

Three Failures of King Saul

March 18, 2018

Saul's Original Character

1 Samuel 9:2 ESV

2 And he [Kish] had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

1 Samuel 9:19-21 ESV

19 Samuel answered Saul, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind.

20 As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found.

And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?"

21 Saul answered, "**Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?"**

Saul's Ordination

1 Samuel 10:1-11 ESV

1 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his heritage.

2 When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, 'The donkeys that you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"'

3 Then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine.

4 And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand.

5 After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying.

6 Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

7 Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you.

8 Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do."

9 When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day.

10 When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them.

11 And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, "What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

1 Samuel 10:14-16 ESV

14 Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?" And he said, "To seek the donkeys. And when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel."

15 And Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you."

16 And Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel had spoken, he did not tell him anything.

1 Samuel 10:20-24 ESV

20 Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot.

21 He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its clans, and the clan of the Matrites was taken by lot; and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they sought him, he could not be found.

22 So they inquired again of the LORD, "Is there a man still to come?" and the LORD said, "Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage."

23 Then they ran and took him from there. And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward.

24 And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people." And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

Saul's First Failure - *the destruction self-preservation and self-promotion brings*

1 Samuel 13:5-14 ESV

5 And the Philistines mustered to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude. They came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth-aven.

6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble (for the people were hard pressed), the people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns,

7 and some Hebrews crossed the fords of the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

8 He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him.

9 So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering.

10 As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him.

11 Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash,

12 I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.' So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering."

13 And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.

14 But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

Lessons Learned:

1. ***Do nothing of your own initiative (especially in times of trial and crisis).***
2. ***Wait for God to either move or speak to you what to do.***
3. ***Don't allow the fear, stress or suffering of the moment to compel you to premature or worldly action.***
4. ***Continue to be faithful and obedient in what you know God has ordered for you.***

John 5:19 ESV

19 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

Psalm 37:5-9 ESV

5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act.

6 He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!

8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.

9 For the evildoers shall be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD shall inherit the land.

Saul's Second Failure - *the danger and peril of self-serving leadership*

1 Samuel 14:22-33 ESV

22 Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle.

23 So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.

24 And the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day, so Saul had laid an oath on the people, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged (naqam - take vengeance, to punish) on my enemies." So none of the people had tasted food.

25 Now when all the people came to the forest, behold, there was honey on the ground.

26 And when the people entered the forest, behold, the honey was dropping, but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

27 But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath, so he put out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright.

28 Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man who eats food this day.'" And the people were faint.

29 Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See how my eyes have become bright because I tasted a little of this honey.

30 How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies that they found. For now the defeat among the Philistines has not been great."

31 They struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very faint.

32 The people pounced on the spoil and took sheep and oxen and calves and slaughtered them on the ground. And the people ate them with the blood.

33 Then they told Saul, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a great stone to me here."

Lessons Learned:

1. ***Never promote or try to advance your interests by using and taking advantage of other people. (Leaders who do so should never be trusted.)***
2. ***Many see other people as assets and resources to be used and even manipulated for personal advantage and gain. (Many leaders have built their ambitions and kingdoms on the blood, sweat and finance of others.)***
3. ***Live to serve those whom God has placed in your life, even when you're bearing the heaviest load or suffering the most.***

Matthew 20:25-28 ESV

25 But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.

26 It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,

27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,

28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Saul's Third Failure - God does not accept partial obedience

1 Samuel 15:1-3 ESV

1 And Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the LORD.

2 Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt.

3 Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey."

1 Samuel 15:7-28 ESV

7 And Saul defeated the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt.

8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive and devoted to destruction all the people with the edge of the sword.

9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fattened calves and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them. All that was despised and worthless they devoted to destruction.

10 The word of the LORD came to Samuel:

11 "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments." And Samuel was angry, and he cried to the LORD all night.

12 And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal."

13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed be you to the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

14 And Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?"

15 Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to the LORD your God, and the rest we have devoted to destruction."

16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night." And he said to him, "Speak."

17 And Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel.

18 And the LORD sent you on a mission and said, 'Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'

19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"

20 And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD. I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me. I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have devoted the Amalekites to destruction.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

22 And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king."

24 Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.

25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me that I may bow before the LORD."

26 And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you. For you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

27 As Samuel turned to go away, Saul seized the skirt of his robe, and it tore.

28 And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.

Lessons Learned:

1. ***God accepts no compromise in our obedience. Partial obedience is presumption and rebellion.***
2. ***Our surrender in obedience must be absolute, complete and unconditional.***

John 14:21-23 ESV

21 **Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.**"

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered him, "**If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.**"