

6425-U

SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 2000

DAVID, A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

A SHEPHERD AND FUGITIVE

Speaker: Bro. Ron Kidd

Study #1: Israel desires a king

Reading: 1 Samuel 8

Good morning my dear brethren and sisters!

Last night, b&s, bro. Mike introduced us to David, and I concluded at the end that Thursday morning will be cancelled because he did a good job on Psalm 34; but I'd like to emphasize a comment that he made. We're going to spend 18 hours this week, learning about David, the man after God's own heart. We're going to analyze his actions, we're going to probe into his mind, we're going to examine his thoughts, and to some degree, as human beings always do, we're going to judge the things that he does. But none of this, b&s, will be of any value to us, if we don't take it personally. If we don't recognize that we are looking at an individual who is similar to us, that manifests the same problems in life, that experiences the same difficulties, has to overcome the same tribulations and trials, and suffers the same weak experiences. And if we don't take that personally, we will go away from this bible school learning nothing. What we're going to do, we're going to walk with David into the valley of the shadow of death. We're going to stand by David when he faces a man of the flesh; when he sees a reflection of what David could be, and we're going to rejoice, b&s, when David stands on Goliath with his head raised high, and the mind of the flesh defeated, and the people of Israel shout for joy! But we're also going to weep with David, when he agonizes over his sin with Bath-sheba, when he comes to grips with the problem and Nathan says, 'thou art the man!' And unless these events in David's life become personal experiences, unless we face the trials that David did with the same comfort and confidence, unless we deal with our own sins in the same honest way that David did, we will go away from this bible school learning nothing.

It's a personal study, b&s, of ourselves, and where do we begin? We're going to begin with an examination of the conditions of Israel, and particularly Saul, prior to God's choice in 1 Samuel 16. It seems a most appropriate start to a wonderful study to find out why it was that Saul was put on the throne in the first place. And I think if we can appreciate the circumstances surrounding the choice that people made of Saul, and

how he conducted himself before God, we will appreciate better, when we come to look at it tomorrow, of why God chose David, the man after His own heart. (I haven't got a lot of overheads, but some of them will sort of remain up there while we discuss the points.) All Israel had been settled in the Land for approximately 350 years. And in 1 Samuel chapter 8 we read the words on the chart, in verse 5, 'Behold, said the tribes of Israel, thou art old and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations'. Now in itself, there was nothing wrong with that request on a biblical basis; it wasn't as though there was no scriptural evidence to suggest that one day a king would sit upon a throne in Israel. Just go with me, b&s, very quickly to Genesis 35, for example, and verse 11, and God's speaking to Jacob many, many years before this incident in 1 Samuel chapter 8. And God says, 'I am God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins', and so there we have in Jacob's life evidence that one day there would be kings sitting upon the throne of Israel who would arise out of the loins of Jacob.

We'll come a little closer to the times of Saul, and now we're in 1 Samuel chapter 2; and Hannah, she picks up the theme, as it were, of the promises of God in 1 Samuel 2 and verse 10, and she says, entering into the prayer of Hannah, 'The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His Anointed'. And so again, Hannah believed that one day a king would sit upon a throne in Israel. And we're not left to any speculation where that throne would be, are we, b&s? because in Genesis chapter 49 and verse 10, Jacob promised his sons that the sceptre shall not depart from Judah. And so there was to be appointed, some time in the future, a king who would sit upon a throne in Israel, who would originate out of Judah. Why then, did God give them a Benjamite? If the Word of God had been talking about a king who would come out of the tribe of Judah, why give them a Benjamite? Now the answer may be found in Deuteronomy chapter 23, remember what He says in verse 2, 'A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD', and if we went through the genealogy of David, David was the 10th generation from Judah, and of course, Judah's sons were, as it were, illegitimate because they were born of Tamar who had played the harlot, because Judah had forgot to give to her Shelah when he had come of age. And so she had to go through this awkward situation in order to bring about the seed, to raise up to her original husband. David was the tenth generation, and when Israel, as we'll see tomorrow, when Israel chose a king, David wasn't born. So that maybe wants a suggestion, that it wasn't the right time and God had to sort of provide them with somebody in the meantime. And that makes sense to some degree, but I think there's a more probable answer!

