

FIRST SAMUEL

Lesson 21: Chapter 13, Disobedience: the Beginning of Saul's Spiritual Breakdown

25 November 2016

VSS. 1-4 When Saul reigned two years, he assembled the troops against the enemies. His son Jonathan was in charge of 1,000 soldiers in Gibeah. This reveals that Saul was not a young boy when he was searching for his father's asses (chpt. 9); he already had a wife and son at that time.

Israel defeated a Philistine garrison at Geba. Their next place of conflict will be in Gilgal. This is the place where Saul begins to falter. In Gilgal we see Saul's first great spiritual failure. We begin to see the defects in his character, which lead to some bad decisions.

VSS. 5-7 When the Philistines gathered to fight with Israel, all the people lost confidence in their new king. They hid themselves for fear of the enemy and lack of faith in their new king.

“Stand up for Jesus:” —The arm of flesh shall fail you! You dare not trust your own!

VSS. 8-9 Samuel promised Saul he'd be there after seven days to offer the sacrifice and prepare the people for battle (see chpt. 7). When Saul saw all the people leaving, he tried to regain control by offering the sacrifice that was forbidden for him to offer. After Saul committed this sin, Samuel appeared on schedule, just as he had promised.

Often we get impatient with God, give up on Him, and go back to our old sinful ways. We forget that the Lord is not slack concerning His promise (2 Peter 3:9). He will be where He said He'd be in due time. —We need to stay faithful until we see God fulfil His promises.

Preachers need to remain faithful to God's truths even if they see that people are leaving the church. We should never compromise God's commandments to attract or hold onto church members. Be patient, live by faith, don't draw back (Hebrews 10:35-39).

VSS. 10-12 When Samuel arrived, Saul confidently went out to meet him. This action reveals that Saul is losing his “conscience toward God” (1 Pet. 2:19). He has no shame for disobeying God's commandment. We need to thank God when he speaks to our heart and prevents us from doing something we'll regret for the rest of our life.

Saul blamed the people (vs. 11), he blamed Samuel, and he blamed the enemy. It is human nature to blame somebody else (Genesis 3:11-13). It doesn't matter who you try to blame; God knows the truth.

If blaming others doesn't work, you'll try to justify your actions with really good reasons (vs. 12). It is never right to disobey God—even if your intentions are good. You will reap what you sow. Nobody gets away with sin (Num. 32:23).

VSS. 13-15 Samuel did not accept any of Saul's excuses or reasons for his wrongdoing. Saul clearly disobeyed the commandment that God gave him. If Saul had obeyed, God would have gladly blessed him and established him in the kingdom. His disobedience cost him everything.

VS. 16 Jonathan not only witnessed seeing his father being rebuked by the prophet, but the consequences of Saul's sins would affect Jonathan just as much. Jonathan would not receive the kingdom after his father.

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7). You might think your sin only affects you, but the Bible teaches otherwise.

Your children are following the path that you're creating for them. It's your responsibility to make sure it's a path that they can safely follow.
