

I SAMUEL 12-13

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Samuel chapter 12 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we have seen so far, the children of Israel wanted a King like all the other nations and God gave them what they wanted, not necessarily what He wanted at this time. He gave them a King by the name of Saul.

As the saying goes, *“Sometimes we get the leaders we deserve!”*

That was true with the children of Israel. Saul was a man who lived to please the people and not God. And that is a huge problem.

Here’s the thing. You will never please everyone no matter how hard you try. But when you obey the Lord, do what He has called you to do no matter the consequences that may come your way, you will do well.

But, as we will see, as good or I guess pretty good as Saul started out, he will not end well, and we will begin to see what was in his heart manifested in his actions in our study tonight.

In our last study we saw how Saul and the children of Israel defeated Nahash and the Ammonites who were coming against the people of Jabesh Gilead.

And God gave Saul and the children of Israel a great victory and now they are beginning to recognize that Saul is truly their King.

Back in I Samuel 10:8 Samuel said to Saul, **“You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do.”**

This is not the same event that we see here at the end of I Samuel chapters 11 and 12. Just keep that in mind so that you don't get confused about these two events.

Remember as we concluded last time, we read what took place after their victory. We are told, **“Then Samuel said to the people, ‘Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there.’ So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.”** I Samuel 11:14-15.

And that is where we are going to pick up our study this evening, in I Samuel chapter 12 starting in verse 1 as Samuel will be addressing the children of Israel at Saul's coronation as King and he is going to show them what true leadership, godly leadership is all about.

I SAMUEL 12

VERSES 1-3

As we have seen in our study of I Samuel, Samuel began his ministry when he was very young and now, he is old, and he is transitioning the nation from the time of the Judges to the Kings.

This was important to do, this transition from Judges to Kings. And thus, Samuel saw his ministry decreasing and the people would now look to King Saul for direction. His days are over, and Saul's have just begun is the idea here.

Thus, this is, in a sense, Samuel's farewell address to the nation of Israel and he will just tell it like it is. He does not hold back!

Notice what he tells the children of Israel, “**And now here is the King. . .**” I Samuel 12:2.

That truly is godly leadership, not only knowing that it is time for another to be raised up but the quality of his life from the time he was very young until now, when he is very old!

What I also want you to see is that Samuel tells them that he gave to the children of Israel what they wanted, a King.

I don’t believe this is necessarily what God wanted at this time, but God gave them what they wanted, and it is not going to be a good decision.

You see, I believe that David was the man that God wanted but it was not yet time for David to become King. Thus, they rushed things along, they could not wait, and they wanted to be like the other nations instead of being like the children of God!

Also, note that regarding the sons of Samuel, he tells them, “**my sons are with you.**”

That is interesting to me because they were not good men.

In fact, in I Samuel 8:1-5 we are told, “**Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, ‘Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.’**”

I get the impression that Samuel removed his sons from a leadership position because they were not walking with the Lord, and they were now like the common people.

And, the children of Israel did not have them Judging over them, but now they have a King by the name of Saul!

Probably not an easy thing for Samuel to do with his sons, but it was the right thing, it was what needed to be done because of their actions, they did not belong in ministry any longer!

We saw the problem with the High Priest, Eli, who did not remove his wicked sons from ministry. They were Hophni and Phinehas and they died in battle. Sometimes, as a godly leader, you have to do difficult things and Eli didn't, but Samuel did!

As the leader of this church, over the years, I have had to make some difficult decisions. Some that were not popular, but it was the right thing to do. That is what a leader must do to protect, watch over and help the people that God has entrusted to him to grow in the Lord!

Yes, the sons of Samuel may have lacked integrity, they may have done things for dishonest gain, defrauding the people, but Samuel wants the people to know that he did not live that way.

He was like a shepherd to the people, guiding them, and not for a profit but for his love for God and for them!

And if he did any wrong, he challenges the people to make it known to him and he will repay them back!

That truly is godly character in the life of Samuel, he had a humble heart and may our lives be like Samuel's!

I like this illustration because it truly shows that a leader knows what to do.