There's a principle in Galatians chapter 6, there's a principle that you and I have a great difficulty in learning; and, Israel had to learn that same principle. Galatians chapter 6 and verse 7, 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he

that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting'; and that principle, b&s, where if we pursue a road, God will eventually allow us to go down that road. We reap what we sow. Israel had to learn that lesson, the nation needed to learn that principle; that we reap what we sow. And we tend to think, don't we, b&s, that Israel came to Samuel and were provoked to ask for a king simply because Samuel's sons were not towing the line. Just have a look back in 1 Samuel chapter 8, verse 1, 'It came to pass when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of the first one was Joel, the name of the second was Abiah: they were judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like the nations'. So we tend to think that they came as a result of the conditions which were now prevailing in the family of Samuel.

But notice the divine comment, verse 7, 'And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them'. They had rejected Me, and that word 'rejected' is a Hebrew word which means 'to despise', it means 'to cast off' (3988). Just one passage that will demonstrate it in Hosea chapter 9 and verse 17, 'My God shall cast them away, because they did not hearken unto Him'; and, that's exactly what Israel had done to God. They had despised Yahweh, they had cast Him away, and out of the 76 times that that word occurs, it's used 25 times as 'despised'. And so it wasn't an overnight process, it didn't just happen like that (he snapped his fingers), it had taken a long time, b&s, to get to that point.

If we go to the book of Judges, for example, (let's just remind ourselves of where we are on the chart; but there's the times of David and Saul around about 400 years from the beginning of the exodus, 350 years since the time that they entered into the Promised Land), and Judges chapter 17 tells us, 'That in those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes'; and so, for 350 years, b&s, God had struggled with His people. You can read it 6 times in the book of Judges, 'the people of Israel did evil in the sight of Yahweh', and there's a cycle in the book of Judges of sin, of suffering, of supplication and of salvation. And that was the whole process that Israel went through for 350 years. There was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes; but that wasn't true, was it, b&s? Just go with me to Judges chapter 8, the incident of Gideon in verse 22, 'Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, rule thou over us, both thou and thy son and son's sons also, for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; Yahweh shall rule over you!' So God was their King, they were a kingdom of priests and an holy nation, but what had happened, b&s? THEY HAD DETHRONED GOD IN THEIR HEARTS, that was the problem, for 350 years God had wrestled with the nation of Israel, and they had dethroned God in their hearts.

Notice the circumstances! They have rejected Me: just go back, b&s, to 1 Samuel chapter 7, what were the conditions like prior to Samuel coming to an age of responsibility and influence in Israel? Verse 3, 'Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel saying, If you do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashteroth from among you and prepare your hearts unto the LORD and serve Him only, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines'. And so they were idolaters, for 350 years they had mixed allegiance; they'd been serving God on the outside, but on the inside their hearts were dedicated to another god, self indulgence! - they were idolaters!

Go with me to 1 Samuel chapter 28 and again look what it says prior to the days of Saul, verse 3, 'Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land'. And so, coupled with this idolatrous condition that existed in Israel, they were looking to another source of authority: sorcery and witchcraft, necromancers, a source of authority which was not of God. And everyone of us, b&s, are no different than Israel! we all have our gods in our hearts, as we sit here reading our bibles; and there are times, when because the situation suits, we listen to other sources than the Word of God, by means of advice in directing our walk before Him. And that was Israel's problem! It wasn't an overnight process, it didn't just happen as a result of Samuel's sons. Here was an opportunity, and human beings are opportunists, we seek the opportunity and the moment, the time was right to go further in the direction of the nations around them. Give us a king! Make us a king to judge us like the other nations.

