***Saul and the Amalekites

The Conflict of Desire and Duty, No. 5 - PH26-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:22-26***

People usually have no hesitancy whatsoever in declaring what God thinks or what God will do. They can be gathered in some bar room or they can be gathered in some congregational meeting of a local church, and they have very definite definitive concepts concerning what God thinks and what God will do. These opinions however are mostly human viewpoint, and they originate in human reasoning capacity of people, or out of their experiences. The fact of the matter is that God deals with us only on the basis of what He has recorded in his book, the Bible. In it, He presents very clearly his divine viewpoint. By this guidebook, we can interpret life. By this guide book, we can indeed determine what God thinks and how God will act.

Consequently, when things go wrong for people, they are willing to blame God because he has failed them, they think. However, in reality all He has done is not acted according to their human viewpoint conclusions. God has not acted according to the way they decided He should act. God has not proceeded in His thinking according to the way their reason and experience determined that He should. This attitude on the part of people is really basically an indifference toward the Word of God. This attitude of thinking that, apart from the Bible, we can determine what God thinks and what He will do is simply a reflection of negative volition toward the Word of God and thus toward God's viewpoint. This of course comes from Satan who does belittle doctrine and who does exalt our reasoning capacity and our experience as being means whereby we can approach God and enter His thinking and His actions.

This attitude is very forcefully illustrated today, as we have been trying to show you, by the charismatic movement of religion. Oral Roberts, Kathryn Kuhlman, and many in that category of the charismatic leaders have had an experience which does not conform to the doctrine of the Word of God. Also, it is not confirmed by the Word of God in any respect whatsoever. They make claims, for example, of speaking in languages which are not confirmed by the Word of God--that at this point in time a person can speak in the languages of the world as they did in New Testament times. They make claims that God is performing miracle physical healings which we do not have from Scripture the confirmation that at this point of time, that is what God is doing--that God is performing miracles. If you study the Word of God, you will remember that miracles have occurred only at certain stated intervals, periodically through the history of mankind--about four different times, and that's all. The last time was the New Testament era, and they have ceased since.

Because these leaders have ignored doctrine, people like Oral Roberts and Kathryn Kuhlman have fallen into the trap of practicing white magic. They do surround themselves with forces which perform supernatural things. These forces are of Satan, but they attribute the credit to God--that's what white magic is. Black magic does the same thing but it gives Satan the credit openly. White magic gives God the credit, and that's a delusion. This is the same thing with the people in Matthew 7:22-23 who were attributing miracles to God that Satan performed. In other words, the charismatic leaders such as Oral Roberts and Kathryn Kuhlman today are in reality mediums. They are mediums. They are not charismatic practitioners at all. Yet, those who are famous non-charismatic religious leaders are condoning the mediumship of the charismatic leaders and the white magic which they are practicing. That's where the confusion comes in.

How can famous evangelical evangelists and Bible teachers condone the white magic in the mediumship of the charismatic leaders? Many times, that condoning is simply a copping out of coming to grips with the issue. They are simply not confronting the fact that this issue exists, and that Christians are wondering concerning the reality of these things.

We've been trying to illustrate from the Word of God the disastrous results that come from ignoring the guidebook in order to guide and to evaluate your experience. We used 2 Samuel 6:1-23 which gave us the story of David's transfer of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Because he did it in violation of doctrinal guidelines for transferring the ark, Uzzah died with all of his good intentions because he touched the ark to keep it from falling off the cart onto the ground. When David decided to obey God and to transfer the ark according to doctrinal guidelines, no one got hurt. It was a very joyous occasion. His wife Michal held him in contempt for his joy over his response to sound doctrine. For that reason, God brought discipline upon her, and she was childless to the day of her death. She never experienced the thing that is so precious to a Jewish woman, and such an honor to have borne children. She was childless to the day of her death. This was discipline upon her for the simple fact that she stood at the window and scoffed at her husband's response to doctrine.

**1 Samuel 15**

We have in Samuel 15 another very forceful example of what we're talking about. The king of Israel is a man named Saul. In 1 Samuel 9, Saul is introduced as a very handsome conscientious promising young man. He's been chosen by God as Israel's first king. Yet this youth was to die a bitter, carnal, spiritually disoriented man for the simple fact that he went negative to Bible doctrine. His negative reaction came to a head here in the story that we have recorded in 1 Samuel 15:1:

"Samuel also said onto Saul (Samuel was the prophet), 'The Lord sent me to anoint you as king over his people (over Israel). Now therefore, hearken to the voice of the Words of the Lord.'" I want you to notice the expression, "The Words of the Lord," which is another expression for what we have been calling Bible doctrine--a principle of divine declaration. Saul is given the Word of God concerning a specific issue. The issue in this particular case was a group of heathen people who still existed on Jewish territory in the land of Palestine called the Amalekites--a group of people upon whom God had laid a severe judgment of discipline centuries before.

