

Saul's fear

Israel's first ruler was a good example of how unrepented sin leads to an open door for the enemy to then continue to influence a person's thinking leading to more sin. Observing the timeline of sins Saul performed during his rule shows how unrepented sin can lead to hardship that could be avoided.

Anointing

In [1 Samuel 8](#), Israel pleaded to Samuel about wanting a ruler after his sons abused their titles as Judges. Israel saw how the neighboring tribes had physical kings and wanted someone in the physical to lead them. Samuel warned them that the ruler would take from them a tenth of their finest fields and livestock. He would also make their sons soldiers and daughters cooks and bakers. God told Samuel to accept their request since they weren't rejecting Samuel, they were rejecting God (vers. 6-8).

Saul went into Zuph with a servant to find lost donkeys. God told Samuel the day before that Saul was coming to the town and to consecrate him. Samuel saw Saul, brought him up to the and fed him dinner. The next day, Samuel anointed Saul and told him he would have three signs proving that God anointed him to be king (2 people with the missing donkeys, 3 people giving him bread prophesying with a group of prophets) before the spirit of the Lord would come upon him in Gibeah and he would prophesy with the prophets there. Samuel then called the tribes to Mizpah and Saul was chosen to be king when they cast lots (first by tribe, then by family in the tribe). He would then fight Nahesh and Ammonites to deliver the people of Jabesh Gilead.

Sins

Made a burnt offering when he didn't wait for Samuel - fear

1. In [Chapter 13](#), Saul attacked a Philistine outpost with 2,000 men and called for the rest of Israel to join him. However when the Israelites saw the number of the Philistine army, most became afraid and ran off.
2. Back in Chapter 10 verse 8, Samuel told Saul to wait for him for seven days before he made an offering to the Lord. When the seven days passed, more of the army started to leave and Saul did a burnt offering on his own.
3. Samuel then showed up asking why Saul did it. Saul answered because he thought the Lord abandoned Him and performed the offering out of fear. (ch 13 ver. 11-12 NET, But Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul replied, "When I saw that the army had started to abandon me, and that you didn't come at the appointed time, and that the Philistines had assembled at Micmash, I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down on me at Gilgal and I have not sought the Lord's favor.' So I felt obligated to offer the burnt offering.")

4. Some translations have that last part as, "I forced myself" (KJV, NASB, NRSV, CEV); NAB "So in my anxiety I offered"; NIV "I felt compelled."
5. Because of this, Samuel told Saul he disobeyed the Lord and the Lord had already started to look for another ruler that would be loyal to Him. (ch 13 vers. 13-14 NET, "You have made a foolish choice! You have not obeyed the commandment that the Lord your God gave you. Had you done that, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom will not continue. The Lord has sought out for himself a man who is loyal to him, and the Lord has appointed him to be leader over his people, for you have not obeyed what the Lord commanded you.")
6. His son Johnathan and Johnathan's armor-bearer snuck over to the Philistines' camp and killed 20 men. God then released fear in the Philistine camp and Saul beat the Philistines.
7. Saul failed here by looking at his physical circumstance and not trusting what God (through Samuel) told him to do. This then cut short his reign and started the process for David to be the next king.

Not killing King Agag and taking his best livestock ([1 Samuel 15](#)) - fear, greed

