

# 1 Samuel 13 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
1 Samuel Chart from Charles Swindoll

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		
<p><b>Legend:</b> B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that <b>after the division</b> of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "<b>Judah</b>" and the Northern Kingdom as "<b>Israel</b>." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.</p>									

**1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was [thirty] years old when he began to reign, and he reigned [forty] two years over Israel.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:1

KJV 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

NET 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign; he ruled over Israel for forty years.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was 30 years old when he became king, and he reigned 42 years over Israel.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul lived for one year and then became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel,

NIV 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty- two years.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned for forty-two years.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was... years old when he began to reign; and he reigned... and two years over Israel.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:1 A son of a year is Saul in his reigning, yea, two years he hath reigned over Israel,

RSV 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was . . . years old when he began to reign; and he reigned . . . and two years over Israel.

NKJ 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

NJB 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was . . . years old when he became king, and reigned over Israel for . . . years.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:1 (Saul was... years old when he became king and he reigned... (two) years over Israel.)

LXE 1 Samuel 13:1

ASV 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was forty] years old when he began to reign; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

DBY 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was...years old when he became king; and he reigned two years over Israel.

GWN 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he was king of Israel forty-two years.

BBE 1 Samuel 13:1 \*\*\*

BHT 1 Samuel 13:1 Ben-šānâ šā'ûl Būmolkô ūšŭTê šānīm mālak `al-yiSrā'ĕl

- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Acts 13:21+ "Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

**Wiersbe** summarizes chapters 13-15 - These three chapters record three sins of King Saul, sins that ultimately cost him the kingdom. A. Impatience (chap. 13). B. Pride (chap. 14) C. Disobedience (chap. 15). (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#))

**Mattoon** - The tables begin to turn on Saul in chapter thirteen. Victory soon turns to defeat. One victory does not make a man a conqueror

**Saul** (asked, desired) **was forty years old when he began to reign, and reigned forty two years over Israel** - Here is the incredible rendering of the RSV = "Saul was...years old when he began to reign; and he reigned....and two years over Israel!" Almost all scholars agree that the numbers have dropped out in the course of transmitting this verse! The translation of this verse is

problematic and the Septuagint even leaves it untranslated. Even the ESV is difficult to understand. The age of Saul at the time he began his reign is not certain, some versions inserting 30 and some 40, which expresses the uncertainty even by the experts! The length of his reign is undoubtedly 40 years (or some versions say "42"), because of the statement by Stephen in Acts 13:21 (see above).

The general wording introducing Saul as king is similar to the "formula" used with other kings but only of the southern kings and never the northern kings (one reason is probably the fact that some were illegitimate). Here are some of the southern kings introduced by a similar formula - Rehoboam, 1Ki 14:21; Jehoshaphat, 1Ki 22:42; Jehoram, 2Ki 8:17; Ahaziah, 2Ki 8:26; Joash, 2Ki 11:21-12:1; Amaziah, 2Ki 14:2; Azariah/Uzziah, 2Ki 15:2; Jotham, 2Ki 15:33; Ahaz, 2Ki 16:2; Hezekiah, 2Ki 18:2; Manasseh, 2Ki 21:1; Amon, 2Ki 21:19; Josiah, 2Ki 22:1; Jehoahaz, 2Ki 23:31; Jehoiakim, 2Ki 23:36; Jehoiachin, 2Ki 24:8; and Zedekiah, 2Ki 24:18.

**Henry Morris** - Contrast Acts 13:21+, which indicates that Saul reigned forty years. Actually the Hebrew text in this verse is defective, possibly because of some ancient copyist error. The Septuagint omits it altogether. The Hebrew text as it now stands actually reads: "Saul was--years old when he began to reign, and he reigned--and two years over Israel." Consequently various translators have used various ways of supplying the lost numbers. If it is rendered approximately as follows: "Saul was thirty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and two years over Israel;" then the subsequent narratives, along with Acts 13:21, will be found to fit well together, and it is so interpreted by many modern scholars. The fact is, however, that the actual numbers are unknown, so the best chronological constraint for this period must come from Paul's summary in Acts 13:21v.

**TECHNICAL NOTE - NET NOTE ON THIRTY** - The [Masoretic Text](#) does not have "thirty." A number appears to have dropped out of the Hebrew text here, since as it stands the [Masoretic Text](#) (literally, "a son of a year") must mean that Saul was only one year old when he began to reign! The KJV, attempting to resolve this, reads "Saul reigned one year," but that is not the normal meaning of the Hebrew text represented by the [Masoretic Text](#). Although most LXX (Septuagint) Manuscripts lack the entire verse, some Greek Manuscripts have "thirty years" here (while others have "one year" like the MT). The Syriac Peshitta has Saul's age as twenty-one. But this seems impossible to harmonize with the implied age of Saul's son Jonathan in the following verse. Taking into account the fact that in v. 2 Jonathan was old enough to be a military leader, some scholars prefer to supply in v. 1 the number forty (cf. ASV, NASB). The present translation ("thirty") is a possible but admittedly uncertain proposal based on a few Greek Manuscripts and followed by a number of English versions (e.g., NIV, NCV, NLT). Other English versions simply supply ellipsis marks for the missing number (e.g., NAB, NRSV).

**TECHNICAL NOTE - NET NOTE ON FORTY** - The [Masoretic Text](#) has "two years" here. If this number is to be accepted as correct, the meaning apparently would be that after a lapse of two years at the beginning of Saul's reign, he then went about the task of consolidating an army as described in what follows (cf. KJV, ASV, CEV). But if the statement in 1Sa 13:1 is intended to be a comprehensive report on the length of Saul's reign, the number is too small. According to Acts 13:21+ Saul reigned for forty years. Some English versions (e.g., NIV, NCV, NLT), taking this forty to be a round number, add it to the "two years" of the MT and translate the number in 2 Sam 13:1 as "forty-two years." While this is an acceptable option, the present translation instead replaces the MT's "two" with the figure "forty." Admittedly the textual evidence for this decision is weak, but the same can be said of any attempt to restore sense to this difficult text (note the ellipsis marks at this point in NAB, NRSV). The Syriac Peshitta lacks this part of v. 1.

**Brian Bell** - **SAUL'S SLIPPERY SLOPE!** A. We've all heard the expression "a Slippery Slope". It is the slide from A to Z via the intermediate steps B through Y that is the "slope", & the smallness of each step that makes it "slippery". C. S. Lewis said, "The safest road to hell is the gradual one - the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts." Others have explained it, "really there is no slippery slope, only a long staircase where each step downward must first be tolerated." Let's look at Saul's 1st 4 steps downward...that eventually ends up at a witch's house & with suicide on the battlefield.

1. 1st STEP DOWN, SAUL FAILED TO ACT DECISIVELY! (1Sa 13:1-4)
2. 2nd STEP DOWN, SAUL FAILED TO INSPIRE THE PEOPLE! (1Sa 13:5-7)
3. 3rd STEP DOWN, SAUL FAILED TO WAIT! (1Sa 13:8-9)
4. . 4th STEP DOWN, SAUL FAILED TO TELL THE TRUTH! (1Sa 13:10-15)

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**James Smith** - **SAUL, THE DISOBEDIENT** 1 Samuel 13:1–14

"None

Could trace God's will so plain as you, while yours

Remained implied in it, but now you fail,  
And we, who prate about that will, are fools;  
In short, God's service is established here  
As He determines fit, and not your way—  
And this you cannot brook.””  
—BROWNING.

Samuel, in the love of his heart, and in faithfulness to the Lord, had just sounded a note of warning to Saul and the people, accompanied with a gracious word of encouragement (chap. 12:20–25). But in the day of prosperity we often fail to consider. “Saul reigned one year.” This might be rendered: Saul was like a child of one year when he began to reign. All that we know of Saul up till this time bears this out. Like Uzziah, he was marvellously helped till he was strong (2 Chron. 26:15–16). The pride that lifteth up the heart into self-confidence will surely end in destruction. God will never fail or forsake those who trust Him and are little in their own eyes.

I. His Duty was Plain. To get the explanation of verse 8 we have to go back to chapter 10:8. The word of the prophet was both urgent and explicit. “Seven days shall thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do.” Although the time may have been about three years after, still Saul's way was perfectly plain; he was to do as occasion served him (chap. 10:7) till this present crisis should come, then he was to wait for the ministry and guidance of the man of God. Our responsibility will be according to the light we have. If, like Saul, we are conscious of being chosen of God, and of being made partakers of the holy anointing (chap. 10:1), then surely the revealed will of God must become the absolute and unconditional law of our life. This is the way, walk ye in it.