We are told,

All morning, an instructor on my staff had been explaining *leadership* to a class of police recruits.

Calling a man to the front of the class, he handed him a piece of paper on which was written: ***“You are in charge. Get everyone out of the room without causing a panic.”***

The recruit was at a loss for words and returned to his seat.

The second man summoned tried: ***“Everybody outside. Go!”***

No one moved.

A third man glanced at the instructions, smiled and said, ***“All right, men. Break for lunch.”***

The room emptied in seconds.

- Source Unknown

Again, leadership is knowing what to do in various situations and not only knowing but following through with them! That was Samuel!

VERSES 4-5

What a testimony this leader in Israel had. The people saw the integrity of this man and as they recognized this Samuel wanted them to understand that down the road, they could not accuse him of any wrong that they perceived he had done.

In other words, they had their chance and God is their witness.

In fact, they could not even blame Samuel for making Saul their King, it was what they wanted, and he gave them what they wanted, or I should say the Lord did!

VERSES 6-12

Notice who Samuel is focusing on here in these verses.

It is not the children of Israel, but it is the Lord and all He has done for them. It is a history lesson for them, you might say.

Why does Samuel give them this history lesson?

Why did they need to be reminded of these things?

First of all, Samuel was showing them the faithfulness of God and how they turned from the One who loved them and delivered them over and over again.

Also, He wanted them to understand that God's past works are a predictor of His work in the future. God's promises to Israel will not fail, even though they may. God is faithful!

Yes, he is re-capping their history but apart from the Lord they would have remained in slavery.

It is their deliverance from this slavery, their salvation that the Lord has given to them, a new life you might say!

There are times we may forget all that the Lord has done for us. And what tends to happen when we do is that we look to others to rule and reign in our lives. We look to other things to reign in our lives.

That will never work because it is only the Lord who has taken us from the slavery we had in sin and brought salvation into our lives, He has given us a new life.

May we never forget that!

And Samuel speaks of the period of the Judges, which was a period of time that was very dark spiritually speaking.

As we saw as we went through the book of Judges that the nation goes through a cyclical pattern in their walk with the Lord.

The cycle begins with a time of prosperity and rest as God blesses the nation.

During this time of peace and prosperity they become complacent in their walk with God, they turn from God and fall into idolatry.

As they turn away from God, as idolatry fills their lives, God brings His judgment upon them. And this judgment is manifested as the enemies of Israel rise up and oppress them.

As this judgment continues on for years the children of Israel finally come to their senses and fall on their knees, repenting of their sins before God, the one they told Joshua that they would serve wholeheartedly! It is then that they do return to the Lord.

Then God raises up a Judge who comes on the scene to deliver the children of Israel from the oppression they were facing with their enemies.

Thus, out of this is born a time of peace and prosperity that continues on for a time, until the Judge dies, and then they return to their complacency and turn from the Lord and the cycle repeats itself over and over again!

And Samuel reminds them all that God had done in raising up these Judges to deliver them.

He raised up *Jerubbaal* or *Gideon*.

Then Samuel speaks of *Bedan*, which many feel is speaking of *Barak* as the Septuagint translates it this way.

Others feel it is *Samson* and still others feel it is *Jair*.

But the idea here is that God raised up a man to deliver them.

He speaks of *Jephthah* and himself, *Samuel*, besides others, to deliver them.

And yet they still turned from God and wanted a man to be King over them.

Again, they have seen the faithfulness of God over and over in their lives and yet, they have rejected Him to have an earthly King over them.

What a sad picture it is but Samuel, before he steps down you might say, wants them to understand this and the choice they have made. An earthly King over a heavenly One!

And Samuel brings them up to the present day as he speaks of what the Lord did in delivering them from the hands of Nahash and the Ammonites.

I think if we were honest with ourselves, we miss out many times what God has done in our lives, just as the children of Israel had done!

And because of that we look to carnal, fleshly, earthly solutions to our problems instead of the Lord.

Look at what He has done for you and then, walk with Him and not apart from Him!

