

## Saul's War with the Philistines; His Impatient Sacrifice and Loss of the Kingdom; Lack of Weapons in Israel; Jonathan's Victory Leads To A Greater Victory; Saul Stops the People from Sinning Further

### 1 Samuel 13-14

Saul's kingship having been solidified, he begins attending to nation building and warring against the surrounding peoples, particularly the Philistines, who would seek to take possession of lands and cities from the Israelites. We see in this chapter the fickle nature of Saul's kingship, instances of faithfulness contrasted by times of impatience and rebellion against the Lord. --

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### ***There and Then***

#### **Outline:**

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#### **People:**

God, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, Philistines

#### **Location:**

Cities of Michmash and Geba in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin north of Jerusalem.

#### **Context:**

Saul had just delivered the city of Jabesh-gilead, east of the Jordan, in the region of the tribe of Gad, south east of the Sea of Chinnereth / Galilee.

Samuel reprimands the people for wanting a king other than the Lord but promises to pray for the people as a result of their sin.

#### **Key Words:**

Old Testament, History, 1 Samuel, Lord, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, Philistines

#### **Key Verse(s):**

**1 Samuel 13:8-9** Now he waited seven days, according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattering from him. **9** So Saul said, "Bring to me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering.

**1 Samuel 13:13-14** Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. **14** "But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

**1 Samuel 14:6** Then Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "Come and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; perhaps the LORD will work for us, for the LORD is not restrained to save by many or by few."

**1 Samuel 14:12** So the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, "Come up to us and we will tell you something." And Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hands of Israel."

**1 Samuel 14:33-35** Then they told Saul, saying, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have acted treacherously; roll a great stone to me today." **34** Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Each one of you bring me his ox or his sheep, and slaughter *it* here and eat; and do not sin against the

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LORD by eating with the blood." So all the people that night brought each one his ox with him and slaughtered *it* there. **35** And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

**1 Samuel 14:52** Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff.

### Cross References<sup>1</sup>:

**13:13**—*"You have acted foolishly"*

**2 Samuel 12:7-9** Nathan then said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. **8** 'I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! **9** 'Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.

**1 Kings 18:17-18** When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is this you, you troubler of Israel?" **18** He said, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house *have*, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and you have followed the Baals.

**1 Kings 21:20** Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" And he answered, "I have found *you*, because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD.

**Proverbs 19:3** The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages against the LORD.

**13:13**—*"have not kept"*

**1 Samuel 15:10-11** Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, **11** "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.

**1 Samuel 15:22** 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.

**1 Samuel 15:28** 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.

**2 Timothy 2:10-13** For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and* with *it* eternal glory. **11** It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; **12** If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; **13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

**14:6**—*perhaps*

**2 Samuel 16:11-12** Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my son who came out from me seeks my life; how much more now this Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him. **12** "Perhaps the LORD will look on my affliction and

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<sup>1</sup> (Smith 75-76)

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return good to me instead of his cursing this day."

**2 Kings 19:3-4** They said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah, 'This day is a day of distress, rebuke, and rejection; for children have come to birth and there is no strength to *deliver*. **4** 'Perhaps the LORD your God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore, offer a prayer for the remnant that is left.'"

**Amos 5:14-15** Seek good and not evil, that you may live; And thus may the LORD God of hosts be with you, Just as you have said! **15** Hate evil, love good, And establish justice in the gate! Perhaps the LORD God of hosts May be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

**Zephaniah 2:3** Seek the LORD, All you humble of the earth Who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden In the day of the LORD'S anger.

*14:6—the Lord is not restrained*

**Deuteronomy 32:28-31** "For they are a nation lacking in counsel, And there is no understanding in them. **29** "Would that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would discern their future! **30** "How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had given them up? **31** "Indeed their rock is not like our Rock, Even our enemies themselves judge this.

**Joshua 14:12** "Now then, give me this hill country about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim *were* there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out as the LORD has spoken."

