

1 Samuel 15

- The Lord is ready to put Saul's wavering heart to the test
 - Tests brought by God are intended to reveal what's in a person's heart
 - God knows our heart already, of course
 - But when the Lord wants to expose the inner motives and thinking of a man, He will construct a test, a trial
 - The test offers the Lord's servant an opportunity to obey and receive the Lord's praise
 - But there is equal opportunity for the person to disobey and fall into ruin
 - We can find examples in scripture of men who passed such tests
 - For example, the Lord allowed Job to be tested severely by the enemy to reveal Job's heart for the Lord
 - Despite the severity of God's trial, Job steadfastly maintained his devotion to the Lord
 - And Abraham passed a test by his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac
 - And Joseph, Hezekiah, and David all exhibited faithfulness of one kind or another in the midst of testing
 - But we can also find plenty of examples of men who failed such tests
 - Peter failed his test when he denied Christ three times
 - And virtually the entire generation of Israel who left Egypt failed ten tests in grumbling against Moses and the Lord
 - In all cases, the Lord knew the heart of each person before He brought the test
 - But by observing these tests, we learn an important spiritual principle
 - The motives of our hearts are best revealed by how we respond to a command from God

- In chapter 15, Saul will receive a test from God
 - Even before the test comes, we have seen Saul's deteriorating walk with the Lord
 - He's increasingly prideful, arrogant
 - He's determined to receive glory for himself rather than giving it to the Lord
 - And just to make sure we don't miss Saul's descent into conceit, the Lord brings a test to reveal it
 - The Lord has already declared that Saul's dynasty can't last
 - And now with this test, Saul will be personally disqualified from serving as king
 - Soon, the Lord will anoint Saul's successor even as Saul remains on the throne a while
 - The Lord will withdraw His Spirit from Saul even though Saul continues to rule
 - And the Lord will bring an evil Spirit to terrorize Saul during his final years on the throne to reveal His jealous heart
 - The test of chapter 15 is important to explaining why and how Saul's reign comes to an end
 - Then in Chapter 16 the Lord selects Saul's replacement
 - A king according to the Lord's choice who will become a contrast to the one the people selected
 - But first we finish up chapter 14 with Samuel's summary of Saul's reign

1Sam. 14:49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan and Ishvi and Malchi-shua; and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn Merab and the name of the younger Michal.

1Sam. 14:50 The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the captain of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

1Sam. 14:51 Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

1Sam. 14:52 Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff.

- It was common in ancient records to highlight a king's accomplishments by summarizing his family line and his military victories
 - So Samuel offers that summary of Saul here
 - At this point in Saul's reign, his family consisted of three sons and two daughters
 - One son we know, Jonathan
 - The second, Ishvi, (going by his other name, Ishbosheth) becomes an important character in 2Samuel
 - Malchi-shua is third
 - Not all Saul's sons are mentioned here, but all but one will die violent deaths
 - The captain of Saul's army is also mentioned because he plays a large role in the rebellion against Saul's anointed successor
 - Then Samuel mentions Saul's military service to the nation, commanding standing armies in Israel for the first time in their history
 - He fought principally against the Philistines who were Israel's strongest opponent in these years
 - Nevertheless, the Philistines were a severe enemy all the days of Saul's reign
 - And Saul was constantly recruiting new warriors to serve him
 - When he came across a valiant or mighty man, Saul would conscript him into the army
 - This summary paints a picture of a failed and wasted monarchy
 - Saul's posterity was ignominious
 - He fathered only a few sons, all of whom died violent deaths
 - His trusted advisor becomes a traitor
 - His military success was hollow, since he never defeats the Philistines, barely keeping them under control
 - And he can't seem to inspire and attract men to serve him, since he has to conscript them

- This is a picture of failed leadership and wasted opportunities
 - That summary sets up chapter 15, where Saul's reign is judged by God

[1Sam. 15:1](#) Then Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the Lord.

[1Sam. 15:2](#) "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.

