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Sunday School Times

Published almost weekly, but more like…..whenever, so get used to it, OK?

***Stuff For Today***

• Bob the Square

• Technology Pick of the Week

• Probably the bloodiest story in the Bible. It is the only Kroger Bible story that must be edited for violence!

# The 600 Year Story

**By Mr. Lyle (mrlyle1@gmail.com**

 ***I Samuel 15, Esther***

The “Six Hundred Year Story” begins in I Samuel 15. Saul was commanded by God to execute judgment upon the Amalekites. The nation of Amalek had proven themselves to be worthy of annihilation. Many years previous to Samuel and Saul, Israel had gained their freedom from Egypt. Led by God through the desert toward the Promised Land and arriving at the border, they sent a group of men over the Jordan to go through the land and bring back a report of what they saw there. Those men returned with a demoralizing description, one based in doubt and a lack of trust in God. The entire assembly agreed that it was indeed hopeless. In response to their disbelief, the Israelites were banished to wander in the wilderness for forty years. During that time, Amalek was an ever-present harassment. Troops from Amalek were known to come up behind the huge nomadic nation of Israel, and pick off inevitable stragglers who lingered behind the main group for one reason or another. Guerrilla tactics were effective from their viewpoint, but extremely offensive from God’s view. As Saul took on responsibility as the newly appointed king of Israel, Samuel informed him that he was to devote all of Amalek to the Lord. They and all that was theirs was to be destroyed, totally.

Saul failed at this directive miserably. He did not kill all the people of Amalek. He allowed some to escape, and brought at least one back to Jerusalem—Agag, their king. Neither did he destroy all the livestock. The explicit charge given by God forbade the taking of any articles or animals owned by the Amalekites. Ignoring the clear instruction he had been given, he brought many of them back, using the excuse that he would sacrifice them to God. In our culture, we look back at such incidents with a bit of horror at the bloodshed decreed by God. God is righteous, and the judge of all mankind. Scripture clearly states that those whom God deemed to be destroyed had been given many chances to repent and be forgiven. In failing to do so, they had made the choice to reject His salvation and had earned the wages of death.

Samuel arrived on the scene and confronted Saul face to face. Saul, true to his character, made excuse after excuse for his actions. This seemingly simple request made by God concerning Amalek, was not unimportant, or a minor concern. God understood the potential problems in the future posed by this lack of Saul’s obedience. Samuel reflected that disappointment in his extreme display of anger. Moved by the Holy Spirit to demonstrate to those present the significance of this offense, Samuel, in righteous anger, hacked Agag to pieces before the Lord. One can imagine the surprise and shock on the faces of the witnesses there as an old man of nearly ninety years old performed a physical feat that in any movie of today would require an extreme warning label.

Agag was now dead, Saul was reprimanded by God, through Samuel, and life went on. But the story was far from over. Years later, Saul faced his final moments. Mortally wounded in battle, with no hope of survival, he attempted suicide by falling on his own sword. He failed, and was found in an awkward predicament, dying, but not yet dead, afraid that he would be found by the enemy and mistreated horribly, probably spending his last moments in torture. Coincidences do not exist when God is involved. The man, who stumbled upon the gasping Saul in the final throes of death, was ironically, an Amalekite! Responding to the request made by Saul, he promptly finished what Saul began, with his own sword.

For most people of that day, the issues represented in this story, and the actions displayed, were probably disregarded over time. But God was still interested. The story was not yet over. Six hundred years later, everyone but God Himself had forgotten. As the seventy years of Israel’s captivity in Babylon drew to an end, the issue was rekindled. God would have His judgment fully realized six centuries and eight hundred miles from where it all began.

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## **The 7 Sunday School Commandments**

By Mr. Lyle (mrlyle1@gmail.com)

Thou shalt bring 2 million dollars in unmarked bills to the corner of 43rd and Jackson Streets….oops, wrong list!

Thou shalt bring a smile. If thou cans’t not find thine and thou hast left thine in a dumpster, then thou shalt return to that dumpster, and retrieve thy smile.

Thou shalt be breathing. And having brushed thy teeth this morning, verily it shall be minty fresh.

Thou shalt not poke thy neighbor in the eye lest he smite you on the nose.

Thou shalt not smite thy neighbor on the nose lest he kicketh hard against thy shin.

Thou shalt not kick hard against thy neighbor’s shin lest he poke thee in the eye.

Thou shalt have a good time, for verily verily I say unto thee; he that refuseth to have a good time shall be cast into the Lake of Fire… oops, wrong list again!