VERSES 13-15

I want you to notice here who wanted a King. It was the children of Israel!

Look at what we see here, **“here is the king whom you have chosen.”**

This is the King **“you have desired.”**

And it is out of what they wanted we see that **“the LORD has set a king over you.”**

God gave them what they wanted, not what they needed at this time. The Lord was the one who was to rule over them, but they wanted Saul, an earthly King!

Because of that Samuel wants them to remember that they may be under the authority of an earthly King, the one they wanted, but ultimately, they are under the authority of the Lord.

And he gives them a choice to make.

To follow the Lord and be blessed or disobey the Lord and see the judgment that will come upon their life for it.

The example he gives to them was their fathers or earlier generations and the ones that walked with the Lord, were submissive to Him, obedient to Him, they were blessed.

On the other hand, the ones that were in rebellion against God, disobedient to Him, were cursed.

It is as simple as that. Yes, they had an earthly King but more importantly they had a heavenly One they needed to follow!

This reminds me of what Joshua did back in Joshua 24:19-20 in his farewell address to the nation as he was admonishing them to walk with the Lord.

We are told, **“But Joshua said to the people, ‘You cannot serve the Lord, for He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good.’”**

The idea that Joshua and Samuel are both trying to get across is that they were not to serve the Lord half-heartedly but to completely surrender their lives to Him or do not serve Him at all. Don't be wishy-washy in your walk with the Lord!

Make no mistake about it, we too are under the authority of our local and national government as well as our parents and so on. And we are to follow the laws in which have been established up to the point where they go against what God has said and then we are to follow the commands of God over the commands of men.

Remember as Peter and the apostles were preaching Christ and because of that they were taken prisoner by the Sadducees.

As they were in prison God opened the doors and set them free. And as the guards went to bring these men before the council, they found that they were not there!

Where did they find them?

They were preaching Christ in the Temple.

Because of that they were brought before the council and they said to Peter and his men, **“... ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!’ Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’”** Acts 5:28-29.

You see, they were not going to let the commandments of men stop them from preaching Christ.

What does that mean for us?

When the laws of the land command us to do something contrary to what God has said, then we too must obey God rather than man.

Otherwise, we are to obey the laws of the land for that is what God desires of us.

VERSES 16-18

Please keep in mind that during the wheat harvest, which was usually around the end of May and the beginning of June, it is very dry in Israel.

And now as Samuel prays to the Lord, we see thunder and rain coming down upon the land.

Why did Samuel do this?

I think he wants the children of Israel to understand that the words he is speaking is not just a retribution, vengeance or payback for what they did to him, but this is of the Lord.

You see, they may turn to the god Baal or the god of thunder and rain, but it is the true and living God that controls all these things.

Thus, focus on Him or you will face His judgment upon your land and your lives!

Now the response of the people is interesting.

They were afraid, greatly afraid of the Lord and of Samuel!

Why were they so impressed by this?

Didn't they know that God is all-powerful?

I think they did intellectually, but it did not sink down into their hearts and become part of their lives.

God wanted them to see that He is all-powerful and thus, repent and get right with Him before His judgment comes!

What are they going to do?

Let's read on and see.

VERSE 19

Israel not only recognized their sin in asking for a King but the many more sins in their lives.

We have seen that God brought the thunder and the rain and it exposed their sin, and they do turn to the Lord.

But in regard to a King, they are stuck with that one and yet, don't be discouraged because if the King, if the people walk with the Lord, they will be blessed.

But if they don't, then they will see the judgment of God upon their lives and upon the land.

I like the way that Trapp expounds on this idea of **“we have added to all our sins.”**

He wrote, *“By occasion of this sin, they came to the sight and recognition of many more. Our lives are as full of sins as the firmament is of stars, or the furnace of sparks.”*

May we not lose sight of that fact for when we do we become self-righteous, and we begin to look down upon people!

