

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 463

1 Samuel 15

Date, 2023

Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Teacher: Dr. Justin Bass (JB)

### Episode Summary

God commands Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites, including all of their livestock. Saul obeys the command to destroy the Amalekites, but he spares the king and the best of the livestock. When Samuel confronts Saul about his disobedience, Saul tries to justify his actions. Samuel rebukes Saul for his disobedience, and declares that God has rejected him as king.

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 463: 1 Samuel 15. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin and he's the scholar, Dr. Justin Bass. Hey, Justin! How are you? I appreciate you sort of filling in for Mike and helping me finish 1 Samuel!

**JB:** Hey, Trey! So honored to do it. Thanks for inviting me.

**TS:** Absolutely. I know Mike would appreciate it. Actually you and Mike... Can you tell us a little background about how y'all met, and are you teaching anything new, and all that good stuff?

**JB:** Yeah, you know I'm just so thankful and blessed to have been connected with Mike back in 2020. So not that long, but it was so cool—really an intersection with our work. What was my dissertation became my first book: *Battle for the Keys*. It dealt with the descent of Christ into the underworld and some of that discussion of the unseen world connected with some of the things that Mike, of course, has been doing for many, many years. Some of his students connected our books and recommended my book to him. And that's how, I think, he first heard about my work. And then his book, *Demons*, and my book, *The Bedrock of Christianity*, both published by Lexham Press, came out within (I think) weeks of each other in 2020. And then he had me on the podcast to talk about the evidence of the resurrection from the *Bedrock* book. So we've been friends ever since, and it's been such a blessing to be with him. He invited me to fill in for him at the AWKNG School of Theology, teaching the New Testament Apologetics course. And that was an honor, just being able to connect with all his students and followers from all over the world. They are so passionate about the Word, so passionate about Christ. It's just really been awesome to have this connection.

**TS:** And are you teaching anything new at the AWKNG School of Theology? Don't you have a new course coming up?

**JB:** Yeah, my second course. This one is on the book of Revelation. I'm really excited for that to come out. That's coming out, I think, March 6. I recorded twelve lectures for that one. It's really just walking through Revelation, but also dealing with things in eschatology. I did some good background history... The way I open the course is a history of the predicting of the end of the world. I like to go through the different people throughout church history, going all the way back to Hippolytus. He goes all the way back to 200 A.D. He was already predicting that the world would end in 500 A.D. [laughs]. So people from him all the way to present-day were predicting the end of the world. So that was just a fun way to open the course, but really, it's more of an expositional going-through of the book of Revelation. We don't hit every verse, but we hit every key section through the book. So that was a lot of fun.

**TS:** Fantastic. Well, before we jump into 1 Samuel 15, I've got to ask you some personal stuff here. Me and Mike bonded over sports, so are you a sports guy? Are you not a sports guy? Do you have a particular sport? I know we talked before the show, and our kids and your wife actually have something in common: shot putting! My daughter made the shot put team in track and you said your wife was a high school champion!

**JB:** Yeah, she was a high school champion in shot put and hasn't really touched in since, but now she's coaching it again for my 13 year-old daughter in 7th grade. She's running track and she's helping out with the shot put team, as well. It's really a cool thing. As far as being a sports guy, I think I'd have to say (and everybody that knows me is saying), "No, I'm not a sports guy." Except for Ultimate Fighting Championship—so UFC. Really from my teen years from before I was a believer, I've been watching the MMA/UFC fights. I started watching it before they had rules. They really only had three rules in the beginning—basically, no eye-gouging, no fish-hooking, no biting [laughs]. That's all the rules there were at the beginning. Those were the most fun fights. I haven't watched it much recently, but that's been the only sport I really followed most of my life.

**TS:** All right, well there you go. Maybe I can get you over to the dark side of football one of these days.

**JB:** [laughs] We did watch the Superbowl! That was a good game. We enjoyed that. I get my family together and we watch the Superbowl every year. That's about the only sport I make sure I watch, other than great UFC fights. Anytime GSP gets in there... I think he's retired now, but he's one of my favorites.