Verse 2: "Thus says the Lord of Hosts, 'I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not: but slay both man and woman; infant and suckling; ox and sheep; camel and ass.'" The Amalekites as a people were now to be exterminated by the Israeli military force under Saul's command, and all of their possessions were to be burned along with them--totally destroyed--nothing saved. Now that's doctrine. That was the Word of the Lord. That was the proposition of the commandment of God's viewpoint, and it was very clearly stated. Saul knew what he was to do.

The reason for this judgment was because when the Jews were fleeing from Pharaoh in Egypt, the Amalekites had treated them in a very despicable way. You may read about this in Exodus 17:8-14 where it says: "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, 'Choose men and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.' So, Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek, and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. It came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed. When he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses's hands were heavy, and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon. And Aaron and Hur held up his hands--the one on the one side, and the other on the other side. And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. Joshua vanquished Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said, 'Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the years of Joshua. For I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.'"

God says, "Moses, I want you to record what these people did to my people in their desperation seeking to escape from the forces of Pharaoh. I want you to record that in time I will wipe out the Amalek nation and everything connected with him, so nobody will even know they ever existed." When Moses came to the end of his life, and he was about to die, he reiterated this direction from God in his final message to the people before his departure, as to what they were to do following his death. We have this in Deuteronomy 25:17-19. Moses says, "Remember what Amalek did unto you by the way when you were come forth out of Egypt; how he met you by the way, and smote those behind you, even all that were feeble behind you, when you were faint and weary, and he feared not God. Therefore, it shall be when the lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies roundabout, in the land which the Lord your God gave you for an inheritance to possess it, that you shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget it."

Therefore, the judgment that came upon Amalek was one that was long overdue, but God in His providence was taking care of the Jewish people until the time came when Amalek's iniquity had come to the full, and this nation which was under the judgment of God, not only for what they did to Israel at this time, but for all of the heathen, vile, paganistic customs that they practiced in their idolatrous religious practices, and the threat that they were to the spiritual welfare of the Jewish nation. That in itself was reason for them to come under divine discipline. So that's the background of the situation.

Therefore, when God says, "Now I'm calling upon my king, the ruler of my nation, to execute this divine judgment," this was no small thing that God was calling upon Saul to do. Therefore, God was telling Saul in very specific terms exactly what he was to do, and exactly why it was to be done. The doctrinal factors were very clear. The time of execution had arrived. God, in his direction to Saul, indicated that everything was to be destroyed. This was because, according to God's decision, nothing was salvageable and worth saving of the Amalek civilization.

In verses 4-15, we have the execution of this mission by Saul. The first thing we run into is negative volition on the part of King Saul. He attacked the Amalekites, but notice what he did beginning in verse 7: "And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until you come to Shur. (That is, over against Egypt.) He took Agag, the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."

What's the picture? He attacked the Amalekites. God gives him victory. They go systematically through the camp of the Amalekites, through the dwelling places, and every woman they find, they put her to death. Every man they find, they put him death. Every child that goes running through the camp, under the direction of God for the extermination of this people, they put that child to death. Every worthless animal that comes through, they put that animal to death. However, under agreement between Saul and his people, the Jews, they determine to save certain good animals--animals that had some economic value in their eyes. Also, in the exhilaration of conquest, they save the king alive in order to be able to parade him as a captive, so that Saul can present himself in the guise of a great conqueror. Both these things were the Word of the Lord, the doctrinal instruction.

So what had happened? Saul found something good in a thing that God's Word had declared to be evil. That's what was so horrendous about this. God said, "There's nothing good in this civilization, and nothing salvageable." Along comes King Saul, and he says, "You know, God must be mistaken. God hasn't been here to look at these animals. God did not realize what he was telling us to do. Had he seen some of these magnificent beasts, he wouldn't have told us simply to kill them." Therefore, the people said, "Let's sacrifice them to the Lord. We're going to kill them. We're going to do it for a good reason, not just exterminate them." We'll do it by offering them up to the Lord. That's how we'll kill them. That was sensible; that was logical; that was reasonable; and, that was economical. Saul was merely keeping the best of what God had utterly condemned. God's thinking was not sensible to the experience of Saul. Saul was there to see the loot.

