

9077U

NEW ZEALAND SUMMER SCHOOL - 1993

SAMUEL THE SEER

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study 4: Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh

Reading: 1 Samuel 15:10-35

Brother chairman and my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We left then, on the occasion of our last study, Samuel having completed his resignation speech, you'll remember, in 1 Samuel 12, in which he warned the nation that unless they learned the lessons of the era of the judges, that they would be bound to perpetuate the same cycle, wherein **sin brings suffering but supplication brings salvation**. You'll remember that he finished his warning in the 12th chapter and in the very last verse of 1 Samuel 12, verse 25, 'But if you shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king', said Samuel. One can just imagine the old prophet swinging around on his heel at the end, and glaring at the young man who stood with the crown upon his head, and say, 'if you don't learn these lessons you'll be swept away, both you and your king', and he sits there and he frowns at Saul and then stomps off to Ramah, the old man having given his resignation speech. You need to sense that drama in the record.

Well, now we come to the 15th chapter, of course, and we're going to come to the tragic story of Saul's rejection and of Samuel's involvement in that particular matter. Saul hasn't reigned for many years, and he has shown himself, to have continued in the way of wickedness. Now we haven't got time to follow through the whole of 1 Samuel 15, and so we're going to start the record as our reader began, from the 10th verse, so that we can try and get through to the end of the chapter, God willing. So in 1 Samuel 15 verse 10 it says, 'Then came the word of Yahweh unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments. And it **grieved Samuel and he cried unto Yahweh all night**'. Do you remember when the people in chapter 8, came and asked Samuel that they should have a king and that he should make a king for them, you remember it said, that Samuel was **upset** in that matter, and the Word said in chapter 8 verse 6, 'that it **displeased** Samuel', the margin says 'it was **evil** in his eyes', it was a matter that deeply upset Samuel that the people had rejected him on that occasion!

But interestingly enough, the word used here in chapter 15 verse 11 when it says that 'it grieved Samuel', is a far more powerful word in the Hebrew than that used in chapter 8

verse 6. Now the funny thing about this is, that in chapter 8 Samuel himself is being rejected! and it says that he was upset. Here, it's not Samuel that's being rejected, it's Saul and yet it says that Samuel was **far, far more upset when Saul was rejected than when he was** in chapter 8 verse 6; in fact, the Hebrew word here means literally **'to glow or to blaze up with anger, with zeal or with jealousy; to fret or to be incensed'** (2734). It's a tremendously powerful word in the Hebrew, 'to blaze up with jealousy or anger, to fret one's heart out'. Now one ponders the story here, and says, 'why was Samuel so bitterly upset at the rejection of Saul, in a far more powerful way than he reacted to his own rejection in chapter 8? The reason is that in chapter 8 verse 6, Samuel is **rejected by the people**, but in chapter 15 verse 11, **this is the rejection of Yahweh Himself**; Samuel could bear the bitterness of the people turning against him, but this is something else spoken of concerning Saul; this is **the rejection of Almighty God Himself**, and Samuel was absolutely grieved in that particular matter. We're told in the Jerusalem bible translation that, 'Samuel was deeply moved and all night long he cried out to Yahweh!' You know, b&s, there are circumstances at times in our life in the truth, something happens and someone is appointed to a task or a responsibility in ecclesial life, where really they weren't suitable all along, and sure enough something goes wrong, and it's so easy for us to say, 'well, I could have told you that a long time ago'. You see, there's no **self vindication** in Samuel here, is there? There's no feeling of **personal triumph**, there's no thoughts of **malicious satisfaction** that he's been in some way vindicated and Saul has been condemned for his unsatisfactory nature, his unsuitability for the office, there's nothing of that spirit in Samuel! is there? only **great bitterness** that Yahweh Himself has rejected the king!

Just look what the verse goes on to say! this amazing statement at the end of verse 11, 'It grieved Samuel and he cried unto Yahweh **all night**'. You know, we talk in our studies of giving thanks for our brethren, about giving prayers about our brethren. In the ecclesia we pray for one another, how often do we pray for our brethren by name? and when we're away from the ecclesia? how often in our homes and in the privacy of our personal prayers do we pray for other people, for their needs? as we are exhorted to do by the apostle Paul? But Samuel didn't just pray here for Saul, **he prayed for Saul all night!** and we can't even begin to comprehend what that must have been like! What do you say all night in prayer? what could that have been like? and for this reason, Samuel goes down in the record, doesn't he? as one of the greatest **intercessors** that the nation ever saw, a man who **never, ever ceased to pray for other people**; a man who was constantly moved by that spirit. His name was indicative of the power of his prayers, because 'shama-El', the basis of his name, means '**heard of God**' (8085+410), we believe his prayers were characterized by a particular **shriek** (2199), an unusual cry that Samuel used when he lifted up his voice. There's an indication in Psalm 78 verse 65, that the cries of Samuel in prayer were able to draw down the divine response in time of need! We have a play upon his name on at least two separate occasions in the record, when it says that 'Samuel cried unto Yahweh, and Yahweh **heard him**'; **heard of God** was the meaning of his name. Here's a man where his whole life's ministry was characterized by prayer to and converse with God, and what we're looking at, of course, here in the 15th chapter is one of those examples, when he lifts up his heart and mind

in absolute prayer for the whole night, on behalf of someone else; intercessory prayer, a true obliteration of self in seeking a blessing upon another. There's a wonderful spirit there in the old man, isn't there!

