

# Saul - What Happened?

## 1 Samuel 15:17-26 (NIV)

*<sup>17</sup> Samuel said, "Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. <sup>18</sup> And he sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.' <sup>19</sup> Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?" <sup>20</sup> "But I did obey the LORD," Saul said. "I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. <sup>21</sup> The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."*

*<sup>22</sup> But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."*

*<sup>23</sup> For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king."*

*<sup>24</sup> Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. <sup>25</sup> Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD."*

*<sup>26</sup> But Samuel said to him, "I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel!"*

### **A. Introduction:**

- Saul's story is among the saddest in Scripture, marked by a tragic fall and wasted potential.
- The question arises: what happened to Saul and why?

### **B. Context of Saul's Leadership:**

- Israel was chosen to showcase the one true God.
- Initially led by patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, & Joshua.
- Then by judges like Barak, Gideon, Deborah.
- Prophets provided spiritual guidance.
- Despite these arrangements, Israel demanded a king (1 Sam. 8).
- God allowed this choice, leading to Saul's anointed kingship.
- Saul's reign exemplifies the consequences of a self-directed life.

**C. Saul's Promising Start:**

- Saul's promising start, chosen by God as Israel's first king (1 Sam 9:16-17).
- He received divine confirmation and a new heart from God (1 Sam 10:9).
- Saul had physical and personal qualities ideal for kingship, including humility, bravery, and generosity.
- His early successes came from obedience to God.
- However, Saul's character flaws and self-direction led to his downfall.
- He alienated himself from God and his people.
- Saul's life teaches that while strengths are valuable, recognizing and surrendering weaknesses to God is crucial.

**D. Saul's Self-Directed Life**

- Saul's leadership fell short of expectations due to impulsiveness.
- His impatience led to unauthorized religious acts, such as in 1 Samuel 13.
- He consistently disobeyed God, notably failing to destroy the Amalekites.
- Saul's superficial commitment to God, blame-shifting, and jealousy towards David highlighted his spiritual deficiencies.
- Saul's primary issue was his lack of true spirituality and commitment to God.

**E. Consequences of Disobedience:**

- God withdrew His blessing from Saul due to disobedience.
- Saul lost the promise of a lasting dynasty.
- His life ended in misery, filled with depression and despair.
- Seeking help from a spiritualist medium and committing suicide on the battlefield (1 Sam 31:1-10) epitomized his tragic end.
- Saul's potential was wasted due to his self-directed life, contrary to God's better plan.

**F. Conclusion:**

- Saul's story illustrates the end result of self-directed lives.
- God desires heartfelt obedience, not mere rituals.
- True obedience involves sacrifice and recognizing our need for God's guidance.
- To avoid a life of misery and wasted potential, one must stay under God's protection and seek His will.
- Saul's path represents that of the uncommitted and indifferent.
- The choice is between following Saul's example or giving one's heart to God.
- Reflection on who directs your life is essential.