



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2274 ~ Saul and the Amalekites.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Under the leadership of Israel's first king, Saul, the people of Israel won their first great battle by protecting a town from being captured by their enemies. However, as time progressed, King Saul didn't always make good and wise battle decisions; the victories Israel won were more of the Lord their God's doing rather than Saul's.

King Saul's first mistake before heading into battle with the Philistines was to rebelliously offer a sacrifice to God when he shouldn't have. From his humble beginnings as an unlikely king, Saul grew more and more self-honouring and less and less obedient to the Lord who had appointed him as Israel's leader. Saul raised himself up in his own mind as being equal to God's prophet, Samuel, and then even to God Himself. People of every generation can do this just like Saul by deceiving themselves into thinking that because of their importance God will overlook any sinful thing that they do.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, which is taken from 1st Samuel, Chapter 15, from the Bible, God told Samuel to send King Saul on a mission to fight the Amalekites, a warring tribe who lived close to the Egyptian border, southwest of the Dead Sea. 350 years earlier, when Moses led the Israelite slaves out of Egypt as they headed to God's Promised Land, the Amalekites had attacked and harassed them as they were crossing the desert. The Amalekites had descended from Jacob's twin brother, Esau, and were nomads who plundered their neighbours' fields and livestock.

Now that the Israelites were settled and secure in their new land, the time had come when God commanded that the Amalekites were to be totally destroyed, along with everything that belonged to them. Samuel gave King Saul specific instructions concerning this.

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Why did God delay His punishment of the Amalekites for so long? God is sovereign and we aren't told in the Bible why. But we need to remember that Israel is the 'apple of God's eye', as stated in Zechariah, Chapter 2; all who harm the Jews can expect to be punished by God. Yes, even in current times, when nations outside of Israel force Israel to do something that isn't in their best interests, history shows that physical calamity comes to those nations, sometimes as quickly as during the same day. God's punishment can be forest fires, big floods, long droughts, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, contagious diseases or plagues of insects.

It's always the Christian's duty to pray for the 'peace of Jerusalem', as listed in David's Psalm 122, and this ultimately means peace for the whole nation of Israel.

The Lord's prophecy in Zechariah, Chapter 12, says: "It shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it." Yet the leaders of many nations today seem to be oblivious to this Bible teaching. They gather together and order Israel to do things that no other nation would accept such demands or interference in their affairs.

When King Saul took his troops to battle the Amalekites, they were to totally destroy the people and every living thing that belonged to them. Everything was to be given to the Lord; no human or animal was to be spared for any reason. Remember the sin of Achan, who stole some clothes and money from the spoils of Jericho? Everything was to be given to the Lord that time too. But like Achan, the Israelites were unwilling to destroy the good animals; only the weak and useless ones. This meant that the Lord was given the worst of the animals and not the best. No wonder the Lord was grieved!

King Saul also let the king of the Amalekites live and brought him away from the battlefield. His name was Agag and as time went by, he thought he'd escaped death by the Israelites.

Why did Saul disobey God's words? No doubt he decided to keep some livestock for himself and wanted to please his troops by letting them have some good animals too. But these actions showed that King Saul didn't have full command of his soldiers, nor that he really cared about what God had said. Such rebellion and arrogance ended up costing him his kingdom.

Samuel also grieved for King Saul and cried out to the Lord all night over how King Saul had rejected God's authority in his life. In the morning, Samuel went to find Saul, only to discover that Saul had set up a monument in his own honour. Saul was increasingly taking the credit for Israel's battle victories and giving less and less credit to God. When the two men met, Saul told Samuel a series of lies, and insisted that he'd carried out the Lord's instructions correctly. He then blamed the soldiers under him for bringing the animals away from the battlefield but then said they were going to sacrifice the animals to the Lord.

Samuel responded to King Saul's untruths by saying that "to obey is better than sacrifice." This meant that gifts and sacrifices need to be offered to God in the right spirit of an obedient heart or God wouldn't accept them. Samuel went on to compare Saul's rebellion to that of an alliance with a false god, which was punishable by death. Samuel also compared Saul's arrogance to the evil of idolatry: Saul had made himself into an idol and put himself in the place of God.

There are many people today who believe that all they have to do to please God is to offer some kind of personal sacrifice, observe some ritual or attend some sort of church service from time to time, or even every week. But God doesn't look at these outward observances; He looks at a person's heart. We must first love God with all of our heart because only then, will the things we do bring pleasure to God and be a blessing to ourselves.

King Saul needed Samuel's support to retain the popularity of the people. That is why when Samuel refused at first to go with Saul and turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the edge of Samuel's robe and tore it.

In response, Samuel told King Saul that God had now torn the kingdom of Israel away from him and given it to another man who was better than Saul. Again Saul asked Samuel to go up with him and honour him before all the people. This time Samuel agreed, but only so he meter out God's sentence on King Agag of the Amalekites. In front of Saul and the people, Samuel put Agag to death for the many crimes he'd committed against other people. From that time on, Samuel and King Saul never met again, yet Samuel continued to mourn for Saul, because he'd hoped that Saul would have done what was right.

Saul had great gifts and potential but in the end, that potential wasn't realised. Saul hadn't kept his trust in God. Instead, he feared his enemies and his own men more than he feared God, the opposite to what Samuel had commanded. Saul was more interested in receiving honour from people than he was interested in receiving God's honour. Saul's disobedience had ruined his potential to be a godly, victorious king, as trust and obedience go together.

Today there are many Christians like King Saul who aren't living up to their potential for God, and their reasons are the same. At some time in their lives, such people have shown a lack of trust or they've disobeyed God in some matter, and they haven't repented from doing so. As a result, they've ceased to grow in their spiritual lives.

Although Saul was rejected by God, he still ruled Israel for 40 years as the nation's first king. The Bible says that one future day Israel will be ruled by one last king, Jesus Christ Himself. In present-day time, however, Israel doesn't have a king but rather, a form of democratic government that is led by a prime minister. But the words of Biblical prophecy indicate that a future day is coming when a victorious king who is descended from Jacob's son, Judah, will rule the whole world from Jerusalem.

Hear the prophetic words of an angel about this new king in Luke, Chapter 1: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob (or Israel) forever; and of His kingdom there will be no end." These angel words were spoken to Mary, Jesus Christ's earthly mother.

While the Lord Jesus was ministering to people here on earth, He didn't let people worship Him as the Messiah-King of Israel until the day that He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday in the last week of His earthly life before He was crucified. Although the crowds cheered Him on, Israel's spiritual and political leaders did not. However, they should have known Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. In Daniel, Chapter 9, it was foretold that from when the Jewish exiles living in Babylon for 70 years, were given permission to return to rebuild Jerusalem, until the presentation of Israel's Messiah-King, that it would be 483 Jewish years.

In the Jewish calendar, a year has 360 days and when the calculations are done, the dates are precise to the day. In Daniel's prophecy, however, there are still 7 years set aside for God to deal with the Jewish people. This 7-year period is known as the Great Tribulation. It is described as a time of great trouble for all those living on the earth. A number of Scriptures give examples of these tribulations, and indicate that those who've put their faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, will be raptured up and out of the earth to be with Jesus for ever before these 7 years commence. Their sins have already been paid for by Jesus.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians, Chapter 2, verses 10-11: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, and on earth and under the earth and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Will you gladly bow down and worship Jesus? Or will you be forced on Judgement Day to admit that He is Lord of all? Don't wait for that. Make your peace with Him today!

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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