You know, it's a funny thing in life, but in the truth it's so easy for us to be weighed down at times, with the burden of our own problems and our own difficulties in life, and yet fondly enough, one of the best things that we can do to help us, is to put our own problems in perspective, to enlarge our care for other people, and somehow when our care and our concern focuses on other people, the size of our own problems seem somehow to shrink back into its proper size and proper smallness. Samuel was ever a man who thought of other people and we see him here in this wonderful aspect of intercessory prayer on this particular night when, Yahweh rejected Saul.

We're told in verse 12, 'When Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning', so you see, although he cried to God all night, Samuel was never going to flinch from the responsibilities that now lay upon him, he obviously asked the Father that night, if He would extend His forgiveness, he obviously pleaded with the Father for more time, for more opportunity for Saul, and the answer was, NO! I have rejected him', so in verse 12, 'When Samuel rose early in the morning', he knows that when he rises it's for the express purpose now, of fulfilling the command of God and of rejecting Saul from office. You know, this business of rising early in the morning, it's an interesting one! You know, there are many people in the scripture that rose early in the morning because they were **agitated in mind** about a difficult task that they had to perform dealing with somebody else. Take these ones!

In Genesis 22 verse 3, Abraham rose early in the morning on the day he was to offer Isaac'. He was agitated in mind about the responsibility that lay before him concerning his son. In Exodus 9 verse 20, we're told that Moses rose early in the morning on the day that he knew that he had to confront Pharaoh; he had a personal confrontation with another man looming up before him, and so agitated was Moses, said the record, that he rose early in the morning on that particular day. In Joshua 7 verse 16 we're told that Joshua arose early in the morning, on the day he knew that he had to expose Achan; and here's the really telling thing! We're told of Samuel that he only ever rose on two occasions early in the morning; the divine record only tells us of two occasions when Samuel himself rose early in the morning, and here's the real tragedy of the story. The first was in chapter 9 verse 26, when he arose early in the morning **to anoint Saul**; and now in chapter 15 verse 12, he arises early in the morning to **reject Saul** and to do so on behalf of God.

And so he does! and we're told in the 12th verse, 'When Samuel rose early 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'. Actually, he had gone to fight with the Amalekites, hadn't he? Where were the Amalekites? well, they laid to the south, and the battle having taken place in the south, we're told now that Saul is ascending northwards, coming up through the middle of the

country heading northwards. Yet the funny thing about it in verse 12, it says, 'he came **down** to Gilgal', now why would the record say that one goes **down** to Gilgal, when one's actually heading north going up the Land? do you remember the other night one thing about good bible reading is a knowledge of bible geography, any answers to that? that's exactly right! because you'll notice in verse 12 it says he actually came to Carmel. Now Carmel is not mount Carmel here, is it? this is actually the Carmel that was Nabal's hometown, it's in the area skirting the wilderness of Jeshimon, it's about 7 miles southeast of Hebron. What Saul did was he came from the south and came up through Carmel and up through the central Judean plateau and then descended down into the Gulf of the Jordan in order to go to Gilgal. So the record is quite right here, although he's travelling north, he went **down** to Gilgal, quite right geographically. It says that on the way though, that 'he came to Carmel and behold, **he set him up a place**', now in the Hebrew the word 'place' here is the word 'yad', anyone know what 'yad' means in Hebrew? it actually means 'the hand' (3027) but it's not just any hand, it's actually the **open hand**; in fact, there are two words in the Hebrew, there's one word for the open hand (yad) and one word for the **closed hand** (kaph - 3709) or the clenched fist, and the two words express two totally different ideas. The open hand represents the outstretching of a man's power or his might, and the idea behind this word here, in 1 Samuel 15, 'he set him up a hand' was that Saul set up some sort of memorial to celebrate his victory over the Amalekites. Actually, if you come to 2 Samuel 18, we have an illustration of this same word used and we can see how it takes that idea of being a memorial or a monument in some way. We're told in 2 Samuel 18 verse 18, it says, 'Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar', (actually, Absalom quite liked himself really, you can tell that by reading this verse) 'which is in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, **yad Absalom.**' Absalom's hand! and it was a memorial, you see, to Absalom, it was a token of memorial in some way, to remember Absalom after he had died. It's the same word used in Isaiah 56 verse 5, concerning the strangers that join themselves to Yahweh in the day, that in the future age they shall be given a name and a place (a yad) better than of sons and of daughters, says Isaiah 56 verse 5.

