

BOOK OF 1 SAMUEL
KING SAUL IS TESTED—PART 1
1 SAMUEL 13:1-14

Introduction

What do people want in their leaders?

Today, candidates for high political office are often chosen by their parties with as much **consideration to the image they project as to the positions they take on issues.**

- 1) Does his or her appearance inspire confidence?
- 2) How does his or her spouse come across?
- 3) Do they have attractive children, and will they cooperate?
- 4) What is their military record?
- 5) Can a large segment of the voters identify with them?
- 6) Is there a skeleton in their closet that someone might rattle?

Most folks want their rulers **to embody their own ideals and principles** as well as to **make an impressive appearance before the world.** The problem anymore is that **people have stepped away from God's ideals and principles in their own lives to their own detriment!**

By the way, the Bible does not say that conservative ideals will exalt a nation! Don't get me wrong...I am a conservative both in principle and practice but my brand of conservatism flows out of godly ideals associated with the righteousness of Jesus Christ that I possess—i.e. my salvation!

The Bible does say that righteousness is what exalts a nation!

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

If people don't have God's ideals and principles (i.e. His righteousness) in their own lives, then they are not going to demand them in the lives of their leaders! That speaks to why our nation has strayed away from God and why we find ourselves ruled by those who may have some principles of conservatism, but are unrighteous!

As we saw last week, **God's ideal ruler may and often does differ from man's.**

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According to Deuteronomy, rulers should be **free of personal ambition or addiction to pleasure and must be immersed in the Word of God.**

We will now see that though Saul had a great beginning, he **fell short of God's ideal for him.**

I. THE BEGINNING OF TROUBLE FOR SAUL-PRIDE. (13:1-4)
Saul outwardly appeared to have had the right image. The record shows that he was **striking in appearance** and he initially had been **valiant in battle!** (e.g. Remember the victory over the Ammonites at Jabesh-Gilead—you couldn't want any better outcome than he had!)

Saul, up **to this point** had been **humble** while at the same time **displaying physical courage, resourcefulness, generosity, and even self-control with those who opposed him.**

Saul was a **man of the people**; and his son, Jonathan, is one of the most attractive characters in all the Scripture.

Saul represented **the epitome of man's ideal**; but **it was not in these areas that God put him to the test.**

It is here in these verses where we see King Saul first slip! The once humble king takes credit for winning a battle that his son actually won. **(Vs 3-4)**

The Bible says here that Jonathan is the one who had attacked and destroyed the Philistine garrison, but Saul, his father, took credit for the victory!

That may have been normal for that culture, but it didn't make it right! We see the very first manifestation of **PRIDE** creeping into Saul's life!

We will see that **giving pride this foothold** in his life was **the beginning of what would eventually destroy him** and his family and even threaten the well-being of the nation of Israel!

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Proverbs 8:13-16

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

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

II. **A STEP DOWN FOR ISRAEL—RELIANCE ON MAN. (13:5-7)**

III. **THE SPIRITUAL DEFEAT. (13:8-14)**

The Word of God came to Saul through the mouth of Samuel, and the king was therefore bound to obey it.

A. **The Instructions. (vs 8)**

B. **The Circumstances.**

1. The Enemy.
2. The People.
3. The Delay.

C. **The Disobedience. (vs 9)**

He lacked the faith to wait in patient obedience.

D. **The Timing. (vs 10)**

God had timed the delay to be a deliberate test of Saul's faith and obedience.

E. **The Blameshifting. (vs 11-12)**

It is interesting to notice how quick the king was to blame the people, the Philistines, and even Samuel himself.

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

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F. **The Rebuke. (vs 13-14)**

Samuel brushed the explanations aside as worthless. These were not the issue.

Saul had known God's will and had chosen to defy it.

For this alone he was pronounced unfit to found a dynasty that would rule the chosen people of God.

Many years later, as a broken, defeated, and discredited old man, Saul himself would say, "*I have played the fool.*"

Had he only had the humility to make such a confession on this early occasion, he might have developed into a king after God's own heart.