[1Sam. 15:3](#) 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

- Samuel is sent to Saul to announce the Lord's purpose to punish one of Israel's adversaries
 - Samuel prefaces his announcement with an important comment
 - Samuel reminds Saul that the Lord sent him to anoint Saul as king over His people
 - Saul wasn't king because he earned it or even inherited it
 - The monarchy of Israel was dropped in Saul's lap
 - The implication? Saul should have kept that fact in mind to keep his heart humble before the Lord
 - Yet we know this is not what Saul did
 - He has become arrogant
 - Secondly, Samuel reminds Saul he rules over *God's* people, Israel
 - Israel didn't belong to Saul
 - Much like the judges, Saul was appointed a caretaker working under the authority of God
 - Yet Saul has been ruling the nation like it was his private kingdom
 - And finally, Samuel directs Saul to listen to the words of the Lord
 - This is a thinly veiled rebuke of Saul's unwillingness to listen to the Lord
 - We've already seen one episode of Saul ignoring the instructions of God and His prophet

- And we're about to see another in this chapter
- The instructions Saul receives are to utterly destroy the Amalekites and their king
 - The Amalekites were descendants of Esau who lived in the southern Negev and Sinai
 - As Samuel mentions in v.2, the Amalekites tried to destroy Israel by a sneak attack upon the people when they were walking out of Egypt
 - In Exodus, Moses needed help holding up his arms so Israel would win the battle
 - After that battle, the Lord declared in Deut 25 that one day He would bring the Amalekite people to an end
 - And now He's offered Saul the honor to fulfill that prophecy and bring about the end for one of Israel's main enemies
 - But the Lord's instructions are very specific
 - Saul is to show no mercy
 - He must utterly destroy every man, woman and child, including the king
 - And every animal of the Amalekites would be destroyed
 - And the people of Israel may not take any spoil from the city
 - In scripture, this is called being under the ban
 - To be placed under the ban meant that every person, beast and all possessions must be destroyed without mercy or exception
 - Nothing survives or carries forward
 - Just to emphasize that the Lord was clear on His expectations, Samuel repeats the word *utterly* seven times in this account
- Why did the Lord order such a complete destruction?
 - In short, to make a point
 - In ordinary warfare, a conquering army would destroy the men in a city since they posed a threat

- But women and children would usually be spared so they could become slaves of the conquering army
- And the choice livestock and precious materials would be kept as war booty
- But the Lord isn't taking Saul to war to enrich Israel with slaves and war booty
 - By putting the Amalekites under the ban, the world will know God was fulfilling His promise to destroy an adversary Israel
 - Therefore, all the credit for the victory will belong to the Lord alone
- Now if Saul obeys the Lord's command, naturally Saul himself would receive a measure of glory for the victory
 - This is always the pattern for those who serve the Lord
 - The Lord does great things *through* His people
 - By working with Him, we have opportunity to share in His reflected glory Just as Moses's shining face reflected the glory of God
 - We receive a measure of reflected glory and praise for what God accomplishes in and through us when we obey Him
 - And we also understand that all credit for the result belongs to the Lord
 - This is the test for Saul's heart
 - Heed the word of the Lord
 - Defeat the city, take nothing
 - And forgo any opportunity to become enriched by the victory
 - Don't seek personal credit for the victory
 - And ensure the world understands God keeps His promises
- And with that commission from Samuel, Saul goes out to battle the Amalekites

[1Sam. 15:4](#) Then Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah.

[1Sam. 15:5](#) Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley.

[1Sam. 15:6](#) Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

[1Sam. 15:7](#) So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt.