So coming back then to 1 Samuel 15 verse 12, what's happened here is Saul can't wait to celebrate his victory and so already before he's even got to Gilgal, as he passes through Carmel, he sets up some sort of memorial to celebrate his great victory. In fact, the Amplified bible translates that phrase in the 12th verse, 'he set up for **himself** a monument or trophy of his victory'. He was obviously excited with what had happened, and now he's gone to Gilgal and he's there striding around imperiously as the king, to organize the celebrations that he has in hand. We're told in the 13th verse, 'And Samuel came to Saul', oh, can you just sense the drama in that phrase, **and Samuel came to Saul**, one can just imagine the king striding around giving orders concerning the disposition and the setting up of altars, and the organization of the animals for the feast; and all of a sudden, he turns around and there's the old man standing behind him. If ever there was something in life that would constantly give Saul a nervous tingle, it was the sight of Samuel looking at him! and sure enough, there's the old man! I tell

you what! read verse 13, and Saul said unto him, 'blessed be thou of Yahweh! I have performed the commandment of Yahweh!' He's obviously nervous, isn't he? it's interesting! actually if you go back to verse 11, the divine estimate on Saul says, '**he hath not performed My commandment**', and yet, Saul himself says in verse 13, '**I have performed the commandment**', how often it is, b&s, that our own estimate concerning our achievements in the truth, **differs from the divine!** You know what really happened, of course, when he said those words, what really happened in verse 13 was he said, 'I have (moo) performed the commandment (baa) of Yahweh.' The sounds of the animals behind him, were absolute testimony to the fact, that he **had not performed the commandment**. And the divine estimate of what Saul had done, was absolutely different to Saul's own view of himself.

So in verse 14 Samuel said, 'What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? Of course, when Samuel says that in this verse, he's taking Saul's mind back, isn't he? to the 3rd verse where he said, 'now go and smite Amalek, and **utterly destroy all that they have**', and so he's reminding Saul of the terms of reference that he was given in the first instance. And Saul said, verse 15, '**They** have brought them from the Amalekites: for **the people** spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto Yahweh thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed'. You know, really, this is a very clever verse, verse 15, when you think about it! You see, not only does Saul move very quickly to implicate the people, but the whole thing is very devious and very cunning and it's all to do with good bible emphasis, let's just read that verse again, shall we? You see, Saul's already on the back foot, isn't he? Samuel's already said, 'what's the noise of the animals? now let's just see the cleverness of Saul on this occasion. Read it again, verse 15, but let's put a little bit of emphasis in! ' And Saul said, 'ahhh, well they have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people **spared the best, only the best** of the sheep and the oxen **for sacrifice unto Yahweh** thy God, and the rest **we have utterly destroyed!** It's a web of excuses, isn't it? clever words, plausible phrases, careful inflections, but the basic essence of the verse is, **that Saul had violated a scriptural principle!** and all the words in the world can never cover up the fact when we violate scriptural principles; it doesn't matter what we say or how we endeavour to say it or what inflections we endeavour to give, **we cannot transgress bible principles** and explain them away.

In fact, so transparent were his excuses, in verse 16, it says Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Yahweh hath said', and the word 'stay' here that's used, it literally means, if you like, '**be quiet**' (7503), so Saul's in the middle of his explanation, Samuel holds up his hand and says, 'look, just be quiet, I don't want to hear it', he says, 'but I want you to hear what Yahweh hath said to me this night'. So poor old Saul at the end of the verse says, 'Say on!' Well, what else could he say? I mean, what else could Saul do? he's absolutely in a sense there, at the mercy of the old man now, as Samuel begins to deliver the judgment of God upon him.

So in verse 17 we're told, 'When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and Yahweh anointed thee king over Israel?' and we

said, didn't we? that Saul at the beginning of his reign did have a certain measure of humility. He had a certain interest in spiritual matters. His ear was open to the divine requirement, in fact, there's almost a converse here, verse 17, 'when thou **wast little in thine own sight**', was really a time when **Yahweh's will loomed large in his sight**, but as Saul's own estimate of himself increased, so his appreciation of the divine requirements diminished.

Samuel says in verse 18, 'And Yahweh sent thee on a journey, and said, **Go and utterly destroy the sinners** and fight against them until they be **consumed**. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Yahweh, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of Yahweh'. You know, you often wonder about the extent of this judgment against the Amalekites; we're told in Exodus 17 verses 8 to 13, that the **Amalekites** stand as the very **first** of the nations **who wantonly attacked Israel** in the wilderness. Did you notice the word I used there, **they wantonly attacked Israel** in the wilderness, in other words, it was an act of absolute hostility towards Israel; they hated Israel did the Amalekites! In Numbers 14 verses 43 to 45, we're told not only that the Amalekites warred against Israel themselves, but they combined with the Canaanites to attack Israel. In Judges 3 verses 12 and 13, we're told that they combined with the Moabites to attack Israel; in Judges 7 verse 12, we're told that they combined with the Midianites to attack Israel. They stand as representative of those people **who are absolutely hostile to the principles of the truth**. And Yahweh would have judgment against those people. So the commandment had been, verse 18, 'Go and utterly destroy **the sinners, the Amalekites**. 'Wherefore then, didn't thou not obey the voice of Yahweh?' says Samuel.