II. His Faith was Tried. The Philistines had gathered in great force to fight with Israel (v. 5). Saul had blown the trumpet throughout the land, and summoned the Hebrews to meet him at Gilgal. While he tarried there for seven days, according to the set time of Samuel, “the people were scattered from him” (v. 8). His waiting may have appeared to the already distressed army of Israel as a sign of weakness and fear, so many of them took advantage of the delay and hid themselves (v. 6). Day by day, as he waited for the prophet, he saw the strength of Israel melting away. Every hour he tarried seemed to make his case all the more hopeless. What a test to his faith and patience! What a struggle there must have been in his soul; what a conflict between faith and sight! It is always a sore trial to part with the Isaac of our hopes while we are following the bidding of God (1 Peter 1:7). “He must increase, I must decrease.”

III. His Failure was Great. “Saul said, Bring hither a burnt-offering to me; and as soon as he had made an end of offering Samuel came” (vv. 9, 10). Saul had waited till almost the close of the seventh day, as Samuel had appointed; but ere the full time had come, through pressure of circumstances, his patience with the will of God had broken down. He had chosen his own way, and stepped out of the purpose and favour of God. Every Spirit-anointed one will have their testing time. As soon as Jesus Christ was baptised of the Spirit He was led into the wilderness to be tried (Mark 1:10–13). If Abraham had failed when the great testing crisis came he never would have become the “Father of the faithful.” But he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief (Rom. 4:20). The way to abiding honour and usefulness in the service of God is by “enduring as seeing Him who is invisible.” To fail when we are brought face to face with the circumstances planned by God for the testing and developing of our faith is to be a life-long cripple in the work of the Lord. Whenever, as Christian workers, we choose our own way rather than wait on the fulfilment of God's Word, we become as bones out of joint in the body of Christ. Such can only live a painful life.

IV. His Excuse was Vain. “Samuel said, What hast thou done? Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me; ... I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering” (vv. 11, 12). His army was dwindling away, the Philistine host was increasing, Samuel was long in coming, and his own patience was exhausted. Yet in taking the place of the priestly prophet he acted foolishly, and in direct rebellion against the commandment of the Lord (v. 13). For unbelief and disobedience there can be no excuse. No argument or reasoning can extenuate the guilt of doing what we know to be contrary to the mind of God. He that heareth the sayings of Christ, and believeth them not, is the foolish man that goes on building his life on the ruinous sand (Matt. 7:26). The most melancholy feature of Saul's attempt to justify himself is that there are no signs of repentance. After Samuel's solemn warning he proceeds to number the people (v. 15). When we have discovered that we have blundered and failed, and disobeyed, genuine repentance and confession is the only way back to God's favour and fellowship.

V. His Loss was Deplorable. “Now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee” (v. 14). Saul has turned away from the Lord, now the Lord seeks another man after His own heart, as an instrument more willing to abide in His hand, for the working out of His purposes concerning Israel. All Saul's trumpeting and planning now can no more hinder the kingdom from settling down in David than he could hinder the sun from setting in the west. He may shake himself like Samson, but the power is gone. It is a solemn thought that we may be earnestly keeping up the form of our service for God in the energy of the flesh when the Spirit of power has departed from us. Let us never forget that to choose our own way is to choose loss and defeat. May God work in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure!

**1 Samuel 13:2 Now Saul chose for himself 3,000 men of Israel, of which 2,000 were with Saul in Michmash and in the hill country of Bethel, while 1,000 were with Jonathan at Gibeah of Benjamin. But he sent away the rest of the people, each to his tent.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:2 κα κλ γεται Σαουλ αυτ τρε ς χιλι δας νδρ ν κ τ ν νδρ ν Ισραηλ κα σαν μετ Σαουλ δις χλιοι ν Μαχεμας κα ν τ ρει Βαιθηλ χ λιοι σαν μετ Ιωναθαν ν Γαβεε το Βενιαμιν κα τ κατ λοιπον το λαο ξαπ στειλεν καστον ε ς τ σκ νωμα α το

LXE 1 Samuel 13:2 And Saul chooses for himself three thousand men of the men of Israel: and there were with Saul two thousand who were in Machmas, and in mount Baethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gabaa of Benjamin: and he sent the rest of the people every man to his tent.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:2 Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

NET 1 Samuel 13:2 Saul selected for himself three thousand men from Israel. Two thousand of these were with Saul at Micmash and in the hill country of Bethel; the remaining thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin. He sent all the rest of the people back home.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:2 He chose 3,000 men from Israel for himself: 2,000 were with Saul at Michmash and in Bethel's hill country, and 1,000 were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. He sent the rest of the troops away, each to his own tent.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:2 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.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:2 Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand were with him at Micmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:2 Saul selected 3,000 special troops from the army of Israel and sent the rest of the men home. He took 2,000 of the chosen men with him to Michmash and the hill country of Bethel. The other 1,000 went with Saul's son Jonathan to Gibeah in the land of Benjamin.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:2 Saul chose three thousand out 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 to their tents.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:2 Saul selected three thousand men of Israel; two thousand of them were with Saul at Michmash and in the highlands of Bethel, and one thousand with Jonathan at Geba of Benjamin; the rest of the people Saul sent home, everyone to his tent.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:2 Saul chose three thousand men of Israel, of whom two thousand remained with him in Michmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. He sent the rest of the people back to their tents.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:2 and Saul chooseth for himself three thousand men out of Israel; and two thousand are with Saul in Michmash, and in the hill-country of Beth-El; and a thousand have been with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin; and the remnant of the people he hath sent each to his tents.

- **chose:** 1Sa 8:11 14:52
- **Michmash:** Michmash was situated east of Bethaven, or Bethel; and Eusebius says it was in his time a considerable place, about nine miles from Jerusalem, towards Ramah. 1Sa 13:5,23 14:5,31 Isa 10:28
- **Gibeah:** 1Sa 10:26 15:34 Jos 18:28 Jdg 19:12 2Sa 21:6 Isa 10:29
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Saul at Michmash, Jonathan at Gibeah

**Now Saul chose for himself 3,000 men of Israel, of which 2,000 were with Saul in [Michmash](#) and in the hill country of [Bethel](#), while 1,000 were with [Jonathan](#) at [Gibeah](#) of Benjamin** - Saul is establishing a standing military for his kingdom. The

330,000 troops in 1Sa 11:8 was for a specific conflict with Nahash. These 3000 were apparently select warriors and were divided between King Saul at Michmash, about 4.5 miles NE of [Gibeah](#) (Saul's hometown which functioned as the "royal" city - there was no designated capital of Israel) **and** where his son [Jonathan](#) was stationed with his 1000 troops. In between [Michmash](#) and [Gibeah](#) lay the town of [Geba](#) which was controlled by the Philistines ([click this map](#) and see the blow up to help you see the relationship of these 3 cities). When you see the geographic proximity of [Michmash](#), [Gibeah](#) and [Geba](#), you can better understand why Jonathan attacked the Philistines at Geba (1Sa 13:3).

[Guzik](#) - This was the first "regular" army for Israel. Previously Israel only had a militia that assembled in times of national threat. Now for the first time Israel had a professional army.

[Wikipedia](#) comments on the equipment of the men - none of the soldiers carried swords or spears with them and had to rely on axes, sickles, mattocks, and plow points as weapons; Josephus attributes this to a systematic seizure of such items by the Philistines in the region of Gibeah (cf "no blacksmith" in Israel - 1Sa 13:19+).

**But he sent away the rest of the people, each to his tent-** Saul basically sent the rest of the Hebrews to their homes. This is surprising in view of the fact that the Philistines had a garrison very near his hometown!

[Gibeah \[EBD\]](#) a hill or hill-town, "of Benjamin" (1Sa 13:15), better known as "Gibeah of Saul" (1Sa 11:4; Isa. 10:29). It was here that the terrible outrage was committed on the Levite's concubine which led to the almost utter extirpation of the tribe of Benjamin (Jdg. 19; Jdg 20), only six hundred men of the tribe of Benjamin surviving after a succession of disastrous battles. Gibeah was the birthplace of Saul, and continued to be his residence after he became king (1Sa 10:26; 11:4; 15:34). Gibeah was reckoned among the ancient sanctuaries of Palestine (1Sa 10:26; 15:34; 23:19; 26:1; 2Sa 21:6-10).

