

Character Sketch

SAUL

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Saul
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*The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places:
how are the mighty fallen! 2 Sam 1:19*

Saul, a man of extremes, whose rise was as mighty as his fall.

Extremes were the theme throughout his life, beginning immediately upon his call to office by lot at Mizpah. In 1 Samuel 10:22 we see that Saul "hid himself among the stuff", for he was afraid to stand before his people as the LORD's chosen king. However, soon after that in chapter 11 and verse 6 when "the Spirit of God came upon Saul" and "his anger was kindled greatly" for the tidings which he heard of the Ammorites, he reacted with strength and without fear. And because of this "the fear of the Lord fell on the people" (11:7). The latter, seeming to be a more dangerous situation, causes us to wonder about Saul's reaction to the two events. This theme would paint a picture of Saul's life from this beginning until his untimely death.

As we see in 1 Samuel 9:2, Saul was "a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." This was his outward appearance; however, it is not long before Saul's true character was seen, and proved to be one of disobedience, impatience, and impulsiveness. Strangely enough, he was even cowardly at times, which later forced him to make decisions that he would not likely make otherwise.

Saul's impatience became a real problem for Samuel when we see his need to reprove him for not waiting for him and acting on his behalf in the office of a priest (10:8) in 1

Samuel 13:8-11. Samuel reproved Saul by clearly stating that he did not keep "the commandment of the LORD" and that he "hast done foolishly" (13:13).

We see Saul's disobedience in 1 Samuel 15:9 when "Saul and the people spared" those things of Amalek's in which they were instructed in chapter 15 and verse 3 to "utterly destroy".

Saul was a man that seemed to be easily swayed by the things around him. This was compounded by the obvious fact that he sought favor in the eyes of men, more than he was concerned about God's displeasure with him.

To leave Saul in this condition would not be fair. He indeed was a man that was honorable and noble, however, as King Solomon so clearly stated in Ecclesiastes chapter 7 and verse 8 "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit." Saul's end was one where "the Spirit of the LORD departed from" him and "an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him". An end whereby he found himself in complete rebellion against the LORD, inquiring and seeking counsel with wizards (28:7-13), and one which ended in suicide (31:4).

*Thine own wickedness shall correct thee,
and thy backslidings shall reprove thee:
know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter,
that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God,
and that my fear is not in thee,
saith the Lord GOD of hosts.
Jeremiah 2:1*

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