

CHAPTER 7

FLESHLY SAUL

Saul was Israel's first king. Actually Israel had another KING even before they had Saul (the best KING a nation could ever have). Who was this KING (1 Samuel 8:7)?

The people of Israel wanted a king just like all the _____ (1 Samuel 8:5). The other nations had kings. Why shouldn't they? But they forgot that the other nations did not have GOD as their KING.

Sometimes God gives people what they want even though it may not be what is best for them. God did give them a king. It was as if God were saying, "All right, I'll give you just what you want. YOU ASKED FOR IT!" God "gave them their _____ but sent _____ into their soul" (Psalm 106:15). It is not always a good thing when God allows what **you want** to happen.

In what ways did Saul seem to be the ideal king and just the kind of leader the people of Israel would want (1 Samuel 9:1-2)?

Saul was anointed as king by Samuel (1 Samuel 10:1). God gave the people what they wanted. Did the children of Israel do the right thing by asking for a king (1 Samuel 8:7 and 12:17)?

King Saul was tall and handsome and strong and he seemed like the ideal king. There was only one problem. **HE WAS NOT A SPIRITUAL MAN.** King Saul was a fleshly man. He was controlled and dominated by his sinful nature. He was not spiritually minded and God was not in his thoughts. He was a man who lived to please self and not God. We must never forget what the Bible says: "So then, they that are in the _____ cannot _____ God" (Romans 8:8).

As we read 1 Samuel 10:6,7,10 we learn that the Spirit of God came upon Saul in a special way. Does this mean that Saul was a spiritual man? Not at all. There were times when the Spirit of God came upon people who were not spiritual at all. In 1 Samuel 19:18-24 Saul and his men were trying to kill David. Certainly Saul and his men were not very spiritual. But as Saul sent his messengers to carry out his evil plans what happened (1 Samuel 19:20-21)?

Finally when Saul went himself what happened (1 Samuel 19:23-24)?

Remember, the Spirit of God can even come upon a donkey in a very special way (Numbers 22:28), but does this mean that the donkey is spiritual? _____ At the beginning of Saul's reign God was with Saul in a very special way (1 Samuel 10:7), but Saul rejected what God was doing in his life and later on the Spirit of God _____ from Saul (1 Samuel 16:14).

Perhaps the brightest chapter in Saul's life is recorded in 1 Samuel 11. God gave Saul a great victory over the Ammonites (read Saul's own testimony in 1 Samuel 11:13). Saul's kingship got off to a great start! But after this first victory everything started going downhill.

Let us take a look at Ten of Saul's WORKS OF THE FLESH:

1) WORK OF THE FLESH #1--IMPATIENCE

Samuel had told Saul to wait seven days and at the end of these seven days Samuel would come and offer sacrifices and give Saul further instructions (see 1 Samuel 10:8). Read 1 Samuel 13:8-10. Did Saul wait for Samuel? _____ He became impatient and he pushed the panic button! Instead of waiting and doing it God's way, he panicked and did it his own way. And in his hurry Saul did something that only the priest should have done. What did he do (1 Samuel 13:9)? _____ This was a foolish act of disobedience (1 Samuel 13:13)!

Saul did not have a heart for God. He was not a man "after God's heart" (see 1 Samuel 13:4). He was a fleshly man, not a spiritual man. David was the kind of man God was looking for, not Saul!

2) WORK OF THE FLESH #2--FOOLISH WORDS

In 1 Samuel chapter 14 God used Jonathan in a special way to give a great victory to the children of Israel as they defeated the Philistines. But Saul said something foolish that discouraged his whole army. He put a curse on any man that did what (1 Samuel 14:24)? _____ This was the wrong time to call for a fast! In the heat of the battle men need proper nourishment.

Who violated Saul's command (1 Samuel 14:27)? _____ What did Saul want to do to this person when he found out (1 Samuel 14:43-44)? _____

_____ Would the people allow this terrible thing to happen (1 Samuel 14:45)? _____ Saul made a foolish and hasty statement which he never should have made.

3) WORK OF THE FLESH #3--REBELLION

In Romans 8:7 we learn that "the carnal (fleshly) mind is enmity _____ God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be." The flesh (man's sinful nature inherited from Adam) is AGAINST GOD! It refuses to submit to God. It would rather fight God. The flesh rebels against the command of God and refuses to obey. Rebellion is part and parcel of man's sinful nature.

We learn about Saul's great rebellion and disobedience in 1 Samuel chapter 15. Notice God's clear command in 1 Samuel 15:3. Did Saul obey this command (1 Samuel 15:8-9)? _____ Did Saul perform God's commandments (1 Samuel 15:11)? _____ But what did fleshly Saul say (1 Samuel 15:13)? _____ Remember, PARTIAL OBEDIENCE is nothing less than DISOBEDIENCE.

According to Samuel, Saul was guilty of what two sins (1 Samuel 15:23)?

1. _____ 2. _____ What did Saul reject (1 Samuel 15:23)? _____

4) WORK OF THE FLESH #4--COWARDICE

In 1 Samuel 17 we read the wonderful story of when David killed Goliath. But why did not Saul face this giant on the battlefield? Saul was the tallest and strongest man in all of Israel (1 Samuel 9:2). Why didn't he trust God for the victory over the giant? Saul was a COWARD! David was a spiritual man who knew how to trust a great God. Saul was not. Saul was a man of the flesh.

5) WORK OF THE FLESH #5--JEALOUSY

Galatians 5:20 tells us that "emulations" (JEALOUSY) is a work of the flesh. "Envyings" is also in this list (Galatians 5:21) and this word means "desiring what another person has."

