1 Samuel Chapter 15

Please **pray before beginning to read and study your bible**. **Repent of any sin or attitude** that would prevent you from hearing the Holy Spirit and ask him to guide your heart and mind as you read. **Read through the entire chapter first** before going back to read and answer questions. **Take notes** when God reveals Himself to you.

To appreciate the significance of this chapter, we need to delve into the history between the Amalekites and the Israelites. Amalek was a grandson of Esau, Jacob's brother. He pitched his tent and built a kingdom in the area of Edom. Locate Edom in your bible's maps or look online then read Exodus, chapter 17.

1. What circumstance made a surprise attack on the Israelites at Rephidim a smart strategic move by the Amalekites? How did God provide for his people prior to the attack?

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2. What did the LORD say will happen to the Amalekites in Exodus 17: 14-16? Who will be at war with the Amalekites?

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3. What does Balaam prophesy about the Amalekites in Numbers 24:20?

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4. Read Deuteronomy 24: 17-19. Which of the Israelites did the raiders prey upon as they journeyed through Rephidim? What does the scripture say their lack of compassion and willingness to crush the weak and helpless indicate? What does the LORD command the Israelites to do once he has given them rest from their enemies?

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5. What three people groups banded together to enslave the Israelites in Judges 12: 12-14?

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6. Go back to Numbers chapter 24. What does Balaam's oracle say about the Kenites in verses 21-22.

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Chapter 15

7. What does Samuel remind Saul before he delivers the LORD's directive?

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8. The LORD provides an explanation for the task he gives to Saul in verse 2. Should he have to do that to acquire Saul's obedience?

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9. Although 400 years had passed since the Amalekites attacked Israel at Rephidim and were not provoking the Israelites during Saul's reign, Saul did not question the LORD's word but immediately prepared for battle. Does the LORD's retribution against the Amalekites surprise you? Does it seem harsh? Conversely, are you gratefully reassured that, although God's just compensation for wickedness might be delayed, "he does not leave the guilty unpunished?" (Exodus 34:7)

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10. Our society, supported by the Christian charismatic movement, has all but replaced fear of God's judgement with unlimited forgiveness, provided without the true rebirth through the Holy Spirit that makes Christ lord in our hearts. Because the wrath of God against sinners is marginalized, sin is tolerated and passing judgement is ridiculed, which effectively neuters our own convictions and our passion for sharing the gospel. Cheap grace does not exist. The God of the New Testament is the same as the God of the Old. The wrath of God was already unleashed upon the Savior of those who are being saved and will be unleashed upon the unbelieving and unregenerate souls who are not. Read Hebrews 10: 26-31. What is waiting for those who trust in cheap grace to save them? To what does verse 29 liken continuation in sin after a person comes to know the gospel? Which deserves more wrath, violation of the old covenant under Moses, or indifference to the new covenant blood that acquits us of the penalty we are due?

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11. Saul's actions in this account can help teach us what it means to submit to the will of God. Read the first verse of Samuel 15 in the King James Version of the Bible. What is the first instruction that Samuel gives to Saul? Who is the Word speaking to Saul through Samuel (John 1:1, 14)? According to Jesus in John 10:27, who listens to His voice? What do they do when they hear his voice?

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12. In what ways did Saul carry out the LORD's command?

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13. Who was he careful to spare and why?

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14. How did Saul fail to carry out the LORD's command?

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15. While God was sharing His disappointment in and rejection of Saul with Samuel, what was Saul doing in Carmel to congratulate himself on his victory? Is it safe to say that Saul was confident that he had done enough to please God and make himself a hero?

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16. What excuse does Saul use to justify his compromise in obedience to God's commands?

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17. Why wasn't the LORD satisfied with his argument? What flaws of human nature drove Saul's desire to appease the people rather than defend God's unpopular directive?

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18. When Saul is called out for his sin and hidden motives, how does he respond?

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19. In verse 23, to what does Samuel compare the rational, noble modifications Saul made to the LORD's commands? To what does he compare Saul's continued justification for disobedience? What is the penalty for these two offenses under Mosaic law? (Deuteronomy 13, Leviticus 20)

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20. How serious is God about your full devotion to His Word? Read Ezekiel 36: 25-27 and Jude 24-25. How can a person fight against the control sin has on their natural instincts to become obedient and blameless before God?

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21. Who's power provides the strength we need for faith and goodness? (2 Th 1:11)

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22. What does Saul finally have to admit in v. 24? (I recommend the KJV translation.) How authentic does his repentance seem to you? Does he seem focused on harnessing Samuel's religious influence to garner favor and standing with the people?

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23. What name does Samuel give God in v. 29? In this verse, how do the attributes of the LORD, Israel's true King, contrast with what we have seen of Saul's?

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24. What did Israel's holy man do to King Agag according to the KJV (original Hebrew text)? This is another illustration of God's wrath against the workers of iniquity. Can you imagine this level of zeal against wickedness from leaders of current American churches?

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25. Samuel mourned for Saul the rest of his days, watching as Saul drifted further away from God. Why didn't he continue to rebuke him and try leading him back to righteous obedience?

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26. How does God want you to respond to this week's biblical revelation of His righteous nature and of His undeserved mercy towards us, who would be the objects of His wrath if it weren't for the mediation of Jesus Christ?

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