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Jonathan in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Ten men named Jonathan are mentioned in the Bible, but we will only look at two here. The first is the son of Gershom, making this Jonathan the grandson of Moses. He was of the tribe of Levi and is notable (or notorious, rather) for being the priest hired to lead idol-worship in the tribe of Dan during the chaotic time of the judges (Judges 18:3–4, 30).

The other prominent Jonathan in the Bible is the son of [King Saul](#). This Jonathan was a noble man of true character, faith, and integrity. Despite Saul's hatred of David, [Jonathan and David](#) were very close friends (1 Samuel 18:1–3), and Jonathan protected David and helped him to escape Saul (1 Samuel 19:1–2). Since David was married to Jonathan's sister [Michal](#), Jonathan was also David's brother-in-law.

In 1 Samuel 14, we see Jonathan's good character contrasted with his father's foolishness. Saul and his men were battling the Philistines, and Jonathan decided to raid a Philistine outpost (1 Samuel 14:1). He took only his young armor-bearer with him, and he told no one else of their plans (1Sa 14:3). Jonathan's bravery as they approached the enemy garrison was rooted in faith, as he told his armor-bearer, "Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few" (1Sa 14:6). The Lord was indeed with Jonathan, and he and his companion killed about twenty Philistines (1Sa 14:14). Then God sent a panic into the enemy camp, along with an earthquake, and the enemy was routed (1Sa 14:15, 20, 23). Meanwhile, King Saul had placed his troops under an oath: no one was allowed to eat anything all day (1Sa 14:24). Jonathan, who had not been present when Saul made his foolish demand, found some honey after the battle and ate it (1Sa 14:27). When Saul found out that his son had eaten the honey, he demanded that he be slain (1Sa 14:44). It was only through the intervention of the rest of the army that faithful, brave Jonathan was spared that day (1Sa 14:45).

Jonathan was not much like his father. Jonathan was known for his deep love, loyal friendship, and faith in God, while Saul repeatedly showed foolishness, pride, and disobedience to God (1 Samuel 13:8–13; 14:24–30; 15:1–34). God eventually rejected Saul's kingship and replaced him with David (1 Samuel 16:11–13). Jonathan was faithful to the Lord and positioned himself against his father politically, because he knew that God had chosen David to be the next king. He made a covenant with the house of David and therefore recognized David's family, rather than his own, as the chosen line of kingship (1 Samuel 20:16). Jonathan and Saul were obviously not on good terms, for Jonathan actually desired that the Lord take vengeance on David's enemies (1 Samuel 20:16), and Saul, when he suspected Jonathan's betrayal in favor of David, threw a spear at his son in an attempt to murder him (1 Samuel 20:33). Saul also insulted both Jonathan and his mother, calling Jonathan a "stupid son of a whore" (1 Samuel 20:30NLT).

In a later battle with the Philistines, Jonathan was killed alongside two of his two brothers, Abinadab and Malchi-shua (1 Samuel 31:2). Saul himself was also badly wounded and told his armor-bearer to slay him. When the armor-bearer was unwilling to take the king's life, Saul fell on his own sword, and his grieved armor-bearer followed his example. Even in death, Jonathan's righteousness exceeded that of his father. In that way, the line of Saul ended, and David's line continued as prophesied. Jonathan's five-year-old son, [Mephibosheth](#), was crippled on the day that his household received news of Jonathan's death (2 Samuel 4:4). Later, King David honored Mephibosheth and treated him as his own son for the sake of his friend Jonathan (2 Samuel 9). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**1 Samuel 13:3 Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear."**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:3 κα π τᾶξεν Ἰωνᾶθαν τ ν Νασιβ τ ν λλ φυλον τ ν ν τ βουν κα κο ουσιν ο λλ φυλοι κα Σαουλ σ λπιγγι σαλπ ζει ε ς π σαν τ ν γ ν λ γων θετ κασιν ο δο λοι

LXE 1 Samuel 13:3 And Jonathan smote **Nasib the Philistine** that dwelt in the hill; and the Philistines hear of it, and Saul sounds the trumpet through all the land, saying, The servants have despised us.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:3 And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

NET 1 Samuel 13:3 Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost that was at Geba and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul alerted all the land saying, "Let the Hebrews pay attention!"

CSB 1 Samuel 13:3 Jonathan attacked the Philistine garrison that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. So Saul blew the ram's horn throughout the land saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!"

ESV 1 Samuel 13:3 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."

NIV 1 Samuel 13:3 Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, "Let the Hebrews hear!"

NLT 1 Samuel 13:3 Soon after this, Jonathan attacked and defeated the garrison of Philistines at Geba. The news spread quickly among the Philistines. So Saul blew the ram's horn throughout the land, saying, "Hebrews, hear this! Rise up in revolt!"

NRS 1 Samuel 13:3 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!"

NJB 1 Samuel 13:3 Jonathan killed **the Philistine governor** stationed at Gibeah and the Philistines were informed that the Hebrews had risen in revolt. Saul had the trumpet sounded throughout the country,

NAB 1 Samuel 13:3 Now Jonathan overcame the Philistine garrison which was in Gibeah, and the Philistines got word of it. Then Saul sounded the horn throughout the land, with a proclamation, "Let the Hebrews hear!"

YLT 1 Samuel 13:3 And Jonathan smiteth the garrison of the Philistines which is in Geba, and the Philistines hear, and Saul hath blown with a trumpet through all the land, saying, 'Let the Hebrews hear.'

- **the garrison:** 1Sa 10:5 14:1-6 2Sa 23:14
- **Geba:** or, the hill, Jos 18:24, Gaba, Jos 21:17 Isa 10:29 Zec 14:10
- **blew:** Jdg 3:27 6:34 2Sa 2:28 20:1
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## THE SHOFAR SOUNDED IN THE LAND

Jonathan smote the garrison ([netsib](#)) of the Philistines that was in [Geba](#) - Note NJB has "the Philistine governor" and the Septuagint has "**Nasib the Philistine.**" TEV has he "**killed the Philistine commander.**" RSV giving in margin: "Prefect" at 2 Samuel



8:6. So some sources translate this clause as if Jonathan struck down a Philistine official (prefect) rather than an entire garrison. [See note above](#) on the geography which helps understand that Jonathan's smiting was not without cause. In any case Jonathan's act is an act of war and stirs the Philistine's hornets nest.

**Brian Bell** - It was Jonathan, not Saul who declared war by attacking one of the Philistine garrisons. Yet Saul took the credit & blew the trumpet (or toots his horn) to rally the people. Jonathan burst onto the scene as a brave & victorious soldier.

**And the Philistines heard of it - NJB** = "the Philistines were informed that the Hebrews had risen in revolt." Clearly the Philistines' reaction would be to seek revenge.

**Then Saul blew the trumpet** (blew the ram's horn - [shophar/shopar](#)) **throughout the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear."** - NLT "Hebrews, hear this! Rise up in revolt!" Don't miss the progression - Jonathan strikes and wins, then Saul blows the horn! Saul issues what amounts to a warning call of coming war with the Philistines, as he knows they will not sit still after Jonathan's attack on the garrison (or commander). Did you catch the beginning? It was Saul that blew the trumpet, trumpeting his son's victory. He is taking credit where credit is NOT due as the next verse substantiates.

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**Garrison** ([05333](#)) (**netsib** from **natsab** = to take one's stand, station oneself) meaning: a pillar, prefect, garrison, post.