Read 1 Samuel 18:6-8. What made Saul jealous?

_____ Who was Saul jealous of? _____ What was Saul envious of (what did he want that David had)? _____ This intense jealousy led to what other sin (1 Samuel 18:8)? _____

6) WORK OF THE FLESH #6--HATRED

Is hatred one of the works of the flesh (see Galatians 5:19-21)? _____

Saul's jealousy and anger turned into a bitter hatred for David. How did Saul show this hatred (1 Samuel 18:11)? _____ How many times did Saul try to do this (compare 1 Samuel 18:11 with 1 Samuel 19:10)? _____ He must have had a poor aim! But most importantly God's hand of protection was upon David in a very special way!

7) WORK OF THE FLESH #7--ANGER

Is anger (wrath) one of the works of the flesh mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21)? _____

Saul's hatred for David was so intense that he became angry with anyone and everyone who seemed to be on David's side. Who was Saul angry with in 1 Samuel 20:30?

_____ Why was this so?

_____ Saul told Jonathan to fetch David and bring him so that he might die. Jonathan answered and said, "Why shall he be slain? What hath he done?" (1 Samuel 20:31-32). This was a reasonable question. How did Saul answer this question (1 Samuel 20:33)?

Remember, this was his own flesh and blood son! And again he missed! So far Saul is 0 for 4 (four attempts with no success)!

8) WORK OF THE FLESH #8--MURDERS

Do you find "MURDERS" in "the list of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21)? _____ In 1 Samuel chapter 21 we learn that Ahimelech the priest helped David and gave him bread. David was fleeing from king Saul at the time. Remember, anyone who helped David became Saul's enemy!

In 1 Samuel 22:13 King Saul asked Ahirnelech why he helped David and Ahimelech's answer is found in 1 Samuel 22:14. Did Ahimelech think that David was faithful or unfaithful?

_____ Did he think that David was honorable or dishonorable? _____ Because of this Saul said to him: "Thou shalt surely _____" (1 Samuel 22:16). And Saul was not content to kill just one man, but he had to kill the whole household of priests!

First Saul told his footmen to slay the priests. According to Saul, why should these priests be killed (1 Samuel 22:17)?

_____ Anyone who was with David was against Saul! Were the footmen willing to do such a thing (1 Samuel 22:17)? _____ They knew better!

There was one man who was willing to carry out this wicked crime. What was his name (1 Samuel 22:18)? _____ How many priests were killed on that day (1 Samuel 22:18)?

_____ Even though Doeg was the one who actually did it, who was really responsible for slaying the priests (1 Samuel 22:21)? _____ Saul was guilty of "MURDERS."

9) WORK OF THE FLESH #9--PHONEY REPENTANCE

Read 1 Samuel 24:2-15. Did David have a perfect opportunity to kill King Saul? _____ Notice what Saul said when he learned that David had spared his life (read 1 Samuel 24:16-21). Saul wept. He called David "my S _____" (verse 16). He said, "You are more righteous than I. You have done good and I have done evil" (see verse 17). He even said that David was the one who should be king (verse 20). Was Saul really sorry for the way he had acted toward David? It all sounded very good, but was it real?

In 1 Samuel 26:2 what was Saul doing? _____ He was back to his old ways again!

Read 1 Samuel 26:5-16. Did David have a perfect opportunity to kill King Saul? _____ Notice what Saul said when he learned that David had spared his life (read 1 Samuel 26:17-21). Notice especially verse 21: Saul said, "I have _____: return, my son, David; for I will _____ do thee harm." He even admitted that he was a fool (verse 21). Was Saul really sorry for his sins? Was he really repenting (changing his mind about sin, self and the Saviour)? It all sounded very good, but was it real?

David knew Saul pretty well by this time. Did David think that Saul would never harm him any more (1 Samuel 27:1)? _____

We need to remember that the flesh can sound pretty good and can pretend to repent, but the whole thing is phoney and not real! Saul never had that "godly sorrow" which is spoken of in 2 Corinthians 7:9-10.

10) WORK OF THE FLESH #10--WITCHCRAFT

Is "WITCHCRAFT" (sorcery) listed as one of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21? _____ At the end of his life Saul decided to seek out a witch or a medium (1 Samuel 28:7). This was a woman who was supposed to be able to communicate with the dead. Saul wanted to find out about the future. Since God would not communicate with him (because he had rejected God's Word--1 Samuel 15:23) he turned to the world of the occult. Would a spiritual man do this? _____ Why not (see Deuteronomy 18:9-14)?

1. Saul's life was characterized by disobedience to God's Word. What should the believer's life be characterized by (1 John 2:3-4; 5:3)?

2. Saul's life was characterized by hatred towards David (a man who belonged to God). What should the believer's life be characterized by (1 John 3:14-15; 2:9-10; 4:20-21)?

3. Saul's life was characterized by evil deeds and unrighteous acts. What should the believer's life be characterized by (1 John 2:29; 3:7-12)?

You might think: "I'm not like Saul. I would never throw a javelin at someone! I would never kill 85 pastors! I would never go visit a witch or a medium!" But we need to remember that we have the same flesh (sinful nature) as Saul! Our flesh is just as bad and as rotten as his was! And under the right circumstances we could do some of the very things he did or even worse things. It is this FLESH that Christ died to save us from: "God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful _____ and for sin, condemned sin in the _____" (Romans 8:3).

HAS CHRIST SAVED YOU?

ARE YOU A SPIRITUAL PERSON?

And Samuel said, Hath 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 hearken than the fat of rams (1 Samuel 15:22).