

AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

Topic: *Lessons from the Rise & Fall of Saul (3)*
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Text: *1 Samuel*
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Introduction

Saul was chosen as king by God and by public acclamation and anointed by Samuel. His chief assignment was to defend Israel against its many enemies, especially the Philistines. The two men who significantly influenced Saul's kingship were Samuel and David. Saul's failure in religious duties—presumption in offering unauthorized sacrifice before battle (**1 Sam 13**) and a reluctance to devote Amalek to destruction as God instructed contributed to his rejection as king. (**1 Sam 15**)

Unable to deliver a final blow to the Philistines, towards the end of his reign, Saul consulted the necromancer at Endor, but the oracle of Samuel's ghost could only foretell the doom awaiting the following day. As Saul fought in the battle at Mount Gilboa, he and his sons perished.

There are many lessons to be learned from the life of Saul. Last week we discussed selfism, jealousy, disobedience, and Saul's arrogance. Today we'll address his rebellious attitude, his egotism, failure to repent, and denial.

1. Denial

Denial is a conviction that an individual's behavior or action is right, when it is apparent to everyone else that it is rotten. Saul was in denial. He looked the prophet in the eye and denied everything concerning the Amalekite issue. (**1 Sam 15**) A good leader will assume responsibility for his or her mistakes. Anyone who passes the buck is not a good leader.

Saul was in denial and having a spirit of denial means an individual cannot be a great leader. A great leader accepts accountability and can cry to God and say Lord, I still have my hand on the plough. Saul was in denial, and denial births a blaming spirit. (**1 Sam 15: 21**) Saul claimed that it wasn't his fault when he offered the sacrifice he shouldn't have offered. (**1 Sam 13:11**) God put Saul in charge, he had the last say, it was him God was going to judge not his soldiers.

2. Rebellion

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. (**1 Sam 15:23**) Rebellion is an open intentional, blatant disregard for God, not a mistake, accident, not forgetfulness, or error. It is a deliberate, willful movement in the opposite direction of God's will. Did you notice how the Bible puts rebellion and witchcraft together?

A witch practices witchcraft, and the dictionary describes witchcraft as the exercise or invocation of alleged supernatural powers to control people or events, practices typically involving sorcery or magic. Witchcraft manifests through manipulation. Anyone trying to move you away from God's plan and in line with their own agenda could be described as a witch. The spirit of witchcraft destroys; it led Saul to a bad place.

3. Obstinacy

Failure to reflect and repent is the devil's snare. Saul wouldn't repent, he simply won't do it. If you fail to repent, you may end up like Saul. Do you know one of the reasons why God chose David to replace Saul? David was always running to God asking for mercy. (See **Psa 51:10; Matt 5**) Saul was a man with a filthy heart and a filthy heart is an unrepentant heart. (See **Mat 3:1-2**)

Repentance was never on Saul's to do list unlike David who got better because he repented. (See **2 Chro 32:26; Acts 3:19**) If you don't repent you may lose your gifts or position. Does it make sense if you lose your gifts or

position because you are too stubborn to change? (See **Luke 24:47**) Saul was unrepentant and his failure to repent eventually caught up with him.

4.Egotism

Samuel told Saul: you are losing your job, status, and kingship, yet he didn't seem to care. (**1 Sam 15: 25**) Egotism is the preoccupation with one's ego, an obtrusive and excessive reference to and emphasis upon oneself and one's own importance. (See **Phil 2:3**) Egotism is the opposite of humility. Many of us see ourselves as better than others. Saul didn't really care about losing everything, he was only concerned about people not knowing that he had lost it. In other words, if people didn't know at that moment that he had lost Samuel's support, it didn't matter. (**1 Sam 15: 24-25**)

Saul probably reckoned: I know that I have lost my anointing, my kingdom, my position, but for the benefit of the people, Samuel, just walk out with me and act as if God is with me because if people see you in my company, they will assume that I am still blessed. Also, did you notice how Saul had gone to build a monument in his own honor? (**1 Sam 15:12**)

Egotism is when the image becomes more important than the reality. Egotism births pretense and when pretense becomes the main thing for an individual, that individual is in deep trouble. That was part of what led to Saul's fall. He didn't guard his loins with belt of truth, helmet of salvation, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith, and the sword of the spirit. (**Eph 6**)

Conclusion

Are there lessons to be learned from how things ended for Saul? Saul put himself in a situation where he had to fight battles that were not his. The anointed, powerful, physically imposing king ended his own life by the roadside, when he fell on his sword. The anointed man died without honor because he wouldn't change his ways. There were great things about Saul, which were unfortunately obliterated by his disobedience, arrogance, rebellion, denial, obstinacy, and other proclivities. The finest tribute paid the fallen leader is found in the immortal words of David's magnificent elegy in **2 Sam 1**: "*A gazelle lies slain on your heights, Israel. How are the mighty fallen!*" (**2 Sam 1:19**)