And whilst they physically removed the idols and the witchcraft from their lives, they still wanted to be like the nations around them. Verse 19 of 1 Samuel chapter 8, 'Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us! That we also may be like all the nations that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles'. There's a bible echo there, isn't there? have you noticed it, b&s? There's a little bible echo there: they wanted somebody to go out before them, where have we heard that before? Go back to the book of Exodus chapter 23, when Israel came out of Egypt, what did God promise them? Exodus chapter 23 and verse 20, and just look at the context of the words here, in light of what Israel asked, 'that we might be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles. And what did God promise? Verse 20, 'Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared; beware of him, obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon thy transgressions, for My name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and shall do what I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary unto thine adversaries'. God was going to fight their battles for them! They had somebody before them working on their behalf; but they didn't always see him; the angel was not always visible, and now they wanted somebody who they could look up to!

And that's exactly what God gave them, isn't it? 1 Samuel 9 verse 2, 'Kish had a son whose name was Saul, choice young man, goodly; there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he, from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people'. They wanted somebody to fight their battles, what a hypocrisy of the people! You see, there wasn't any battles to fight, at certain times; (just go back a little bit to 1 Samuel chapter 7, God was already working on their behalf, verse 7), 'The Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mispeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines'. They didn't need to be, verse 10, 'And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle; but Yahweh thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel'. God fought their battles! And verse 13 says, 'So the Philistines were subdued, they came no more into the coasts of Israel and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel'. God was already fighting their battles, but you see, b&s, they're just like us! They couldn't see the invisible! They were hesitant, they were uncertain because there wasn't anything tangible before their eyes, and that's exactly like you and I. And it reflected the kind of king that they asked for!

Saul had a spiritual opportunity in chapter 11, it's the incident where the Amorites came against them, and Saul sought to assist, by destroying the Amorites and subduing the people before them. And the circumstances surrounding that victory on behalf of Saul, brought these words, 1 Samuel 11 and verse 14, 'Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before Yahweh and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly'. He demonstrated strong leadership, and the result was that Samuel wanted to renew the kingdom; that word 'renew' means 'to repair' (2318), here was an opportunity to 'start again' as it were, to begin over, to forget the past and move on as far as their spiritual welfare was concerned. And where was it more appropriate to start again, b&s, than Gilgal? Gilgal was the place where the people of Israel, came over Jordan on dry-shod, and they took 12 stones out of the dryness of the riverbed of Jordan, and they placed them as a memorial, for future generations. What did they say at Gilgal? Look at Joshua chapter 4 and verse 20, 'Those 12 stones which they took of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up from before us, until we were gone over; That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God forever'. And so, there at Gilgal, when Samuel gathered the people of Israel to repair or to renew the kingdom, there was the witness of God's almighty hand, that all the nations might know that He was mighty and that He was a God looking after His people!

It was also the place where God rolled away the approach of Egypt; where the burden of sin and death was removed. They came over Jordan and they entered into the kingdom of God, into the Promised Land. And it was also the place where they re-instituted the covenant of circumcision. What an appropriate place to renew the kingdom! where they had re-instituted the covenant of circumcision, the cutting off of the flesh, the destruction of everything that opposed the things of God; and, we're going to see, b&s, in our studies, that every step of the way the flesh has got to be challenged and destroyed. Jonathan, we'll see, as we look at him in our fourth study, chapter 14 (sorry bro. Skip we're going to deal with that in a few days time). When we look at David as he went out against Goliath. It's these uncircumcised individuals that God had removed from Israel, and what better place to renew the kingdom, to make a re-commitment to Yahweh than Gilgal, where they re-instituted the cutting off of the flesh. And yet, b&s, circumcision goes deeper than the physical cutting off of the foreskin of the flesh, doesn't it? You remember what it says in Deuteronomy chapter 10 where God says that to Israel, circumcise the foreskin of your heart. That's what God is looking for in members of His family, individuals who are prepared to go that one step further, who are not simply prepared to show their brethren and sisters how far they are going to go, but they are prepared to go in their hearts further than the people of this world; circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and God, b&s, was about to determine the quality, not only of the people's heart, but Saul's.

