

1st Samuel 15

Verses 1 - 3

Then Samuel said to Saul, “The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD. ² This is what the LORD of armies says: ‘I will punish Amalek *for what he did to Israel*, in that he obstructed him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. ³ Now go and strike Amalek and completely destroy everything that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’”

² This is what the LORD of armies says: ‘I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, in that he obstructed him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.

This event took place about 2 months after Israel left Egypt. Israel crossed the Red Sea into Arabia and after camping at several places they came to Rephidim where they were attacked by the Amalekites.

See Pic 1505



Even though Israel defeated the Amalekites in the time of Moses, God had sworn that in time, he would utterly destroy the Amalekites.

See Exodus 17:14-16

God was fulfilling a promise that he had made 400 years ago. The Exodus took place in 1446 BC and here in chapter 15 of 1st Samuel it is 1026 BC.

One thing that needs to be pointed out here is that the Amalekites lived in more than one area. Shortly after the exodus Joshua defeated the Amalekites that lived by the Sea of Aquabah but here in I Samuel 15 Saul will defeat the Amalekites that live in the area that is south of Judah.

See Map 1510



³ Now go and strike Amalek and completely destroy everything that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

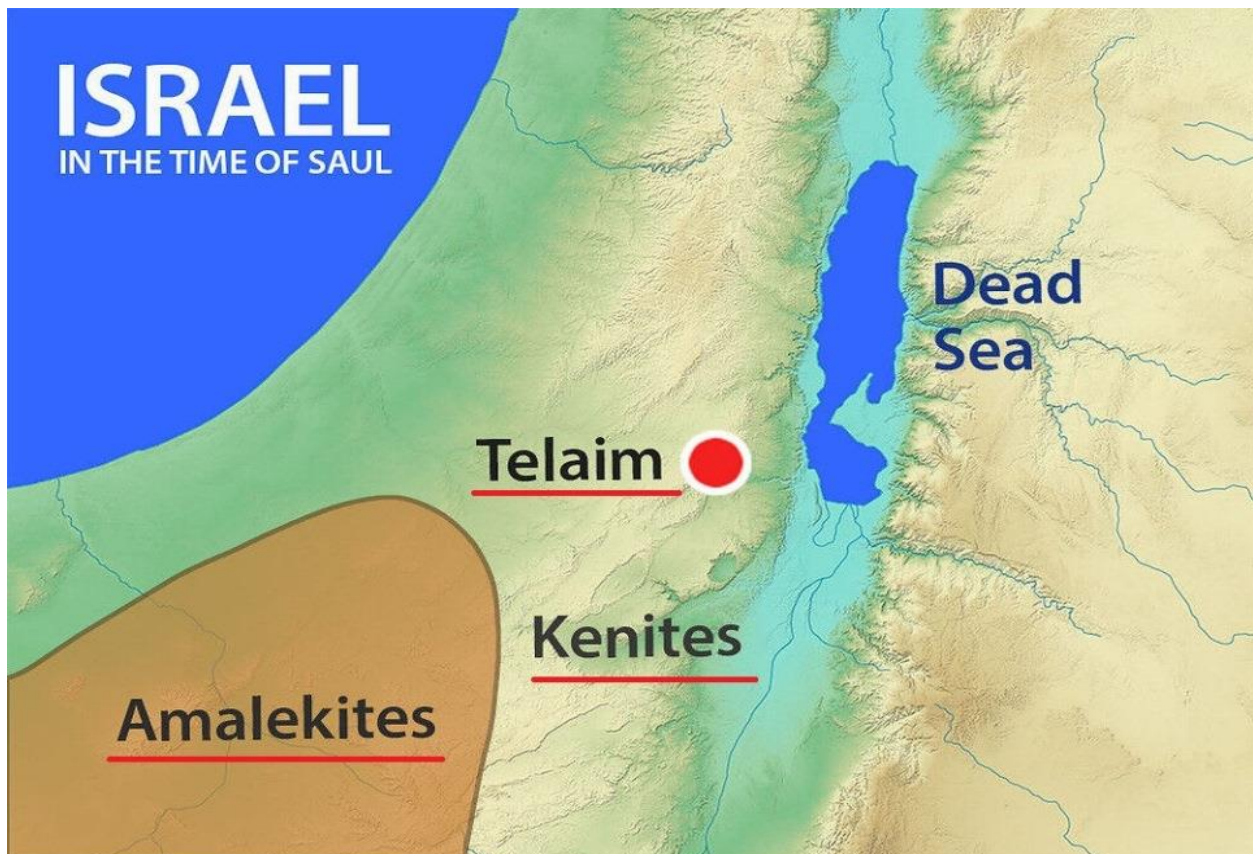
Everyone from the king to the servant was to be put to death. And no animals could be saved as plunder or for any other reason.

