

1  **THE TURNING POINT**

1 Samuel 13

2  **REVIEW**3  **ISRAEL ASKS FOR A KING**

- The nation of Israel, seeing themselves surrounded by increasingly powerful foes such as the Philistines and Nahash the Ammonite, asked the prophet/judge Samuel for a king.
- This was after generations of God ruling over his people as their only king, and delivering them by the hand of Judges – local spiritual and military leaders whom God raised up.

4  **SAUL THE KING**

- The man chosen by God – and eventually accepted unanimously by the people of Israel – was Saul.
- Saul was a tall, handsome man who possessed some admirable character traits: He was small in his own eyes and he had a natural talent for leadership.

5  **SAUL VS. THE SERPENT**

- Saul's first test as a leader came when Nahash, king of Ammon, came and besieged Jabesh-Gilead.
- Although the rest of Israel wrung their hands and panicked, Saul kept his head and rallied the nation of Israel into a unified military force.
- He then led them to battle and destroyed the Ammonite army.

6  **SAUL VS. THE PHILISTINES**

1 Samuel 13

7  **SAUL IS ESTABLISHED**

- *Saul lived for one year and then became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel, Saul chose three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent home, every man to his tent. (1Sa 13:1-2)*

8  **SAUL'S ARMY**

- Saul reigns for two years before establishing a regular standing army, instead of the improvised militias he'd previously used (in his conflict with Nahash).
- Note that Samuel's prophecy begins to be fulfilled: The sons of Israel are now being taken to serve their new king in his wars.

9  **SAUL'S ARMY**

- His placement of the garrisons at Gibeah and Michmash was strategically chosen to defend against Philistine raids and incursions.

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10  **JONATHAN'S VICTORY**

- *Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." (1Sa 13:3)*

- Geba was an important hill fortress about 6 miles north of Jerusalem.
- It is located roughly between Saul's two outposts.

#### 11 JONATHAN'S VICTORY

- The initial encounter between the fledgling Kingdom of Israel and the Philistines takes place at Geba, located roughly halfway between Gibeah and Micmash, Saul's two garrisons.
- Saul's son Jonathan (who will be important to the stories of both Jonathan and David) leads a raid and defeats the Philistine garrison at Geba.
- Saul is ecstatic over this initial victory and publishes his success throughout the land.

#### 12 ISRAEL GOES TO WAR

- Saul musters the people of Israel to war against the Philistines. This begins the first of three key encounters with the Philistines during the reign of Saul.

#### 13 ISRAEL GOES TO WAR

- *And all Israel heard it said that Saul had defeated the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become a stench to the Philistines. And the people were called out to join Saul at Gilgal. And the Philistines mustered to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude. They came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth-aven. (1Sa 13:4-5)*

#### 14 THE PHILISTINES GO TO WAR

- The Philistines respond with an overwhelming raiding force, consisting of a formidable number of chariots and horsemen, as well as an innumerable number of footmen.

#### 15 A DISPARITY OF FORCE

- Saul's headquarters of Michmash is essentially besieged. Keep in mind that the Philistines have an extraordinarily large raiding force (either three or thirty thousand chariots, depending on the translation of the Hebrew word).
- Either way, it's an enormous disparity of numbers when you consider that Saul's standing army numbers no more than 3,000 men, including those who are with Jonathan.

#### 16 HUNTED AND HARRIED

- *When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble (for the people were hard pressed), the people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns, and some Hebrews crossed the fords of the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. (1Sa 13:6-7)*

#### 17 HUNTED AND HARRIED

- The Philistines push the Israelite troops all the way to Gilgal.
- "All the people," refers to all of the people with Saul. We will soon see that Saul's numbers, which were not impressive to begin with, have dwindled as his army has lost morale and his forces have been scattered.

#### 18 THE TURNING POINT

- *He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering. (1Sa 13:8-9)*

19  **THE TURNING POINT**

- This is the all-important turning point for Saul. His army is scattered and dwindling, his role as a king drastically undermined by this reversal in fortunes. He needs a morale boost. His army needs a shot in the arm.
- He has been waiting for Samuel to arrive so that he can offer the "burnt offering" - the traditional sacrifice which according to Mosaic law must precede almost all important events.

20  **SAUL'S FALL**

- Saul eventually grows impatient and, after having waited the seven days Samuel had prescribed, decided to offer the sacrifice himself. In doing so, he disobeyed both Mosaic Law and Samuel's command.
- Mosaic law commanded that the Burnt Offering be offered only by priests. Samuel, though a prophet/judge, was also trained as a priest under Eli.

