

I. Introduction and review.

II. Saul's faces a test: War with the Philistines. v. 1-7

- A. When did Saul rule and for how long? v. 1 Acts 13:21 II Sam. 2:10 5:4-5
- B. Saul and Jonathan take military initiative against the Philistines. v. 2-4 8:20 9:16
 - 1. Israel is sorely oppressed under the Philistines. 4:9 .
 - 2. Saul establishes a (small) standing army. 8:11-12 11:8
 - 3. Saul's son Jonathan successfully attacks the Philistine garrison. v. 3 10:5
 - 4. Saul summons the people of Israel to gather for battle. v. 4
- C. The Philistines prepare to retaliate with overwhelming force. v. 5
 - 1. Israel has become odious (a stench in their nostrils). Ex. 5:21 7:21 II Sam. 10:6
 - 2. The Philistines enjoy incredible superiority in numbers and technology. v. 5,19 Judges 6:2 Gen. 22:17 I Ki. 4:20
- D. Most of the Israelites flee in disarray and shame. v. 6-7 14:21 23:23 24:3 II Sa. 22:13 Ps. 3:6 Judges 6:1-5

III. Saul's fails the test: fatal disobedience. v. 8-14

- A. Saul faces a hard dilemma. v. 8,11
 - 1. The prophet Samuel had told him to wait. 10:8
 - 2. The people in his tiny force were scattering.
 - 3. The Philistines appeared poised to strike. v. 11c,5
 - 4. It appeared Samuel was running late.
- B. Saul jumps the gun and goes ahead without Samuel. v. 9-10
- C. What was so wrong about what Saul had done? v. 11a Gen. 3:9,13
 - 1. Did King Saul overstep by performing functions reserved to Priests? II Chron. 26:16-21 II Sam. 24:25 I Ki. 3:4,15 8:63
 - 2. Saul's great fault was that he disobeyed God's Word through Samuel. v. 8,13,14b
 - 3. Saul's root sin is proud unbelief. Prov. 3:5-6
 - 4. Saul has committed a tragic life altering sin. Ge. 3 Nu. 20
 - 5. What should Saul have done? Deut. 17:18-20 Judges 6-7
- D. Saul is full of excuses. v. 11-12 Gen. 3:12
 - 1. It's the people's fault! v. 11a
 - 2. It's your fault, Samuel! v. 11b
 - 3. It's the Philistines' fault! v. 11c-12a
 - 4. I was doing the right thing by seeking God's favor before battle. v. 12b 15:22
 - 5. I was forced. v. 12c
- E. Samuel rebukes Saul. v. 13-14
 - 1. You have acted foolishly by disobeying the LORD. v. 13a 15:22 Ps. 14:1 Jdg. 6-7
 - 2. Your kingdom shall not endure. v. 13b-14a I Ki. 11:38 Dan. 2:21
 - 3. The LORD has already chosen your successor. v. 14b 16:1ff 17:1ff Acts 13:22
 - 4. Does Saul's punishment seem harsh? Ps. 51:4

IV. Saul and Israel suffer the consequences of disobedience. v. 15-23

- A. Samuel departs from Saul. v. 15a
- B. Israel is oppressed under the Philistines. v. 15b-23
 - 1. Saul only has 600 men in his army. v. 15b
 - 2. They are powerless to stop the evil raiders. v. 17,23
 - 3. They are outgunned (disarmed) and outmanned. v. 19,22 Jdg. 5:8
 - 4. They are under economic bondage. v. 20-21
- C. Yet God is still able to deliver them! 13:23-14:15

V. What should we learn from Saul's bad example?

- A. Obedience to God is very important.
 - 1. Some say our obedience doesn't matter. John 14:15 Mt. 28:20 I Jo. 2:3ff
 - 2. God's commands are a test of our faith.
 - 3. There is no small disobedience.
 - 4. Partial obedience is not enough.
 - 5. Learn to obey God when it is hard.
 - 6. Beware of pride. Pr. 28:26
- B. We are tempted to rationalize and excuse our sin. Pr. 21:2
 - 1. Every time we sin we try to convince ourselves that we were justified.
 - 2. There is no excuse for disobedience.
 - 3. The church often resembles Saul. Mt. 15:8
- C. We often suffer the consequences of our sin. Num. 32:23 Gal. 6:7-8 Pr. 3:5-6

VI. Concluding applications.

- A. Where is Christ in our text?
 - 1. He is the King after God's own heart. v. 14a Isa. 52:13 53:10d
 - 2. He obeyed God the Father perfectly. John 15:10 8:29
 - 3. He faced tremendous temptation to sin, but acted wisely. Heb. 5:7-8
 - 4. He won the victory against seemingly impossible odds.
 - 5. We can call upon Him for help in our impossible situations. Heb. 4:16
 - 6. His kingdom shall endure forever. II Sam. 7:15-16 Rev. 11:15
- B. Wait on Him. II Pe. 3:9ff

Discussion questions

- 1. Why are there differences among Bible translations as to the number of years mentioned in verse 1? Does this mean we can't fully trust our Bibles?
- 2. What was Saul's great sin?
- 3. What excuses did he make?
- 4. What excuses have you used for disobeying God?
- 5. What was the consequence of Saul's disobedience?
Does the penalty seem harsh?
- 6. What was wrong with Saul's character which led to these sins?
What is your evaluation of his religion?
- 7. Where can Christ be seen in I Samuel 13?