

1st Samuel Chapter 13

V: 1-2 2 years into his reign he drafts an army just as God / Samuel had predicted, taking men to serve him.

- Saul is in direct command of 2,000 while Jonathan his son is in command of 1,000.

V: 3-4 Jonathan draws 1st blood provoking the Philistines, he must have been confident that the Lord would be with them.

- Saul blows the trumpet to muster the troops, to mobilize the nation – they've provoked the Philistines.
- Jonathan is fighting, Saul is blowing a trumpet – and taking credit for the battle / victory.

Proverbs 16:18 “Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”

V: 5 The Philistines gather for battle:

- Chariots: 30,000 Cavalry: 6,000 Infantry: too many to number.
- Previously 330,000 to battle against Nahash / Ammonites.
- Israel is always outnumbered!

V: 6-7 They've just been told to fear God – which means to fear God more than anything else – now they're given something to challenge that, to test them.

Matthew 10:28 “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

- They run for the hills, they hide under rocks, those who do follow Saul do so trembling – not a vote of confidence!

V: 8 Somewhere behind the scenes, Samuel has given Saul instruction to meet him in Gilgal and to wait 7 days for him there.

- This means that God is working in this situation somewhere.

V: 9-10 Saul grows impatient and acts presumptuously offering a sacrifice that he was not supposed to offer.

- Somehow Saul knew that he wasn't supposed to make the offering, but he “forced himself” – against his better judgment.

- This would play out again in Saul's life in up-coming events:

1 Samuel 15:22-23 “²²And Samuel said, hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. ²³For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”

- Just as Saul finishes the sacrifice, Samuel shows up – so often this seems to be God's way of working in us, testing us, developing us – waiting until the last possible moment to intervene – He takes us right down to the wire.

James 1:3-4 “³Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. ⁴But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

V: 10 Saul goes out to greet Samuel like nothing is wrong; but he's playing the hypocrite.

1 John 1:6 “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:”

Romans 8:8 “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

V: 11-12 Saul's motivation is fear – “because I saw that the people were scattered from me...”

“¹²*The Philistines will come down now upon me...*”

- Faith & fear are mutually exclusive terms.

1 John 4:18 “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

Proverbs 29:25 “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”

- Saul is also lying: “*I forced myself...*” I made myself do it even though I didn't want to... Liar, Liar, pants on fire.

V: 13-14 Samuel rebukes Saul for his disobedience and informs him that the kingdom will be taken from him and given to a man after God's own heart.

- A high value is assigned to obedience, even in the small things.

Zechariah 4:10 “For who hath despised the day of small things?...”

- Samuel was the designated official, the one ordained to act in the role of the priesthood. He wasn't a Levite, but seemingly he'd been assigned that duty.

V: 15-16 Samuel departs for Gibeah, Saul is left with 600 men who also return to Gibeah – the Philistines are in Michmash.

V: 17-18 The Philistines come out to battle in a three pronged attack.

- From Michmash they strike out at Ophrah, Beth-horon, and Zeboim.

V: 19-23 The Israelites have no weapons, they are defenseless and seemingly at the mercy of the Philistines.

- The enemy would not allow them to have swords or weapons, only the things to keep them busy farming and working – but no swords.
- The enemy still uses the same tactic – trying to keep us away from the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.
- Keep away from that which will increase your faith, keep away from that which will strengthen and defend you – without the sword we're at the mercy of the enemy.

Ephesians 6:17 "... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword..."

1 Samuel Chapter 14

V: 1-3 Jonathan again initiating action against the Philistines, 1st with the garrison in Gibeah, now a much larger force seemingly surrounding them on every side.

- While Jonathan is going out to war, Saul is sitting under a shade tree taking it easy and or avoiding the battle. He's in the uttermost part of Gibeah, meaning the farthest away from the action.
- There is a priest in the camp, the grandson of Eli wearing an ephod – priestly garments.
- It doesn't particularly seem to be needful to make mention of Ichabod, the priest's brother except to indicate the meaning of his name "The Glory has departed" in relation to king Saul.

V: 4-5 Jonathan goes through this pass that is there to this day, headed towards the Philistines.

- Steep rocks on either side of this pass, jagged rocks that go just about straight up – making it easy to defend, soldiers on the top defending against the enemies that might pass just below.
- Jonathan is heading through this passage that leads to the whole Philistine army with all their chariots, cavalry, and infantry that cover the countryside.

V: 6-7 Reveals Jonathan's motive: God is able to give them the victory whether through many or by few – faith in action, seeing the issue at hand in light of the one who would do the work – God, trusting that God is able.

Philippians 4:13 “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

- Perhaps Jonathan is thinking of Shamgar the Judge spoken of in Judges 3:31 when he kill 600 Philistines with a sharp stick. Or Samson killing 1,000 with a donkey's jawbone.
- Nothing restrains the Lord, except perhaps our unbelief:

Matthew 13:58 “And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.”

- A venture in faith, seeing if God wants to act or move in a certain way. Jonathan has a right or proper understanding of the greatness of God; God doesn't need a man to do His work, He doesn't need a multitude of men – many or few, God can always do the job.

2 Chronicles 16:9 “For the eyes of the Lord run to and from throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him....”