VERSES 20-25

Listen to how The Living Bible puts I Samuel 12:20-22, **“Don't be frightened,' Samuel reassured them. 'You have certainly done wrong, but make sure now that you worship the Lord with true enthusiasm, and that you don't turn your back on him in any way. 'Other gods can't help you. The Lord will not abandon his chosen people, for that would dishonor his great name. He made you a special nation for himself-just because he wanted to!’”**

We can't ignore the fact that Israel sinned. But the wonderful news is that God will forgive the repentant heart.

And Samuel does not stop there. He tells them not to continue walking in sin but walk in the Lord.

You see, Satan has no problem with us living in the past or in the future, it is the present walk with the Lord that he tries to steer us away from. ***DON'T TURN ASIDE*** is what Samuel is telling them and us!

Don't just pretend to love the Lord. Don't just come to church and think that you are honoring God by doing that.

We are to come and worship Him with “**true enthusiasm**”!

May our love and worship be from our hearts and may that love be manifested in all that we do!

If you don't, then what you worship will be – *EMPTY!*

We also have to remember that this is not just for the children of Israel or the people back in those days that worshiped bizarre things instead of worshiping the Lord.

It happens even today!

Listen to this article from the *Chicago Tribune* dated Tuesday, November 16, 1993.

The title of this article is “*A Former Roadblock Becomes Key Thoroughfare To Hindu God.*”

The story goes like this, “*Devotes from as far away as India worship at the San Francisco shrine to the Hindu god Shiva. Although it originally was just a traffic barrier, believers now pray and offer flowers, food and coins there. . . It (is) a 4 - foot tall stone traffic barrier, but to Maharaj's mind it looked amazingly like a lingam, a phallus-shaped symbol of Shiva's power and fertility.*”

It is amazing the things you will worship when you refuse to turn to the true and living God!

And look at verse 22 and in that we see the love of God for His people.

And again, this is from The Living Bible, “**The Lord will not abandon his chosen people, for that would dishonor his great name. He made you a special nation for himself-just because he wanted to!**”

Why doesn't God give up on Israel?

Because He loves them!

Why doesn't God give up on us?

Because He loves us!

May we not forget that and may His love for us cause us to love Him even more and not turn to the left or to the right but continue following our Shepherd, Jesus Christ!

Now verse 23 is interesting because Samuel tells us if he does not pray for his people, it would be a sin!

Thus, if it is a sin to stop praying it must be even worse to fail to start praying!

I like the way that Spurgeon put it as he wrote, ***“Perhaps you will never preach, but you may pray. If you cannot climb the pulpit you may bow before the mercy-seat, and be quite as great a blessing.”***

How true that is, and it does not end with prayer, it only begins with prayer.

You see, Samuel not only prayed for them, but he taught them the **“good and right way.”**

I truly believe they go hand-in-hand.

You need to be in prayer for those you are teaching, those you are sharing the Gospel with because prayer opens the doors for ministry to begin!

Samuel was a man of prayer and a man of the Word, and he shared that with others. May we do no less!

It is not just giving people what you feel is right, it is giving them the truths of God found in the Word of God – ***PERIOD!***

And Samuel concludes by saying in verses 24 and 25, and again this is from The Living Bible, **“Trust the Lord and sincerely worship him; think of all the tremendous things he has done for you. But if you continue to sin, you and your king will be destroyed.”**

Samuel gave them a choice but if you reject the Lord then the choice you make is truly foolish.

But they were warned as Clarke reminds us, ***“Never was a people more fully warned, and never did a people profit less by the warning.”***

And when both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah were swept away into captivity, it was not because they were not warned. They just refused to listen!

What about us? We too have been warned by God. May we listen and obey!

Now as we move into I Samuel chapter 13 we will see King Saul learn this lesson firsthand in regard to following the Lord whole-heartedly. He will see that rebellion against God has serious consequences, but on the other hand, obedience to God has tremendous blessings!

And as a nation’s leaders go, so will the people, for they will not rise above the level of commitment of their leader.

Let’s read on into I Samuel 13 and see how this is played out!

I SAMUEL 13

VERSES 1-2

This first verse is difficult to translate but what it is literally saying is, ***“Saul was [40] years old when he began to reign, and he reigned over Israel for two years.”***

Again, there is much debate about this verse and what it means. Some say Saul was 30 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty-two years as the forty is missing from the text.

