

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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Lesson 22: "The Lord Looketh on the Heart" (1 Samuel 9–11; 13; 15–17)

Introduction



Can you guess what this word means? After giving your best guess, if you wanted to know the correct definition you could go to the Bible Dictionary. Guessing at the definition of an unfamiliar word is like making decisions based only on our own understanding. **Proverbs 3:5-6** says: "*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*" Just as we would turn to a trusted source to learn the correct definition of an unfamiliar word, we need to trust the Lord and seek his will to make correct decisions in our lives.

This lesson contrasts the experiences of two men, Saul and David, to teach the importance of trusting the Lord and seeking his guidance when we make decisions. If we learn as we should from today's scriptures, we will resolve to trust in the Lord rather than our own understanding.

Saul seeks guidance from Samuel and is anointed to be king. (1 Samuel 9-11)

The Israelites wanted a king like those of the nations around them. Yielding to the Israelites' request, the Lord told Samuel to anoint Saul as Israel's first king.

1 Samuel 9:2 - Saul was "a choice young man, ... and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he."

Saul's actions before he was anointed king and shortly thereafter demonstrated his good qualities:

- **1 Samuel 9:3-4** – He was diligent in his search for his father's donkeys.
- **1 Samuel 9:5-10** – He listened to and followed the wise counsel of his father's servant
- **1 Samuel 9:18-25** - He trusted the prophet Samuel and communed with him
- **1 Samuel 9:20-21** – He was humble.
- **1 Samuel 10:6-10** – He was spiritually reborn, and he prophesied.
- **1 Samuel 11:11-13** – He forgave his critics.
- **1 Samuel 11:13** - He recognized the help of the Lord in Israel's victory over the Ammonites.

Lesson Highlights

- Saul seeks guidance from Samuel and is anointed to be king.
- Saul offers a burnt offering without the proper authority.
- Saul disobeys the Lord in the battle with the Amalekites and is rejected as king.
- The Lord chooses David as king.
- David slays Goliath in the strength of the Lord.

A study of this lesson will encourage us to trust in the Lord rather than our own understanding.

Next Week

#23 "The Lord Be Between Thee and Me For Ever"
(1 Samuel 18–20; 23–24)

Saul offers a burnt offering without the proper authority.

(1 Samuel 13:1–14)



Samuel and Saul

Two years after Saul was anointed king, the Philistines gathered a mighty army to fight against Israel. Saul's men were so afraid that many of them hid and scattered.

1 Samuel 13:7-8 - Saul wanted Samuel to offer sacrifices to the Lord in behalf of the people.

1 Samuel 13:9 - When Samuel did not come at the appointed time, Saul offered the sacrifices himself even though he did not have the priesthood authority to do so.

Elder James E. Talmage wrote, "*Saul prepared the burnt offering himself, forgetting that though he occupied*

the throne, wore the crown, and bore the scepter, [he had] no right to officiate ... in the Priesthood of God; and for this and other instances of his unrighteous presumption he was rejected of God and another was made king in his place" (The Articles of Faith, 12th ed. [1924], 185).

1 Samuel 13:10-14 -

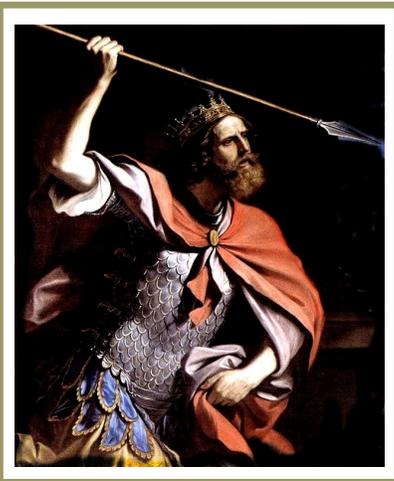
Samuel's response to Saul's offering an unauthorized sacrifice was a pronouncement that Saul's foolishness and disobedience would end his kingdom.

1 Samuel 13:14 - Saul's offering an unauthorized sacrifice revealed that he was no longer "a man after

[the Lord's] own heart". He had grown impatient, failed to trust the Lord, and disobeyed. In addition, his presuming the authority to offer sacrifice suggests that he had an exaggerated opinion of his own power and importance.

Sometimes our own impatience with the Lord or his servants can cause us to fail, but we must be aware that there are consequences accompanying such impatience. We must come to trust the Lord fully even if his timetable is different than ours.

Saul disobeys the Lord in the battle with the Amalekites and is rejected as king. (1 Samuel 15)



Saul

1 Samuel 15:1-3 - The Lord commanded Saul to smite and destroy the Amalekites and all they had.

1 Samuel 15:4-9 - Instead of obeying, Saul saved some animals to sacrifice.

1 Samuel 15:11 - Saul's actions revealed that he followed his own judgment rather than the Lord's will.

1 Samuel 15:13-15, 20-21, 24 - Saul tried to justify his disobedience in saving the best of the Amalekites' animals by blaming his people for wanting to save the animals. According to Saul, it was his people wanted to save the Amalekites' animals for sacrifice, not him.