Verses 4 - 9

⁴ Then Saul summoned the people and counted them in Telaim: two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. ⁵ And Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the wadi. ⁶ But Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, get away, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they went up from Egypt.” So the Kenites got away from among the Amalekites. ⁷ Then Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah going toward Shur, which is east of Egypt. ⁸ He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and completely destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the more valuable *animals*, the lambs, and everything that was good, and were unwilling to destroy them completely; but everything despicable and weak, that they completely destroyed.

⁴ Then Saul summoned the people and counted them in Telaim: two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah.

See map 1515



330,000 men joined Saul in the war against the Ammonites in chapter 11. However, Israel was involved in many wars from 1048 to 1026 BC (see chapter 14) and now the troops are down to 210,000.

See chart 1520

Number of troops in Israel

| Scripture | Year | Event | Troops | Men killed |
|---------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------|------------|
| Joshua 6 | 1406 BC | Enter Canaan | 600,000 | |
| Joshua 6 - 12 | 1406 to 1400 | Takeover of Canaan | | - 175,000 |
| Judges 20 | 1350 | Beginning of Judges | 425,000 | |
| Judges 20 | 1350 | Civil war with Benjamin | | - 65,000 |
| 1 Sam 4 | 1070 | War with the Philistines | 360,000 | |
| 1 Sam 4 | 1070 | Philistines destroy Shiloh | | - 34,000 |
| 1 Sam 11 | 1050 | Saul is King | 330,000 | |
| 1 Sam 14 | 1048 - 1026 | War with 6 nations | | -120,000 |
| 1 Sam 15 | 1026 | War with the Ammonites | 210,000 | |

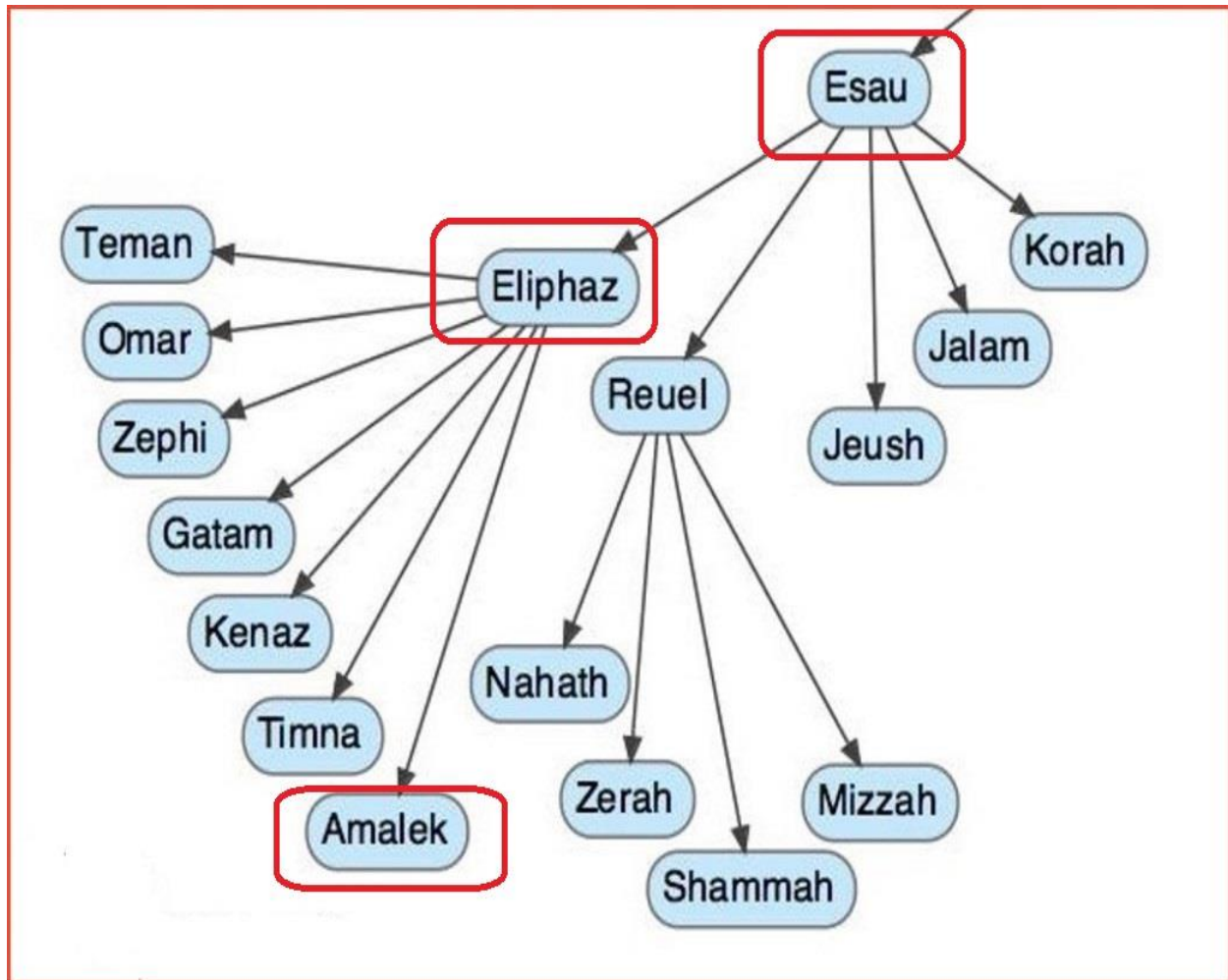
⁵ And Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the wadi. ⁶ But Saul said to the Kenites, “Go, get away, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they went up from Egypt.” So the Kenites got away from among the Amalekites.