**Judges 7:6-7** Now the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was 300 men; but all the rest of the people kneeled to drink water. **7** The LORD said to Gideon, "I will deliver you with the 300 men who lapped and will give the Midianites into your hands; so let all the *other* people go, each man to his home."

**Psalms 115:1-3** Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Your name give glory Because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth. **2** Why should the nations say, "Where, now, is their God?" **3** But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

**Zechariah 4:6-7** Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts. **7** 'What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel *you will become* a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"'

**Matthew 19:25-26** When the disciples heard *this*, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?" **26** And looking at *them* Jesus said to them, "**With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**"

**Romans 8:31** What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

### Difficulties:

There are no particularly difficult passages in these chapters.

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### Questions:

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### Notes & Commentaries:

James Swanson<sup>2</sup>

Saul's spiritual conflict with following God is exemplified with moments of faithfulness contrasted with moments of rebellion and impatience which has its impact on his kingship and his legacy.

Jonathan's dependence on God to aid in providing a victory is a great example for Christian to look to when considering how to impact the world and stand against the enemy.

### IVP Bible Background Commentary<sup>3</sup>

**1Sa 13:8. Saul's conundrum.** Offering a sacrifice to enlist a deity's favor before an impending battle was common in the ancient Near East. ... In Saul's case the need for the ritual was interfering with the strategic element of timing. His choice attempted to acquire the ritual benefit (by offering the sacrifice himself) and still try to take advantage of striking before the strategic military moment passed.

**1Sa 13:8-13. Saul's offense.** ... It should be noted that Saul is not accused in verse **1Sa 13:13** of violating priestly protocol or committing desecration, but of breaking the command of God.

**1Sa 13:14. man after his own heart.** This statement means that God was now going to select someone of his own choosing (according to his own will or purpose rather than according to the will and purpose of the Israelites). This wording does not concern the piety of David but demonstrates God's exercise of will in rejecting Saul (a man fulfilling Israel's desire, **1Sa 9:20**) and replacing him with someone who was measured by a different criterion.

**1Sa 13:21. charges for smithing.** The smithing charges here can be seen to be exorbitant when measured against the fact that the average monthly income was approximately one shekel.

**1Sa 13:22. weapon shortage.** This verse confirms that neither iron nor bronze manufacture was permitted to the Israelites. We must assume that the Philistine rule in the area had resulted in the confiscation of weapons and that the law against blacksmithing of any sort had made only the most primitive weaponry available to them.

**1Sa 14:6. divine warrior ideology.** In the divine warrior motif the deity is fighting the battles and defeating the deities of the enemy. ... The stronger god would be victorious regardless of the strengths or weaknesses of the human combatants. Therefore, if Yahweh fights on their behalf, Jonathan is convinced that they will be victorious.

**1Sa 14:23. aspects of divine intervention.** Evidence for crediting the Lord with the victory would be seen in four elements that typically indicated divine intervention: direction through an oracle (v. **1Sa 14:10**); success by the outnumbered army (v. **1Sa 14:14**); earthquake (v. **1Sa 14:15**); and confusion and panic among the Philistines (v. **1Sa 14:20**). These are all connected to the work of Jonathan, while Saul was experiencing no such divine help or guidance even though he anxiously sought it.

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<sup>2</sup> Personal thoughts on the text.

<sup>3</sup> (Walton et al.) on 1 Samuel 13-14.

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**Wiersbe<sup>4</sup>**

**1 Samuel 13:5-9** - Why did Samuel tarry? ... Samuel had nothing to gain if Saul failed on the battlefield, and Samuel knew that God was in control, even in the appointment of a new king. Furthermore, this meeting had been planned some two years before (v. 8), and no doubt Samuel had reminded Saul of it more than once. This rendezvous was the Lord's way of testing Saul's faith and patience. Without faith and patience, we can't receive what the Lord promises (Heb. 6:12), and unbelief and impatience are marks of spiritual immaturity (James 1;1-8). Until we learn to trust God and wait on His timing we can't learn the other lessons He wants us to teach us, not can we receive the blessings He's planned for us.

