

Question: Why did God reject King Saul, and what lesson do we learn from his downfall?

Answer:

God rejected Saul because of two major sins:

1. Rebellion, and
2. Stubbornness of heart.

These are the two areas in which Saul failed, and the Bible explains them clearly.

1 Samuel 15:22-23

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 listen than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is as the sin of divination,

and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,

he has also rejected you from being king.”

1. Rebellion

Rebellion means turning away from the right path and becoming an enemy to that path. This is exactly what happened to Saul. His heart slowly turned away from God, and he knowingly began to go against God's commands even though he fully understood that what he was doing was wrong.

2. Stubbornness

Saul's second sin was stubbornness.

A stubborn person is someone who cannot be corrected, refuses advice, and will not change his mind—whatever he has decided, he holds onto firmly.

King Saul was stubborn before the LORD.

When he committed his first sin by offering a sacrifice unlawfully (against God's command) in 1 Samuel 13:8–14, he was rebuked. Yet, despite this warning, he later repeated a similar sin in 1 Samuel 15:14–15, when he brought forbidden offerings from the Amalekites and claimed he wanted to sacrifice them to the LORD.

He brought the best sheep and oxen from the Amalekites to offer to God. At first glance, it may appear like a wise or spiritual action, but in reality, Saul committed a great offense.

Taking animals belonging to idol worshipers—animals likely used or dedicated to their gods, with unknown spiritual histories—and presenting them to Yahweh simply because they looked “fat and healthy” was a serious act of disrespect (1 Samuel 15:14–15).

This is just like taking a prostitute's earnings and offering them to the LORD, something God strictly forbids.

Deuteronomy 23:18

You shall not bring the fee of a prostitute or the wages of a dog into the house of the LORD your God in payment for any vow, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God.

The law also says God must not be offered any animal that is blemished or tainted (Deut. 17:1). Yet Saul brought animals full of the wickedness and defilement of the Amalekites as sacrifices to God. This was extreme stubbornness.

These Same Two Sins Still Displease God Today: Rebellion and Stubbornness

Jeremiah 5:22-25

Do you not fear me? declares the LORD.

Do you not tremble before me?

*I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea,
a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass;
though the waves toss, they cannot prevail;
though they roar, they cannot pass over it.*

*But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart;
they have turned aside and gone away.*

*They do not say in their hearts,
'Let us fear the LORD our God,
who gives the rain in its season,
the autumn rain and the spring rain,
and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.'*

Your iniquities have turned these away,

and your sins have kept good from you.

Maranatha!

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