

2) I have transgressed. Admittedly he had passed beyond the will of God. He had passed over God's Word!

3) Pardon my sin. Here is a deep moving call for sins to be lifted up from him. Verb "pardon" means to "lift up." There is nothing here to suggest that he is not guilty.

4) I will worship Him. Three times (vv. 25, 30, 31) the text talks about this matter. Noticeably, Saul had not been worshipping the Lord! He makes bold his renewed intention.

b. His confusion.

Mingled with Saul's confession is a motley jargon which leaves one cold. Note these items:-

1) His accusation.

He finds "the people" as culprits in the whole matter. Read vv. 15, 21, 24 and see how he blames others!

2) His vindication. vv. 20, 21.

There is a striking "I have obeyed . . . BUT" in the account. God's Spirit did not overlook the details which Saul had forgotten. The fact that Saul was indeed at fault is supported by the Word (v. 8). Sin always has its companions (v. 9).

Conclusion Taking all into account as recorded in the Word, one cannot escape the fact that the key to a joyous experience with the Lord is obedience. This seems so simple, but tragically it is ignored! What is written in the Word concerning God, Samuel, and Saul should stand as a landmark never to be forgotten that whatever else one does in his relation with the Lord, let it be first, second, and last a matter of true and genuine obedience! God grant that for each of us today.

THE BOOK OF FIRST SAMUEL

"Sacrifice and Obedience"

1 Samuel 15:1-35

Introduction

1. To give or obey--which is most important? Is it better to do some service for God than to obey what He commands? For many, this either/or situation is a complete dilemma.

2. There are others who propose to have a both/and arrangement with God. This borders on the idea of the "both of two worlds." Is there actually a situation which God proposes is the very best and for which there is no peer?

3. Allow this axiom and some of the problem is solved: when sacrifice and obedience are put in a scale, sacrifice is outweighed and found wanting. To put it in other terms: to listen to God is more important than anything else in the entire universe.

4. Can such a bold statement be supported? We believe it can! Mark the following evidence from this text:-

1. CONSIDERATION OF THE LORD.

Two big verbs dominate the thought here:-

a. His remembrance v. 2.

Saul had actually gained many victories and one of them was over the Amalekites (14:46-52). But there was more to be done. The verb "remember" means to "visit" and particularly in this context to "visit with punishment." Would Saul cooperate with God in this--this is the question!

b. His repentance v. 11.

The verb means to "pant, sigh, lament, grieve," It concerns one's own doings. God did not change, but man did, hence the changed feeling with God. Cf. Gen. 6:6,7.

2. CONVERSATION OF SAMUEL

Several matters are mentioned here about Samuel. Note these:-

a. His investigation. v. 14.

He knew what God had required. He bluntly pointed out that there was noisy evidence that disobedience had been committed by Saul. If God's Word is to be done, it must not be done in parts. The "then" of this verse is critical.

b. His instruction. v. 22.

Here is a forward statement to inform Saul that no amount of "performance" (v. 13) or explanation of what understanding he had offered to the Lord for obedience was adequate. God had spoken and that was it! He had called for "utter destruction." The verb means to "devote to destruction." This was God's Word (v. 3), but note what Saul did to circumvent this word (vv. 8, 9, 15, 20, 21). God's Word is simple; man's inventions are entirely circular and full of adumbrations. The verb "hearken" means to "point up the ears" like animals. To "obey" means to hear in the sense of "watch, guard."

c. His explanation. v. 23.

The seriousness of the whole situation is given full and adequate treatment by Samuel. Disobedience is "stubbornness, rebellion."

Both of these terms gives the idea of active aggression, albeit "rebellion" may merely mean "perverseness." Let no one say that "disobedience" is not sin! This verse forever closes that argument. It is unworthy of a person to deny the awful character of disobedience.

d. His affirmation. v. 28

The consequences of "disobedience" are great. For Saul, it meant his kingdom. This was all he had! Just as surely as God rends the heavens (Isa. 63:19), so he is able to remove one from a place of service due to disobedience. Indeed, the key word for acceptance in God's program is agreement with His purpose—that's obedience!

e. His action. vv. 32, 33.

God is sure to accomplish His purpose. There are some who will obey Him. Others are dispensable. The man available to Him is the one whom He uses. Samuel hews Agag to death. Only once is this verb used in the O.T. It is as if He gives a single solemn warning that obedience is His desire at any cost!

3. CONVICTION OF SAUL

Here is crowning proof to the thesis of this study:-

a. His confession vv. 24, 25, 30, 31

God's Spirit got to the quick of Saul. He responded to admit his failure before a thrice holy God. Here are His words:

1) I have sinned. The common verb for sin. He covered everything!