

I Did It My Way (I Samuel 15:1-35)

I. Summary of I Samuel 10 through I Samuel 14

A. I Samuel 10

1. In verses 1-6, Samuel tells Saul about some things that are about to happen.
 - a. He will go to Rachel's tomb at Zelzah (in Benjamin), and two men will tell him that the female donkeys have been found.
 - b. From there, in the plain of Tabor, he shall meet three men, and they will give him two loaves of bread.
 - c. From there, he shall meet a company of prophets, and they will prophesy.
 - d. While he is with them, the Spirit of the Lord will come upon him. He will also prophesy and become another man.
 - 1) Prophecy (*naba'*) – to come under the influence of a divine spirit.
 - 2) Another (*'acher*) – he would become a different person.
2. Why did Saul have to become a different man? He seemed so perfect before.
 - a. Did he become a better man?
 - b. **Question:** When the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, was he saved?
3. Is Saul among the prophets?
 - a. In verses 10-12, he prophesied with the company of prophets.
 - b. Prophecy (*naba'*) – to come under the influence of a divine spirit.
4. In verses 18-19, Saul shared with his uncle what Samuel had said to him.
 - a. God had delivered Israel from all their enemies.
 - b. But now they were demanding a king.
5. In something similar to casting lots, in verses 20-21, Samuel chose the tribe of Benjamin and ultimately Saul, himself.
6. When he was chosen, Saul could not be found because he had hidden himself.
 - a. Saul had been changed in verse 6.
 - b. He was bigger than all the others.
 - c. Yet, he hid himself. Why?
 - d. Notice in verse 27 that not everyone was pleased with Saul.

Question: Why did Saul hide himself? What would you have done?

B. I Samuel 11 – Saul was an instant hero

1. In verses 1-4, Nahash the Ammonite came against the men of Jabeshgilead and threatened them. He wanted to gouge out their right eye as a reproach against Israel.
 - a. The Ammonites were
 - b. The people of Jabeshgilead were
2. In verses 5-6, Saul heard about the threat, and he became angry. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he organized his troops for battle.
3. In verses 8-11, Saul led 330,000 men against the Ammonites and slaughtered them. The people of Jabeshgilead were delivered.

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4. In verses 12-13, Saul showed some class.
 - a. In I Samuel 10:22, he had hidden himself among some stuff.
 - b. In I Samuel 10:27, he allowed some men to publicly speak against him, and he did not do anything about it.
 - c. In I Samuel 11:11, he delivered his people from their enemies.
 - d. In I Samuel 11:12-13, he had a second chance to kill the men that had spoken against him, but he did not do it.
5. Saul may have become a bad king, but he did not start out that way.
- C. I Samuel 12 – Samuel addressed the people and caused them to fear the Lord and him.
 1. In verses 1-13, Samuel reviewed Israel's history with them, from Egypt through the time of the judges and to Saul.
 2. **In verses 14-15, Samuel promises a blessing if they are obedient and a curse if they are not.** This will become important in chapter 15.

Question: After convincing the children of Israel of their wickedness for demanding a king, how did Samuel try to encourage them? What can we learn from this?

3. In verses 20-25, he made his closing remarks, as it were.
 - a. He told them to remain faithful to the Lord even though they had behaved wickedly.
 - b. He ensured them that the Lord would not forsake them because they are His chosen people.
 - c. He promised to continue praying for them.
 - d. He promised to teach them the good and right way.
- D. I Samuel 13 – another battle and the beginning of Saul's downfall.
 1. A brief history of Israel's wars during Samuel's tenure.
 - a. Michmash was part of Benjamin and 10 miles north of Jerusalem. Gibeah was in the mountainous part of Judah. Bethel was in the south part of Judah.
 - b. In I Samuel 4, Israel went to battle against the Philistines. They had not consulted with Samuel, and they were defeated.
 - c. In I Samuel 7, they went against the Philistines and won.
 - 1) That time, it was under the clear leadership of Samuel.
 - 2) I Samuel 7:3 says, "And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth 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."

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- d. In I Samuel 11, Saul battled against the Ammonites in an effort to defend his people from Israel's enemies. Samuel's close presence suggests that he was content with what Saul had done.
- e. In I Samuel 13:1-7
 - 1) Gilgal was a dwelling place of prophets in northern Israel about four miles (7 km) from Shiloh and Bethel.
 - 2) Gilgal had been an earlier meeting place for Saul, Samuel, and the people (see I Samuel 11:14-15).
 - 3) Apparently, Samuel was supposed to meet Saul at Gilgal, but Saul did not know when he was coming.
- 2. In verses 8-12, Saul made a terrible mistake. He should have known better.
 - a. Samuel did not show up at the appointed time.
 - b. Saul placed more value on the sacrifice than the situation warranted.
 - c. Saul was from Benjamin, not the Levites. Samuel was from Levi (see I Chronicles 6:28). He was the only one that could offer the sacrifice.
- 3. In verses 13-15, Samuel rebuked Saul. He told him that his kingdom would not last and that another king would be chosen to take his place. Then, Samuel left.
- E. I Samuel 14 – Saul's son, Jonathan, was introduced in this chapter, and Saul declined further.
 - 1. In verse 3, Jonathan separated himself from the others and went to a Philistine garrison. In fact, he was looking for trouble, and he found it.
 - 2. In verse 12, Jonathan knew that the Lord had delivered them into Israel's hands.
 - 3. In verse 15, the Lord sent a panic into the camp (**Compare NIV and KJV**).
 - 4. In verses 16-22, Saul realized what Jonathan has done with the Philistines. So, he ordered the priests to carry the Ark of the Covenant to the battle. The confusion continued, and "every man's sword was against his fellow."
 - a. Dr. J. Vernon said that Saul was trying to get in on the act to take credit for what Jonathan had already done.
 - b. Dr. Ronald F. Youngblood did not write so harshly about Saul. He gave credit to Saul and Jonathan for the victory, and he credited Saul with offering a sacrifice to the Lord to give Him the glory for what He had done.