5:00

**TS:** That was a great game. And just FYI, Justin, Patrick Mahomes went to Texas Tech University where I went, so he's basically my best buddy. He just doesn't know that, but he's basically my best friend [laughs].

All right, again, I can't thank you enough for coming on and filling some big shoes for us, for the audience. We certainly appreciate you doing this. You're going to do more than just one chapter here, and I appreciate you again for that. We're ready, Justin, to jump into 1 Samuel 15!

**JB:** All right, sir. Well, let me open this up. I do want to say a word. My heart is broken to lose such a great scholar, such a great man, and really a great friend in Dr. Michael Heiser. I'm honored to keep going his prophetic, Elisha-like legacy of opening people's eyes to the unseen realm and the deeper truths of the scriptures. As I was listening just yesterday to his last podcast on 1 Samuel 13-14, I was struck by the fact that we have 458 podcasts from him, which equates to (I did some math) around 20 straight days of listening to Dr. Heiser's teaching, not to mention all his books, articles, and courses. What a blessing to have such treasures!

Let's begin the study of 1 Samuel 15 with a story from 60 years ago, when this text was actually invoked and applied (and, I think, applied well). After World War II, Adolph Eichmann (leading Nazi and architect of the Holocaust) escaped to Argentina, where he would remain in hiding for 15 years. Israel's Mossad tracked him down and captured him on the streets of Buenos Aires in 1960. They drugged him and flew him back to Israel to stand trial. I mean [laughs], this needs to be a movie. I think there may have been a movie. I don't know if it was well done and I haven't seen that, but this is better than any action movie. He was ultimately condemned to be hanged. Eichmann never admitted to guilt of any kind. Not once. He was only "following orders," he claimed. Two days before he was hanged on May 29, 1962, Eichmann sent a letter to then-Israeli president Yitzhak (Isaac) Ben-Zvi asking for pardon. Here's the last sentence of that letter:

I am not able to recognize the court's ruling as just, and I ask, Your Honor Mr. President, to exercise your right to grant pardons, and order that the death penalty not be carried out.

Yitzhak Ben-Zvi rejected his request for pardon in a letter written in his own hand. As part of his justification, he quoted from 1 Samuel 15:33.

**As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women.**

Which, of course, originally referred to King Agag. Eichmann was hanged June 1, 1962. It's fitting that 1 Samuel 15 was invoked for a righteous execution because it is God's holy and righteous command for the execution of the wicked

Amalekites that sets the stage for God to remove Saul and bring in David as Israel's true king. 1 Samuel 15 is a key bridge from the focus on Saul to the focus on David. Someone has even called it a "prophetic introduction to the rise of David." I like that. Saul's decline already began in 1 Samuel 13, where because of hastiness to sacrifice before Samuel arrived, his enduring royal dynasty was revoked. And in chapter 14, he made a rash vow—a very stupid vow—that almost led to the death of his son, Jonathan. And now in chapter 15, he loses the kingdom, at least in the eyes of Yahweh, which, of course, is what really matters.

The story of Saul is truly a brilliant Shakespearean tragedy 2500 years before Shakespeare. Side note: everyone needs to find the movie King David released in 1985 with Richard Gere as David. The movie is actually terrible. Richard Gere is a terrible David. But the opening scene (the very beginning of the movie—that's all you need to watch) is 1 Samuel 15 in visual form. And I don't think it could have been done better. The actors who play Saul and Samuel are perfect. Check it out.

Let me read the first 3 verses of 1 Samuel 15—a summons to holy war [NASB 1995].

10:00

**Then Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD. <sup>2</sup> This is what the LORD of armies says: 'I will <sup>[b]</sup> punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, in that he obstructed him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. <sup>3</sup> Now go and strike Amalek and completely destroy everything that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"**

In that first verse in the Hebrew, it literally says, "Me Yahweh sent" [laughs]. The pronoun is put first for emphasis. Samuel is the vehicle for the word of Yahweh and the king must submit to it (must obey it), and that is also true to this very day of kings and presidents and prime ministers.