Saul said to Samuel, 'Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Yahweh, and have gone the way which Yahweh sent me, and brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. **But the people took of the spoil**, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things **which should have been utterly destroyed**, to sacrifice unto Yahweh thy God in Gilgal'.

You know, they are remarkable words, do you know what he actually said? he actually says the same thing that he said last time; Saul just repeats what he said before. He says, I know we shouldn't have, but it was the people, and they only brought the best things, they should have been utterly destroyed but they are going to sacrifice them unto Yahweh **thy God**. He's already told Samuel that! you see, Saul's got nothing more to say, but to try somehow to repeat what he's done in the hope that the excuses this time, might somehow have more weight or power. You see, there are always those in life that presume to see a little further and a little deeper into situations than God Himself sees! and **so when there is obviously a better way of doing things than what God has laid down, then we modify what God requires!** One of the lessons of these verses is, that great sacrifices offered to God according to our own desires, are never acceptable to Him unless they are offered in conformity to His own requirements. It's a funny thing in life, we sometimes find it very hard to learn the lesson, you know, we'll run around in the truth and we'll give everything possible to God; we'll offer every sacrifice imaginable other than what He actually requires, and we fall into the trap of

Saul! We imagine that if we offer enough sheep and oxen of **other things** that God will be pleased simply because we've offered them, and because the sacrifices are large, whereas in fact, the finest lesson that comes out of these verses is, **that the smallest thing offered in humble obedience to the divine will, actually is the choicest thing as far as God's concerned. That's all God's ever wanted!** not the great things, just the small offerings in our lives, where we've done so in absolute obedience to God's will. Nothing more! Yahweh delights in that, He truly delights in that! it's the choicest part as far as God is concerned, and that was a lesson that Saul never, ever learnt and one that sometimes we find hard to learn ourselves.

So in verse 22, Samuel replies (and look at these, these are famous words, aren't they?) 'And Samuel said, Hath Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to **obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken** than the fat of rams. For **rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry**. Because thou hast rejected the word of Yahweh, He hath also rejected thee from being king'. Now these are very, very important words, particularly the ones, of course, of the 22nd verse, and I think one of the first lessons that comes out of these words is this, that what verse 22 tells us, and this was true in Old Testament times and ever thereafter, is that sacrificial offerings had to find their moral counterpart in the life of the believer. I'll say that again, sacrificial offering had to find their moral counterpart in the life of the believer, and without that **moral** implication being worked out in life, the sacrifice itself was useless.

So we have this statement that Samuel makes which has gone down in history as one of the most famous statements in all the bible. There's actually something interesting here, because we really haven't looked at this, you see in verse 22 where it says, 'hath Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in **obeying** the voice of Yahweh'; behold, to **obey** is better than sacrifice. Now do you see that word 'obey' there, that's the Hebrew word 'shama' (8085), in fact, all the way through this record it appears. Come back to chapter 8 for a moment and I'll see if I can pick out a few of these for you. Shama-el , Samuel's own name; **heard of God, hear God**, those were the two watchwords of his life. You know, that word 'shama' becomes almost a theme word that's woven into the story of Samuel. Now take for example, 1Samuel 8 verse 7, 'Yahweh said unto Samuel, shama unto the voice of the people'; verse 9, 'shama unto their voice'; verse 19, 'nevertheless the people refused to shama the voice of Samuel'; verse 21, 'and Samuel shama the voice of the people'; verse 22, 'and Yahweh said to Samuel shama unto their voice'; you see, the word 'shama' becomes a key word that woven into the story of Samuel's life, it's the root word of his own name.

If you come to chapter 12 , the chapter we had the other day, in his resignation speech it's the word used in verses 14 and 15 of 1 Samuel 12, 'if you will fear Yahweh and serve Him and shama His voice and not rebel'; verse 15, 'but if you will not shama the voice of Yahweh'; so you see, this word 'shama' becomes a key word that's woven into the story of Samuel's life, and it's just worthwhile having a look at what the word means, it's perhaps a little bit wider than what you might imagine. So exactly what does '**shama**'

