

## FIRST SAMUEL

### Lesson 24: Chapter 15, Partial Obedience is Disobedience

16 December 2016

In this chapter, Saul demonstrates the typical behavior (and downfall) of the carnal man; one who doesn't hate God, but certainly doesn't love Him enough to obey His every word.

**Vss. 1-7** God told Saul to utterly destroy Amalek, to spare no one, and to take nothing. God gave this instruction for the benefit of His beloved people, Israel. If the Amalekites are not destroyed, they will do great harm to Israel.

See **Deuteronomy 25:17-19**. God told the children of Israel to remember what Amalek did to them when they came out of Egypt; to remember their tactics. The Amalekites attacked from the rear when they saw that Israel was faint and weary.

Amalek was a descendant of Esau (**Genesis 36:9, 15**). Esau had no love for God and no respect for spiritual things. He is a type of the firstborn (natural man); a type of the flesh.

See **Exodus 17:15-16**. God reveals that He will have perpetual war with Amalek (Spirit against the flesh, spiritual vs. carnal). The Apostle Paul illustrates this battle within us (**Rom. 7:18-25**).

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**Vss. 8-9** The failure: God told Saul to utterly (completely, absolutely, totally) destroy Amalek, but Saul spared Agag the king and the best cattle. Saul decided what was okay and what was not okay and he partly obeyed God. He got rid of what he considered "vile and refuse."

People today still follow Saul's example. We eliminate the sinful practices that we count as "vile." Then we hold onto things we think are "good" (vs. 9). But everything that pertains to Amalek (the flesh) is evil in the sight of God. If you don't get rid of ALL of it, it will hurt you; it will cause you to fall.

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**Jeremiah 48:10** describes the man who obeys God partially. He is deceitful because he chooses to hold back his sword and won't utterly cut off the things of the flesh; things that will destroy him.

See **Colossians 3:1-9**. If you are saved, you ought to seek God, live for heavenly things, and set your heart on eternal things (vss. 1-4). But also you MUST (!) put to death the things of the flesh (vss. 5-9) that will influence you and tempt you to sin.

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**Vss. 10-11** When you submit to the flesh, it grieves God and His ministers. When you desire the things that God has forbidden it brings sorrow to His heart. He wants you to desire fellowship with Him.

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**Vss. 12-13** Once you start giving-in to the flesh, you will deceive yourself. Saul convinced himself that he had fulfilled the commandment of the Lord. The problem is that he defined obedience according to his own carnal mind. He set his OWN standard of obedience and obeyed THAT.

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**Vs. 14** When you begin to yield to the flesh, you will not be able to hide the fact of the matter. Saul said he obeyed the Lord. The sheep and the oxen said, “No you didn’t.”

If you walk after the flesh, it doesn’t matter how many things you do right, eventually the things that you did wrong will be exposed and will embarrass you (Numbers 32:23).

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**Vs. 15** The flesh will make you justify your sin. You’ll try to share the blame (or the “*credit*”) with others and you’ll try to present a case to convince others that it was the right thing to do.

**Vss. 16-20** The flesh will make you defend yourself even against the word of God.

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**Vs. 21** The last step: you end up critically blaming others. Instead of repenting and saying “I was wrong,” you’ll begin pointing fingers at others, fault finding, and gnat straining.

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**Vs. 22** People do a lot of things in the name of “serving the Lord,” but if it’s not what God said to do, it will not please Him. God is pleased when you obey Him. Read the Bible to find out what He wants you to do.

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**Vs. 23** Without a doubt, witchcraft is satanic. But when we rebel against the truth of God’s word, we’re no different from a witch (Lev. 20:6, 27, Exod. 22:18, 1 Chron. 10:13, Deut. 18:10, Gal. 5:20).

Idolatry is a foolish and sinful iniquity. So is stubbornly rejecting God’s word and bowing down to the flesh instead. It’s the same thing.

**Vss. 23-25** Saul asked Samuel to pardon his sins. No man can pardon sins. He should have turned to God.

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**THE RESULTS:** Second Samuel 1:1-10. Saul was killed by an Amalekite when he was weakened and injured. That’s why God wanted him to smite Amalek; so Amalek couldn’t harm him.

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**Vss. 26-33** Just as Samuel took a sword and “hewed Agag in pieces,” we need to take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:17) and apply it to our flesh. Don’t make a peace treaty with your flesh! Put it down! (Eph. 4:22, Col. 3:9, Rom. 6:6, 8:13, 7:24).