of these judges, we can learn about God's works and ways.

II. Samuel was the judge God chose, but the people demanded a king and the LORD gave them Saul. Yet their actions in demanding a human king when the LORD was already their king were presumptuous and rebellious in the extreme, and the LORD showed them this. Yet their choice was made and Saul was king. Now the new king had a matter to deal with: the oppressive Philistines were once again up to their old tricks. But a more important matter must be decided: would Saul be the people's king only or would he by faith become the LORD's king as well?

III. I Samuel 13:1-15. Saul fails to obey Samuel's urgent instructions.

A. I Samuel 13:5-8. Saul assembles his army at Gilgal and waits for Samuel seven days. These were his important instructions back in I Samuel 10:8. This was the great test to see if Saul was worthy of the kingship! Would he pass as a man of faith?

B. I Samuel 13:9-12. Saul takes matters into his own hands and fails the test. He no sooner fails than Samuel arrives, just "late" enough to show what was in Saul's heart. Saul, in spite of his excuses, was compelled by nothing but his own lack of faith.

C. I Samuel 13:13-15. Saul's kingdom is now doomed because of his disobedience. God will seek a man He desires, rather than Saul, the man the people desired. Then Samuel leaves Saul in the midst of his terrible predicament. He has taken matters into his own hands, so now the help he should have received from the Jehovah does not come!

D. I Samuel 13:16-14:46. God saves Saul through his faithful son Jonathan, though Saul's blunders still nearly lose the day. Yet Saul has lost more than the day through this incident: he has lost the favor of Yahweh. Yet next he will lose even more.

IV. I Samuel 15:1-35. Saul rejected.

A. I Samuel 15:1-3. The LORD orders the extermination of the Amalekites. This goes back to Amalek's sneak attack against them in the wilderness on their way from slavery in Egypt. Exodus 17:8-16. The LORD promised war with Amalek unending. Deuteronomy 25:17-19. Amalek attacked the rear ranks where the tired stragglers were. This showed Amalek despised God. God insists that they should be wiped out. But notice that it is something like four hundred years later! The LORD graciously waited before bringing about Amalek's destruction.

B. I Samuel 15:4-5. Saul gathers the army in order to obey.

C. I Samuel 15:6. Saul makes sure the Kenites do not die with the Amalekites. Remember, these were the descendants of Moses' father-in-law, Judges 4:11.

D. I Samuel 15:7-9. Saul only partially obeys. He does not kill Agag the king, who would have made him a nice trophy. He keeps the best of the animals alive.

E. I Samuel 15:10-11. Jehovah regrets His choice of Saul as king, since he does not obey His commandments.

F. I Samuel 15:12-13. Saul is disingenuous enough to meet Samuel proudly as if he had obeyed!

G. I Samuel 15:14-19. Samuel clears away Saul's deception and reveals the truth of the matter. Saul is no longer little in his own eyes before Yahweh. He is disobedient.

- H. I Samuel 15:20-23. Saul tries to blame the people, but Samuel pronounces his rejection as king.
- I. I Samuel 15:24-26. Saul wants to just be forgiven, but there is no true recognition of his sin. To demand forgiveness is presumption!
- J. I Samuel 15:27-29. Saul tries to keep Samuel from leaving. This act becomes symbolic of what the LORD has done in tearing away his kingdom.
- K. I Samuel 15:30-31. Saul's true heart is revealed. The anger of Jehovah does not so much bother him; he just doesn't want to be humiliated in front of his men!
- L. I Samuel 15:32-33. Samuel returns with him, but only to see to the destruction of Agag.
- M. I Samuel 15:34-35. Samuel mourns Saul, and Yahweh regrets his kingship.
- N. What of the Amalekites? It is interesting that in the book of Esther the man who tries to destroy Israel is Haman the Agagite, Esther 3:1. This descendant of the Amalekite king Saul tried to spare almost wipes out Israel! Yet the LORD sees to his destruction, Esther 7:10. His family is also destroyed, Esther 9:6-10. Saul may not have been zealous to carry out the LORD's mission, but the LORD carried it out Himself according to His word in Exodus 17:16. It does not do to be an enemy to the LORD!

V. Samuel was the last and greatest judge, but the people did not trust the LORD's protection through him and demanded a human king. God chose Saul, and then tested him. Saul had important instructions from Samuel to obey, but when the time came he disobeyed and took matters into his own hands. The result was he was left to solve matters himself! How often do we look to our own strength rather than waiting on the LORD? But our own strength is totally inadequate for the job. Let us learn to distrust ourselves and trust wholly in the power of our God! Saul later was given an important mission from Jehovah. While he went on the mission, he disobeyed Jehovah's instructions, so Jehovah rejected him from being king. Do we sometimes think that partial obedience is enough? Let us remember: either we must serve and obey the LORD fully or we do not truly serve Him at all!