It was a time to heal! It was an opportunity to re-build and repair a fractured nation. And in 1 Samuel 12 verse 13, 'Now therefore, behold the king whom ye have chosen and whom ye have desired, and behold, the LORD has set you a king over you'. What was the criteria, what was the criteria for this king? 1 Samuel 12 and verse 14, 'If you will fear the LORD and serve Him, obey His voice and not rebel against the commandments of the LORD; then shall both ye and also the king that shall reign over you, continue following your God. But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you as it was against your fathers'. Notice the terminology, FEAR YAHWEH, and that term, b&s, means 'to recognize God as an authority in our lives'. Perfect love casts out fear but we have a respect for the God that we worship, we give Him the glory and the honour that is due; we fear Him because He is our Creator, and our actions, therefore, are governed by the knowledge that God can see not only what we do on the outside, but what we think on the inside. That God is our Sovereign in our lives, and we've got to obey His voice, listen to what He has to say, and in order to do that, we've got to read the Word, haven't we? we have to become familiar with what He has to say to us! And we rebel not against His commandment!

How well did Saul fare? How well did he work out in the purpose of God? Let's have a look at a few points with regard to Saul, b&s. Go back to 1 Samuel chapter 10 and verse 6 it says, 'that Saul was turned into another man', an interesting little comment in itself, may not suggest very much to us. But let's just have a look at what we're being told here! Verse 6, 'The Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man'; look at verse 9, 'And it was so, that

when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart, and all these signs came to pass that day'. God gave him another heart, we're not interested in the mechanics of how that was accomplished, simply to say, b&s, that God turned him into another and he was given another heart, now what does that mean? Well, there's a hint in verse 11, 'And it came to pass that all that knew Saul beforetime, saw that, behold, he prophesied amongst the prophets. Then the people said one to another, what is this that's come upon Saul? Is Saul amongst the prophets?' You see, b&s, what we're being told was that it wasn't Saul's natural disposition! He wasn't inclined to spiritual matters, God gave him another heart, He turned him into another man, and everybody that knew Saul before- hand, couldn't believe it! Here's Saul, he's quoting scripture, his soul amongst the prophets? So that's the first hint that we have of this man Saul that he wasn't naturally inclined to spiritual things.

There's no indication, b&s, that Saul ever sought a blessing from God when he went out to battle! Just go to 1 Chronicles, for example, chapter 13, just a little comment that comes out in that record. There we read at verse 3, 'David said, Let us bring again the ark of our God to us, for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul!', so Saul wasn't inclined to ask God whether he should do this or that; and that's very evident when we look at two situations in the book of Samuel. Look at 1 Samuel chapter 13, look at Saul's excuse because of the reason why he offered burnt offerings himself instead of waiting for Samuel; verse 12, 'Therefore, said I, the Philistines will come down upon me to Gilgal, and I've not made supplication unto the LORD; I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering'. So he hadn't asked God beforehand whether he should go up, and he forced himself. He was a weak minded man. Chapter 14 and verse 18, he learns his lesson the second time, and now when they're faced with the Philistines he says to Ahiah the priest, 'Bring hither the ark of God, for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel. And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased; and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand', he couldn't wait for God's answer. He was impatient, b&s, he couldn't wait for God's answers, 'let's get on with it, withdraw your hand, we haven't time to wait for what God has to say! the Philistine is at the door', he was impatient and he cut off the priestly work.