Here is my take on it, you can do your own research on it, but I think during his first year Saul faced the Ammonite threat and now he is in his second-year reigning as King over Israel!

The reason he has to be older is that we see mentioned here his son Jonathan, who was over part of his army and thus, Jonathan had to be a grown man at this time.

And keep in mind that prior to this Israel had no standing army, but now, with a King, they gather a standing army.

It is in the second year of Saul's reign he picks 3,000 men of war, men ready to fight that are at his side.

Of these 3,000 men, he keeps 2,000 for himself in Michmash, and he gives 1,000 to his son Jonathan in Gibeah.

Michmash was located northwest of the Dead Sea almost due west of Jericho.

Gibeah was located just south of Michmash.

And as we are going to see, Jonathan was a godly man and what a great story this man has left for us to read about.

Of this man, Jonathan, Saul's son, Clarke tells us, ***"This is the first place in which this brave and excellent man appears; a man who bears one of the most amiable characters in the Bible."***

And we will see that as we go through I Samuel.

VERSES 3-4

Keep in mind that the children of Israel were under the authority or power of the Philistines and as long as they took their place, they had peace with the Philistines.

And everything was okay until Jonathan rose up and fought against them. And now the Philistines are not happy, and they are rising up against Israel.

Now this is important. As long as we are ineffective in our spiritual walk, as long as we let the spiritual enemies of our lives control us, as long as we don't rock the boat and stand up for the things of God, sharing the Gospel message, they will not fight against us.

But guess what! As soon as you begin to fight, they will rise up to fight against us.

If you are in a battle, that means you are walking in the ways of God and the enemy does not like it.

But as John said, **“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”** I John 4:4.

May we not forget that!

Now when Saul hears about it, he blows the trumpet and the nation of Israel thinks that Saul is leading the charge against the Philistines, instead of what really took place.

It was Jonathan that took a stand for God and what the enemy was doing to God's people.

But here we see pride building up inside Saul and manifested in his actions. He wanted to look good before the people, and so as King, he blew the trumpet.

In other words, he wanted all the glory.

How sad it is when others take credit for the work you have done. But we must not forget that God not only knows the things we have done, but the motivation behind them!

According to David Guzik, ***“In Geba: Archaeologists have found this Philistine fortress at Geba (also known as Gibeah). The archaeological evidence shows that it was destroyed but then later rebuilt by Saul, and then became his palace and fortress.”***

So once again we see archaeological evidence that the Bible is true!

So what are the Philistines going to do in response to the battle that Jonathan began and King Saul is joining in?

Let's read on and see.

VERSE 5

Here is the reason it was not a great idea to fight against the Philistines, they had a massive army, and they were not afraid to use it against their enemies!

When the Philistines get wind of what is happening to their brethren, they mobilize their forces together and this is a massive military assault that the Philistines are putting together against Israel!

Let me also add this. Some translations feel it is 3,000 chariots instead of 30,000, which would make more sense if there were six thousand horsemen. But, in either case, it was a large number of people and equipment!

VERSES 6-7

Why were they so afraid?

Because they were outnumbered and outnumbered by a lot!

Some of the children of Israel went into hiding and others went *AWOL*, they left the scene!

What I want you to see here is that you need to notice the difference between men of faith and men that are faithless!

Jonathan was bold enough to launch this military campaign against the Philistines; he had faith in the Lord.

On the other hand, the children of Israel along with their leader, King Saul are fearful, they are trembling and as the leader goes, so go the people!

As they hear about this massive army that the Philistines have gathered together, they panic, they hide in caves, some in pits, some crossed over the Jordan River for safety and according to what I Samuel 14:21 tells us, some of them even joined forces with the enemy!

I guess you might as well fight on the winning team they thought, a kind of “*Better red then dead*” mentality!

But how sad when God’s people tremble in fear, hid, join forces with the enemy instead of turning to the true and living God and asking for His guidance, His direction, that He would give them the victory!