[1Sam. 15:8](#) He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

- Saul musters a large force to attack and he prepares to ambush the city
 - An ambush was traditionally understood to be a less honorable way of prosecuting war
 - But it was the Amalekites who had ambushed the Israelites in Moses' day
 - So turnaround now was fair play for Saul
 - Living among the Amalekites were another people descended from Esau, the Kenites
 - The Kenites descended from Abraham through his third wife Keturah
 - Unlike the Amalekites, the Kenites had been kind to Israel when they wandered through the desert
 - So to repay their history of kindness, Saul allows the Kenites to flee before the attack
 - Following the departure of the Amalekites, Saul's army rolls over the city
 - This was no small victory, as the Amalekites were powerful
 - But God delivered the victory to Saul as He promised
 - Saul defeated the people throughout the region of the Sinai
 - And Saul killed all the inhabitants of the city as God directed
- Well, all except the king, which he captured alive and brought back into Israel

[1Sam. 15:9](#) But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

- After capturing Agag, the king of the Amalekites, Saul lets him live
 - Nevermind that Saul is directly disobeying the Lord's command, why would Saul even want his enemy to live?
 - There is no reason given in scripture, but we might suppose Saul was keeping his adversary as a trophy
 - To keep an opposing king alive as a prisoner or slave humiliated the king
 - Regardless of Saul's purposes, it was sin
- Furthermore, Saul's heart was taken in by the prospect of enlarging his personal fortune
 - He took one look at the good herds of Agag and decided it would be a waste to kill them
 - So he took them as well destroying only what he didn't want
 - Every decision Saul made was calculated for his own benefit
 - Obeying the Lord wasn't on his mind
 - Both those Saul killed and those he let live served his selfish purposes
- Saul failed God's test, just as the Lord knew he would
 - Twenty-five years have passed since Samuel first declared that Saul's dynasty would not stand
 - And since then, we've been watching Saul's heart move in this direction
 - Now having failed this final test, the Lord is going to reject Saul personally as king

[1Sam. 15:10](#) Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying,

[1Sam. 15:11](#) "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night.

[1Sam. 15:12](#) Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal."

- In the climactic verse of the chapter, we're told "the word of the Lord came to Samuel"
 - This phrase appears only three times in all 1 & 2 Samuel
 - Each time it, it is followed by a word of judgment from God to the king
 - It's a solemn and eternal declaration
 - The Lord tells Samuel He regrets making Saul king
 - This phrase inevitably causes some confusing for Bible students
 - To regret (or the KJV says repent of) something implies that God's mind has been changed by events He didn't anticipate beforehand
 - As if He didn't realize all that would happen in Saul's reign
 - So it's confusing to consider that the God Who is the same yesterday, today and forever, is changeable, lacking omniscience
 - Well, the Spirit anticipated our confusion, and so later in this very chapter we see an important clarifying statement
 - Glance down the page briefly to read v.29

[1Sam. 15:29](#) "Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."

- Despite the wording of v.11, Samuel makes clear that God doesn't change His mind
- Moreover, God is not like a man in that new information could come to His attention or that His judgments or opinions change
- God knew Saul before the foundations of the earth

- And He knew exactly what would happen when Saul became king
- In fact, Samuel warned the people on two occasions that bad things would come upon them if they called for a king
- So there is no surprises here for God
- So why are we told God regretted Saul's reign?
 - In the few times you find a statement of this kind, it's always in the context of someone failing a test of the heart
 - When the sinful, unfaithful, disobedient heart is exposed by a test, the Lord expresses regret at the discovery
 - It's regret in the sense of sorrow, not remorse
 - Our sin and disobedience grieves God's heart, but they don't surprise Him
 - God's sorrow was for Saul turning back from obeying God's commands to destroy the city properly
 - As Samuel learns the news, his heart is broken as well
 - Now Samuel isn't mourning the discovery that Saul disobeys God's commands
 - He's also seen that before
 - His distress is over the coming consequence because of the Lord's anger
 - Samuel understood that God will not be mocked nor will He overlook sin forever
 - If the king of the people is disobedient and receives God's discipline, then the people of God will suffer too
 - Moreover, it's a principle of scripture that what God delights in, we should approve
 - And what grieves God's heart should also grieve our hearts
 - Samuel is grieving with God over the sin of Saul