The Kenites lived south of the Dead Sea and east of the Amalekites. See map 1515 above.

The Kenites were related to Jethro (also known as Hobab), Moses' father-in-law. They were Midianites by ancestry but were also known as Kenites based on their place of residence.

The Amalekites were descendants of Esau.

See chart 1525



⁷ Then Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah going toward Shur, which is east of Egypt. ⁸ He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and completely destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the more valuable animals, the lambs, and everything that was good, and were unwilling to destroy them completely; but everything despicable and weak, that they completely destroyed.

Saul and Israel killed all of the Amalekites in that area except for the king. Is this what God said to do? No, the king should have been killed.

They also spared the best and more valuable animals. Is this what God said to do? No, all of the animals should have been killed.

Verses 10 – 16

¹⁰ Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, ¹¹ “I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.” And Samuel was furious and cried out to the Lord all night.

¹² Samuel got up early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was reported to Samuel, saying, “Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal.” ¹³ So Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord.” ¹⁴ But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the bellowing of the oxen which I hear?” ¹⁵ Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord your God; but the rest we have completely destroyed.”

¹⁶ Then Samuel said to Saul, “Stop, and let me inform you of what the Lord said to me last night.” And he said to him, “Speak!”

¹⁰ Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, ¹¹ “I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands.”

Why would Saul save King Agag? Some leaders are vain and they take pride in taking a foreign king captive and presenting him to his people so they will all see what a great and powerful leader they have.

For Saul receiving the praises of men was more important than doing what God wanted.

¹³ So Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord.” ¹⁴ But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the bellowing of the oxen which I hear?” ¹⁵ Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord your God; but the rest we have completely destroyed.”

Did Saul really believe that he had carried out the command of the Lord? That was a positive spin on a bold face lie. Aren't we fortunate that politicians today no longer do anything like this? ☺

Saul also tries to spin the sin of saving the best of the animals by saying this was done so they could sacrifice to the lord. ☹

Verses 17 – 23

¹⁷ So Samuel said, “Is it not *true*, though you were insignificant in your own eyes, *that you became* the head of the tribes of Israel? For the Lord anointed you as king over Israel. ¹⁸ And the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, ‘Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are eliminated.’ ¹⁹ Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Instead, you loudly rushed upon the spoils and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord!”

²⁰ Then Saul said to Samuel, “I did obey the voice of the Lord, for I went on the mission on which the Lord sent me; and I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have completely destroyed the Amalekites. ²¹ But the people took *some* of the spoils, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things designated for destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal.” ²² Samuel said,

**“Does the Lord have as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
As in obeying the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than a sacrifice,
And to pay attention is *better* than the fat of rams.**

**²³ For rebellion is *as reprehensible as* the sin of divination,
And insubordination is *as reprehensible as* false religion and idolatry.
Since you have rejected the word of the Lord,
He has also rejected you from *being* king.”**

¹⁷ So Samuel said, “Is it not *true*, though you were insignificant in your own eyes, *that you became* the head of the tribes of Israel? For the Lord anointed you as king over Israel.

Saul started out with a humble attitude but somewhere along the line he began to believe that his position as king was well deserved.