We don’t see them pray, seek direction from God, but just tremble in fear.

Now let me also say this. They had every right to be fearful, from a human standpoint.

But God told them that He would be with them and give them the victory if they walked with Him. And they saw the faithfulness of God, but now that it is being put to the test in their lives, they are on the run instead of standing strong in the Lord!

I don’t know how many of you remember when all those soldiers were killed when the Beirut bombing took place. The nation was shaken, and President Regan pulled the nation together during this time of tragedy.

But not King Saul, he was still in Gilgal, where he was made King, maybe staying away from the trouble, but in his actions, the one who was to lead his people in war, was also trembling at this massive army!

What is Saul going to do?

What is this King who is to lead the people going to do now?

In fact, according to I Samuel 13:15 and 14:2 his army had dwindled down from 3,000 men to only 600. That is not good.

What is he going to do?

Let's read on and see if he is a man of faith or a man of fear!

VERSES 8-9

Now word got to Samuel about this, and it seems that Saul asked for his help and Samuel told him to wait seven days.

Why did Samuel do this?

I think to see the faith of Saul.

You see, when Samuel came, he would offer the sacrifices and seek the Lord and see what they would do in this battle.

What is interesting to me is that earlier on God spoke to Saul but now, Saul is not listening, or he just did not believe that God would listen to him. Maybe it is because he was not a man of faith.

Now things are getting tough. His military is deserting him, they are trembling in fear and things are getting out of control.

Yes, maybe the first day he was able to encourage the troops the best he could but then day two, three, four, five, six, seven and no Samuel.

What was he going to do?

Why was God allowing Saul to go through this?

First the second question and then we will see what Saul will do.

We see here that Saul is being tested. In other words, is Saul going to trust God or is he going to trust in his military might, that is dwindling down!

We see here that Samuel told Saul to wait so he could offer a sacrifice to God and pray for Israel's victory.

But again, Saul needs to act because his soldiers are going *AWOL!*

F. B. Meyer once said, ***“God can only use those who trust Him absolutely; and He often tests them by long delays.”***

A prerequisite for Christian service is the willingness to wait on God. Get ahead of God and you're on your own.

For King Saul, he could not wait any longer because his back was up against the wall. So he does the only thing he can think of, he offers the burnt offering to the Lord.

Folk's, Saul was a King and not a priest. He acted in the flesh and God is not going to honor that!

In fact, Trapp tells us of this incident, ***“If Saul was among the prophets before, will he now be among the priests? Can there be any devotion in disobedience? O vain man! What can it avail to sacrifice to God, against God?”***

And this truly tells me that Saul was not a man of faith. God was giving Saul a chance to grow, to mature in his faith in the Lord, but he failed because he was a man who did not have faith, he was not devoted to God. Yes, he was a leader, not a good one, but he was not a spiritual man at all!

VERSES 10-12

God's timing is perfect!

We need to understand that God is never early or late, He is always right on time and that is what we see here!

As soon as Saul is finished in strolls Samuel, not late but right on time.

And we are told that Saul went out to greet Samuel and, in the Hebrew, it literally says that he went out to bless Samuel.

Saul is a man who thinks he can do anything, and he is doing it, but it is not of God. He is trying to show Samuel how spiritual he is, and it isn't working.

One writer illustrated it like this. He said it is like the little boy whose mom caught him with his hand in the cookie jar and then replies to his mom, "***Mom, let's pray!***"

It just doesn't work!

And look at the excuses that Saul makes when Samuel asks him, "**What have you done?**"

He tells Samuel, "***Look, the people were all scattered, they were afraid, I had to do something!***"

He tells Samuel, "***Look, it is your fault. You're the one who is late not me!***"

He tells Samuel, "***Look, the Philistines were coming down upon me and I had to make supplication to the Lord. What else could I do?***"

He could have made supplication by bringing it to the Lord; he did not need to offer a burnt offering, that was the priest's responsibility!

Instead of humbling himself before the Lord, he lifted himself up and God will bring him down!