"Thus says Yahweh Sabbioth..." He introduces himself with this great title, which actually originates in the beginning of Samuel. We find it used for the first time in chapter 1, verse 3. Another way to translate it would be "the Lord of armies of the unseen realm." He is summoning Saul to perform the ban, or in Hebrew, *haram*, used seven times in this chapter for emphasis. It means "to utterly destroy" the Amalekites for something they did over 400 years before Samuel and Saul even existed. *Haram* means literally "to kill everything that breathes." You really don't want to be under the ban. Amalek was the son of Eliphaz, who was the son of Esau (Jacob's twin brother, Isaac's son). He and his concubine, Timnah, had a son named Amalek. So the Amalekites are distant relatives with Israel. But they have been like the boogeyman to Israel from the beginning—monstrous enemies

that are constantly attacking them and they just won't die. The Amalekites were actually the first nation to attack the Israelites after their deliverance out of Egypt. That story is recorded in Exodus 17, and I encourage you to go read that. But Deuteronomy 25:17-19 contains God's declaration or promise of vengeance on the Amalekites. He says this (this is Moses speaking):

**<sup>17</sup> “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way when you came out of Egypt, <sup>18</sup> how he confronted you on the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God. <sup>19</sup> So it shall come about, when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies in the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, that you shall wipe out the mention of *the name* Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.**

Now is the time for blotting out. To borrow from Genesis, the Amalekites' sins have reached their full measure. What's interesting is that the Amalekites are the only nation outside of the Canaanites that receive the ban (*haram*) from Yahweh. *Haram* (the ban) was also performed by other nations at the time. There's the famous Mesha stele discovered in 1868, which has inscribed on the stone the recording of Moabite victories by supposedly their god Chemosh. You can actually see that at the Louvre in Paris. (I haven't been there; it's one of the few museums I haven't yet been to that I'm dying to go to.) But they have a copy of it at the museum in Jordan, where I lived for three years (Amman, Jordan). Listen to this command from Chemosh to King Mesha of the Moabites. This is from the Mesha stele:

(14) Chemosh said to me: “Go, take Nebo from Israel!” I  
(15) went by night, and fought against it from the break of dawn until noon; I  
(16) taking it and slaying all: seven thousand boys, women, girls, and  
maidservants  
(17) for I had devoted them to destruction for the god Ashtar Chemosh.

That writing dates to around 840 B.C., by the way. So *haram* (the ban) may have been common in ancient Near Eastern warfare. Deuteronomy 20 actually lays out the rules of war for Israel dealing with other nations generally, and then how to deal specifically with the Canaanites: “kill them all.” As my professor, Robert Chisholm, said (and by the way, Robert Chisholm was also a good friend of Dr. Heiser; I heard Dr. Heiser mention and quote Dr. Chisholm a few times in the previous podcast on 1 Samuel 13-14)... Dr. Chisholm would say in class, “The only good Canaanite is a dead Canaanite.” Well, the only good Amalekite, it seems, is a dead Amalekite.

15:00 Now, think a moment about holy war and genocide in the Bible—these few instances, which is really only the Canaanites and the Amalekites. In the stories of Joshua, he almost (remember he wasn't successful) wiped out all the Canaanites. And this story here about the almost-wiping-out of the Amalekites fills pages and atheist books and blogs and YouTube comments as a justification to reject God and call him evil. To those who criticize the Bible because of these stories, I thought I'd share a few responses. First of all, if unbelievers have a problem with this story and the Canaanites, wait until they hear about the story of Noah, when God kills everyone except for eight people! Or when Jesus returns, as I talk about in Revelation 19 in my course on Revelation. When Jesus returns, he kills everyone who is rejecting him and the blood rises to a horse's bridle throughout Jerusalem.

Second, the Amalekites and the Canaanites were cruel and sadistic, as alluded to in this story itself. God commanding their total destruction is like God destroying the wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrah, only God's vehicle now for his divine punishment is the Israelite army, rather than angels raining down fire and brimstone from the heavens.