21  **THE LAW OF THE BURNT OFFERING**

- *The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Command Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the burnt offering. The burnt offering shall be on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it.*

22  **THE LAW OF THE BURNT OFFERING**

- *And the priest shall put on his linen garment and put his linen undergarment on his body, and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire has reduced the burnt offering on the altar and put them beside the altar. Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. - Leviticus 6:8-1*

23  **SAMUEL'S COMMAND**

- Additionally though, as part of Samuel's instructions to Saul when he was made king, Saul knew that a day would come when he would be waiting at Gilgal for Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice - and that Saul must do nothing until Samuel came.
- *Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do." - 1 Samuel 10:8*

24  **SAUL'S FALL**

- So Saul grows impatient and decides to offer the sacrifice himself. But the moment he does, Samuel arrives.
- *As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, (1Sa 13:10-11)*

25  **SAUL'S FATAL FLAW**

- Where did Saul go wrong? What happened to change him, given that he started out so sincerely?

26  **SAUL'S FATAL FLAW**

- Is the lesson here that power corrupts (as is usually taught) or is there a deeper meaning

here, a deeper lesson we need to learn?

- Saul's character was what ultimately failed the test.
- He elevated his own will above that of God's – he put self first. Saul was a self-centered man, and this would lead to his destruction.

27  **SAUL'S FATAL FLAW**

- Ultimately, Saul elevated his own ideas about what needed to be done above what God had commanded to be done. He justified his disobedience with good intentions.
- Saul elevated his will above God's - a stunning act of pride for a man who so recently had been "little in his own eyes."

28  **SEVEN FLAWS OF SELF-CENTERED SIGHT**

29  **1) CONFUSES OBEDIENCE AND SACRIFICE**

- So what is Saul's sin and why is this such a big deal? As we see both in this passage and in Saul's coming confrontation with the Amalekites, Saul has a problem when it comes to the subjects of obedience and sacrifice:
  - Saul displays a lack of trust in God

30  **OBEDIENCE VS. SACRIFICE**

- Saul has problems with the concepts of obedience and sacrifice:
  - Saul puts his confidence in the ceremonies of God rather than in the God of the ceremonies.
  - He is more concerned about the morale implications of the sacrifice than he is in obeying and honoring the God who commanded them.

31  **2) FAILS THE TEST OF ADVERSITY**

- Saul could handle the challenges of kingship when they involved taking charge, success, and affirmation.
- Saul failed the test of adversity - when the tides of fortune had turned against him and the people began to leave him, Saul put his own will in front of God's in order to salvage the situation.

32  **3) CLINGS EVEN TO SHAME**

- There is irony in the idea that Saul disobeyed in the matter of the Burnt Offering.
- The remains of the Burnt Offering are carried outside the camp, a reminder of our shame and our unworthiness before God.
- Saul had been called to shepherd the Lord's inheritance - but he very quickly lost sight of his calling as his life and kingship became about himself.

33  **4) CONFUSES TRUE HUMILITY**

- It is possible to be small in your own eyes, and still be focused on yourself.
- Humility is not thinking less of yourself – it is thinking more of others.

34  **5) SHIFTS BLAME**

- Saul's first instinct, when confronted with his sin, is to make an excuse.
- In doing so, he shifts the blame first to Samuel, and then to the people, and finally to the Philistines. He blames:

- Authority (Samuel)
- Peers/Subordinates (the people)
- Circumstances (the Philistines)
- Saul's sin is everyone and everything's fault except for his own.

35  **6) ELEVATES INTENT OVER PERFORMANCE**

- *I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.' So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering."* (1Sa 13:12)
- Confronted with his sin, Saul plays the part of the martyr. "Well, I didn't want to do it, but I had to. It's not my fault."
- He expects his good intentions to be enough to excuse his bad behavior.

36  **7) MISSES THE CALLING OF GOD**

- *And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the LORD your God, with which he commanded you. For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."* (1Sa 13:13-14)

37  **7) MISSES THE CALLING OF GOD**

- To disobey the command of the Lord is the highest epitome of foolishness.
- If Saul had been obedient to the Lord - if he had not put his will before God's will - his kingdom could have endured forever.

38  **7) MISSES THE CALLING OF GOD**

- Saul experiences the consequences of self-focus: The revocation of his calling, the termination of his dynasty, and the replacement of his throne.