**Milton Fisher** - The one place where the noun *nešib* is translated "pillar" is in reference to Lot's wife (Genesis 19:26). The obvious intent here is to depict her as stopped, trapped, transformed as and where she was, in a still upright posture, whether we assume the transformation into salt as instantaneous or subsequent. (See Robert Boyd's interesting analysis in his *Tells, Tombs and Treasure*, Baker, 1969, pp. 85-86). Elsewhere this expression is rendered "garrison" (RSV using "prefect" in one instance), as mentioned above, or "officer" (1 Kings 4:19; 2 Chron. 8:10). ([TWOT](#) online)

**Gilbrant** - Derived from the Hebrew verb *nātsav* (HED #5507), "to stand," *netsiv* primarily means "garrison." Cognates in Jewish and Egyptian Aramaic confirm this understanding. The nine times *netsiv* is translated as "garrison" all point to a military unit of troops (e.g., 1 Sam. 10:5; 1 Chr. 11:16). There are two times that the noun should be translated "governor" or "officer": "He was the only officer which was in the land" (1 Ki. 4:19); "And these were the chief of king Solomon's officers" (2 Chr. 8:10). Although primarily a military term, *netsiv* is used in Gen. 19:26 to denote the "pillar" into which Lot's wife was transformed after she looked back at her condemned town. The emphasis is that she is not moving, but standing upright. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Netsib** - 12x in 11v - deputy(1), garrison(4), garrisons(5), officers(1), pillar(1). Gen. 19:26; 1 Sam. 10:5; 1 Sam. 13:3; 1 Sam. 13:4; 2 Sam. 8:6; 2 Sam. 8:14; 1 Ki. 4:19; 1 Chr. 11:16; 1 Chr. 18:13; 2 Chr. 8:10; 2 Chr. 17:2

**1 Samuel 13:4 All Israel heard the news that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become odious to the Philistines. The people were then summoned to Saul at Gilgal.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:4 καὶ πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ κούσεν λέγων πταίκεν Σαουλ τὴν Νάσιβ τὴν ἄλφυλον καὶ σὺ νῆθησαν Ἰσραὴλ ἐν τῷ ἔλλοφίῳ καὶ ἐβήσαν λαὸς πρὸς Σαουλ ἐν Γαλγαλῶν

LXE 1 Samuel 13:4 And all Israel heard say, Saul has smitten Nasib the Philistine; now Israel had been put to shame before the Philistines; and the children of Israel went up after Saul in Galgala.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:4 And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

NET 1 Samuel 13:4 All Israel heard this message, "Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel is repulsive to the Philistines!" So the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:4 And all Israel heard the news, "Saul has attacked the Philistine garrison, and Israel is now repulsive to the Philistines." Then the troops were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:4 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.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:4 So all Israel heard the news: "Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become a stench to the Philistines." And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:4 All Israel heard the news that Saul had destroyed the Philistine garrison at Geba and that



the Philistines now hated the Israelites more than ever. So the entire Israelite army was summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:4 When all Israel heard that Saul had defeated the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become odious to the Philistines, the people were called out to join Saul at Gilgal.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:4 and all Israel heard the news, 'Saul has killed the Philistine governor, and now Israel has antagonised the Philistines.' So all the people rallied behind Saul at Gilgal.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:4 Thus all Israel learned that Saul had overcome the garrison of the Philistines and that Israel had brought disgrace upon the Philistines; and the soldiers were called up to Saul in Gilgal.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:4 And all Israel have heard, saying, 'Saul hath smitten the garrison of the Philistines,' and also, 'Israel hath been abhorred by the Philistines;' and the people are called after Saul to Gilgal.

- **odious:** Heb. did stink, Ge 34:30 46:34 Ex 5:21 Zec 11:8
- **Gilgal:** 1Sa 10:8 11:14,15 Jos 5:9
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## PHILISTINE ATTACK CAUSES ISRAEL TO "STINK"

**All Israel heard the news that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become odious (baash) to the Philistines** - This passage sounds like most of the news in 2023, "fake news!" (Which is why I ceased watching news about 5 years ago - I sleep much better!) Who had **smitten the garrison**? Not **Saul** but Jonathan. Saul takes the credit. Jonathan's small victory caused Israel to be a stench to the Philistines.

**Rod Mattoon** - Saul gets the credit for what Jonathan accomplished. Pride begins to surface in Saul's life. Getting the glory was important to Saul and it becomes a snare to him. Later, Saul will become enraged with David when the women sing, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands!" His anger will motivate him to try to kill David. With Jonathan's victory over the Philistines, Israel becomes an abomination to the Philistines which literally means "they became a stench." At this point let me ask, "Is the motivation for your actions to get glory from people?" If you live by the "finger in the air" philosophy instead of Bible convictions, it will become a snare to you. Getting glory can feed a person's pride and make them worse in the area of pride. Glory is addictive like a narcotic. When a person addicted to glory fails to receive any, he struggles with disappointment, depression, discouragement, bitterness, anger, loss of motivation, persecution complex (no one knows or cares), and ungratefulness.

**Life Application Study Bible (Borrow)** - Jonathan attacked and destroyed the Philistine outpost, but Saul took all the credit for it. Although this was normal in that culture, it didn't make his action right. Saul's growing pride started out small-taking credit for a battle that was won by his son. Left unchecked, his pride grew into an ugly obsession; thus, it destroyed him, tore his family apart, and threatened the well-being of the nation. Taking credit for the accomplishments of others indicates that pride is controlling your life. When you notice pride taking a foothold, take immediate steps to put it in check by giving credit to those who deserve it.

**Guzik** - The same principle is true spiritually in our lives. We don't war against armies of Philistines; our enemies are principalities ... powers ... the rulers of the darkness of this age ... spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12). But our

spiritual enemies have the same attitude as the Philistines. As long as we are weak and subjected to our spiritual enemies, they don't mind us at all. They may even kind of like us. But as soon as we show some boldness and courage against the Lord's enemies, our spiritual foes consider us an abomination. If peace with the devil is more important to you than victory in the Lord, you will often be defeated and subjected.

**The people were then summoned to Saul at Gilgal** - Saul gathers the nation at Gilgal, the site of many important events in Israel's history (see below). This gathering at Gilgal fulfills Samuel's prophetic instruction (roughly one month earlier) in 1Sa 10:18 ""And you shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice peace offerings. You shall wait seven days until I come to you and show you what you should do."

**Gilgal** was located just to the west of the Jordan River (see map above).

1. At Gilgal Joshua and the Israelites first camped after crossing the Jordan River.
2. At Gilgal they built a monument here of 12 memorial stones. (Josh 4:20)
3. At Gilgal the Israelites renewed the covenant, circumcising the men and celebrating the first Passover in the Canaan (Josh 5:7-12)
4. Gilgal continued as a special place for sacrifices (1Sa 10:8; 13:8,9,10; 15:21),
5. At Gilgal Saul was crowned (1Sa 11:14,15)
6. At Gilgal Saul was rejected as king (1Sa 15:23)
7. At Gilgal Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord (1Sa 15:33),
8. At Gilgal (2Sa 19:15), the people assembled to welcome David as he returned from his exile beyond Jordan during Absalom's rebellion.
9. Prophets refer to Gilgal as a center of idolatry (Hos 4:15; 9:15; 12:11; Am 4:4; 5:5).

**Smitten** (struck)(05221) **nākāh** is a verb meaning to beat, to strike, to wound. The meaning ranges from hitting to killing. niphal = be hit, be struck down; pual = be battered, ruined, destroyed; hiphil = strike, hit, beat, strike dead, wound, batter, destroy; ho. be struck down (dead), be taken, be hit There are many instances of striking physically (Ex. 21:15, 19; Job 16:10; Ps. 3:7; Song 5:7). Of Yahweh smiting the firstborn (Nu 3:13, 8:17), His own people (Nu 11:33). Of Moses striking the rock twice resulting in his not being allowed to enter the Promised Land (Nu 20:11) Frequently, nākāh is related to the Israelite conquest of Canaan. God used disease to smite the inhabitants of Canaan (Num. 14:12). This word is also used in a different sense, as when the men of Sodom and Gomorrah were stricken blind by the two angels (Gen. 19:11); when a priest stuck a fork into the kettle (1 Sam. 2:14); when people clapped their hands (2 Kgs. 11:12); or when people verbally abused Jeremiah (Jer. 18:18). God struck the Egyptians with plagues (Ex. 3:20); and struck people down in judgment (Isa. 5:25).

**Odious** (0887) (baash) means to have a bad smell or to stink. To be repulsive. It denotes a bad physical smell (blood in the Nile **Ex 7:21**) or odor of spoiled manna (Ex 16:20). In a figurative sense, it speaks of a person who becomes strongly revolting to another, a metaphorical "stench in the nostrils."