And after all this Saul says to Samuel, “**Therefore, I felt compelled and offered a burnt offering.**”

In other words, he let his feelings dictate his actions and that is never a good thing. He never repented of what he did, he just made excuses and that is never good.

Repent and get right is what he should have done, and it is what we need to do when we disobey the Lord. What a lesson for us to learn!

In our own lives, how many times does God allow us to reach that point where our backs are pushed up against the wall, with no hope that God will intervene.

Thus, we have only two choices.

To wait upon the Lord and trust that He will respond.

Or to take matters in our own hands.

If we wait upon the Lord we can say, “**. . . ‘Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.’**” Isaiah 25:9.

Or we can act as Saul did and be “**compelled**” to sin against God.

It is not easy to wait upon the Lord. Sometimes the answer or the help does not come till the last second.

There is a song with the lyrics that go like this,

*When You don’t move the mountains I ‘m needing You to move.
When You don’t part the waters I wish I could walk through.
When You don’t give the answers As I cry out to You.
I will trust, I will trust I will trust in You.*

- Lauren Daigle - Trust In You

Can we trust in the Lord no matter what we are facing?

We need to!

You see, I guarantee that if you wait upon the Lord, you will be blessed beyond belief.

It will be a time of spiritual growth and maturity for you.

For Saul, he is going to find out what the consequences would be for his lack of faith and disobedience to God.

VERSES 13-14

Samuel does not buy any of the excuses that Saul had given him, and he tells Saul that he is a fool to disobey the Lord. God had established what a King was to do, and Saul did not follow them, and he was held accountable for his actions.

He will not establish his kingdom with the descendants from Saul. He forfeited those rights.

Now some may see this as being harsh, but it is not.

Trapp puts it like this in regard to what Saul did, ***“To disobey God in the smallest matter is sin enough: there can be no sin little, because there is no little God to sin against.”***

And Poole makes these remarks regarding the actions of this King, Saul.

He wrote, ***“Men see nothing but Saul’s outward act, which seems small; but God saw with how wicked a mind and heart he did this; with what rebellion against the light of his own conscience, as his own words imply; with what gross infidelity and distrust of God’s providence; with what contempt of God’s authority, and justice, and many other wicked principles and motions of his heart, unknown to men. Besides, God clearly saw all that wickedness that yet lay hid in his heart, and foresaw all his other crimes; and there had far more grounds for his sentence against him than we can imagine.”***

Like it or not, God is fair, He is just, He is right in His actions against Saul!

Now notice who will replace Saul as King. It will be a man who has a heart for God.

What does that mean?

It does not mean a perfect man but a man who loves God and his desire is to do the will of God.

I realize that you may feel that you have failed, that your heart is not after God like you would like it to be. Folk's look at who God chooses to be King, David.

If David was a man after God's own heart, and yet have our sins, then we can have his heart, one that is in love with the Lord.

Not a perfect heart but one who truly loves the Lord!

Trapp put it like this, *“As for David, though he was not without his failings, - and those foul ones too, some of them, - yet for the main, his heart was upright, not rotten, as Saul's was.”*

Let me share with you a few things regarding this issue of having a heart after God.

David Guzik made these observations regarding this issue.

He wrote,

- A man after God's heart honors the LORD. Saul was more concerned with his will than God's will. David was a man after God's heart in the way that he knew God's will was most important. Even when David didn't do God's will, he still knew God's will was more important than his own was. All sin is a disregard of God, but David sinned more out of weakness and Saul more out of a disregard for God.
- A man after God's heart enthrones God as king. For Saul, Saul was king. For David, the LORD God was king. Both David and Saul would have thought sacrifice important before the battle. But David thought it was important because it pleased and honored God. Saul thought it was important because it might help him win a battle. For Saul, God would help him achieve his goals. For David, God Himself was the goal.

- A man after God's heart has a soft, repentant heart. When Saul was confronted with his sin, he offered excuses. When David was confronted with his sin, he simply said I have sinned against the LORD (2 Samuel 12:13).
- A man after God's heart loves other people. Saul became increasingly bitter against people and lived more and more unto himself. David was a man after God's own heart in the way that he loved people. When David was down and out, he still loved and served those who were even more down and out than himself (1 Samuel 22:1-2).

