

BOOK OF 1 SAMUEL
KING SAUL IS TESTED—PART 2
1 SAMUEL 13:15—14:23

Introduction

We began to look last week at a time of testing for King Saul.

Proverbs 14:34—“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”

If leaders are going to lead properly, they need to do it according to God’s ideals and principles (i.e. His righteousness) in their own lives!

Last week we saw the beginning of trouble for Saul was the matter of PRIDE as he claimed for himself a victory that his son Jonathan had won!

Rather than being honest and truthful, Saul sought for the praise of men!

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

We saw also how that Israel also took a step down by their reliance on Saul rather than relying on God—it brought forth FEAR! (13:5-7)

The result being that it culminated in a SPIRITUAL DEFEAT for both Saul and Israel. (13:8-14)

Saul showed a **lack of faith to wait in patient obedience and do things God’s way instead of his own way!** Then when he was confronted with his sin, **he was quick to shift blame to others rather than to accept responsibility.**

This tendency can be traced through Saul's entire career; **he never learned to accept responsibility for his own behavior.**

But Saul had **known God's will and had chosen to defy it.** For this he was pronounced unfit to found a dynasty that would rule the chosen people of God.

Things could have been so much different. Had Saul only **shown the humility to confess his sin and accept responsibility on this early occasion, he might have developed into a king after God's own heart.**

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I. SAUL’S MILITARY HINDRANCES! (13:15-23)

After failing the test of waiting on the LORD, we see Israel’s **small army got even smaller** here because of all the desertions. (His 3000 man army was now 600 men! 20% of what he started with!)

Israel was obviously **not a military superpower** when compared to other nations—especially compared to their main oppressors, the Philistines.

In fact, things were in such a sad state of affairs in Israel militarily, **one might wonder how Jonathan and his army managed to smite the garrison of the Philistines in verse 3 of this Chapter.**

Israel’s army **had no weapons of war** (with the exception of their leader, Saul and his son, Jonathan). **They had nobody to turn their tools into weapons** (i.e. no blacksmith). And they didn’t even have the ability to sharpen their own tools! They had to go to the Philistines and pay to get that done!

In light of these circumstances, how could Israel hope to stand against their oppressors? Well, **their only hope was to rest in the LORD’s help!**

The LORD wanted to give Israel victory! Then to Him would be all the glory of the victory!

But we see Saul (and Israel) were stuck here *“like a deer in the headlights!”* Saul previously had acted too quickly, now he fails to act at all!

In the meantime the Philistines split up into three companies. One group was left at the garrison in Michmash while two other groups went marauding through Israel on both sides!

“Spoilers” = “raiders”

- II. **JONATHAN'S VICTORY! (14:1-16)**
- A. **Jonathan's Secrecy! (Vs 1-3)**
He didn't tell his daddy what he was going to do.
He snuck out and the people didn't even know he had gone out.
- B. **Jonathan's Sureness! (Vs 4-6)**
His sureness or we could say his confidence was not in his own ability or his own weapons, but rather his confidence was in the LORD!
- C. **Jonathan's Support! (Vs 1, 7)**
The confidence and backing of Jonathan's armorbearer shows that he believed in Jonathan and his LORD!
It tells me that Jonathan had some character!
- D. **Jonathan's Sign! (Vs 8-10)**
Jonathan used this sort of "*throwing out a fleece*" method to discern from the LORD what he should do. (e.g. Gideon)
- E. **Jonathan's Success! (Vs 11-15)**
Against great odds, Jonathan and his armorbearer prevailed by the LORD's help and by their trust in the LORD!
- Instead of Jonathan's victory, maybe we should say the LORD's victory!
- F. **Jonathan's Spectators! (Vs 16)**
Saul's watchmen caught sight of what was going on!
- They saw a big army melted away and saw how the Philistines wound up beating themselves in the chaos of the trembling!

- III. **SAUL AND HIS ARMY JOIN IN! (Vs 17-23)**
- A. **Saul Realized That Jonathan And His Armorbearer Were Missing! (Vs 17)**

- B. **Saul And His Company Of 600 Joined In The Fray! (Vs 18-20)**
- C. **The Philistines Fought Themselves! (Vs 20) (Of the LORD's doing!)**
- D. **The Israelites That Had Been Fighting With The Philistines Joined Back With Israel! (Vs 21)**
- E. **The Deserters Returned To Fight For Israel! (Vs 22)**
- F. **But The Victory Was The LORD's! (Vs 23)**

Conclusion

Next we will see another of Saul's mess-ups as he utters an unwise oath. A curse that wound up ensnaring his own son! We'll see that had it not been for the people of Israel, Saul would have killed his own son because of it!