- As Samuel comes to meet Saul following the victory, someone retells Saul's exploits
 - Saul traveled north from the Negev desert about 25 miles to a town called Carmel
 - In Carmel, he erects a monument to himself
 - He doesn't erect an altar or place of worship to honor the Lord, as other men have done following great victories in the past
 - Instead Saul wants to glorify *his* great victory
 - Following his victory lap, Saul goes back to Gilgal
 - We remember that it was at Gilgal that the Lord rejected Saul's dynasty some 25 years earlier
 - Saul had decided to perform a sacrifice on his own and the Lord said his family could not have the throne after him
 - Now we're back to Gilgal again, where now the Lord will reject Saul as king
- Samuel confronts Saul in Gilgal

[1Sam. 15:13](#) Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord."

[1Sam. 15:14](#) But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

- The first one to speak is Samuel, which is similar to way their previous confrontation in Gilgal began
 - In chapter 13 Saul had become impatient and sacrificed without Samuel
 - When Saul learned Samuel had arrived in Gilgal after all, Saul rushed out to meet him
 - You're left with the impression Saul felt guilty at begin caught sacrificing, so he tried to put the best face on the situation
 - Now it appears Saul is up to something similar again
 - He sinned with his eyes wide open
 - And his guilty conscience is showing

- Saul declares to Samuel without a trace of irony that Samuel should feel blessed because Saul has carried out the command of the Lord
 - The pride and arrogance of Saul's heart seems to know no limit at this point in his life
 - He is lying and knows it
 - And he has audacity to cover his sin with a baldfaced lie
 - Samuel, knowing all he had learned from the Lord and what he had heard about Saul's monument, reacts in disgust
 - He points out the king's hypocrisy to his face
 - And in the process, Samuel utters one of the more memorable lines in scripture
 - Samuel asks Saul if Saul had accomplish all the Lord commanded, why then does Samuel hear the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen?
 - He's pointing out the obvious
 - Not all the animals died, which is in violation of the Lord's commands
 - Given how easy it was to see Saul's disobedience, it was utterly ridiculous for Saul to claim he did as the Lord commanded!
- So how does Saul defend himself?

1Sam. 15:15 Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed."

- First, notice Saul speaks in the third person referring to the people and to what "they've" done
 - Saul didn't make a mistake...the people had a mind of their own
 - Saul is passing the buck, pure and simple, deflecting blame rather than taking responsibility
 - This shows us there is no repentance in his heart
- Secondly, Samuel says he had godly reasons to take the animals

- He was going to sacrifice them to the Lord
- There is no better cover up for sin than to claim we did it for God
- It's like defending bank robbing by claiming you were going to give the money to charity
- It's a lie and an excuse claiming a sinful act was actually a righteous act
- In reality, Saul was selfishly preserving the best animals for himself
 - Now that he's been caught, he's trying to rewrite history to avoid the wrath of God
 - Even if we were to assume Saul truly intended to sacrifice all the animals, he would still have been disobeying the Lord
 - And any act that isn't consistent with God's will is sin, regardless of how good it appears
 - This has become Saul's pattern
 - His will rules his heart, not the Lord's
 - As we've said, the Lord intended to rule His people, whether through judges or through a king
 - The king existed to carry out the Lord's instructions
 - But Saul shows no interest in serving the Lord, only himself
 - As Saul is sinning his yarn, he forgets that Samuel has direct access to the God with all the facts
 - God Himself gave Samuel the true story
 - A reminder that lying to a prophet of God is a dumb idea

1Sam. 15:16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait, and let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak!"

1Sam. 15:17 Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed you king over Israel, **1Sam. 15:18** and the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.'

1Sam. 15:19 "Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord?"