**Baash** - acts disgustingly(1), became foul(3), become foul(2), become odious(2), grow foul(1), made(1), made themselves odious(1), made yourself odious(1), making me odious(1), odious\*(1), stink(2), surely made(1), surely made himself odious(1). Gen. 34:30; Exod. 5:21; Exod. 7:18; Exod. 7:21; Exod. 8:14; Exod. 16:20; Exod. 16:24; 1 Sam. 13:4; 1 Sam. 27:12; 2 Sam. 10:6; 2 Sam. 16:21; 1 Chr. 19:6; Ps. 38:5; Prov. 13:5; Eccl. 10:1; Isa. 50:2

**1 Samuel 13:5 Now the Philistines assembled to fight with Israel, 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen, and people like the sand which is on the seashore in abundance; and they came up and camped in Michmash, east of Beth-aven.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:5 κα ο λλ φυλοι συν γονται ες π λεμον π Ισραηλ κα ναβα νουσιν π Ισραηλ τρι κοντα χιλι δες ρμ των κα ξ χιλι δες ππ ων κα λα ς ς μμος παρ τ ν θ λασσαν τ πλ θει κα ναβα νουσιν κα παρεμβ λλουσιν ν Μαχεμας ξ ναντ ας Βαιθων κατ ν του

LXE 1 Samuel 13:5 And the Philistines gather together to war with Israel; and then come up against Israel thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand by the seashore for multitude: and they come up, and encamp in Machmas, opposite Baethoron southward.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:5 And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven.

NET 1 Samuel 13:5 For the battle with Israel the Philistines had amassed 3,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and an army as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:5 The Philistines also gathered to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-aven.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:5 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.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:5 The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:5 The Philistines mustered a mighty army of 3,000 chariots, 6,000 charioteers, and as many warriors as the grains of sand on the seashore! They camped at Micmash east of Beth-aven.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:5 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 at Michmash, to the east of Beth-aven.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:5 The Philistines mustered to make war on Israel, three thousand chariots, six thousand horse and a force as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They came up and pitched camp at Michmash, to the east of Beth-Aven.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:5 The Philistines also assembled for battle, with three thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and foot soldiers as numerous as the sands of the seashore. Moving up against Israel, they encamped in Michmash, east of Beth-aven.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:5 And the Philistines have been gathered to fight with Israel; thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and a people as the sand which is on the sea-shore for multitude; and they come up and encamp in Michmash, east of Beth-Aven.

- **thirty thousand chariots:** The Philistines had no doubt collected troops in this emergency, from all the surrounding nation; but the number of chariots is immensely large beyond any example, and wholly disproportional to the number of their cavalry. It is probable, therefore, that for {sheloshim aileph,} "thirty thousand," we should read {shelosh aileph,} "three thousand," with the Syriac and Arabic.
- **the sand:** Ge 22:17 Jos 11:4 Jdg 7:12 2Ch 1:9 Isa 48:19 Jer 15:8 Ro 9:27
- **Bethaven:** 1Sa 14:23 Jos 7:2 18:12 Ho 4:15 5:8 10:5
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Battle of Michmash  
Courtesy [ESV Global Study Bible](#)

## PHILISTINES GATHER FOR WAR

**Now** - While the Hebrews gathered at Gilgal, the Philistines assemble a massive force.

**The Philistines assembled to fight with Israel, 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen, and people like the sand which is on the seashore in abundance; and they came up and camped in [Michmash](#), east of [Beth-aven](#)** - Note that Saul had previously been at [Michmash](#) but obviously had moved his forces from this area. The **Philistine** reaction was swift and strong, as they brought forces and armament the likes of which were not possessed by the Hebrews. [Chariots](#) (see also [Wikipedia](#)) were feared weapons of war, but they did need level ground for greatest effectiveness. The Hebrews had no chariots at this time, and apparently not until the time of King David (who took chariots as spoils of war). The **people like the sand** (specified as 300,000 by Josephus but we cannot be certain) signifies a massive army arrayed against Israel, creating the prospect that Israel would be annihilated in this war.

[Brian Bell](#) - This same simile "as the sand which is on the seashore" was also used for Gideon in Judges 7:12 & Saul's army was twice the size as Gideon's. The difference wasn't so much the size of the army, as the strength of the leader's faith!

**1 Samuel 13:6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:6 καὶ ὁ Ἰσραὴλ ἐδυνάστευεν, καὶ οὐκ ἔκρηκεν λαὸς νηλεῶν, καὶ οὐκ ἔκρυπτον ὥραις καὶ νηλεῶν πύλαις καὶ νηλεῶν βράχοις καὶ νηλεῶν λακκοῖς

LXE 1 Samuel 13:6 And the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait so that they could not draw nigh, and the people hid themselves in caves, and sheepfolds, and rocks, and ditches, and pits.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

NET 1 Samuel 13:6 The men of Israel realized they had a problem because their army was hard pressed. So the army hid in caves, thickets, cliffs, strongholds, and cisterns.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:6 The men of Israel saw that they were in trouble because the troops were in a difficult situation. They hid in caves, thickets, among rocks, and in holes and cisterns.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:6 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,

NIV 1 Samuel 13:6 When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:6 The men of Israel saw what a tight spot they were in; and because they were hard pressed by the enemy, they tried to hide in caves, thickets, rocks, holes, and cisterns.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:6 When the Israelites saw that they were in distress (for the troops were hard pressed), the people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:6 When the Israelites saw that their plight was desperate, being so hard pressed, the people hid in caves, in holes, in crevices, in vaults, in wells.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:6 Some Israelites, aware of the danger and of the difficult situation, hid themselves in caves, in thickets, among rocks, in caverns, and in cisterns,

YLT 1 Samuel 13:6 And the men of Israel have seen that they are distressed, that the people hath been oppressed, and the people hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

- **in a strait:** Ex 14:10-12 Jos 8:20 Jdg 10:9 20:41 2Sa 24:14 Php 1:23
- **in caves:** 1Sa 14:11, 23:19, 24:3 Jdg 6:2 Isa 42:22 Heb 11:38
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ISRAEL IN DIRE STRAITS STIMULATES FEAR OF THE PHILISTINES

**When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait** ([tsar](#); [stenos](#)= narrow) (**for the people were hard-pressed** [[nagas](#)]) - The implication of being in a tight, hard-pressed condition is that the Philistines were encroaching and they might become surrounded. And so a spirit of fear gripped Israel at the sight of the Philistine forces. Where was Saul? Why do we not hear of him encouraging the people that the battle is the Lord's and He would give them the victory?

**then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits.** - Instead of the Philistine threat prompting them to by faith run into the strong tower of the Name Jehovah for protection (Pr 18:10+), the Hebrews ran for cover in inanimate places that could not necessarily protect them" When Israel saw the gathering of massive Philistine forces, their reaction was not a desire to pray and not a desire to flight but a desire to flee! In short, there was mass desertion from Saul's ranks! Notice he begins with 3000 (1Sa 13:2) and ends up with 600 (1Sa 13:15).

[Guzik](#) makes an interesting point - Probably many of them thought, "What we really need is a king. A king would solve our problems." Now they have a king and the problems are still there. We often think things will "fix" problems when they won't at all. "And hereby God intended to teach them the vanity of all carnal confidence in men; and that they did not one jot less need the help and favour of God now than they did before, when they had no king." (Poole)

[Life Application Study Bible \(Borrow\)](#) - When we forget Who is on our side or see only our own resources, we tend to panic at the

sight of the opposition. (**ED: WALK BY SIGHT, NOT BY FAITH!**) The Israelites became terrified and hid when they saw the mighty Philistine army. They forgot that God was on their side and that He could not be defeated (**ED: PLAY [GOD UNDEFEATABLE](#)**). As you face problems and temptations, focus your attention on God and His resources (**ED: HIS IMMUTABLE, POWERFUL WORD!**), trusting him to help you (Romans 8:31-37).

**Strait** (distress, trouble, affliction, tribulation) ([06862](#)) **tsar** from **tsarar** = to bind, tie up, be restricted, be cramped; see related **tsarah** is a masculine noun indicating narrowness, tightness, distress, application, misery. It refers to a narrow space or object, not wide, with a small distance across it, this meaning being vividly depicted when the Angel of the Lord confronted Balaam and stood in such a narrow space that Balaam could not pass by (Nu 22:26). **Tsar** is used figuratively of the personal anguish one encounters in adverse circumstances; e.g. the great distress which comes from the death of a close friend (2 Sa 1:26) or from God's refusal to give help or direction (Job 7:11; cf 1 Sa 28:15; Isa 25:4; 63:9). **Tsar** describes a person's pain and distress; oppression, a feeling of being hemmed in (Dt 4:30; Job 7:11; 15:24). The Lord delivers the faithful from affliction and distress (Ps 4:1).