(8085)mean? Well, we're told in the lexicons that firstly, the word 'shama' means **'to listen'**, so one must listen to the spoken words, to listen to the words of Yahweh. But the word means more than just to listen, it also means (and look at this, this is interesting) it also means **'to hear'** and you think, well, that's funny, what's the difference between 'to listen' and 'to hear'? Well, there is a difference, isn't there? you see, one can listen as long as one likes but still fail to hear anything. There's a difference between listening and hearing, one can listen but not hear anything of personal value in an exhortation that you ought to go away and do! You've listened to the exhort but you didn't actually hear it, there's a difference you see; and it doesn't just mean 'to hear', 'shama' means 'to listen', 'to hear' but it also means **'to understand'**, so there's comprehension involved with the opening of the ears on this occasion. There's the taking in of the message, there's the reception of the message, there's the grasping of the message, that we follow the divine requirement. Lastly, the word 'shama' means **'to obey'**, you see, it's really a very wide word in the Hebrew, it's rounder and a lot fuller than simply our word 'to hear', it's the whole process, **to listen, to hear, to understand and finally to obey** what one has heard. There's the full meaning, and that's the root word of Samuel's own name, **'hear God, heard of God'**, they were ever the watchwords of Samuel's own life.

Now this statement here, coming to 1 Samuel 15 verse 22, is therefore another play on the name here: 'Samuel said, Hath Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and in sacrifices, as in **obeying** the voice of Yahweh? Behold, **to shama** is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams'. That's the real offering that Yahweh has always wanted, is the offering of **obedience**, the law of obedience, the greatest offering finally, that we can make to the Father in whatever aspect of life we might be called upon to make. I want to just show you how important this statement of Samuel's is! Here are the bible passages (we've talked about bible echoes and about bible cross references, well here they are) just a few passages in the scriptures that are born out of Samuel's statement. I believe that everyone of those references there, in measure, has been drawn from Samuel's great statement here in 1 Samuel 15 verse 22:

Psalm 40, Psalm 50, Psalm 51,
the basis of Proverbs 21:3,
Ecclesiastes 5, Isaiah 1,
Jeremiah 6, Jeremiah 7,
Hosea 6, Amos 5, Micah 6,
Matthew 9, Matthew 12, and Mark 12,

they're all drawn from this **foundation statement** from the days of Samuel. Now we haven't got time to go through all of those, I'll tell you what, that's a wonderful study! just to trace those references through, it's a whole study just on its own; just to trace that idea through that Samuel first lays out here, about what Yahweh truly requires of us, the offering of obedience unto Him. Let's just take one of them as an illustration, let's take Psalm 40, they're all good, believe me! Psalm 40 just as an illustration of how other passages take up now, these famous words of Samuel in order to impress that lesson

upon us. Psalm 40 reading from the 6th verse, 'Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; (and then look what he says) but mine **ears** has Thou opened (**to obey**) 'to **hear** is better than sacrifice; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight **to do** thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart'. The only reason that the law of God was within the heart of this person in verse 8 was because it came in through the **open ear** of verse 6. 'Behold, to shama is better than sacrifice', and Psalm 40, the words of Psalm 40 here, we believe, are born out of the spirit of Samuel's words and so are all those other bible passages that flow on and out and right through into the very New Testament itself, woven out of the fabric of Samuel's famous words here, on the occasion of the rejection of Saul as king. It's a very, very important bible passage, and it enunciates an important bible principle.

So coming back then to 1 Samuel 15, we take up the record therefore, perhaps in the 24th verse. The record says, 'Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of Yahweh, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice'. In this verse, what Saul does is, he does expose his **fatal weakness**. Here was the fatal problem that Saul struggled with all his life; you see, he felt so strongly, he loved so powerfully, he craved so deeply, **popular opinion** and the **favour of himself**. He loved that! he absolutely loved it; he loved popular opinion, 'because I feared the people, he says, and obeyed their voice'. Because he wanted that favour more than anything else in life, Saul was actually prepared to sacrifice **divine principles**, that's what he was prepared to sacrifice, he was prepared to sacrifice the principle in order to obtain the favour. You know, Proverbs 29 verse 25 a proverb written for kings, it says, 'The fear of man bringeth a snare', and in this particular matter, Saul himself was deeply entrapped because of his own characteristics. He exposes his weakness here, 'I have sinned, I have transgressed **because I feared the people**'.

Then he says and you've got these remarkable words in the 25th verse, 'Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again, that I may worship with thee'. You know, you almost can't believe Saul, can you? you see, Samuel told him at the end of verse 23, 'because thou hast rejected the word of Yahweh, He hath also rejected thee from being king'. Saul says, 'Look, I know I've sinned, it was a very naughty thing for me to do, now therefore, pardon my sin that I may turn again with thee and worship'. Saul thought that all could be forgiven and forgotten all over again; Samuel couldn't do that! you see, God has a law, doesn't He? for dealing with sin. God's law for dealing with sin is, **confession followed by repudiation!** and only then can there be any hope of divine forgiveness. You see, Saul was prepared to confess but he could never repudiate, and on that basis Samuel could certainly not offer the divine forgiveness.

