

I Samuel 15:22-23

²² And 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, And to heed than the fat of rams. ²³ "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.*"

Since the days that Saul was King over Israel, man has tried to manipulate the Lord through religious acts, rather than an obedient heart. Remember, that religion is simply man's feeble attempt to stay out of hell. The only thing that can save anyone from spending eternity in hell is the redemptive and saving blood of Jesus Christ. Here we are told how Saul, Israel's first king, was guilty of seeking God's favor through religious sacrifices, rather than his own obedience. The word of God is very clear here that no amount of sacrifice will offset disobedience in our life! People today still struggle with this very same issue. Often we try and conjure up more rules and laws, rather than obey what God has instituted in the first place. What the bottom line is here is that we want what we want, only we also desire God's favor and blessings. Church this will no more work in our lives, as it did in King Saul's.

Why? Verse twenty-three clearly defines it for us. **"For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.** Another word for rebellion is manipulation, and another word for divination is witchcraft. Often Christians ignorantly try to manipulate their will on to God. He takes this very seriously. Do you know why the Lord allowed the 'tree of knowledge of good and evil' in the Garden of Eden? It was there as a constant reminder that Adam and Ever were not God. Our role as believers in Jesus Christ is to obey!! We are told by Jesus in **John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.** If there is sin in your life that you have been unwilling to deal with, yet you believe that you are OK because you are a big giver, or there is something else that you have to offer; then you are clearly deceived by the wickedness in your own heart. Dear friends, I personally know this to be true in my own life! For years the Lord clearly told me to lay down the addictions that were ruling my life. I tried everything I knew to win His favor, yet maintain my own will. It wasn't until I completely obeyed, repented and sought His forgiveness; that I was free of the manipulating power that was ruling my life. I know that I am not the only one. The difference is that most Christians hide their sins so well from everyone around them; yet the very one they should consider most, they worry about the least!

Dear friend if this describes you; if you have been disobeying the Lord, yet trying to sugar coat your sin through some form of religious, personal or financial sacrifices; then I exhort you today, to get serious with your God. Jesus Himself said in John **3:36, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."** Jesus is right there willing to forgive and to take your sins away, please make today, the first day of the rest of your life!!