**1 Samuel 13:10-12** - ... Throughout his career, King Saul was adept at minimizing his own sins and emphasizing the faults of others, but this isn't the way a man of God leads God's people.

**1 Samuel 13:13-14** - ... Saul's sin at Gilgal had cost him the dynasty, and his sin involving the Amalekites cost him the kingdom. He eventually lost his crown and his life (see 15:16-34, especially 23, 27-29; 16:1). God wanted a king with a shepherd's heart, and He found that kind of heart in David (13:14, Pss. 78:72; 89:20; Acts 13:22).

**1 Samuel 13:15-16** - [speaking of the difference between Gideon and Saul's small armies and Jonathan's victory] ... The difference wasn't so much the size of the army as the strength of the leader's faith. Gideon trusted God for victory and God honored him; Saul disobeyed God and God punished him. ... Jonathan knew that the Lord didn't need great numbers to accomplish His purposes (14:6), but He did honor great faith. ... And yet the Lord was going to use Jonathan and his armorbearer to win a great victory, for with God, nothing is impossible.

... In the way it functions or doesn't function, the church of Jesus Christ today may sometimes resemble Saul's army, but if we do, it's our own fault. Through His great work on the cross, the Lord has defeated every enemy, and His power is available to His people. We have the armor and the weapons we need (Eph. 6:10ff), and His word tells us all we need to know about the strategy of the enemy and the resources we have in Christ. All He asks is that we trust Him and obey His orders, and He will help us with the battle.

**1 Samuel 14:1-15** - ... The two courageous Jews quickly killed twenty men, and then the Lord honored their faith by sending an earthquake, "a very great trembling"! "But the Lord Your God will deliver them over to you, throwing them into great confusion until they are destroyed" (Deut 7:23). Terror and confusion gripped the enemy camp and prepared the way for a great victory of the army of Israel.

**1 Samuel 14:16-19** - Once again Saul's impatience and self-confidence got the best of him and he acted without knowing God's will or receiving God's blessing (Deut. 20:4-5). He was desperately anxious to prove himself as good a soldier as Jonathan and he desperately wanted to avenge himself against his enemies (1 Sam. 14:24). It was to fulfill his own personal agenda, not to honor God, that he rushed into the battle spiritually unprepared.

**1 Samuel 14:24-46** - ... When we obey God's commands, we walk by faith, but when we obey unnatural human regulations, we only tempt the Lord. The first is confidence and the second is presumption. All of us need to heed the admonition given in Eccl. 5:2—"Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hasty before God" (NKJV). ... A truly spiritual vow brings out the best in people, but Saul's carnal vow brought out the worst. ... Saul was feebly trying to turn a gastronomical orgy into a worship service, but he didn't succeed too

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4 (Wiersbe 236-244) on 1 Samuel 13-14.

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well. The men were famished and more interested in eating than in worshiping the Lord.

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### *Here and Now*

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Answer the questions below as you reflect on your own life and this study<sup>5</sup>: *my LOG vs others SPECK*

**S** – Are there *sins* to avoid or confess?

- How often do I rush in wanting to do something, even if a good thing, outside of God's timing, resulting in diminished returns?

**P** – Are there *promises* from God to claim?

- Nothing can restrain God from accomplishing His desires

**E** – Are there *examples* to follow?

*Positive*

- Jonathan was willing to do something difficult upon acknowledging the Lord's confirmation

*Negative*

- Saul's impatience in waiting for the offering of the sacrifice by Samuel

**C** – Are there *commands* to obey?

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**K** – How can this passage increase my *knowledge* about God / Jesus Christ / Holy Spirit?

- God is holy and wants His commands to be followed wholly
- Dependence on God is greater than the largest army to defeat enemies

#### *Other Application Questions*

Are there principles to guide?

Are there warnings to heed?

Are there attitudes to adopt?

Are there actions to take?

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5 *Navigator Bible Study Handbook (The Navigators)* [with additions] & Matthew 7:1-5.