And he failed to keep the commandments of God, look at chapter 13 and verse 13, Samuel says to Saul, 'Thou hast done foolishly, thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God', and that was the criteria, 'rebel not against the commandment of the LORD'. We see the same again, don't we? in chapter 15 and verse 11; 'It repented Me, saith God, that I have set up Saul to be king, for he has turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments'. You see, there had been a principle laid down in the book of Deuteronomy, hadn't there, b&s? Back in Deuteronomy chapter 17, God in His foreknowledge had anticipated the time when Israel would seek for a king. God, as early as that, set out the criteria for the king's conduct before Israel, verse 14 for connection, 'When thou art come into the Land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shall possess it and shall dwell therein and say, 'I will set a king over me, like the nations that are about me, (God anticipates Israel's move), down to verse

18, 'It shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he should write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites, and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein, all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep (or to be obedient) to the words of that law', verse 20, 'That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren and that he turn not aside from the commandment'. To fear, to obey, and to rebel not against the commandment, and Saul failed on all counts; he kept not the commandment of God.

And he was an individual, b&s, that was unwilling to accept responsibility; a man that would not stand up and be counted! And that's what we're lacking in our community today, b&s, men and women who are willing to stand up and be counted for the things that they believe; and Saul was that kind of individual, he justified his actions and he blamed the other people for what he had done wrong. 'The people forced me', it's a reminiscence of Adam and Eve, isn't it? all over again. 'It was the woman that Thou gavest me' and Adam blamed God, and we are reluctant, b&s, to accept responsibility for our actions. Let's take the opportunity to stand up and be counted. And here was a man, that was overly concerned with the letter of the law, more than the Spirit, of doing God's work. When Jonathan, as we read in this morning's readings, went out to battle against the Philistines, he was about to be put to death, because Saul was humiliated, simply because he had made a rash vow himself; he was willing to keep the letter of the Law, in order to justify his own weakness and ineffectiveness.

Just to conclude with, b&s, let's look at two examples of people and king. What were they both like? You see, Saul's name means 'asked' (7586), and God gave them precisely what they asked for, a king like the nations. That's what they wanted and that's what they got, and in 1 Samuel chapter 13 and verse 5 we read these words, 'And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, 30,000 chariots, 600,000 horsemen and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash eastward from Beth-aven'. Now what did the Word of God tell them to do under those circumstances? Deuteronomy chapter 20 verses 1 to 4, 'When thou goest out to battle against thy enemy and seest horses and chariots and all the people more than thou, be not afraid of them; for Yahweh thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be when you come nigh unto the battle, the priests shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, you approach this day unto battle against your enemies, let not your hearts faint; fear not, do not tremble, neither be terrified because of them, for the LORD your God is He that goeth before you, to fight for you against your enemies and to save you' that's what the Word of God said, and the Philistines are there on the doorstep of Israel, how did they fare, b&s? How did the people fare?

Verse 6 of 1 Samuel 13, 'When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in the thickets, and in the rocks and in the high places, and in the pits; And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan (they fled away as far as they could), into the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people following him trembled'. That's how far they had come spiritually because of Saul's leadership.

They ignored the teaching of the Word of God, and they failed to put their confidence in the Almighty; they walked by sight and not by faith! And they did that, b&s, because the leadership of Israel was weak; the leadership of Israel was weak, and in our ecclesias today, weakness is evidenced by weak leadership.

Look at Saul in chapter 15, Samuel also said unto Saul, the LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over Israel, now therefore, hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember what Amalek did to Israel and how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt; now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy them. And he says, though God says 'you've been appointed king, act like a king; go and smite Amalek!' And what happened, b&s? Well, first of all, let's ask ourselves the question, why did He ask him to go and smite the Amalekites? the Philistines were the main problem, they were the ones who were causing the difficulties amongst Israel.