- Samuel interrupt Saul and telling him to “wait”
 - In Hebrew, the word for wait means cease or let it go
 - Samuel is having none of Saul’s pathetic excuses
 - So he tells Saul stop digging the hole he’s standing in
 - And instead Samuel says let me tell you what the Lord has already told me
 - To which Saul responds tell me, faking interest in the Lord’s word
 - Samuel starts by reminding Saul where Saul came from
 - Before the Lord elevated him to king, Saul knew he was the least among the least tribe of Israel
 - He had a humble – but more importantly – a realistic self-image
 - Having been anointed as king of Israel, the Lord turned to the one He raised up, to the one He called to serve Him and gave a command
 - Now we might think that a man plucked from obscurity
 - And elevated to an unexpectedly grand position beyond anything he could have imagined would have gladly served God
 - That’s Samuel’s point...Saul has lost all perspective on who he is and who God is
 - Obedience to the Lord is always directly related to the accuracy of our self-image in relationship to our view of God
 - The more we understand our humble, undeserving, sinful nature
 - And the more we appreciate God’s power, judgment and wrath
 - The more likely we will value His mercy and obey His commands
 - But when we get those two perspectives reversed, we’re headed for a fall
 - That’s Saul in a nutshell
 - Samuel nails Saul’s true reason for leaving the allowing the livestock to survive

- Saul simply wanted the spoils of war for himself
- The choice animals were too good to pass up
- Saul could only think of the wealth he would receive
- Forgetting he owed everything to the Lord who granted him such riches
- In response to Samuel's rebuke, Saul double-downs on his lie

1Sam. 15:20 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the Lord, and went on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

1Sam. 15:21 "But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal."

- Saul seems to have lost all sense of shame at this point
 - He repeats his lie claiming to have obeyed the Lord when in fact he didn't
 - And again he points to the people as the real villains
 - But be sure to notice again Saul's word choice
 - He speaks of "your" God not his God
 - Saul was living so far from God that he has stopped seeing God from a personal standpoint
- Then Samuel responds in poetic language

1Sam. 15:22 Samuel said,
 "Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
 As in obeying the voice of the Lord?
 Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
 And to heed than the fat of rams.

1Sam. 15:23 "For rebellion is as the sin of divination,
 And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.
 Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
 He has also rejected you from being king."

- Why does Samuel respond in rhyme? This isn't "Saul: The Musical"

- When a prophet speaks in poetic structures, it's an indication that his words are spoken under inspiration
 - Obviously, all scripture is inspired
 - But this indicates that Samuel's speech in that moment was coming directly from the Lord to Saul
 - The Lord says He delights in obedience even more than pious acts of sacrifices
 - He prefers a heart desiring to please the Lord than one that performs rituals
- While sacrifices were themselves acts of obedience to the Law, the need for sacrifice was itself a result of prior disobedience
 - Said another way, if there were no disobedience in the first place, there would be not need for sacrifice either
 - Had Saul killed all the animals in obedience, then by definition there would be no sacrifice of any animals needed
- In v.23 the Lord compares disobedience to the command of God to divination
 - Divination is the sin of appealing to demonic power to control the future
 - When we seek to do our will rather than God's will, we inevitably seek to control the future in place of God
 - When you disobey the Lord, you align with Satan's purposes
 - And insubordination is equal to sin and idolatry
 - Insubordination is defiance of authority or a refusal to obey orders
 - It's attempting to put another in God's place, as Saul did here
 - Therefore, it's a form of idolatry
- And with that, the Lord declares that because Saul rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected him
 - This a cause-and-effect outcome for Saul
 - He wasn't going to have a dynasty, but might have reigned in peace and security all the days of his life

- He might have achieved great things as a king
- Assuming Saul obeyed the Lord
- But those days are over for Saul now
 - And he's brought it upon himself
 - And the word of the Lord has gone forth and cannot be changed
- Now that he's pressed into a corner, Saul expresses regret

1Sam. 15:24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice.

1Sam. 15:25 "Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the Lord."