Here's the point. The fact that our intention is to serve God does not make us a spiritual person, nor does it make our acts righteous. That's the point. The fact that it is our intention to serve the Lord does not ensure that we are spiritual people or that our service is righteous and acceptable to God. All Christian service can be performed in the old sin nature, and never forget that. You can teach a Sunday school class in a very brilliant fashion entirely through the pride of your old sin nature. You can give vast sums of money in a fantastic way to God's work through the pride of your old sin nature. Ananias and Sapphira did exactly that. You can do anything that comes under the heading of serving the Lord according to the good side of your old sin nature, and it's worthless relative to reward for you. Your intentions to serve the Lord do not ensure that you will do what is right. The thing that Saul did displeased the Lord. He had gone negative to the doctrine, the instruction given to him.

Verse 10: "Then came the Word of the Lord under Samuel saying, 'It repents me that I have set up Saul to be king. For he has turned back from following me and has not performed My commandments. And it grieved Samuel, and he cried into the Lord all night.'" Samuel, as a genuine spiritual leader, was always disappointed when he saw people going negative to God's word. Therefore, it brought tears to Samuel's eyes to see that the man that God had selected to be Israel's first king, and who had been such a promising young man, should now have brought himself to what was to be the sin unto death for him.

The result was that Samuel confronted Saul with the issues of his negative volition. Verse 12: "When Samuel rose up to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel saying, 'Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.' And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said unto him, 'Blessed be the Lord. I have performed the commandment of the Lord.'" Notice the mind attitude of Saul. The first thing that happens when he meets Samuel is he greets him in the name of the Lord, and says, "Samuel, I've done everything that God asked me to do." In the mind of King Saul, he had perfectly obeyed the Word of God.

In other words, had you gone up to King Saul after all was done in the battle, and said, "You are negative toward the Word of God," he would have looked at you and said, "I certainly am not. I am just as much in love with the Lord God as you are. Furthermore, I am just as good a believer as you are. I'm just as devoted to the Lord as you are." He thought he was just as positive as he could be. Notice that. How many Christians do you know, and how many times is it possible that you yourself have played the role of being very positive toward the Word of God while you were bucking the thunder out of the very Word of God that has come to you that is causing you to grind your teeth and to arch your back in resistance, and eventually to storm off because you will not have it? From the first thing he says, it's very clear Saul's mind is settled that he has done what God told him to do.

So, Samuel then proceeds to confront Saul with the fact that Saul's experience does not conform to God's word. That's the issue. Saul is saying," I've done everything. My experience is that I served the Lord." Samuel says, "Oh, is that right? Well let's take a look at your experience, Saul, and let's see whether your experience conforms to the Word of God."

Verse 14: "And Samuel said, 'What is meant then by this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?'" Samuel says, "If you have obeyed the Word of God and if you have performed the commandment of the Lord, then why is your experience of having obeyed the Word of God contradicted here by the fact that I hear these animals?" Immediately, Saul is going to plead his noble intentions.

Verse 15: "And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice them onto the Lord your God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed." Saul wants to appeal to Samuel, and he says, "The Lord *your* God, Samuel," not just "Our God." He makes it very personal that it is Samuel's God for which they are doing this, and *the people* did it. But we know that verse 9 says that *Saul and the people* spared Agag and the best of the animals, and they were equally guilty because Saul should not have permitted the people to do that which was contrary to doctrine. Saul should have exerted his authority and said, "No, this is wrong. This is contrary to the Word of God. I'm going to sound off about it, and we will not do it." Samuel says, "I see the animals. How can you claim that you have fulfilled the Word of God? You have had an experience, Saul, but the experience that I see you have had does not conform to the Word of God which I know was given to you. And you judge experience by the Word."

As far as Saul's experience went, he felt so good about this that he was sure that he was pleasing God. It just thrilled him to think of looking at all these beautiful animals. He was going to bring them to the priest, and he was going to say, "Now start sacrificing them. I don't care if it takes you a week, night and day, you sacrifice one animal after another upon the altar of the Lord God." Saul just felt great about this--how he was going to honor God with all these sacrifices.

