
Illuminating Scripture

Lecture Two Handout

1. Saul Receives and Disobeys a Command

1Sam. 15:1 And Samuel said to Saul, “The LORD sent me to anoint you king over his people Israel; now therefore hearken to the words of the LORD. ² Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I will punish what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way, when they came up out of Egypt. ³ Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.’”

⁷ And Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt. ⁸ And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them; all that was despised and worthless they utterly destroyed.

2. God and Samuel Confer

¹⁰ The word of the LORD came to Samuel: ¹¹ “I repent that I have made Saul king; for he has turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments.” And Samuel was [upset]; and he cried to the LORD all night. ¹² And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning; and it was told Samuel, “Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal.”

3. Saul is Tested and Found Wanting

13 And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed be you to the LORD; I have performed the commandment of the LORD.”

14 And Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?”

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

16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! I will tell you what the LORD said to me this night." And he said to him, "Say on." 17 And Samuel said, "Though you are little in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel. 18 And the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.' 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop on the spoil, and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?"

20 And Saul said to Samuel, "I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, I have gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, I have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the best of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

22 And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king."

4. A Forced Confession

24 And Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, I pray, pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."

26 And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

27 As Samuel turned to go away, Saul laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it tore. 28 And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you. 29 And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent."

30 Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." 31 So Samuel turned back after Saul; and Saul worshiped the LORD.

32 Then Samuel said, “Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites.” And Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” 33 And Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

5. Exodus 17:8

Then came Amalek and fought with Israel at Rephidim. ⁹ And Moses said to Joshua, “Choose for us men, and go out, fight with Amalek; tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” ¹⁰ So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses’ hands grew weary; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat upon it, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; so his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. ¹³ And Joshua mowed down Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴ And the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.”

6. Esther 3:1

After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman the Agagite, the son of Hammedatha, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who were with him. ² And all the king’s servants who were at the king’s gate bowed down and did obeisance to Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai (cf. “Now there was a Jew in Susa the capital whose name was Mordecai . . . son of Kish, a Benjaminite” [2:5]) did not bow down or do obeisance. ³ Then the king’s servants who were at the king’s gate said to Mordecai, “Why do you transgress the king’s command?” ⁴ And when they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai’s words would avail; for he had told them that he was a Jew. ⁵ And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or do obeisance to him, Haman was filled with fury. ⁶ . . . Haman sought to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.

7. Exodus 32:9

And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people; ¹⁰ now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; but of you I will make a great nation.” ¹¹ But Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, “O LORD, why does thy wrath burn hot against thy people, whom thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? . . . ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou didst swear by thine own self, and didst say to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’” ¹⁴ And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people.

8. Jeremiah 15:1

Then the LORD said to me, “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go! ² And when they ask you, ‘Where shall we go?’ you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Those who are for pestilence, to pestilence, and those who are for the sword, to the sword; those who are for famine, to famine, and those who are for captivity, to captivity.”’