*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 7 - 12

David Chosen by God

**Monday, June 7 1 Samuel 13:23 – 14:23**

*“Jonathan’s Victory”*

 This section stands as the middle of three devoted to the reign of King Saul in chapters 13-15. In the previous one, Saul failed to follow Samuel’s instructions regarding the sacrifice before battle. The result was a prophetic rebuke, in which Saul was informed that his own son would not succeed him as king. The great tragedy of that loss becomes apparent now in chapter 14. What a fine king Saul’s son Jonathan would have been.

 Jonathan initiates a daring raid on the Philistine detachment at Micmash. Against all odds, he and his armor-bearer attack an outpost of Philistines. They are heavily outnumbered and at a strategic disadvantage. But Jonathan is undeterred in his belief that God will deliver Israel from her powerful enemy and the Lord honors Jonathan’s brave leadership. In this opening sortie, these two men alone kill around twenty Philistines in a small area. When Saul sees how God has thrown the Philistines into great confusion, he rushes to the battlefield with his men only to find that his enemies are killing one another.

*Those who honor you, Lord, will in turned by honored by you. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 8 1 Samuel 14:24-52**

*“Saul’s rashness”*

 Saul’s rash, even careless actions continue when he places an unnecessary and unreasonable burden on his troops by disallowing them to eat food during the day of battle. As a result, they soon become weak and are overtaken by exhaustion which keeps them from being able to pursue the Philistines and win a decisive battle that could have won the entire war. Instead, this encounter with their enemy is at best a draw. Saul will continue fighting Philistines throughout his reign, young Israelite men will continue to be drafted into the army, and many will die.

 Once again the contrast between the king and his son is illustrated by their respective actions. Unaware of his father’s foolish ban, Jonathan does not hesitate to refresh himself with honey. His strengthened condition proves that he has better understood God’s will for the troops than his father. Later, when Saul seeks divine guidance concerning a surprise night attack, there is no response from God. This divine silence is tantamount to divine displeasure against Saul. When Saul tries to shift the blame to Jonathan, he is faced with revolt in his own army.

*May we always be careful to seek your will, Lord, so we not act rashly. Amen.*

**Wednesday, June 9 1 Samuel 15:1-9**

*“Saul spares Agag’s life”*

 This chapter is the last of three devoted to the reign of King Saul. They are intended to answer the question: Why did God reject Saul as king of Israel? His war with the Amalekites contributes to this explanation. It was a war divinely initiated, with strict regulations and restrictions. But Saul proves unwilling to accept God’s restrictions. In chapter 13, Saul lost the opportunity for his son to be the next king of Israel. In chapter 14, he lost an opportunity to rout the Philistines. Now he loses his kingdom.

 The Amalekites were a seminomadic tribal group from the south and southwest. They were the first people to oppose the Israelites on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land under Moses’ leadership, portrayed in Scripture as terrorists who preyed on weaker opponents. Consequently, God had promised to take vengeance upon them in some future day (Exodus 17:14; Deuteronomy 25:19). The day has come and God’s instructions to Saul are clear but Saul disregards them, keeping the Amalekite king alive as a trophy of his triumph.

*You call us to obedience, Lord, and all your commands are just. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 7 - 12

David Chosen by God

**Thursday, June 10 1 Samuel 15:10-35**

*“Saul confronted and condemned”*

 Partial obedience is really only disobedience made to look acceptable. Saul obeys God’s word to a degree in that he does in fact attack the Amalekites and wins a great victory against them, convincing himself that he has satisfied the divine command. Samuel is then sent to expose Saul’s actions as unacceptable. The passage narrates the conversation between the prophet and the king, in which Saul’s sin gradually becomes insurmountable. Saul must go! He can no longer serve as king of Israel.

 In the closing scene, Samuel executes the Amalekite king. The job unfinished by Saul is now left for the prophet himself, who gave the original order. The public execution of Agag is itself an implicit rebuke of Saul, who allowed him to live in the first place. The sad closing verses of chapter 15 effectively bring Saul’s reign to an end. Samuel and Saul go their separate ways and will not see each other again. Saul will technically continue as Israel’s king for many years, but his legitimacy has eroded. He has disqualified himself as the representative of God.

*Partial obedience, Lord, shows a disregard for you. Amen.*

**Friday, June 11 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

*“David is anointed”*

 The previous chapter represents the final and official rejection of Saul as Israel’s anointed king. He has failed as the Lord’s first designated king because he rejected the Lord’s authority structure for Israel’s kingship. David, the second one to be anointed, turns out to be the ideal because he accepts God’s authority in principle and genuinely repents when he fails to accept it in practice.

 The Lord sends Samuel to anoint David. The future king is anointed in private and is purely the choice of God. This chapter marks a turning point in this book. Prior to Saul’s final rejection in chapter 15, he and Samuel have been the central figures in the book. From now on David is central even though he does not become king until the early chapters of 2 Samuel. In this text we finally meet the man after God’s own heart (as foretold in 13:14), though here he is hardly more than a boy. He becomes the ideal king of Israel with whom all subsequent rulers will be compared and who paves the way for the coming of the Messiah.

*I accept your authority, Lord, and I will repent when I fail to follow it. Amen.*

**Saturday, June 12 1 Samuel 16:14-23**

*“David serves Saul”*

 Saul is not a well man. Just as the arrival of the Spirit of God marked David as someone destined and supremely fitted to become king of Israel, so the departure of the Spirit from Saul marks him as destined not to remain king. In its place is a *racah* spirit from God, which can be translated as evil, tormenting, or simply bad as in a “bad mood” or a “gloomy outlook.” Regardless of its exact meaning and intent, we are to understand that this *racah* spiritis sent by God because of Saul’s persistent and unrepentant stance. It is the source of his psychological problems, plaguing him throughout the rest of his life.

 Saul’s courtiers believe music is the answer. They offer to find an appropriate harpist to smooth the ailing Saul whenever his fits occur. We can assume a significant passage of time between these verses and those of 16:1-13, for David has now become well known not only as a harpist but as a brave warrior and a man of good judgment. The rest of 1 Samuel narrates Saul’s fall and David’s rise in interchanging fashion.

*My best life is lived, Lord, when I follow you with all my heart. Amen.*