

1 Samuel 15:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

Analysis

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

Saul's failure demonstrates that partial obedience is disobedience, and religious activity cannot substitute for heart surrender. His pattern of excuses, blame-shifting, and selective compliance while maintaining outward religious appearance warns against external religion without internal transformation. The pronouncement that 'to obey is better than sacrifice' establishes that God desires humble submission over impressive religious performance. Saul's rejection teaches that prolonged disobedience, even mixed with apparent faithfulness, eventually results in God's withdrawal of calling and blessing.

Historical Context

The establishment of monarchy around 1050-1010 BCE represented a dramatic political and theological shift for Israel. Unlike surrounding nations where kings were considered divine or semi-divine, Israel's kings were supposed to function under God's ultimate authority as laid out in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. The Benjamite tribe occupied strategic territory between Ephraim and Judah, making Saul's selection a politically astute choice to balance tribal rivalries. Archaeological remains from this period show increased fortification and centralization of settlements, confirming the transition to state-level organization.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does this passage clarify the relationship between genuine faith and concrete obedience, and what does it teach about partial compliance?
2. Are there areas where you practice selective obedience, substituting religious activity for heart-level surrender to God's commands?
3. How does this passage connect to the larger biblical narrative of redemption and point toward Christ and the gospel?

Interlinear Text

כָּה	אָמַר	יְהוָה	צָבָא וְתַ	פָּקַד דָּתִי	אֵת	אֲשֶׁר	עָשָׂה
H3541	Thus saith	the LORD	of hosts	I remember	H853	H834	did
	H559	H3068	H6635	H6485			H6213
עַמִּלְ קַ		לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	אֲשֶׁר	שָׁם	לוֹ	בְּדֶרֶךְ	
that which Amalek		to Israel	H834	how he laid	H0	wait for him in the way	
H6002		H3478		H7760		H1870	
בְּעֵלָת וְ		מִמִּצְרַיִם:					
when he came up		from Egypt					
H5927		H4714					

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 24:20 (Parallel theme): And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever.

Hosea 7:2 (Parallel theme): And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.

Amos 8:7 (References Lord): The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works.

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