1. Samuel then told Saul God wanted him to strike down the Amalekites for their opposition when Israel left Egypt. He specifically told Saul to spare nothing (so no livestock, people, children alive).
2. Saul and the army went down to the Amalekites and slaughtered most, but captured King Agag. They also took the firstborn and secondborn livestock, cattle and fatlings.
3. God told Samuel about this and Samuel confronted Saul about it the next day. Saul's excuse was first that they were planning on using the livestock for offerings, but then repented and mentioned that he was afraid of the army and listened to them.
4. Samuel response to that was in verse 23 NET:
 - a. "Then Samuel said, "Does the Lord take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as he does in obedience? Certainly, obedience is better than sacrifice; paying attention is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and presumption is like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the Lord's orders, he has rejected you from being king."
5. Samuel then said the Lord has rejected Saul from being King. As Samuel was about to leave, Saul ran to grab his robe but it tore. Samuel then said, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to one of your colleagues who is better than you!"
6. Saul then convinced Samuel to go back with him to worship the Lord. However, Samuel requested Agag to be brought to him and Samuel killed Agag before leaving. This would be the last time Samuel would meet Saul before his death.
7. Saul failed here by listening to his army (ie. the world) instead of following the command given to him by God via Samuel. It's to remember here, there were

multiple times in the past where God told the Israelites to wipe out a whole nation because of their idolatry or perhaps to avoid the Israelites being exposed to pagan worship. Instead, Saul saw greed via the livestock and potential leverage/pride over keeping Agag alive instead of following God's orders.

Jealousy towards David after David killed Goliath - fear, jealousy\hate

1. Eventually, God told Samuel to go to Bethlehem to anoint the next king from one of Jesse's sons. Samuel anointed David.
2. During this time, a demon came into Saul that tormented him and he requested someone to come and play a lyre. David found favor with Saul since playing the lyre removed the demon and became his servant.
3. The philistines' army made camp at the valley of Elzah and their champion Goliath challenged Israel for 40 days. Saul and his army were afraid and didn't challenge him. David was going back and forth between the camp and his home to tend to sheep.
4. David came back to the camp and noticed Goliath. He then showed bravery by telling Saul he would kill Goliath. He then went down to the valley, slew a stone at Goliath's forehead that toppled him, then beheaded him with Goliath's sword.
5. (Chapter 18) After Saul's conquest against the Philistines, the Israel women played instruments and sung a song with the lyrics "Saul has struck down his thousands, but David his tens of thousands!". This made Saul jealous.
6. Why would Saul be jealous of a teenager? Research said David was between 15-17 when he killed Goliath.
7. Saul attempted to kill David once by throwing a spear at him while he was playing the lyre (18:10-11), and then by having him as a soldier. Saul told David would need to kill 100 philistines and take their foreskins in order to marry his daughter. David would then kill 200 philistines.
8. Saul realized then God was with David, yet continued to have jealousy.

Chasing after David and lying multiple times - jealousy, lying, anger, murder

1. In chapter 19, Jonathan (Saul's son) confronts Saul about this and Saul takes an oath. Stating that David wouldn't be put to death (verse 6).
2. Yet, in verse 9, another evil spirit went into Saul and attempted to kill David again with his spear. This time, David ran away first to his home with Michal, then to Ramah where Samuel was.
3. Moving forward in chapter 20, Saul got angry when Johnathan told him David went to Bethlehem. Saul tried to convince Johnathan that David would remove their bloodline.
 - a. 1Sam 20:30-1 NET - Saul became angry with Jonathan and said to him, "You stupid traitor! Don't I realize that to your own disgrace and to the disgrace of your mother's nakedness you have chosen this son of Jesse? For as long as this son of Jesse is alive on the earth, you and your kingdom will not be established. Now, send some men and bring him to me. For he is as good as dead!"

4. When Johnathan asked what David did to make Saul angry, Saul threw his spear.
5. Johnathan told David in secret about Saul's anger and David left for Natioth.

Saul ordering priests to be executed - murder

1. Fast forward to chapter 22, David went to Ahimelech in Nob to indirectly get supplies while on the run (He told Ahimelech he was on a mission from Saul and needed food and weapons.) Doeg the Edomite was detained in Nob at the time and saw David there.
2. A few days later, Doeg was with Saul and Saul accused his servants of helping David since no one found him. Doeg then stated he saw David with the priests in Nob and Saul went there.
3. Saul accused Ahimelech of helping David, yet Ahimelech was innocent and knew nothing. Saul commanded his servants to kill Ahimelech and the rest of the priests, but only Doeg obeyed and killed 85 of them.