So verse 26 tells us that Samuel would have nothing of it, and so it says, 'Samuel says unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of Yahweh, and Yahweh hath rejected thee from being king over Israel'. You know, you almost sense a note of frustration here with Samuel, as if he realizes that Saul has not really appreciated the gravity of what he's told him. 'Pardon my sin that I may worship with

thee'; and Samuel says, 'Look, I can't do that and I won't go with you; don't you realize what I've said, God **has rejected thee** from being king'. So we're told in verse 27 as Samuel turned about to go away, the old man with sadness in his heart swings on his heel, as it were, for the last time and as he turned to go about, of course, we're told of this dramatic moment when Saul desperately lunged at him to stop him, in absolute desperation, why? why did Saul lunged in that way? because he **couldn't stand be humiliated in front of the people**. He couldn't stand the thought of losing the favour of the people, so he clutches out, he reaches out at the mantle of Samuel, the symbol of his prophetic office, and of course, there's a terrible ripping sound! It must have been quite forcible, mustn't it? to be able to rip it in that way with a desperate lunge. 'As Samuel turned away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and **it rent**'. You know, b&s, I believe that Saul, never ever forgot that moment, that moment when he reached out, to grasp hold of Samuel to stop him from going. When he grasped hold of the mantle and the mantle ripped, I think that haunted Saul for the rest of his days; never ever forgot that terrible moment when Samuel finally turned away from him. We're told later on in the 28th chapter (you don't need to turn to it) but in the 14th verse, whatever we might think happened or might not have happened on this particular day with the witch of Endor, we're told this, that Saul says, 'what form is he of? and the woman said, **an old man cometh up and he's covered with a mantle**; and Saul, it says, and Saul **perceived that it was Samuel**'. He never ever forgot the old man and the mantle that he ripped on that desperate day at Gilgal; one last despairing clutch, the clutch that was too late!

So verse 28 says, 'And Samuel said unto him, Yahweh hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that He should repent'. Do you see where it says in verse 29 here, 'also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent', the word '**strength**' (5331) is really better translated as the margin says 'eternity'; not victory but 'eternity' (Gesenius), in fact, in the Hebrew it's more generally always translated 'forever'; that's the normal translation of the Hebrew word, almost as if by the use of this title there is a contrast between the brief ephemeral reign of this one king, and the **eternal unchanging purpose of the Father Himself. The Eternity** of Israel will not lie nor repent', what a wonderful contrast with this one brief, short-lived reign of an unsuitable man upon the throne. Do you know where that phrase comes from, the Eternity of Israel? it comes from Numbers 23, just come and have a look at that for a moment because I believe Samuel had this passage in mind when he used that phrase; 'the Eternity of Israel will not lie nor repent; for He is not a man, that He should repent', I think there's a bible echo here and the echo comes from Numbers 23 verse 19, 'God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said and shall He not do it. Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?' So you see, Samuel's words on this occasion are drawn from the circumstance of Balaam's parable.

But I want you to look at the context of Numbers 23 (just have a look at this, this is really interesting! In Numbers 23 just look at the context of this statement that 'God is

not a man that He should lie or repent', verse 20, 'I have received commandment to bless: and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: Yahweh his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; He hath as it were the strength of a unicorn. surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel'. So in this statement of Balaam it says that God is not a man that He can repent or change from what He says, and he says, 'I've received a blessing and I cannot change that blessing, **it's irreversible!** God has looked upon Israel and hasn't seen a shred of iniquity in the nation (when we know full well, by the way, that the nation, in fact, was full of iniquity); but God was pleased to blot out from His sight, their transgressions and their sins, and to say of the nation in verse 23, 'there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel'. Now just think of the remarkable circumstances with which Samuel uses this phrase! You see, Samuel comes along and says, verse 19, 'God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent', but when we go on from there to the 20th verse, really Samuel was in the exact opposite position to the words of Balaam. You see, Balaam came with a **blessing** and Samuel came with a **curse**, and if we're reading verse 20 onwards, in the circumstance of Samuel rejecting Saul we would read, 'Behold, said Samuel, I have received a commandment to curse', and He hath cursed and I cannot reverse it; He has beheld iniquity in the king and seen perverseness in Saul, Yahweh his God is no longer with him'; and as for the enchantments and divination of verse 23, why, they are the very words used of Saul in 1 Samuel 15, 'For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry; Yahweh has rejected thee'. Samuel couldn't change that curse anymore than Balaam could change his blessing, it was irreversible because it had come from the Eternity of Israel, who cannot lie and who would not repent!

Do you notice something interesting if you are still in Numbers? in Numbers 24 verse 7 while we're in the parables of Balaam, 'He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and **his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted**'. So here was a prophecy of a day, when the king of Israel and the kingdom over which he reigns shall be higher than Agag, but that was not a prophecy concerning the **first king of Israel**, it's a prophecy concerning **the last King of Israel, even Messiah Himself**. It certainly wasn't going to apply to Saul and his kingdom, who far from being exalted was now to stand condemned.