Verse 16 declares God's judgment upon Saul: "Samuel said unto Saul, 'Stay and I will tell you what the Lord has said to me this night.' And he said unto him, 'Say on.'" Notice that Saul constantly conveys the image of a person who is very interested in what God has to say. That's one of the things about people who are negative to the Word of God. They pretty regularly convey the impression that they're very interested in the Word of God; that they are very devoted to God; that they are seeking what God desires; and, that they are students of the Word of God. They constantly convey to you that they are very very interested in the Bible. So, Samuel says, "Now Saul, I have a message for you. I have a little more information from God. He has given it to me this night." And Saul says, "Oh, speak on."

Verse 17: "Samuel said, 'When you were little in your own site, weren't you made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed you king over Israel? And the Lord sent you on a journey and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites. Fight against them until they be consumed.'" When Saul was a nobody, Samuel says, "God made you king. When you were little in your own sight, you were not arrogant in spiritual things. You were teachable. Now the Lord has given you a very specific commandment and direction. You have become king. You have had opportunity of instruction. You have developed in your knowledge of God. You are no longer a nobody. You are no longer a know-nothing relative to spiritual things. Now God gave you a specific direction--you, who are somebody and who knows something about the Bible."

Verse 19: "Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord, but you flew upon the spoil and did evil in the sight of the Lord?" Why then, now that you are no longer a nobody, and why now that you have been instructed in the Word of God, and therefore have made some progress in understanding God's ways, did you so eagerly grasp the very thing that I said you were to destroy utterly? Why did you so eagerly decide that some of what I said was utterly unacceptable, and some of it was acceptable?"

Many a Christian, indeed, has followed this identical pattern of Saul, that when he was a nobody in spiritual things, and when he was unacquainted with spiritual things, he was very receptive and very teachable and very responsive. And then, indeed, as he developed spiritual maturity, the old sin nature pride took over and he became arrogant. He came to the point where he was willing to stand up against his instructors in spiritual things and to say, "I know better." There was a time when Saul listened to everything that Samuel had to say. There was a time when Saul went right down the line when Samuel said something and he obeyed. He followed the spiritual leadership that God had provided. Now, here he is rejecting what Samuel, his instructor, had told him, and presuming to know better as to what God really meant.

Verse 20: "And Saul said unto Samuel, 'Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, the sheep, oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed to sacrifice unto the Lord your God in Gilgal." Even here Saul is still conveying the impression that he's right: "I did obey the Lord." In his own eyes, he is still absolutely right. Even at this point, he is arguing with the prophet and saying that, "I did what God told me. What do you mean I didn't do?" Then he does see the animals. He said, "The people grabbed those. I didn't have anything to do with that. Of course I obey the Lord. Well, I took the king. But that's only one. Look at all the bodies out there." In his own eyes, he was absolutely right. This is fantastic. This is a great example. You're going to meet people like this. You're going to look at them, and they are going to be Christians that you've known for years. And all of a sudden, they're going to grow spiritually insane--off their spiritual rocker, right in front of your eyes. You're going to wonder, "What's happening here?" And you're going to try to analyze it.

Here's what's happening. Saul had grown spiritually insane so he no longer could see what he was really doing, and in his own eyes, he was perfectly right. He was perfectly a devoted servant of the Lord. He was pursuing everything that God told him to do. He woke up in the morning, and he was so pleased with himself, and how the battle had gone the day before, and what they had accomplished. Yet, he was completely disobedient. He was not subject to the Word of God. He was arguing on the basis of his good intentions.

So, we come to verse 22: "And Samuel said, 'Does God have great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as obeying the voice of the Lord?'" "The voice of the Lord" is another phrase for doctrine. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of lambs."

Here's a very forceful verse. It is an amazing verse in the Word of God. If you think that saying "No" to doctrine is a little thing, then read carefully verse 23: "For rebellion (negative volition) is as the sin of witchcraft." How do you like that? To say "No" to doctrine is the same as to play around with necromancy--with trying to speak to the dead--with demon world contact. That is the same as a crime that deserves death, which is what witchcraft received. And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Negative volition is like worshiping an idol God. "Because you have rejected the Word of the Lord (doctrine), He has also rejected you from being king.

Saul had already been negative to God previously. In 1 Samuel 13:13-14, we read the incident where Saul lost the kingdom for his descendants. On that occasion, we have his loss of the kingly line in his family. None of his posterity, after this incident in 1 Samuel 13, were to be king. He comes to the point where he himself, who was permitted to continue to be king, was now going to be cut off from rulership on his own.

The Word of the Lord has been rejected. His good intentions did not cover it. He should have known the manual.