Saul still pursued David even after being spared by him - jealousy, listening to man

1. In chapter 24, David had the opportunity to kill Saul when Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. Instead, David cut a piece of Saul's robe, and waited for him to leave the cave before confronting Saul.
2. Saul then left David after David swore he wouldn't kill Saul's descendants.
3. In chapter 26, David had another opportunity to kill Saul. Saul was told by the Ziphites that David was in Ziphites and he went there with 3000 men.
4. Why did Saul pursue David if he was spared back in chapter 24?
5. David and Abishai snuck into Saul's camp at night and Saul was sleeping with his spear near him. David refused Abishai's advice to kill Saul and instead took the spear and jug of water.
6. David went over to a hill nearby and called for Abner(Saul's commander) to summon Saul. Saul then confessed that he was wrong in listening to the men and swore David would be spared.
7. This would be the last time David and Saul would see each other, however David still remained on the run because he didn't believe Saul would stop pursuing him.

Finding a medium when he feared the Philistines - fear, unbelief, witchcraft

1. In [Chapter 28](#), the Philistines made an army and camped at Shuam. Saul brought his army to Gilboa and saw the number of Philistines.
2. Saul became afraid and decided to find a medium since he thought his prayers weren't being answered.
3. Saul removed all the mediums and magicians previously, but one of his servants stated there was one in Endor.
4. He disguised himself and went there in order for her to "summon" Samuel so he could get advice (Samuel passed back in chapter 25).

5. Samuel's spirit appeared and told Saul that since he didn't obey God during the attack on the Amalekites (way back in chapter 15), Samuel's prophecy would come to pass and Israel would be handed over to the Philistines.
 - a. verse 16-19; Samuel said, "Why are you asking me, now that the Lord has turned away from you and has become your enemy? The Lord has done exactly as I prophesied! The Lord has torn the kingdom from your hand and has given it to your neighbor David! Since you did not obey the Lord and did not carry out his fierce anger against the Amalekites, the Lord has done this thing to you today. The Lord will hand you and Israel over to the Philistines! Tomorrow both you and your sons will be with me. The Lord will also hand the army of Israel over to the Philistines!"
6. Saul made his situation worse by going to a medium instead of accepting the prophecy Samuel told him after he failed to wipe out all of the Amalekites.

Killed himself in the proceeding battle instead of fighting till the end - Fear

1. In chapter 31, the Philistines were winning the battle and Saul's sons (Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki-Shua) were killed. Archers saw Saul and wounded him.
2. Saul told his armor bearer to kill him because he was afraid of being captured and tortured by the Philistines. When the armor bearer refused, Saul fell on his sword and died. His armor bearer did the same.
3. The Israelites in the valley fled their cities once they realized Saul was dead and the Philistines occupied them.
4. The Philistines found Saul's corpse, placed his armor in one of their ashtoreth temples, beheaded him and hung the corpse on the city wall at Beth Shan.
5. Israelites from Jabesh Gilead traveled at night to retrieve Saul's and his son's corpses to burn them and give them a proper burial under a tree in Jabesh, before fasting for seven days.

Saul's downfall started after he decided to give in to fear and performed the offering without Samuel. When he failed in following God's order, God searched for another who would follow Him. It's possible to suggest that the fear of the Philistines in chapter 13 was the open door that allowed the demons to torment Saul, which then brought more fear since Samuel told him someone else would be anointed as king. Jealousy towards David only made matters worse since God gave David favor.

We can apply this to our lives to recognize when a situation or hardship from the enemy is trying to give us fear. Very rarely any decision made in fear is the correct decision. If Saul perhaps waited on Samuel (and by extension, God), it's possible that his reign would've lasted longer. If you are in a situation where you start to recognize you're in fear, stop, recognize this is the enemy, then focus on God instead of trying to make a decision on your own.