So coming back then to 1 Samuel 15, we read the words of Saul therefore in the 30th verse. Saul's terrible weakness in verse 30, he said, 'I have sinned, yet honour me now I pray thee, before the elders of my people'; and we only need to underline before and we can see the point of it, can't we? he said, 'I have sinned but honour me now, I pray thee, **before** the elders of my people **and before Israel**'. There was Saul's desperate weakness the love and the craving for the honour and esteem of others. If what we do in the truth, we do for the honour of others, then our work eventually will come to nought; and that's not to say that there aren't times in the truth when we ought to show appreciation for one another, but it must not be our primary motive, the praise of men! It

was Saul's and he couldn't stop himself; 'honour me, I pray thee **before my people**'.

Now verse 31 is interesting in that context because we're told that 'Samuel turned again after Saul and Saul worshipped Yahweh', what sort of worship do you think that was? What sort of worship could Saul really offer on that day? You know Proverbs 28 verse 9 says, 'he that turneth away his **ear** from **hearing** the Law, even his **prayer** shall be abomination'. How could Saul possibly offer worship that day? here's the question, verse 31, good bible reading starts with good bible questions!, why then did Samuel turn back? why then did Samuel turn again and worship with Saul when he'd already said he wouldn't do it? and that God would not repent of the curse that was not brought down upon the kingship of Saul?

I believe the answer is what we find in verse 32; and this is why Samuel did what he did! I don't think he just did it because he felt sorry for Saul, he did it because of what happens in the 32nd verse. 'Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me **Agag the king of the Amalekites**. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past'. So the idea or the sense of the narrative would appear to be in verse 31, that first of all, there was worship, there was the offering of offerings, the giving of prayers, the worship of the Father; then after the proceedings, as it were, had gone for some time, verse 32 says, '**THEN** Samuel said, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites', and the record says he came **delicately** (4574), did you notice that word? actually one is reminded of a Proverb, 'they that live delicately are in king's palaces', and here was a king, a king of the Amalekites, who came tripping in to see the old prophet; the Amplified bible translates the word, 'he came **cheerfully**'; Young's Literal translation says, 'he came **daintily**'; and Gesenius would appear to support that this is the main idea of the Hebrew word here, he came **delicately or daintily**. He came tripping in before the old man and he says, and one can just hear the words of the king here, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past!' 'If I was going to be slain the opportunity for that was earlier on, that time's past! I am after all a royal man, worthy of being captured but also of having my life sustained! But as he came and looked at the old man, one imagines, b&s, that even as Agag said, 'surely the bitterness of death is past', as he looked into the eyes of Samuel, he saw no answering smile and no delicate words, he saw an old man, and he saw something else! He saw a sword in his hand.

Verse 33 says, 'And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel **hewed Agag in pieces** before Yahweh in Gilgal'. Now why did he do it? b&s, why did he do it? What a gruesome blood-thirsty ending to the story! why did Samuel do that? I'll tell you why? because Samuel heard ringing in his ears, the voice of God; that was always his cry for life, wasn't it? **Hear God, heard of God**, and I'll tell you what he heard ringing in his ears. He heard Exodus 17 verses 14 to 16 for a start, 'I, Yahweh, will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; Yahweh hath sworn that Yahweh will have war with Amalek from generation to generation'. That's what Samuel heard ringing in his ears! that this was not just Israel against the Amalekites, this was **Yahweh's war against Amalek!** and if he knew the prophecies of Balaam then Samuel would have

known of Numbers 24 verse 20, where concerning Amalek it says, 'His latter end shall be that he shall perish for ever'. Samuel understood that that was the divine requirement, so he hewed him in pieces; do you see that word 'hewed in pieces' (8158), that's the only time in the bible that that word's used; it's never used anywhere else, just this one passage, he hewed him in pieces, do you know why he did that? I think he did that because what was the divine requirement concerning this mission against Amalek? two words, 'thou shalt **utterly destroy them!** and he hewed him in little pieces, the record says.

Did you notice what it said at the end of verse 33, 'and he did it **beforeYahweh**, because this is Yahweh's war, and I think what he did was this; I think he took the sword, I think he cut him in pieces, and then cut him again and again and again, and he presented the mangled remains of Agag as a terrible illustration of a particular verse that he wanted to impress upon Saul, and I believe that this is the reason why Samuel turned again. Not because he was sorry for Saul, but because he wanted to impress upon Saul **one single, brutal lesson**, by the way, where do you think he got the sword from? I don't think Samuel went strolling down to Gilgal with a sword strapped to his prophetic mantle; that's right! you have to dramatize the story remember, and I think what happened was, that they called Agag and Agag comes in and Samuel leans over to Saul and pulls the sword out of Saul's scabbard, (in other words, he's going to do the king's job for him) hews Agag in pieces as a demonstration of what it means to '**utterly destroy Amalek**', puts the blood stained sword back in the sheaf and says to Saul, 'Behold, to **obey is better than sacrifice**'. Isn't that why he did it? You see, it's an illustration of the very principle of that chapter, 'to obey is better than sacrifice', and that had been the command of God and that was the command that Samuel would obey, and that's why he offered Agag in that way and he did it **before Yahweh with Saul's own sword**.