Third point, stories of holy war may offend 21st Century Western sensibilities, but God doesn't really care what you or I think. He's not interested in the Geneva convention. I like how Jordan Peterson, the psychologist from Canada put it in his book, *Twelve Rules for Life*:

There is a tendency for modern people to think, when confronted with Jehovah, "I would never believe in a God like that." The Old Testament God doesn't much care what modern people think. He often didn't care what Old Testament people thought, either.

**God is in the heavens and he does whatever pleases him (Psalm 115).**

Lastly, God, the sovereign creator of the heavens and the earth, has the right to give life and to take life whenever he pleases. Who is going to say he can't? Who can say to God, "What have you done?" You? Me? John Calvin's comments on Joshua's slaughter of the Canaanites applies here well, I think. He said:

The indiscriminate and promiscuous slaughter, making no distinction of age or sex but including alike women and children, the aged and the decrepit, might seem an inhumane massacre, had it not been executed by the command of God. But as he, in whose hands are life and death, had justly doomed those nations to destruction, this puts an end to all discussion.

I like that. I think he's right. As I said before, God is in the heavens and he does whatever pleases him. It's a good text to overshadow our text in 1 Samuel 15 from Psalm 115.

Back to our story: Saul's disobedience to God, as recorded in 1 Samuel 15:4-9.

**<sup>4</sup> Then Saul summoned the people and counted them in Telaim: two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. <sup>5</sup> And Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the wadi. <sup>6</sup> But Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, get away, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they went up from Egypt." So the Kenites got away from among the Amalekites.**

Side note: notice God shows mercy on the Kenites, because if you go back to Exodus, you'll find that they were kind to the Israelites after they left Egypt, as opposed to the Amalekites who were wicked and evil to Israel.

**<sup>7</sup> So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. <sup>8</sup> He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. <sup>9</sup> But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.**

The text is clear: Saul did not utterly destroy them all as God commanded through Samuel. He rejected the word of the Lord, and God will reject him as king. The story is not retold in Chronicles, but 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 actually gives three reasons why God rejected Saul as king: he was unfaithful to Yahweh, he rejected the word of Yahweh, and he did not seek Yahweh. Saul partially obeyed God's word. But partial obedience is really only disobedience made to look acceptable.

20:00

In 1 Samuel 15:10-11, God rejects Saul as king.

**<sup>10</sup> Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, <sup>11</sup> "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night.**

It's interesting that we see both God and Samuel mourning and grieving God's tragic fall. But guess who is not sorry about it? Saul. We never see Saul grieve

and mourn over his own sin and fall. This Hebrew word behind the English translation (regret or he was sorry, or, as the old King James said, "He repented") is the same word used for God being sorry that he had made mankind in the story of Noah in Genesis 6:6. This does not express any changeableness in the divine nature. He is unchangeable; he is immutable. But it expresses simply the sorrow of the divine love at the rebellion of sinners. When it says God is sorry that he made mankind or that he regrets making Saul king, these are anthropomorphisms—attributing humanlike qualities to God. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the god of Aristotle, who can't do anything but cause things. And really, he can't even do that. The God of the Bible is love, and he can have his heart broken. That is what is being expressed here. It's an Old Testament picture of the father in Jesus' parable losing his disobedient son.

I like what Abraham Heschel says here about Samuel:

The prophet has a fellowship with the feelings of God—a sympathy with the divine pathos, a communion with the divine consciousness, which comes about through the prophet's reflection of, or participation in, the divine pathos. The closer we get to God's heart, the more we will mourn and pray over sinners.

Samuel stayed up all night praying for Saul. Incredible. Samuel has a heart after God's heart, just like David. Let's see how Saul responds to Samuel's rebuke. 1 Samuel 15:12-21:

**<sup>12</sup> Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself [JB: side note: a classic Saul move], then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal." <sup>13</sup> Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord." [JB: No, you didn't!] <sup>14</sup> But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"**

It's one of the most memorable parts of the story. The scriptures are so vivid. I mean, we can hear in our mind's ear the bleating of the sheep as Samuel speaks with Saul—continuous sounds from these animals giving evidence to Saul's disobedience.

