

1 Samuel 15:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.

Analysis

And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against 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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

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

וַיַּעֲשֵׂה	וְשָׁאַל	אֶת	עַמְלֵק	מִצְוִילָה	בָּוֹאָב	שׁ וּ
smote	And Saul	H853	the Amalekites	from Havilah	until thou comest	to Shur
H5221	H7586		H6002	H2341	H935	H7793

מִצְרִים:	פְּנֵי	עַל	אֲשֶׁר	ר
H834	H5921	that is over against	H6440	Egypt

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 25:18 (References Egypt): And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren.

Genesis 16:7 (Parallel theme): And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

1 Samuel 14:48 (Parallel theme): And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.

1 Samuel 27:8 (References Egypt): And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

Exodus 15:22 (Parallel theme): So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

Genesis 2:11 (Parallel theme): The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

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