

I. Introduction and review. I Co. 10:6-13

II. King Saul's foolishness and pride wreak havoc upon Israel. v. 24-46

A. King Saul puts the people under a foolish oath. v. 24

1. Before Saul and his men joined the battle, he put any who ate food before evening under a curse. v. 24b Num. 30:1ff
2. Why would Saul make such an oath? 24:12 Mark 6:22-23 Judges 15:7 16:28
 - a. It appears to be a vainglorious vow: self-focused rather than God-focused.
 - b. He appears to be bargaining with God. 13:12,14 15:22 Col. 2:23 Mt. 15:8-9
3. Saul's vow is foolish and produces many undesirable consequences - *the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day.* v. 24a Mt. 23:4 Judges 11:29-40
4. Saul's foolish vow prevents the people from enjoying the strengthening food (honey) which LORD had prepared for His people to eat. v. 25-26 Dt. 31:20
5. Jonathan, being ignorant of Saul's oath, tastes the honey. v. 27
6. Jonathan recognizes that Saul has troubled Israel. v. 28-30 Josh 6:18 7:25 11:35 I Ki. 18:17-18

B. Saul's foolish vow leads the people to sin against the LORD. v. 31-35

1. When the day of Saul's vow finally ended, the exhausted Israelite are so hungry that they neglect God's law concerning the slaughter of animals. v. 31-32
2. What was so wrong about eating meat with the blood? v. 33 Ge. 9:3-4 Le. 17:10-11 Dt. 12:23-24f Acts 15:20,28-29 Heb. 9:11-10:18
3. Saul makes provision for the people to lawfully slaughter their meat. v. 34-35

C. Saul's foolish arrogance nearly costs Jonathan his life. v. 36-43

1. Now that his men are refreshed, Saul wants to finish off the Philistines. v. 36a
2. When he inquires of God he receives no answer. v. 36b-37 28:6 Judges 20:23
3. Saul investigates what might have caused the LORD to be silent. v. 38
4. Saul repeats and intensifies his foolish vow. v. 39 22:16
5. Jonathan's accidental transgression of Saul's vow is revealed through the casting of lots. v. 40-43 10:19-21 Josh. 7:16-21 Acts 1:24
6. Saul is determined to kill Jonathan. v. 44
7. The people whom Jonathan had rescued now rescue (redeem) him. v. 45,6

D. Because of Saul's folly the Philistines escape. v. 46 II Ki. 13:19

III. Saul continues to fight Israel's enemies. v. 47-52

- A. In spite of his many flaws, Saul is portrayed as a valiant warrior. v. 47-48
- B. It was a hard time to be king. v. 52
- C. God is gracious to Israel, helping them in spite of their faithless foolish king.

IV. Application.

A. Saul is a tragic example of ungodly(abusive) leadership: self-centered, domineering, manipulative, arbitrary, hypocritical and harsh.

B. Leaders must learn from Saul's bad example.

1. Despotism government officials. Rom. 13:1-7 I Pe. 2:13-14
2. Harsh Bosses/Employers.
3. Domineering spiritual leaders. III John 9-10 Ezek. 34:1ff Mt. 23:1ff Acts 20:28

4. Tyrannical husbands and fathers. Eph. 6:4
- C. Other lessons we can learn about leadership from Saul's life.
 1. The LORD can use flawed men for His own purposes.
 2. One can be a success in the world, but a failure with God.
 3. It is possible to be outwardly religious and yet far from God.
 - D. Following extra-biblical rules and treating your body harshly will not draw you closer to the Lord. Col. 2:20-23 Mt. 15:8-9
 1. Legalism will actually separate you from God. Mt. 15:8 Col. 2:20-23
 2. Those bound by legalism neglect what is truly important. Mt. 23:24 15:9
 3. We need to look to Christ who perfectly met God's requirements for us.
 - E. Don't make vows/promises lightly. Ps. 15: 4 Mt. 5:33-37 Judges Ecc. 5:4-5
 1. Be careful before you give your word to anyone. Mt. 5:37
 2. Be exceptionally careful when it comes to making vows.
 3. Don't make foolish promises.
 4. Is it ever permissible to break a vow or promise?
 - a. If it would be sin to keep a promise, it must be broken. Judge 11:31ff
 - b. If it is merely difficult, we must keep our word even if it hurts. Ps. 15:4
 - c. We are free to ask the other party to release us from a promise. Prov. 6:3-5

V. Concluding applications.

- A. Contrast the characters of Saul and Jonathan.
- B. Where can we see Christ in this text? I Samuel leaves us waiting for the right king.
 1. He provides the perfection demanded by the law.
 2. As the people rescued Jonathan, Christ has rescued (redeemed) us. v. 45
 3. We are forgiven by His bloody death for us. Heb. 9:10-14 10:4,10
 4. He was cursed unto death. v. 24,44
 5. He died by the will of His Father. Isa. 53:10 Heb. 10:7-10
 6. Because of His shed blood we have confidence before God. Heb. 10:19-20
 7. He is the Servant-Leader whom it is a delight to follow. Jo. 13:1ff Mark 10:45

Discussion questions

1. What were the harmful consequences of Saul's foolish oath?
2. Why should we be cautious before making vows or promises?
3. Is it ever permissible to break a promise or a vow?
4. Why did God forbid the eating of blood?

Does this apply to us today?
5. In what ways does Saul demonstrate poor leadership?
6. How can Saul's sins be repeated in the church and in the home?

What should someone do if they are suffering under despotic leadership?
7. What is the verdict of history on Saul?
8. Whom do you know who has succeeded vocationally but failed spiritually?
9. Where is Christ in I Samuel 14:24-52?