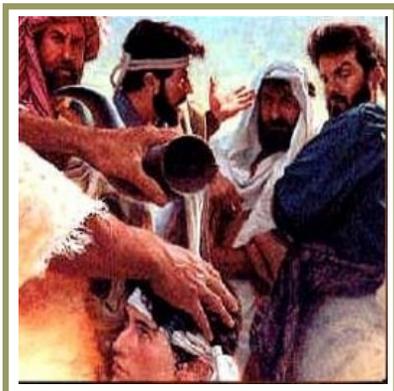
Sometimes we try to justify disobeying the Lord by telling ourselves, "*It's just a little sin,*" "*I'm obeying the spirit of the law rather than the letter of the law,*" "*It won't hurt anyone,*" "*I'll try it just once,*" "*Other people are doing it,*" or "*That commandment doesn't apply to me.*"

1 Samuel 15:22 - Samuel responded to Saul's explanation with counsel that obedience is more prized than sacrifice. Samuel's words apply to us when we try to follow our judgment rather than the Lord's.

1 Samuel 15:23 - When reprimanding Saul for being stubborn and rejecting the word of the Lord, Samuel told him, "*Stubbornness is as ... idolatry*". If we reject God's instruction, we are not worshipping him.

1 Samuel 15:23, 26, 28 - The result of Saul's becoming stubborn and rebellious was that his kingdom was taken from him at the Lord's direction. The results of our being stubborn and rebellious can be just as damaging to us—we may lose our eternal kingdom.

The Lord chooses David as king. (1 Samuel 16)



Anointing of David

Although Samuel anointed David to be king, David did not become king until Saul died many years later.

1 Samuel 16:6-7 - Samuel learned the Lord's method of choosing an individual to serve.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said: "*We ... tend to evaluate others on the basis of physical, outward appearance: their 'good looks,' their social status, their family pedigrees, their degrees, or their economic situations. The Lord,*

however, has a different standard by which he measures a person. ... He does not take a tape measure around the person's head to determine his mental capacity, nor his chest to determine his manliness, but He measures

the heart as an indicator of the person's capacity and potential to bless others" (Ensign, Nov. 1988, 15).

1 Samuel 16:14 - Because Saul had been disobedient, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him.

1 Samuel 16:18 - David qualified as a leader because he was valiant, prudent, and the Lord was

David slays Goliath in the strength of the Lord. (1 Samuel 17)

1 Samuel 17:8-9 - The Israelites would gain or lose their freedom in the fight with Goliath.

Saul and his army were afraid to fight Goliath because they did not think they could defeat Goliath because of his size, strength, armor, and weapons.

1 Samuel 17:32-37, 45-47 - David got the courage to fight Goliath because he recognized that the Lord had delivered him from a lion and a bear, and he trusted the Lord to help him fight Goliath.

As a youth, David's victories over a lion and a bear helped prepare him for the greater challenge of Goliath.

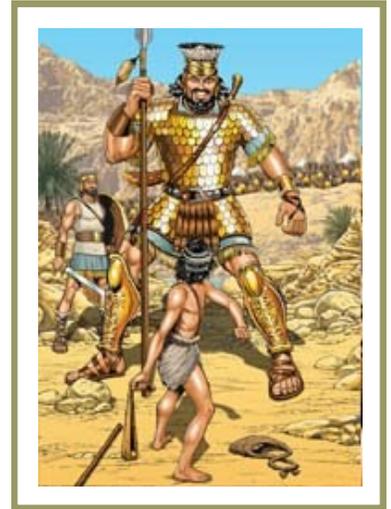
Each day we face challenges that prepare us for greater challenges. Our responses to these challenges affect our ability to battle the Goliaths that may come later. As we defeat the lions and bears in our lives, we will develop the confidence, character, and faith to defeat our Goliaths.

Conclusion

Trust and obey the Lord. By doing so you will grow stronger and have the Lord's assurance that he will help you triumph over personal Goliaths. The Lord looks upon our hearts, not upon our wealth or position or conformity to popular standards.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *"There are Goliaths all around you, hulking giants with evil intent to destroy you. These are not nine-foot-tall men, but they are men and institutions that control attractive but evil things that may challenge and weaken and destroy you. Included in these are beer and other liquors and tobacco. Those who market these products would like to enslave you into their use. There are drugs of various kinds which, I am told, are relatively easy to obtain in many high schools. For those who peddle them, this is a multimillion-dollar industry, a giant web of evil. There is pornography, seductive and interesting and inviting. It has become a giant industry, producing magazines, films, and other materials designed to take your money and lead you toward activities that would destroy you. The giants who are behind these efforts are formidable and skillful. They have gained vast experience in the war they are carrying on. They would like to ensnare you. It is almost impossible to entirely avoid*

exposure to their products. You see these materials on all sides. But you need not fear if you have the slingshot of truth in your hands. You have been counseled and taught and advised. You have the stones of virtue and honor and integrity to use against these enemies who would like to conquer you. Insofar as you are concerned, you can hit them 'between the eyes,' to use a figurative expression. You can triumph over them by disciplining yourselves to avoid them. You can say to the whole lot of them as David said to Goliath, 'Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.' Victory will be yours. ... You have His power within you to sustain you. You have the right to ministering angels about you to protect you. Do not let Goliath frighten you. Stand your ground and hold your place, and you will be triumphant" (Ensign, May 1983, 46, 51).



David and Goliath

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- How can we avoid having impatience for the Lord or his servants? How can we come to trust the Lord fully?
- How can we overcome the tendency to excuse or justify sin?
- What are the results of our being stubborn and rebellious? How can we recognize and overcome these attitudes?
- What does the Lord look for in our hearts?