¹⁹ Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? Instead, you loudly rushed upon the spoils and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord!”

If Saul is the king then why did he follow the will of the people? A leader has to lead, not follow. The soldiers would never have saved the cattle without the kings' permission.

This was clearly an act of rebellion against God and His direct command.

²⁰ Then Saul said to Samuel, “I did obey the voice of the Lord, for I went on the mission on which the Lord sent me; and I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have completely destroyed the Amalekites.

It is amazing how Saul could say he obeyed The Lord and in the same breath admit that he did not kill the king of the Amalekites.

**“Does the Lord have as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
As in obeying the voice of the Lord?
Behold, to obey is better than a sacrifice,
And to pay attention is *better* than the fat of rams.**

This passage is one of the best known verses in the entire O.T. This saying became a fundamental principle with the prophets.

See Micah 6:6-8

**With what shall I come to the Lord
And bow myself before the God on high?
Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings,
With yearling calves?
⁷ Does the Lord take pleasure in thousands of rams,
In ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I give *Him* my firstborn for my wrongdoings,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
⁸ He has told you, mortal one, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?**

There are similar thoughts in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea.

²³ For rebellion is as reprehensible as the sin of divination,
And insubordination is as reprehensible as false religion and idolatry.
Since you have rejected the word of the Lord,
He has also rejected you from *being king*.”

Samuel didn't pull any punches when he said this to the king and this unvarnished truth finally got Saul's attention.

Verses 24 – 31

²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have violated the command of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice.

²⁵ Now then, please pardon my sin and return with me, so that I may worship the Lord.” ²⁶ But 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 Then Samuel turned to go, but *Saul* grasped the edge of his robe, and it tore off.

²⁸ So Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you. ²⁹ Also the Glory of Israel will not lie nor change His mind; for He is not a man, that He would change His mind.” ³⁰ Then *Saul* said, “I have sinned; *but* please honor me now before the elders of my people and before *all* Israel, and go back with me, so that I may worship the Lord your God.” ³¹ So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.

²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned, for I have violated the command of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice.

Better late than never.

²⁵ Now then, please pardon my sin and return with me, so that I may worship the Lord.” ²⁶ But 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.”

Samuel was willing to forgive Saul but forgiving him did not include returning with him.

We can forgive a sex offender for his sin, if he repents, but that doesn't mean we should ever trust him with anyone's kids.

²⁷ Then Samuel turned to go, but *Saul* grasped the edge of his robe, and it tore off.

²⁸ So Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.

Samuel turned to leave and Saul grabbed hold of his garment to detain him. This was not done with any malice or contempt but the garment was torn and it symbolized what had happened to the kingship of Saul. Saul will remain king for 16 more years but this is the beginning of the end.

²⁹ Also the Glory of Israel will not lie nor change His mind; for He is not a man, that He would change His mind.”

The decision is final.

³⁰ Then *Saul* said, “I have sinned; *but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before all Israel*, and go back with me, so that I may worship the Lord your God.” ³¹ So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.

Until a new king was appointed, Saul needed be respected by Israel so Samuel did as the king requested.

Verses 32 – 33

³² Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites.” And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is gone!” ³³ But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel cut Agag to pieces before the Lord at Gilgal.

Here again we see the principle of reaping and sowing. Sometimes justice is a long time in coming but it does come.

Verses 34 - 35

³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵ And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, though Samuel mourned for Saul. And the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

Samuel dies in chapter 25 in the year 1011 BC. The events of this chapter took place in 1026 BC so Samuel did not see the King for 15 years. However Samuel did care very much for the King and mourned for him during that time.

Saul must have come to see Samuel shortly before he died because it says Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his (Samuel's) death.

Saul dies in chapter 31 in the year 1010 BC, one year after Samuel died.

See chart 1530 below.

1st Samuel Timeline

| Ch. | Event | Year |
|---------|---|-------------|
| 10 | Saul becomes King | 1050 |
| 11 | Saul rescues the city of Jabesh | 1049 |
| 12 | Samuel is old & gray | |
| 13 | Saul's kingdom will not endure. Philistines defeated. | 1048 |
| 14 | Moab Ammonites Edom Zoba Philistines | 1048 - 1026 |
| 15 | Amalekites defeated and Saul rejected as King | 1026 |
| 16 | Samuel anoints David | 1025 |
| 17 | David kills Goliath | 1024 |
| 21 - 31 | David in hiding for 10 years | 1020 - 1010 |
| 25 | Samuel dies | 1011 |
| 31 | Saul dies | 1010 |