So what does Saul say? Verse 24: "And Saul said unto Samuel, 'I have sinned. I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words because I feared the people and obeyed their voice.'" Apparently, what Samuel told him shocked him tremendously. He already knew that his son, Jonathan, was not going to sit on the throne. God had already told him his descendants would not follow after him. Now he was told, "You're through. You are through being king over Israel. God is finished with you." This apparently so shocked him that immediately he came back and said, "I admit it." He made confession of sin. He admitted the fact of his wrongdoing, but he justified it even then because he said, "The people made me do it. I was afraid of the people."

Imagine that. Here is King Saul. He could take anybody's head off, just by a commandment, and he is going to be afraid of the people, where the people should have been in respect of him in and of him as the man who stood for what God thinks. Saul said, "Now therefore, I pray, pardon my sin and turn again with me that I may worship the Lord." Saul confesses his sin, and then he asks Samuel to worship with him. That's interesting, isn't it? He says, "I want to continue my fellowship with you, Samuel." Of course, that was important to Saul as king. Not to have fellowship with the prophet was really to do yourself in. "Now therefore, pardon." He says in verse 25, "'Now therefore, I pray, pardon my sin, and turn again with me that I may worship the Lord.' And Samuel said unto 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.'"

That's fantastic. Samuel says, "No, I'm not going to pretend I have spiritual fellowship with you, Saul, because I don't. The reason I don't, Saul, is because I stand for Bible doctrine--the Word of the Lord. You do not stand for the Word of the Lord. Therefore, you and I are not on proper spiritual fellowship ground. I stand for Israel--for all that Israel here as a congregation stands for. What this congregation stands for is what God believes and what doctrine teaches, and I'm for it. You have rejected the congregation of Israel, in effect. And I'm part of that congregation. I'm part of those who stand for what God is doing with his people. When you have rejected this congregation, you have rejected me. And you have rejected me because I stand for the Word, and you have rejected the Word." So, Samuel says, "I won't worship with you, so don't ask me."

With that, Samuel turns to walk off. Verse 27 says, "And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantel, and it tore." Saul, in desperation, reaches out and grabbed the outer garment of Samuel to keep him from walking off. When he does, the thing rips in his hand. Samuel pauses; turns around; looks at Saul; and, says 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." That neighbor, of course, in time we find was King David.

Verse 29: "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for He is not a man that He should repent." Samuel says, "Forget it, Saul. The discipline that God has now imposed upon you will not be removed. You have confessed, but you have a discipline that will continue. You are through as king." You may confess your sin, and restore yourself to fellowship with God, but the consequences of this act will not be undone. Then Saul said, "I have sinned yet. Honor me now, I pray, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and turn again with me that I may worship the Lord your God." Now Saul appeals to Samuel on a different basis. He says, "OK, you're right. I did evil. But Samuel, you know that as long as I am king, I should be honored in the eyes of the elders. On that basis, the fact that I am king of Israel at this point, and that I should be honored in the eyes of Israel, I appeal to you to come worship with me. Now Saul was on better ground. He was indeed on legitimate ground with that appeal.

Verse 31: "And Samuel turned again after Saul, and Saul worshipped the Lord. Then Samuel (after having agreed to worship with Saul) said, 'Bring to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites.'" And this is one verse that all the do-gooders and all of the anti-capital punishment people wished they never had put into the Bible. So, I hope that you will not go and tell your anti-capital punishment friends that it's in here, because you will spoil their whole afternoon if you do. Here's a man who is under the divine death penalty. What do you do with people who are guilty of capital crimes that God says, "For this, you take a life?"

"Then Samuel said, '"Bring to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites,' and Agag came out to him cheerfully." Boy, what a surprise he had coming. "Agag said, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past.'" Agag, being a do-gooder himself, said, "They saved me alive. The heat of battle is over. The intensity of anger that occupies a soldier in the heat of battle has past." So, he thought, "I've made it. All is well with me." He had been used to dealing with Saul. "And Samuel said, 'As your sword has made women childless so shall your mother be childless among women.' And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal." How's that for a sentence in the Bible? Notice that it doesn't say, "And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the people." It say, "Before the Lord, in Gilgal." "I do this, almighty God, as unto you." He cut former King Agag into pieces, as unto the Lord.

It is not irrational; it is not cruel; it is not insane; and, it is not un-Christian to say that if you are a military person, and you are on the field of combat, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be the best soldier on that field of combat. That means that you will pile up more enemy bodies than anybody else around you. That's what it means to serve as a soldier unto the Lord. Samuel executed what Saul should have done.

Verse 34: "Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless, Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel."

