

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 Benjaminite 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

עַמֶּל קָרְבָּן	לִישְׁבָּא לְ	אֲשֶׁר	שָׁמֶן	לוֹ	בְּזַעַק
that which Amalek	to Israel	H834	how he laid	H0	wait for him in the way

מִמִּצְרַיִם: בָּעֵלֶת וּ
from Egypt when he came up
H4714 H5927

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.