It's seeing things from the divine perspective, isn't it? because we're told in Psalm 149 that the saints in the age to come, will have the praises of God in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand to execute upon them the judgment written. If we think this is gruesome let us remember, that it was the divine requirement, and in the age to come, b&s, we will go forth with the praises of God on our lips to execute that which is in accordance with the divine will. We will see things from the divine perspective and ever ringing in Samuel's ears were the requirements of God, and he heard those, and because he **heard**, he **obeyed**, and I think he presented that as an abject lesson to Saul on this occasion.

Really, the whole thing, by the way, becomes typical of the work of the Lord in the age to come. You see, the word **Agag** is translated in the Septuagint as '**Gog**', and we're told in Ezekiel 38 verse 21, in the chapter on Gog, 'I will call for a sword against him', says Ezekiel; and in Ezekiel 39 verse 21 it says, 'the heathen shall see My judgments that I have executed'; and the Lord Jesus Christ when He returns, we're told in Ezekiel 39, will present the mangled remains of Gog's army as a sacrifice to God, after the manner of Samuel of old, who hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh. Verse 34 tells us

in 1 Samuel 15, 'Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul'. You know, you can just see what verse 34 is saying! can you see what verse 34 is saying? we don't have to look up any Hebrew words, do we? Well, you tell me what happens in that verse? it's all based on how you read it; **they went their separate ways!** absolutely right! there's no longer any contact between Samuel and Saul; Samuel went to Ramah and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah. Thus two men walked away as a symbol of the final rupture that had taken place between them, Samuel, sorry of heart that this should be so, but faithful nevertheless to the divine requirement upon him.

You know, we come to verse 35 at the end of this chapter almost with relief. Almost with relief, because we're told in 35th verse that , 'Although Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death; nevertheless Samuel **mourned for Saul:** and Yahweh repented that He had made Saul king over Israel'. I think there's a tremendous lesson that comes out of that verse; you see, although Samuel had been faithful in executing the judgments of God, he had tremendous compassion for Saul. Samuel was not only the **faithful** in the matter of executing Agag, but he was also Samuel the **compassionate** in the matter of interceding for Saul. You see, he tends to appear in this chapter as a harsh man, stern, unyielding, abrupt, resolute, but there was a warm and tender side of Samuel's character as well:

He'd warned Saul on behalf of God in chapter 12,
He'd rebuked Saul on behalf of God in chapter 13, and now
He'd had to reject Saul on behalf of God in chapter 15.

But, despite this, and in his knowledge that God had selected another king, he grieved for Saul, he prayed all night to God for Saul, he exercised prayer on his behalf, and as his bowels of compassion were opened, he continued to lament for Saul as we're told in the last verse, until the final moment came when God Himself said, 'there is no longer any chance to lament for Saul because I've appointed another man'. But until that moment, Samuel would never ever stop breathing and pleading Saul's case before the Father. To take some words out of Jeremiah with just a little change, isn't this the spirit of Samuel? 'Is Saul my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore, my bowels are troubled for him'. The very circumstance of Samuel's grieving and his compassion for Saul here, are echoed later on in Yahweh's own feelings for His wayward nation! this is the very characteristic of God here, b&s, in the life of the old man! There's a tremendous lesson that comes out of that verse.

This is the lesson! It is possible to be faithful and also compassionate. We ought not to imagine that because we endeavour to uphold divine principles, that we lack feeling in the truth. The right and proper balance as seen here in the life of Samuel, is that we are **faithful to Yahweh**, verse 33, but **compassionate for others**, verse 35. Isn't that the right balance? We ought never to suggest that those two ideas are incompatible in the truth, **they're not!** Yahweh Himself is a God of holiness and of justice but also of

compassion and of tender mercies, and those two wonderful sides of the divine character are revealed here in Samuel's own life, as he executed Agag and grieved for Saul.

Well one day, b&s, we'll go forth with that sword ourselves, and so it's important for us to gain that same perspective that the **Father's will** is truly the most important thing; and that **obeying God's will** is finally the prime consideration for all of us in life and if we can see things from God's perspective then we'll take up the sword gladly and do whatever he asks, if it's for the advancing of His purpose. In the words of our closing hymn,

From Zion shall thy rod proceed,
The sword of judgment in thy hand,
Shall make the hearts of rebels bleed
And bring the world to Thy command.

That day shall show Thy power is great,
When Jews shall flock with willing feet,
And strangers crowd Thy temple gate
Where holiness and duty meet.

Oh blessed hour! oh glorious day!
What a great victory shall be Thine,
When listening kingdoms shall obey,
And bow before Thy power divine.