**<sup>15</sup> Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed."**

Notice how Saul says for the first time (but he'll do it throughout the chapter), "The Lord YOUR God." Not "the Lord OUR God." It gives you an insight into



Saul's mindset.

**16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait [JB: or "stop"], and let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night."**

I just love that. Imagine being able to say, "Jehovah spoke to me last night" and it would actually be true! I mean, I do believe God still speaks to us today through prayer, through his Word, through intuition, sermons, fellow believers, godly books, on and on and on... But at the same time, I don't think anyone on earth last night or any night [laughs] in a long time has heard God speak to them the way God spoke to Samuel. In other words, God's prophets and apostles are a thing of the past. But if you want to hear from Samuel or Isaiah or Peter or Paul or John, God has preserved their very words for us to this day. We are studying them right now. You are hearing them as I read Samuel's words, and they are awe-inspiring and powerful to this very day. Back to the text:

**And he [Saul] said to him, "Speak!"**

**17 Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed you king over Israel, 18 and the Lord sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.' 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord?"**

**20 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the Lord, [JB: you almost have to put this in a childish voice] and went on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal."**

25:00

"Not me—the people! The people did it!" I can hear Proverbs 29:25:

**25 The fear of others lays a snare, but one who trusts in the Lord is secure. [NRS]**

It's also difficult not to hear Adam and Eve coming out of Saul. Can you hear them? After God said, "What have you done, Adam?"

"It was the woman you gave me! She did it!"

To the woman: "What have you done?"

"It was the serpent! The serpent did it!"

Blaming other instead of taking responsibility is as old as Eden.

Now comes one of the greatest pieces of truth in all of the Old Testament from 1 Samuel 15: "To obey is better than sacrifice."

**<sup>22</sup> Samuel said,**

**"Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices**

**As in obeying the voice of the Lord?**

**Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice [JB: just three words in the Hebrew],**

**And to heed than the fat of rams.**

**<sup>23</sup> "For rebellion is as the sin of divination,**

**And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.**

**Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,**

**He has also rejected you from being king."**

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon said:

These words are worthy to be printed in letters of gold and hung up before everyone's eyes.

I completely agree. These golden words from Samuel capture one of the greatest theological truths from the Old Testament: heartfelt obedience is what God most desires. Religious ritual always becomes a burden unless it is accompanied by heartfelt repentance, love, and adoration for God. "Obedience is the glory of angels," Psalm 103 tells us. This is testified to throughout the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets. See Psalm 50, Psalm 51, Isaiah 1, Isaiah 58, Hosea 6:6, Micah 6:6-8, Joel 2, Jeremiah 7, and on and on and on. Jesus, in fact, quotes Hosea 6:6 twice in Matthew and says, "Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'" I like how Matthew Henry says it:

God is more glorified and self more denied by obedience than by sacrifice. It is much easier to bring a bullock or lamb to be burnt upon the altar than to bring every high thought into obedience to God and the will subject to his will.

That's so good. It's much easier to bring an animal to be sacrificed. It's much easier to go take communion or to go to Mass, to go hear a sermon, to go to church, to go to a Bible study, to give your tithe... It's much easier to do that than it is to bring every high thought into obedience to God and the will subject to his will. Let Samuel's voice come to you and set you seeking for more grace, for "to obey is better than sacrifice."

What Samuel said was so powerful that the first sign of repentance actually comes from Saul. Or does it? 1 Samuel 15:24 says:

**24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice.**

Still blaming it on others.

**25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the Lord." 26 But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel." 27 As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28 So Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you [JB: David].**

Another vibrant and colorful image from the scriptures: Saul on the ground tearing the hem of Samuel's robe, and then him making this immediate analogy to the kingdom being torn from him. So powerful.

**29 Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind." 30 Then he said, "I have sinned; *but* please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." 31 So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.**

Instead of honoring God, Saul is more concerned with honoring himself. He wants to save face before the people. Fear of the people, not the Lord, does seem to be driving him. May fear of the people not drive us.

