

Crossville Church of Christ

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COMPASS

Using God's Word to Chart The Course
Of A Congregation

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Kyle Fairman
Dale Hennessee
Mike Isaacson
David Kerley
Doug Loveday
Greg Maxwell
Don Napier
Tom Parham
Mark Roberts
Roger Smith
Jason Wyatt
Jerry Wood

Ministers:

Barry Kennedy
Ken Mears

Missionaries: (India)

Don Iverson
Jim Waldron

Service Times

Sunday Bible Study	9 AM
Sunday Worship	10 AM
	6 PM
Wednesday	6 PM

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Ladies Bible Class	
Tuesdays	11AM
Prayer Meeting	
Tuesdays	10 AM
Joyful Generation (Youth Devotional & fellowship)	
1st Sunday	7:00 PM

May 17, 2015



PURPOSEFUL PLANNING

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself” (Daniel 1:8).

KING SAUL (A CASE STUDY IN APOSTACY)

WAYNE JACKSON

SAUL, SON OF KISH, ISRAEL'S FIRST king, stands as a solemn warning to all who followed thereafter. He was the ruler born of Israel's wishes-that the Hebrews might "be like" the heathen nations nearby (1 Sam. 8:5). In the providence of God, he was appointed their king. Yes, allowed by the Lord, but later removed by the same Sovereign (cf. Hos. 13:11).

A consideration of the forty-year career of the striking young ruler (cf. 1 Sam. 9: 1-2; Acts 13:21) represents a case study in how not to behave. From the Old Testament narrative regarding this man, the Bible student can learn much (Rom. 15:4).

The administration of Saul was marked by four major steps in spiritual degeneration. Let us briefly note each of them.

(1) Unauthorized Worship - After he anointed Saul as king, Samuel instructed the young ruler to travel to Gilgal; there he was to wait (seven days) for the prophet's arrival and the subsequent offering of sacrifices. Saul partially obeyed; he went to the appointed place, but he grew impatient when Samuel had not arrived on the 7th day. He thus offered the sacrifices himself (1 Sam. 13:8ff), and then proceeded to justify his transgression when the prophet presently arrived. In rejecting Samuel's charge, Saul had, in point of fact, disobeyed God (13:13). Partial obedience is full disobedience!

As a consequence, Saul's regime was not to be genealogically extended. Rather, another ruler-one "after [God's] own heart" would replace him eventually (13: 14; cf. Acts 13:22). There are consequences to disobeying the Lord. Can we learn from this that there are right and wrong ways to approach God in worship?

(2) Failure To Destroy Amalek - The Amalekites were long-standing enemies of Israel, being distantly related by their ancestry in Esau (Gen. 36: 12). They attacked Israel shortly after the exodus of the nation from Egypt, and their eventual destruction was foretold by Moses (Ex. 17:8-16).

Saul was commanded to "utterly destroy" these heathen people, along with their livestock, for, in a manner of speaking, they were all to be "devoted" to God. The Hebrew term harem, indicated that which was dedicated to Jehovah, and could not be used otherwise (cf Josh. 6:18-19; 7:10-15).

Again, though, Saul failed the obedience test. He spared the king, Agag, who, reputedly, was a noble specimen of humanity "worthy of preservation" (Josephus, Antiquities, 6.7.2), and also the best of the livestock. When Samuel arrived on the scene, the king boasted: "I have performed the commandment of Jehovah," But, as N.B. Hardeman once quipped, "A cow mooed and called him a liar." To phrase it literally, the prophet inquired: "What means then this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

Samuel then uttered the famous declaration: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22). God has no delight with superficial sacrifices which are designed to be a substitute for humble obedience. Human wisdom is not a proper exchange for divine revelation. Saul's actions were beginning to be a real index to the man's character.

(3) Obsessed By Jealousy - A key passage relative to Saul's life is found in 1 Samuel 16:14. "Now the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him." We are convinced that his important passage is misunderstood by many expositors.

Some suggest that Saul became demon possessed. That does not appear likely, for when David played soothing music in the king's presence, the "evil spirit" left him. Such is not characteristic of the sort of demon possession one encounters in the New Testament record.

More likely is the explanation that he became emotionally demented, with serious mood swings. The condition clearly resulted from his deliberate rebellion against God, which was sorely antagonistic to his own conscience. The fact that the "evil spirit" was said to be "from God" is explained by a common Hebrew idiom, by which Jehovah's permissive will is expressed in active terms (Jer. 4:10; cf. 2 Thes. 2:11).