Well, first of all, let's review the background to Amalek. If we went back to Numbers chapter 24, we're told there in one of the prophecies of Balaam, verse 7, of the king, 'He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and Israel's king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted'. And, of course, the king of the Amalekites, in 1 Samuel chapter 15, was Agag; and so Saul was being asked to prove himself. Israel's king had to be higher than Agag, now what was the problem with the Amalekites? Deuteronomy chapter 25 tells us and verse 18, 'that the Amalekites met Israel by the way and smote the hindmost of them, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God'. And so the Amalekites were sort of cowards, that's the way sin is, it sort of comes in at the back door; it attacks the weak and the feeble within our ecclesias. Those that were stragglers, 'the fringe benefits of the ecclesia' we might call it, and sin can pick them off, one after the other. And the Amalekites had no fear of God, they had no respect for the God of Israel; and God said that they had to blot out, verse 19 at the end, 'the remembrance of the Amalekites from under heaven, thou shalt not forget it'. And so Saul was being put to the test!

But there was another thing about the Amalekites which was to come out in Saul's life; go back to Exodus chapter 17, it's the incident where Moses was at the top of the hill and Hur and Aaron had to hold up his hands while Joshua fought the Amalekites in the battle in the valley of Elah. And what does God say? verse 14, 'Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. Moses built an altar and called the name of it, Yahweh-nissi. For he said, Because Yahweh hath sworn that He will have war with Amalek from generation unto generation'. Notice what your margin says there, we've checked it out and the Hebrew is correct, because 'the hand of Amalek is against the throne of the LORD'. That's really what it's saying, that's why they had to have war with Amalek, because the hand of the Amalekites was against the throne of the LORD. The Amalekites challenged the authority and the rulership of God; it was a rebellion against divine authority and rule. It was a rebellion against the sovereignty of the LORD of heaven and earth. And what did Saul do? He preserved Agag, king of the

Amalekites, he claimed to perform the Word of God, and he rejected the Word of God himself, and what in effect, b&s, Saul did, was he allied himself with the Amalekites. He challenged the sovereignty and the authority of the Word of God.

And what does Samuel say to him, and notice the words, b&s, like king, like people; verse 22, 'Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams; for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry'. Saul was no different than the people he ruled over, there was an open challenge on Saul's part to the authority of the Almighty. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, he was prepared to listen to another source, the source of his own heart; and a lot of times, b&s and young people, we listen to our own heart when we want to do something rather than listen to the dictates of the Word of God, and stubbornness which means 'to persist in a course of action against the things of God'; stubbornness is as the sin of idolatry and iniquity.

Saul's name means 'asked' and it reflects the kind of person that Israel really wanted, and what we see in the life of Saul is a kind of judgment upon the nation. If you go back to chapter 10, you'll notice that when Saul was anointed, he was anointed with a vial. Verse 1, 'Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and he poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?' He took a vial and poured it upon his head, and the vial in scripture is associated with judgment, isn't it? where the seven vials of the book of Revelation, where the judgments of God are poured out from the vials on the nations of Europe. It's the same word, b&s, which is used in 2 Kings chapter 9, when Jehu was anointed king over Israel, in order to perform the judgments of God upon the house of Ahab, and it says there in verse 1, 'Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets and said, Gird up thy loins and take of this box, this vial of oil in thy hand, and go to Ramath-gilead', and what did he do with it? He poured it on the head of Jehu who was to perform the judgments of God on the house of Ahab. Saul's life was a judgment upon the house of Israel, and it was preparing the house of Israel for the right quality of man that would lead them, David, a man after His own heart!

You and I, b&s, have been promised that we will be kings in God's kingdom. The book of Revelation in chapter 5 and verse 10, words which are very familiar to us, God says, 'that we will be kings and priests and reign over the earth'. We're being groomed for that work now, in the days of our mortality; but the opportunity to be kings and priests in God's kingdom will be taken away from us, as it was from Saul, if we do not fear Yahweh, if we have failed to obey His voice, and if we rebel against the commandments of Yahweh. There's no point, b&s, following the letter of the Law, if our hearts are so far removed from God, that we can't be recognized by our Father in heaven. And what we're going to see as we progress through our studies now, is the kind of heart that God is really interested in, as we look at David, a man after God's own heart!