Samuel had executed the judgment upon the Amalekite King in full conformity to doctrine. That's what doctrine had told him to do--to destroy everybody. Samuel was fulfilling the doctrine that Saul had failed to do. That's often what happens when some believer fails to execute a portion of doctrine. Then some other believer has to come up and execute that portion of doctrine. The person who executes what has been left undone often then becomes the object of attack in turn by those who were negative in the first place. Samuel executes what Saul should have done, and the Bible says that Saul never had any further contact with Samuel to the day of his death.

The rest of this sad story is that Samuel did not seek out Saul, and Samuel was the communication line to God. And Saul was not permitted to seek out Samuel. Any efforts that Saul made to socialize with Samuel were rejected. Any efforts to engage in camaraderie and Christian camaraderie on the part of Saul were rejected by Samuel. He recognized Saul as one who had moved into negative volition, and he now left him with the Lord. He was very clear as to where Saul's destiny was taking him, and Saul never saw Samuel again. He did see him once more after Samuel died.

After Samuel died, and Saul came down to his last final desperation moment, when all lines of communication with God were closed to him, in the fear of a battle that faced him the next day, he went disguised to the witch of Endor, and had her try to contact Samuel. She, starting to operate like a regular medium, got the shock of her life when, instead of a demon imitating Samuel, the real Samuel came up and appeared on the scene. She screamed in terror as she realized that something had gone wrong, and that this wasn't just her demon familiar spirit who was coming through and imitating the voice of Samuel, but it really was Samuel who appeared. And showing how far his spiritual insanity carried him, desperately Saul appeals to Samuel, "What shall I do relative to the battle?" Samuel says to him, "God will give you no direction, and you call me back from the grave to give you direction when God won't give it?

That's just crazy." And anybody that's in his right spiritual mind would have said, "If God can't talk to me, then that's it. I'm not going to go and ask Samuel to do it." And I hope you are beginning to get a respect for spiritual insanity, and for the reality of spiritual insanity, and what it does to a person. It is an absolutely frightful experience.

So, the result was that he never saw Samuel alive again. He saw him on that occasion, and on that occasion, all he got from Samuel was, "Tomorrow, Saul, I will tell you what's going to happen. You are going to go to battle. You will be killed, and your sons will be killed." One of the saddest parts of that revelation was that one of those sons was that fantastically godly, marvelous, young man, Jonathan--the close associate and friend of King David. And Jonathan died the next day with his father.

I think that this incident clearly portrays from a king, who had as a young person every promise of knowing God and every promise of entering into spiritual things, who then ignored, as he became somebody, the simple obedience to what God had told him. He concluded that he had a mind that could make decisions that were better than what God decided. He had a mind that said that God must surely not have meant what He said. So, he adjusted the commandments, the Word of the Lord, to suit the situation as he believed it existed at the time. So, he saves the king. He saves the animals, all for a good purpose out of noble motivation. "We're going to sacrifice them to honor the Lord." Yet, the Word was so clear, and this began centuries before with the treatment of the Amalekites over the Jewish people. From God's frame of reference, the destruction of those people was very very important. It was an act of divine wrath and righteousness which was not to be ignored. Yet Saul ignored it. The result was that Saul lost his throne, and in time, his very life. The final years that he lived were years of intense agony, knowing that he was absolutely cut off from God.

Today, you too may cut yourself off from the Lord God, the living God. You may cut yourself off by doing the same thing that Saul did, by refusing to obey the Word of God. Then when somebody comes and tells you that's what you're doing, you will very forcefully declare and argue back that that's not true. You have obeyed the Word of the Lord; you love the Lord; and, what you are doing is serving the Lord. What you are doing is totally rejected by God. Unless you know the manual so that you can evaluate your experience, and unless you know this book in sufficient detail to be able constantly to estimate what is taking place, you will be in doubt.

Across your television screen will come Oral Roberts, and you will be in doubt. Behind him will come Billy Graham's commendation, and you will be more in doubt. Along will come Kathryn Coleman with the proper words of feelings in her meeting and that she has nothing to do with it, and you will be in doubt. Along will come Hal Lindsey saying that tongues are taking place today. God's Word has to be proved. You will be more in doubt.

However, if you know the Word of God, and you remember Saul, you will realize that the rejection of the Word of God will come from sources that should be the most informed.

There is another example in the Word that is even more staggering than the one we've looked at today. We will look at that next time. I hope at this point you have developed a respect for the Word of God, and for your positive response to it. That's the path of blessing.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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