**Tsar - 30v - afflicted(1), affliction(1), anguish(1), anguished(1), distress(17), privation(1), strait(1), trouble(7). Deut. 4:30 (=end-times great tribulation);** 1 Sam. 2:32; 1 Sam. 13:6; 2 Sam. 22:7; 2 Chr. 15:4; Est. 7:4; Job 7:11; Job 15:24; Job 36:16; Job 36:19; Job 38:23; Ps. 4:1; Ps. 18:6; Ps. 32:7; Ps. 59:16; Ps. 66:14; Ps. 102:2; Ps. 106:44; Ps. 107:6; Ps. 107:13; Ps. 107:19; Ps. 107:28; Ps. 119:143; Isa. 5:30; Isa. 25:4; Isa. 26:16; Isa. 30:20; Isa. 63:9; Jer. 48:5; Hos. 5:15

**Hard-pressed** ([05065](#)) **nagas** connotes the exertion of demanding oppressive pressure for payment or labor" (TWOT). Thus it means to press hard, distress, exert demanding (oppressive) pressure (for payment or labor). **Nagas** describes the Egyptian taskmasters who afflicted Israel, even ceasing to give straw to make bricks (Ex 3:7, 5:6, 10, 13, 14). In the seventh year law directed creditors not to demand payment during that year (Dt 15:2-3). Isaiah used **nagas** in Isa 3:5 to describe the people of Judah who will be **oppressed** because of their sin against God (cf Isa 3:12). Isaiah sees God breaking the yoke of Israel's oppressors in the future when they will even "rule over their **oppressors**." In Zechariah 10:4 **nagas** is actually applied to the "Cornerstone" Messiah Who will have authority over all **rulers** (**nagas**).

**Nagas - 23v - drive hard(1), driver(1), exact(2), exacted(1), hard-pressed(2), oppressed(2), oppressor(4), oppressors(2), overseers(1), ruler(1), taskmaster(1), taskmasters(5).** Exod. 3:7; Exod. 5:6; Exod. 5:10; Exod. 5:13; Exod. 5:14; Deut. 15:2; Deut. 15:3; 1 Sam. 13:6; 1 Sam. 14:24; 2 Ki. 23:35; Job 3:18; Job 39:7; Isa. 3:5; Isa. 3:12; Isa. 9:4; Isa. 14:2; Isa. 14:4; Isa. 53:7; Isa. 58:3; Isa. 60:17; Dan. 11:20; Zech. 9:8; Zech. 10:4

**1 Samuel 13:7 Also some of the Hebrews crossed the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead. But as for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:7 καὶ ὁ διαβαίνοντες διήλθον τὴν Ἰορδάνην εἰς γῆν Γαδ καὶ Γαλαὰδ καὶ Σαουλ πῦν ἐν Γαλααδ καὶ πᾶς λαὸς ἔστη πῶατο

LXE 1 Samuel 13:7 And they that went over went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Galaad: and Saul was yet in Galgala, and all the people followed after him in amazement.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:7 And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

NET 1 Samuel 13:7 Some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan River to the land of Gad and Gilead. But Saul stayed at Gilgal; the entire army that was with him was terrified.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:7 Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul, however, was still at Gilgal, and all his troops were gripped with fear.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:7 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.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:7 Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:7 Some of them crossed the Jordan River and escaped into the land of Gad and Gilead. Meanwhile, Saul stayed at Gilgal, and his men were trembling with fear.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:7 Some Hebrews crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at

Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:7 Some also crossed the Jordan fords into the territory of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal and all the people who followed him were trembling.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:7 and other Hebrews passed over the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul, however, held out at Gilgal, although all his followers were seized with fear.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:7 And Hebrews have passed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead; and Saul is yet in Gilgal, and all the people have trembled after him.

- **the Hebrews:** Lev 26:17,36,37 De 28:25
- **Gad:** Nu 32:1-5,33-42 De 3:12 Jos 13:24-31
- **followed him trembling:** Heb. trembled after him, De 20:8 Jdg 7:3 Ho 11:10,11
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Some Hebrews fled east across Jordan to Gad (green)

## SOME HEBREWS EVEN FLED ACROSS THE JORDAN

Also some of the Hebrews crossed the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead [Gilgal](#) was just west of the Jordan River (Transjordan) and was the route some of the Hebrews fled for fear of their lives.

But as for Saul, he was still in [Gilgal](#), and all the people followed him trembling ([charad](#)) - But is a term of contrast that contrast Saul's response with that of many of the Hebrews. And so in remaining steadfast, we must give kudos to Saul. At least he was staying put and not running for his life! Recall in 1Sa 13:4 Saul had gathered the nation, but fear apparently cause significant desertion (1Sa 13:6,7). In short, we don't know how many troops Saul had at his disposal after the desertion. What we do know is **all** of them that were left were **trembling**. The Lxx translates **trembling** ([charad](#)) with the verb [existemi](#) which describes them as out of their senses, amazed, and astonished beyond comprehension (astounded). This is not a good condition for an army about to face the fierce, well equipped army of the Philistines, which seemingly had them significantly outnumbered.

[Nelson Study Bible: NKJV Edition](#) - The Philistines controlled the high ground—a clear military advantage. Further, their push to Michmash meant they controlled much of the central Benjamin plateau, effectively cutting Israel in half and limiting Saul's access to the coast. Saul's decision to retreat to Gilgal had given his enemies control of this region; the situation was indeed serious.

[Brian Bell](#) - They followed him **trembling** - Fear is caused by attributing to a person, place, or thing 2 attributes that properly belong to God: Almightyness & Impendency. 1. Almightyness = the power to take away our autonomy(self-governing). 2. Impendency = the power to do us harm. 3. So fear God means to only relinquish to Him these 2 attributes. a) The people of Israel had plainly attributed these powers to the Philistines. b) Such fear is always in opposition to true faith. c) God was ready to come to His help, if His help had been properly asked.

**Trembling** (startled, frightened, afraid, terrified) ([02729](#)) [charad](#) is a verb containing the idea of movement resulting from agitation, usually trembling coming from emotional trauma. It can describe the shaking of a mountain or the flitting of a bird, but it is most commonly used to describe trembling or shuddering from some sort of fear. It describes human trembling before some strange or fearsome event. It conveys the the idea of movement resulting from agitation, usually trembling coming from emotional trauma as when Isaac realized Jacob had deceived him and received Esau's blessing (Ge 27:33) or when Joseph's brothers who had abandoned him in a pit met him in Egypt (Ge 42:28). In the future [Millennium](#) Israel will forget her disgrace and treachery against Yahweh and will live securely in the promised land "with no one to **make them afraid**." (Ezek 39:26<sup>±</sup>, cf Micah 4:4<sup>±</sup>, cf Mic 4:1-3, also Zeph 3:13<sup>±</sup>) After Jonathan and his armor bearer had slaughtered about 20 Philistines, "there was **atrembling** (noun form **charadah**) in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. Even the garrison and the raiders **trembled** (verb - **charad**), and the earth quaked so that it became a great **trembling** (noun form **charadah**)" (1Sa 14:15, cf Da 10:7).

**1 Samuel 13:8 Now he waited seven days, according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattering from him.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:8 καὶ διελπεν πτ μ ρας τ μαρτυρ ς επεν Σαμουηλ κα ο παρεγ νετο Σαμουηλ ε ς Γαλαα κα διεσπ ρη λα ς α το π α το



LXE 1 Samuel 13:8 And he continued seven days for the appointed testimony, as Samuel told him, and Samuel came not to Galgala, and his people were dispersed from him.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

NET 1 Samuel 13:8 He waited for seven days, the time period indicated by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the army began to abandon Saul.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:8 He waited seven days for the appointed time that Samuel had set, but Samuel didn't come to Gilgal, and the troops were deserting him.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:8 He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:8 He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:8 Saul waited there seven days for Samuel, as Samuel had instructed him earlier, but Samuel still didn't come. Saul realized that his troops were rapidly slipping away.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:8 He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people began to slip away from Saul.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:8 He waited for seven days, the period fixed by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the army, deserting Saul, began dispersing.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:8 He waited seven days-- the time Samuel had determined. When Samuel did not arrive at Gilgal, the men began to slip away from Saul.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:8 And he waiteth seven days, according to the appointment with Samuel, and Samuel hath not come to Gilgal, and the people are scattered from off him.