What we are seeing here is the downfall of Saul's kingdom. Keep in mind that it would be many years down the road before he was removed as King and David installed as King. But what we are seeing is Saul spinning out of control and away from God and his actions reflect this broken relationship. He truly was a man who did not have faith.

As men and women of God, can you, as a conductor of a band, keep this in mind. ***“When conducting the band you’ll find it’s allowed; you’re expected to stand with your back to the crowd.”***

For Saul, he wanted the approval of people at all costs, even his relationship with God. His actions were to please the people, not God!

We have to be careful that we don't let the winds of circumstances drive our ship. We must be anchored in Christ and let Him guide our lives.

Are we here to please God or ourselves and win the approval of man?

David was a man who wanted to please God, and may we have that same heart attitude and not be like Saul who wanted to please not only himself, but the people!

VERSE 15

Saul was to lead the people, but instead he caused his people to scatter.

Of the 3,000 troops he had, only 600 remained. He only had 600 men to go up against the vast army of the Philistines.

David, on the other hand, inspired the people. In fact, as we move on in I Samuel we are going to see that David is fleeing for his life from Saul, and has 400 men (I Samuel 22:2) that are with him, following him and they are nothing more than troublemakers who joined forces with David.

But David trains these men into mighty men of God for his faith was something that others caught.

Saul lacked faith and it seems that his fear is what his people caught.

And here we see Samuel announce this judgment against Saul and he leaves.

He knew that Saul was not a man after God's own heart, and he left him to his own devices to see what he could do!

He did not repent before God and there was nothing else Samuel could do!

VERSES 16-18

Can you imagine seeing this invading army coming down upon you! Saul's army is now 600 men and thus, they were far outmatched for this battle.

And it is even worse than this.

Let's read on and see what the other problem was.

VERSES 19-23

Besides being outnumbered, Israel lacked the weapons of war.

The Philistines had acquired the technology to make iron implements, and they kept this technology from Israel.

And during times of peace, Israel had to go to the Philistines to have their farm implements sharpened.

And of course, the Philistines kept the weapons of war from Israel. It would not be until the time of Solomon that Israel would have the technology to make these weapons.

Regarding these weapons of war, Clarke tells us, *“It is very likely that in the former wars the Philistines carried away all the smiths from Israel, as Porsenna did in the peace which he granted to the Romans, not permitting any iron to be forged except for the purposes of agriculture . . . The Chaldeans did the same to the Jews in the time of Nebuchadnezzar; they carried away all the artificers [craftsmen], 2 Kings 24:14; Jeremiah 24:1, 29:2. And in the same manner did Cyrus treat the Lydians.”*

Also, Youngblood makes these remarks, *“For decades archaeologists working at many different sites have unearthed iron artifacts in bewildering number and variety dating from the period of greatest Philistine power and leading to the general consensus that the metal was introduced into Canaan - at least for weapons, agricultural tools, and jewelry - by the Philistines.”*

So once again we see archeology support what the Bible is telling us. We should not be surprised. And it would seem that only those that could afford it, Kings and their sons had weapons of war. Not a great threat if only a handful of people have weapons of war when your enemy is supplied with many weapons of war!

Next time we will see what takes place and if Israel will be able to defeat these Philistines.

But before I close let me leave you with this to think about.

We are told that the Word of God is the sword of the spirit. And just like the Philistines, Satan loves to keep it out of our hands.

How does he do that?

He does this by discouragement and various activities that keep you from getting into the Word, by losing interest in the Word and by not going to Bible studies.

And the only way to counter these attacks is to resist the devil and draw near to God.

If you understand that one of his goals is to disarm you, you will never let him take your offensive weapon away from you.

Think about it. As a soldier you will do everything possible from letting the enemy get your weapon.

Then why are we so lackadaisical about our ***SWORD***, the Bible?

May we keep it with us at all times, for God's Word needs to be treasured in our hearts!

Remember, the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God! May we not leave home without it!