But Saul does say twice, "I have sinned!" These are the exact words in Hebrew that David will say to the prophet, Nathan, after David commits adultery with Bathsheba and has Uriah murdered. Nathan, though, you remember, said to David, "Yahweh has forgiven your sin." But as we already heard, Samuel doesn't say anything like that! In fact, it almost seems like he's saying the opposite. Why? Well, when I read both accounts, it's crystal clear to me that Saul's is a false repentance, and it's being presented as such. And David has a genuine, heart-felt repentance, as Psalm 51 further demonstrates. Saul's repentance should be seen in the same light as Pharaoh's with Moses or Achan's with Joshua, and

30:00

God knows the heart. If you only admit to what you have been caught doing, like with Achan... [laughs] He only said he was sorry because he got caught! If you only admit to what you've been caught doing, then it is a false repentance. True repentance confesses all.

Saul is rejected as king, and the Glory of Israel will not change his mind on this. Saul is out; David is in. But the story is not over yet, for God will never let the guilty go unpunished. King Agag must still be dealt with. Let's read the last few verses of 1 Samuel 15. Here is 32-35:

**<sup>32</sup> Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." <sup>33</sup> But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.**

**<sup>34</sup> Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. <sup>35</sup> Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death [JB: See 1 Samuel 28]; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.**

Truly a MacBeth type of figure—a Shakespearean tragedy. From these words of Samuel, it's clear that Agag had carried on his wars with great cruelty. This execution would have been (and should be) seen like we view the assassination of Osama bin Laden or the previous leader being assassinated—the leader of Isis, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. All were done to the glory of God. Agag, though, died a pretty gruesome death. He got it way worse than al-Baghdadi or bin Laden. The Hebrew actually says he was "hacked to pieces before the Lord." Kind of like a ritual sacrifice of an animal.

Interestingly, if you keep reading through the Hebrew Bible, you find that the Amalekites (like I said before) keep showing up like zombies that won't die to attack the Israelites. They were not all wiped out. And you find this word "Agag" used again. Where? Six hundred years later after this event, we have another Benjamite named Mordecai and another Agagite named Haman. And they have a showdown. This time, Haman attempts genocide on every Jew in the Persian kingdom. Haman really was the first Hitler. Or rather, Hitler was a modern Haman. If Saul had truly obeyed the Lord's command, his people would not have faced potential extermination 600 years later from the future Agagite, Haman.

And of course, you know the story of Esther. The Jews were protected there, too, because of the faithfulness of Esther. But if Saul had obeyed God, they would not have faced that potential extermination. Maybe God knows what he's doing after all.

As we close our study, it's good to remember that you and I are Agag. We are the Canaanites that Joshua conquered, killed, and hung up on trees. Galatians 2:20:

**<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.**

I hope everyone listening to this can say that with heartfelt conviction. We all deserve to be under the ban, but Christ put himself under the ban and was utterly destroyed in our place. He became a curse for us. All the curses of Leviticus and Deuteronomy fell upon him, but God raise him from the dead. Amen? Saul must be removed so that David would come. All kings, tyrants, prime ministers, presidents, and ayatollahs will one day be removed, and the King of Kings—our greater David—will sit on his throne judging the living and the dead. "To obey is better than sacrifice." There is no greater obedience to God than denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and following Jesus wherever he leads. Amen.

35:00 **TS:** Justin, you have given me a new scape goat—Eve. So the next time I'm in trouble, I'm just going to blame it on Eve there. I like that analogy.

**JB:** [laughs]

**TS:** "It's Eve's fault; she did it." I like that.

**JB:** "The woman you gave me!"

**TS:** Haha... you're right, yeah. It's her fault! And you made her that way. Also, what translation are you reading from?

**JB:** NASB. New American Standard Bible.

**TS:** Perfect. Gotcha. All right, sounds good.

---

**JB:** I read from that all the time.

**TS:** Yeah, I love it. Fantastic job, man. I appreciate it.

Again, I want to thank Dr. Justin Bass for covering chapter 15 and filling in. We appreciate it so much. Looking forward to it. I think you're going to be coming back for chapter 17. And next time for chapter 16... Dr. Tim Mackey is going to be doing chapter 16 for us, so we're looking forward to that next week. And with that, I want to thank everyone for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.