- **waited:** 1Sa 10:8
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 10:8+ "And you shall go down before me to **Gilgal**; and behold, I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice peace offerings. **You shall wait seven days until I come to you and show you what you should do.**"

Deut 8:2

### THE SEVEN DAY TEST OF SAUL'S FAITH

Faith is intimately linked to one's actions. If we say we believe, it will (should) effect the way we behave. Saul's behavior in this next section is clear evidence of his failure to trust the prophet's promise (1Sa 10:8+) and since the prophet was God's mouthpiece, it was by default, Saul's failure to trust Jehovah's word. We begin to see Saul slipping away spiritually speaking.

**Now he waited ([yachal](#)) seven days, according to the appointed time set by Samuel**- As we often say "so far, so good!" But because Saul was not playing horseshoes but real life, just getting close to the goal of **seven** complete **days** was not sufficient. It was at best partial obedience, which is always complete disobedience in God's eyes! What is sad is that Saul forewarned should be forearmed. In other words, Saul had heard Samuel's closing powerful warnings, such as "if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away." (1Sa 12:25+) Hearing is not the same as heeding. Saul was a hearer of Samuel's word, but not a doer, and therefore he deluded himself (James 1:22+).

**but** - Term of contrast. This is a key "hinge word" in the life of King Saul, as it marks a change of direction in Saul's thinking and ultimately a change in his final fate! Always observe these little "hinge words" (but, for, therefore, so that), for they open (or in this case close) big doors!

**Samuel did not come to [Gilgal](#); and the people were scattering** (CSB = were deserting) **from him** - NLT = "Saul realized that his troops were rapidly slipping away." More Hebrews were deserting. What is Saul focused on in this passage (2 reasons)? He is



trusting in what he sees, not what Samuel had told him (wait 7 days). He was walking by sight and not by faith. Further he is was undoubtedly walking in fear (**the people were scattering**), the antidote of which was faith, faith he did not lay hold of!

**THOUGHT - A SHORT EXCURSUS ON WAITING** - Waiting is a difficult "virtue" for most of us! But when Jehovah says "Wait" we need to hear and heed. And we do not have to wait passively for in Isaiah we read "**Yet**" (see [Isa 40:30](#) for contrast) those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength (EXCHANGE THEIR STRENGTH FOR HIS STRENGTH - cf 2Cor 12:9,10+); They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary. (Isaiah 40:31+) Play this old Maranatha chorus [Wait Upon the Lord](#) and worship HIm as you wait for whatever He is calling you to wait upon. Here is another one - [Wait On the Lord](#). Here is a third chorus which is a bit more upbeat [I Waited](#)" And while you are waiting don't waste the time but [meditate on His word on waiting as recorded in the Psalms](#) - Observe what "wait" is associated with - make a list and you will be amazed - then give thanks to the Lord that His Spirit enables you to wait patiently on Him - Ps. 25:3; Ps. 25:5; Ps. 25:21; Ps. 27:14; Ps. 33:20; Ps. 37:7; Ps. 37:9; Ps. 37:34; Ps. 39:7; Ps. 40:1; Ps. 52:9; Ps. 62:1; Ps. 62:5; Ps. 69:3; Ps. 69:6; Ps. 104:27; Ps. 106:13; Ps. 119:43; Ps. 119:74; Ps. 119:81; Ps. 119:95; Ps. 119:114; Ps. 119:147; Ps. 130:5; Ps. 130:6; Ps. 147:11. Then let your heart be blessed and lifted up as you sign with Shane and Shane "[I Will Wait For You](#)," Psalm 130:6 "My soul waits for the Lord More than the watchmen for the morning; Indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning."

**1 Samuel 13:9 So Saul said, "Bring to me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:9 κα ε πεν Σαουλ προσαχ γετε πως ποι σω λοκα τωσιν κα ε ρηνικ ς κα ν νεγκεν τ ν λοκα τωσιν

LXE 1 Samuel 13:9 And Saul said, Bring hither victims, that I may offer whole-burnt-offerings and peace-offerings: and he offered the whole-burnt-offering.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

NET 1 Samuel 13:9 So Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." Then he offered a burnt offering.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:9 So Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." Then he offered the burnt offering.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:9 So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:9 So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings. " And Saul offered up the burnt offering.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:9 So he demanded, "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings!" And Saul sacrificed the burnt offering himself.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:9 So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the offerings of well-being." And he offered the burnt offering.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:9 Saul then said, 'Bring me the burnt offering and the communion sacrifices.' And he presented the burnt offering.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:9 He then said, "Bring me the holocaust and peace offerings," and he offered up the holocaust.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:9 And Saul saith, 'Bring nigh unto me the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings;' and he causeth the burnt-offering to ascend.

- **he offered:** 1Sa 13:12,13 14:18 15:21,22 De 12:6 1Ki 3:4 Ps 37:7 Pr 15:8 Pr 20:22 21:3,27 Isa 66:3
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2Ch 26:16-21 (**UZZIAH'S DISOBEDIENCE PARALLELS SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE**) But when he became strong, his **heart was so proud (THE ROOT SIN IN HIS HEART - PRIDE)** that he acted corruptly (**THE ACTION RESULTING FROM HIS PRIDE**), and he was unfaithful (**DISOBEDIENT**) to the LORD his God, for he

entered the temple of the LORD to **burn incense on the altar of incense**. 17 Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men. 18 They opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, (**UZZIAH AND SAUL BROKE THIS LAW...**) **"It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense.** Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from the LORD God." 19 But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the **leprosy broke out on his forehead** before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense. 20 Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the LORD had smitten him. 21 **King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death**; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king's house judging the people of the land.

## **SAUL'S IMPATIENCE AND RESULTING INSOLENT**

**So** - Term of conclusion. Based on increasing size of Philistines and decreasing size of his Hebrew forces, Saul had a problem that we all have - difficulty in trusting God when one feels their resources slipping away (It is 2023 and America is probably entering a recession and anxiety titers are increasing even among Christians). As Saul saw the sand slipping through the hourglass, he became impatient with God's timing or more accurately with God's promise through His prophet that he would come and would give Saul advice. In the heat of God's crucible testing his faith, he began to rationalize that the ritual would be the solutions and so he foolishly substituted ritual for faith in God's sure word of promise! (1Sa 10:8+) In sum, Saul arrived at the conclusion that it was better to take action than trust God's Word.

What was God doing? He was doing what He had done to Israel before and what He does to believers today. Moses wrote "You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He (1) might humble you, (2) testing you, (3) to know what was in your heart, (4) whether you would keep His commandments or not." (Dt 8:2+). Saul got a big fat **"F"** on his test paper! Like Saul, our true spiritual character is revealed under pressure.

**THOUGHT** - Are you currently in God's crucible, testing your faith and patience? When God puts His own people into the furnace, He keeps His eye on the clock and His hand on the thermostat. He knows how long and how much. He is not an arsonist, but a Refiner! "Though times be dark, the struggles grim, And cares rise like a flood, This sweet assurance holds to Him: My God is near and good." (Hager) Gold is tested by fire. Man is tested by adversity. Take a moment to play and pray "[Purify My Heart](#)."

**Saul said, "Bring to me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering-** Notice that Saul asks for the two offerings that Samuel had mentioned indicating that he clearly remembered the words of the prophet. Recall also that Samuel had specifically said "**behold**" ([hinneh](#) = pay attention!!!) because he would come to Gilgal to offer both these sacrifices and Saul was to wait because Samuel would show him what he **should do** (presumably in how to fight the Philistines). (1Sa 10:8+). As alluded to above, waiting on Samuel and his word was tantamount to waiting for Jehovah to speak a word because Samuel was Jehovah's mouthpiece. So Saul's sin was not just against Samuel but ultimately was a sin against Yahweh! In Leviticus 1 it was clearly reiterated that the Levitical priests were to make these offerings (see Lev 1:7, 8, 15, 17+ recalling that Samuel was a Levite). With his action, Saul disobeyed both the law of Moses and the instructions of God's prophet. And he did so having been clearly instructed by Samuel! Another king named Uzziah ([see passages above](#)) disobeyed the clear Mosaic instructions regarding offerings and was punished for life with leprosy.