- Finally, under pressure and facing the consequences, Saul acknowledges he has sinned
 - This isn't repentance...this is merely regret
 - Saul says he has transgressed the command of the Lord
 - But in the Hebrew, the word is better translated overlooked
 - Saul's saying he overlooked a small detail in the overall command God gave Saul
- When you put these two thoughts together you realize that Saul was speaking in a dismissive tone
 - He was saying, "Oh, I guess I sinned...if you count those small details I overlooked in God's plan..."
 - Hardly the words of a repentant heart
- Then Saul goes the extra step of pulling a page from Aaron's playbook
 - He blames the people for making him do it, just as Aaron did with the golden calf
 - He says their greed and desire forced his hand
 - Nevermind, Saul is the king and can do whatever he wants...

- In v.25 he asks Samuel for forgiveness, but this kind of confession can't gain forgiveness
 - Moreover, Saul is asking the wrong person, isn't he?
 - Samuel is just the messenger
 - Saul's words remind me of Simon in Acts 8, who asked the apostles to pray to God on his behalf when he was told he had sinned
 - Those who have strayed from God (or have never known Him) are uncomfortable speaking to Him personally
 - So they ask religious people to intervene on their behalf
 - Finally, and perhaps worst of all, Saul says he needs Samuel's forgiveness so he can worship the Lord
 - This is a purely cynical move on his part
 - He is no more interested in truly worshipping the Lord than he was obeying the Lord
 - In fact, scripture tells us that true worship is obedience
 - Saul is merely doing eye service in an attempt to ingratiate himself to Samuel and to God if that were possible
- Next we find Samuel's response

[1Sam. 15:26](#) But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel."

[1Sam. 15:27](#) As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore.

[1Sam. 15:28](#) So Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.

[1Sam. 15:29](#) "Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."

- Samuel refuses to participate in Saul's charade
 - Samuel refuses to accompany Saul to worship in Gilgal
 - And Samuel reiterates that the Lord's rejection was final and not subject to negotiation
 - This is a central truth of scripture

- As the Lord determines to do, He will do
 - As we said earlier, nothing changes God’s mind
 - Because God already had all the information when He made His decision the first time
 - In fact, God is the author of all history, so all that transpires happens according to His will
 - And all that happens is according to His eternal plan which was established before the foundations of the earth
 - So it is literally impossible for God to change His mind, as His mind is arrived at the perfect outcome from the beginning
- Samuel turns to leave, and in a moment of great irony, Saul reaches out, grab’s Samuel’s cloak to stop him, and rips the garment
 - Saul is losing grip on power and on reality
 - And so he desperately reaches out to grab hold of God’s mercy, as it were
 - Seeking something by his might that he could only find in faith and obedience
 - And as he rips the garment, Saul is watching the rule of Israel being rent from his hands
 - Samuel then informs Saul that a better man has been found and will be anointed in his place
 - This knowledge will torment Saul in the final 15 years of his reign
 - And it will become a test for Saul’s successor

Finally, the chapter ends with Samuel tying up loose ends

1Sam. 15:30 Then he said, “I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the Lord your God.”

1Sam. 15:31 So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.

1Sam. 15:32 Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites.” And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.”

1Sam. 15:33 But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord at Gilgal.

[1Sam. 15:34](#) Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul.
[1Sam. 15:35](#) Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

- Samuel honors the office of king by agreeing to accompany him to worship
 - To do otherwise would have dishonored the king in the eyes of the people, which Samuel won't do
 - His willingness to honor the office of king foreshadows David's own behavior
 - Honoring those God has raised up is our duty
 - And we do so regardless of whether the individual deserves the honor personally
 - Finally, Samuel finishes the job Saul should have done
 - He calls for the king of the Amalekites and beheads him
 - Samuel might be old, but he could swing a sword
 - In v.33, Samuel tells Agag why he must die
 - The Amalekites attacked the Israelites of the Exodus by ambushing the stragglers at the rear
 - Naturally, those in the rear ranks were mostly the children
 - So when the Amalekites attacked Moses and the people, they made many women childless
 - It was a cowardly act deserving of God's retribution
 - And now Agag and his people have paid the price
- This was the last time Samuel saw Saul, though Saul rules for another 15 years