Question: Do you think that Saul was only trying to steal credit from Jonathan, or do you think that Saul was trying to help his son gain a more complete victory?

- 5. In verse 24, once victory was certain, Saul declared a fast until evening.
 - a. But theologians are in disagreement about whether the fast was or was not intended to honor the Lord.

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- b. Dr. McGee wrote that Saul was just trying to show his power over the people, and the people were dissatisfied with it. Dr. Jobling, who wrote "Saul's Fall and Jonathan's Rise," thought that Saul's actions were very foolish. However, Dr. Youndblood said that Saul was behaving in a consistent manner of other holy wars.
 - c. In verses 26-27, Jonathan ate some honey that he had found in the area because he did not know of his father's order.
 - d. In verses 29-32, Jonathan defied his father's order, and the rest of the people began eating as well.
 - e. In verses 33-37, Saul wanted to continue the battle against the Philistines. **But when he inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him.** The Lord was not pleased because Jonathan had broken the order.
5. Through the rest of the chapter, Saul continues to lead battles against Israel's enemies.

II. I Samuel 15 – the final straw for Saul

- A. In verses 1-8, Saul followed the Lord's command, given to him by Samuel, to destroy the Amalekites. Saul did that and even warned the Kenites beforehand.
 1. The Amalekites had hindered the Israelis after they left Egypt.
 2. The Kenites had helped them. Moses' father-in-law was a Kenite (see Judges 1:16).
- B. **Saul disobeyed the Lord.** He did not kill the Amalekite king, plus he brought back some Amalekite sheep, cattle, and everything that was good.
 1. In verses 10-21, Saul and Samuel discuss what has just happened.
 2. Twice, in verses 15 and 21, Saul blamed the people for taking the best of the sheep and cattle for an offering to the Lord.
 3. In verse 20, Saul accepted responsibility for bringing back Agag.
- C. Samuel was very upset with Saul.
 1. Verse 22 is the key verse in the chapter and a key verse in the Bible.
 2. Verse 23 is equally powerful.
 3. In verse 24, after being rebuked by Samuel, Saul finally accepts complete responsibility for everything.
 4. In verse 30, Saul shows his concern about being embarrassed before the elders of Israel. He asks Samuel to accompany him back to the group.
 5. In verse 33, we learn why the Lord wanted Agag killed. Also, notice verse 32. Agag may have been a homosexual.

Question: 1. Do you think Saul was saved?
2. Israel frequently attacked their enemies. Should the church attack its enemies (i.e., abortion doctors)?

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III. The Real Impact of Abortion and Self-centered Greed in this Country – **Are we the Israelites or the Amalekites?**

- A. This country legalized abortion in the mid-1970s.
1. By 2000, this country was killing more than 1,600,000 babies per year. That's an average of 4,383 babies per day.
 2. Most people think that 9/1/01 was a terrible day in American history because more than 3,000 people were killed by an act of terrorism. On that same day in this country, more than 4,000 babies were killed by an even greater act of terrorism.
 3. God hates abortion. It is the murder of innocent life. Even though scientists have discovered that life begins at conception, the abortions have continued.

Question: What is the Lord doing in this country to get our attention about an America without God?

- B. Over the past twenty years, the economic foundation of this country has begun to crumble. A loving God is trying to wake up America.
1. By the early 1990s, the national debt exceeded \$5 trillion.
 2. The troubles of Social Security, Medicare, and the health insurance industry are well documented.
 3. A 19th century philosopher from England, named Voltaire, said that the greatness of America was because of her God. He went on to say that if America ever turns away from that God, then America would cease to be great. Is he correct?
 4. What is the Lord doing in and to America?
 - a. Look at the equation for the country's GNP (Gross National Product).
 - b. $GNP = \text{Personal Consumption} + \text{New Business Investments in Plant Equipment and Goods} + \text{Government Investment in Goods and Services} + \text{Exports minus Imports}$
- C. We like to think of ourselves as the world's great emancipators, but are we really? Saul thought that he was something that he was not, too.
- D. What would the Lord have us do?

IV. Next week's lesson: Prophesied, Planned, and Produced (Psalm 8:2-6; 16:10, 22; 34:20, 68:18; 110)