After young David achieved his heroic victory against the pagan Philistine, Goliath, his fame spread throughout the territory. The women of Israel composed lyrics that cast Saul into the shadow of the shepherd lad. "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." The king was infuriated and "from that day and forward" he "eyed David" (18:10).

Saul became insane with jealousy. On several occasions, he sought to kill the young man directly (18: 11; 19: 10); at other times, his method was more devious (cf 18:21, 25). Finally, David was forced into a life of light and hiding.

Stubbornness, egotism, and jealousy constitute an unholy alliance that will destroy anyone. If we cannot control our thoughts; if we cannot appreciate the accomplishments of others; if we are envious and vindictive only disaster can follow.

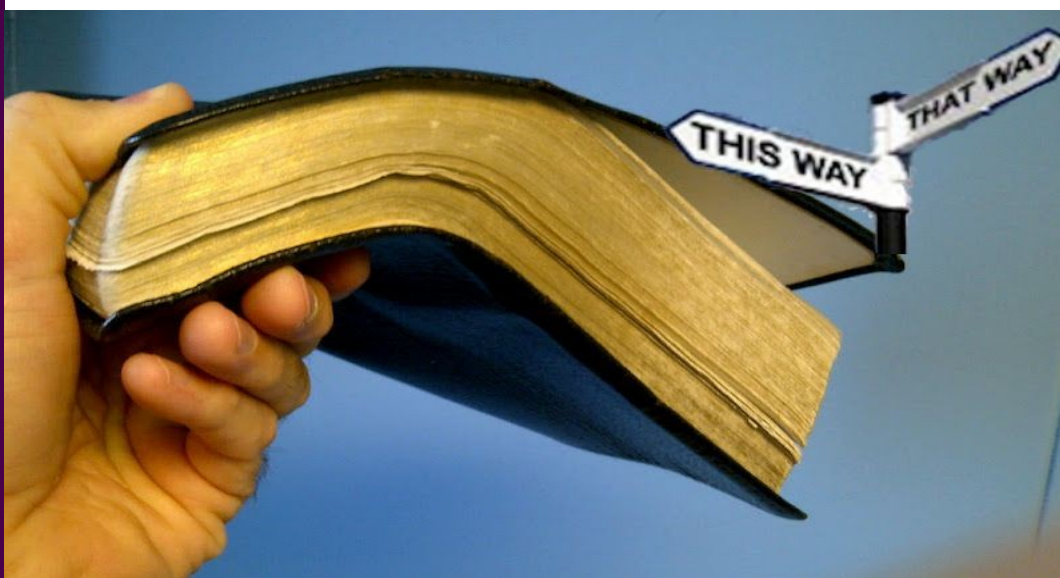
(4) Consulting The Necromancer - The crowning act of Saul's insolence was his consultation of the woman of Endor.

Under Old Testament law, attempts to communicate with the dead were prohibited (Dr, 18:10-11), and Saul had eradicated the land of most of these charlatans (1 Sam. 28:3). At the zenith of his apostasy, however, when God would not longer speak to him (v, 6), he travelled to Endor to consult with a "witch" (KJV) who reputedly had access to a "familiar spirit" (a medium).

Disguising himself, Saul asked the woman to "bring me up Samuel" (v. 11). Much to the woman's surprise ("she screamed"), Samuel appeared. The prophet's appearance, of course, was not the result of the woman's powers; rather, apparently, God effected this miracle for the purpose of pronouncing a final judgment upon the wayward king. Samuel informed Saul that God had totally rejected him due to his disobedience, and that presently, both he and his sons would be dead.

The sad conclusion to this story is found in the final chapter of 1st Samuel. The hostile Philistines mounted a formidable attack against Israel. The cause appeared hopeless. During the fray, Saul was wounded by an arrow. Fearful that he would be captured and abused, he drew his sword and fell upon it, ending his tragic life in suicide.

Conclusion How important it is to keep one's heart pure and sincere in the service of God, in spite of mistakes. When one falls from Heaven's favor, as a result of sin, he must pick



himself up, and, in genuine contrition, return to the Creator's arms, tearfully seeking pardon. That was the difference between Saul and David (cf Psa. 32; 51). If we ignore our sins, they can, like a foreboding whirlpool, suck us into the depths of destruction. So it was with Israel's first king.