- The un-named armor bearer encouraged Jonathan, “do all that is in thy heart to do” I'm with you.

V: 8-10 We'll discover / reveal ourselves to them, if they say wait for us, then we'll wait, if they say come up to us then we'll go up knowing that the Lord has delivered them into our hands.

- Notice there is no option for retreat or running away – we will either stand or move forward.

V: 11-14 Jonathan and his armorbearer come out in the open and reveal themselves to the Philistines who at first mock them, then invite them to come up to them.

- These are the words that Jonathan wanted to hear – now he knows that God has delivered the Philistines into the hands of Israel – not Jonathan, Israel – so that God would be glorified.

Romans 8:31 “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

- Jonathan crawls up to the Philistines on his hands and feet to engage them in battle, Jonathan knocks them down, the armorbearer finishes them off and they kill about 20 men in the 1st ½ acre – just getting into the swing of things

V: 15-17 As Jonathan steps forward in faith, God is there and begins to confuse the enemy, causing them to tremble and they begin to kill each other and retreat.

Psalms 24:8 “Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.”

- God is showing them that He is in it, their venture of faith is according to His will.

Joshua 23:10 “One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, He it is that fighteth for you, as He hath promised you.”

Leviticus 26:7-8 “⁷And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. ⁸And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.”

Deuteronomy 30:32 “How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?”

- The watchmen see what is happening and inform Saul that the enemy is melting away – Saul orders a roll call only to discover that his son and armorbearer are the ones missing and presumably in the battle.

V: 18-19 Bring hither the ark of God? To what end? The same failed tactic of the previous generation.

- It appeared as Saul had ordered the ark of God to be brought forward that perhaps Ahiah had in some way resisted or sought to stop Saul from doing this, he's told to “**withdraw thine hand.**”
- Or this could be a reference to withdraw thy hand from the Urim & Thummim which was upon the High Priests garments, seeking to determine the will of God regarding going out against the Philistines.
- Withdraw your hand, we don't have time for that...

V: 20-23 Saul assembles the people, seeing that the Philistines are killing each other.

- The Hebrews that had sided with the Philistines, wanting to be on the winning side, still want to be on the winning side and switch over to the Israelite side.

- The men who had hidden in the caves, and pits, or fled the country all came out – seeing the victory developing and joined in the battle, pursuing after the Philistines.

V: 23 So the Lord saved Israel that day:

V: 24-32 Saul makes a foolish prideful vow or command, which distresses or grieves the men who are fighting. A “curse” instead of a blessing!

- No man can eat anything until Saul is avenged of his enemies, prideful.

Proverbs 16:5 “Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord,..”

- Jonathan had not heard the command and he ate and was refreshed, strengthened for battle.

Psalm 19 describes God Word is sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Psalm 19:8 “... the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

- When Jonathan is later informed about the foolish vow he simply acknowledges what is already apparent, that Saul has “troubled” the land.
- First the people are faint, then they are very faint – this seemingly bureaucratic decision causes the people to stumble and break the law by taking sheep and cattle and not properly preparing the food and eating it with the blood.

V: 33-35 When Saul is told of what is going on – he doesn’t accept responsibility for his foolish decision – he blames the people.

- Saul commands that the people bring forth their cattle to be properly prepared, and to offer presumably a sin offering for the people – an altar being built for that purpose.

V: 36-37 After the people had eaten and refreshed themselves Saul says lets go get the rest of the Philistines.

- The priest intervenes and suggests that they consult with God.
- When Saul asks God, God does not respond.

Psalm 66:18 “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:”

Isaiah 59:1-2 “¹Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: ²but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that He will not hear.”

V: 38-46 Realizing that it is because of sin that God is not speaking to him / them – Saul sets out to determine who the violator could be – assuming that it is not himself.

- Saul makes another foolish vow, reminiscent of Jephthah who made the vow about his daughter, even if it is his son Jonathan.
- Jonathan is picked out by lot and admits that he had eaten some honey in violation of his father's command – which he hadn't known about, he makes no attempt to defend himself, he just submits to his father's judgment.
- As Saul reiterates that Jonathan must die; it's not because he transgressed against the word of God – he had acted faithfully, he's to die because he's transgressed the word of Saul. Saul has come a long way from his humble beginnings.
- This may appear to be spontaneous, but was it? Saul wouldn't be the first king, or the last to feel threatened by a son who showed initiative, skill in battle, popularity with the people, and favor with God. (Sounds like David)
- More and more of Saul's character has been revealed: disobedient to the word of God through Samuel, taking credit for victories that he hasn't won, capricious and erratic, prone to foolish vows and anger, prideful, and unwilling to admit fault or take responsibility for his actions.
- The people intervene on Jonathan's behalf and at some point Saul lets it go.

V: 47-52 Saul took the kingdom, which God would remove from him.

- Saul's kingdom knew no peace, at war with enemies on every side, always fighting for survival.

Proverbs 16:7 “When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

- Saul's family, his other sons and daughters are named, actually this is a partial listing, others are listed in Chronicles including children from his concubine.
- The last note: if he saw any strong man or any man of valor, Saul took him to be a soldier in his army – just as had been prophesied earlier by Samuel.

Overview: Word of God vs: word of Saul. Saul had a casual, convenience based approach to the Word of God – he was “doctrinaire.”