**Brian Bell** - On the 7th day Saul tries to rally his frightened troops, & he unlawfully assumes the role of priest to offer up the pre-battle burnt offering. 1. Oh if he only waited a little longer. Had he only realized that he was being tested & that Samuel was actually coming, just in the nick of time! 2. Ps.46:1 God is our refuge (He'll hide us) & strength (He'll help us) a very present help in trouble (an abundantly available help in tight places). John McCarthy said, "When I see a slippery slope, my instinct is to build a terrace." 1. Oh, if Saul would have stopped here to build a terrace! 2. But wait...Why does God expose men to such searching??? (see Deut.8:2) a) And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these 40 years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. Patience is a mark of character, & Saul's character was weak. 1. The 19th-century preacher A. B. Simpson said, "Beloved, have you ever thought that someday you will not have anything to try you, or anyone to vex you again? There will be no opportunity in heaven to learn or to show the spirit of patience, forbearance, and longsuffering. If you are to practice these things, it must be now." Each day affords countless opportunities to learn patience. Let's not waste them! God's best gifts come slowly. Paul had time to realize this as he lay in prison; Moses must have asked, 'Why?' many times during the delays in Midian & in the wilderness; Jesus Himself experienced the discipline of delay in His silent years before His great public ministry began.

**1 Samuel 13:10 As soon as he finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him and to greet him.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:10 καὶ γνετο ὅς συνετέλεσεν νόφρων τὴν λοκάτωσιν καὶ Σαμουὴλ παραγνεταὶ καὶ ἔλθεν Σαουλ ἐς πύτησιν αὐτοῦ εὐλογοῦσαι αὐτόν

LXE 1 Samuel 13:10 And it came to pass when he had finished offering the whole-burnt-offering, that Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to meet him, and to bless him.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

NET 1 Samuel 13:10 Just when he had finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel appeared on the scene. Saul went out to meet him and to greet him.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:10 Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. So Saul went out to greet him,

ESV 1 Samuel 13:10 As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:10 Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:10 Just as Saul was finishing with the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet and welcome him,

NRS 1 Samuel 13:10 As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived; and Saul went out to meet him and salute him.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:10 Just as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to meet and greet him.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:10 He had just finished this offering when Samuel arrived. Saul went out to greet him,

YLT 1 Samuel 13:10 And it cometh to pass at his completing to cause the burnt-offering to ascend, that lo, Samuel hath come, and Saul goeth out to meet him, to bless him;

- **Saul:** 1Sa 15:13
- **greet:** Heb. bless him, 1Sa 15:13 Ru 2:4 Ps 129:8
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAMUEL ARRIVES SEVENTH DAY

**As soon as he finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him and to greet him -**

Note the timing (**as soon as he finished offering...**) which is clearly no accident. Saul had completed his sinful sacrifice and Samuel steps onto the scene! Sometimes our sins do not come to light until after a period of "incubation" (but they always come to light - Nu 32:23+), but here we see Saul's sin was exposed immediately! It is like God says "Gotcha!" This **meet** and **greet** that Saul would soon wish had not occurred. Saul seems to be unaware of the gross act of disobedience he has just committed, so he saunters out to **meet** and **greet** (Lxx = [eulogeo](#) = to bless, extol, speak well of) Samuel as if nothing had happened! What would have happened had Saul, smitten with deep conviction and contrition, come out and confessed and cried out for mercy before the man of God, Samuel? Just pondering what might have been a different scenario if Saul's spirit and heart had been broken and contrite??? (See 2Sa 24:10, Ps 51:17)

**1 Samuel 13:11 But Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "Because I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the appointed days, and that the Philistines were assembling at Michmash,**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:11 καὶ ἐπὲν Σαμουὴλ τὸ πεποηκός καὶ ἐπὲν Σαουλ τί ἐδόν ὅς διεσπρήλας πῦμον καὶ ὁ παρεγνοὺς διέτξω τὸν μαρτυρὸν μερὶν καὶ ὁ ἅλφυλοι συνχθησαν ἐς Μαχεμας

LXE 1 Samuel 13:11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? and Saul said, Because I saw how the people

were scattered from me, and thou was not present as thou purposedst according to the set time of the days, and the Philistines were gathered to Machmas.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

NET 1 Samuel 13:11 But Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul replied, "When I saw that the army had started to abandon me and that you didn't come at the appointed time and that the Philistines had assembled at Micmash,

CSB 1 Samuel 13:11 and Samuel asked, "What have you done?" Saul answered, "When I saw that the troops were deserting me and you didn't come within the appointed days and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash,

ESV 1 Samuel 13:11 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,

NIV 1 Samuel 13:11 "What have you done?" asked Samuel. Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash,

NLT 1 Samuel 13:11 but Samuel said, "What is this you have done?" Saul replied, "I saw my men scattering from me, and you didn't arrive when you said you would, and the Philistines are at Micmash ready for battle.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:11 Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul replied, "When I saw that the people were slipping away from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines were mustering at Michmash,

NJB 1 Samuel 13:11 Samuel said, 'What have you been doing?' Saul replied, 'I saw the army deserting me and dispersing, and you had not come at the time fixed, while the Philistines were mustering at Michmash.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:11 and Samuel asked him, "What have you done?" Saul replied: "When I saw that the men were slipping away from me, since you had not come by the specified time, and with the Philistines assembled at Michmash,

YLT 1 Samuel 13:11 and Samuel saith, 'What hast thou done?' And Saul saith, 'Because I saw that the people were scattered from off me, and thou hadst not come at the appointment of the days, and the Philistines are gathered to Michmash,

- **What have:** Ge 3:13 4:10 Jos 7:19 2Sa 3:24 2Ki 5:25
- **Michmash:** 1Sa 13:2,5,16,23 14:5 Isa 10:28
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL'S "SLIP UP" RATIONALIZED

Rationalization describes the action of attempting to explain or justify behavior or an attitude with logical reasons, even if these are not appropriate. Or to stay it more bluntly what is said amounts to a lie, which is what Saul was doing. Notice how sin does not occur in a vacuum, but one sin invariably leads to another. This is another reason we all need to keep "**short accounts**" ([nice blog explanation](#)) with God, to **cut our losses** before the losses can no longer be cut (so to speak)!

[Life Application Study Bible \(Borrow\)](#) - When faced with a difficult decision, don't allow impatience to drive you to disobey God. When you know what God wants, follow his plan regardless of the consequences. God often uses delays to test our obedience and patience.

**But Samuel said, "What have you done?"** - These words must have cut like a knife! But they were Saul's opportunity for a broken and contrite heart like his predecessor David manifested ("I have sinned against the LORD." - 2Sa 12:13) when confronted by another prophet named Nathan! (See 2Sa 12:7-12, 13, 14) David was not perfect but he was forgiven.

**And Saul said, "Because I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the appointed days, and that the Philistines were assembling at Michmash** - Saul responds with 2 rationalizations, 2 weak excuses. There were true statements but did not release Saul from the guilt of his sin of offering a sacrifice. Saul was walking by sight, not by faith. Faith is based on facts, not fiction, and Saul had a host of facts to support the fact that Samuel was a man of integrity, a prophet

whose EVERY word had proved "spot on!" Samuel had said 7 days and it was still the seventh day, but Saul wavered, disbelieved and disobeyed.

**Guzik** - Saul could have made supplication to the Lord in any number of ways. He could have cried out the lord for the whole nation with a humble heart, but instead he did the one thing he must not do: offer a sacrifice.

**Brian Bell** - When David sinned, he came with confessions; when Saul sinned, he had only excuses. He lied to his best friend, & it cost him his crown. (& he'll do it again 1Sa 15:15) Excuses 101: It was "the people"; it was "your fault"; it was "the Philistines"! Or, "If the soldiers didn't desert me...if you hadn't come late...if the Philistines weren't getting so close!" Billy Sunday defines excuses as, "the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie." 2. Benjamin Franklin said, "I never knew a man who was good at making excuses who was good at anything else." 3. Adam made the 1st excuse for sin in the garden(blamed eating the fruit on Eve) & many have followed his bad example. Adam blamed Eve; Eve turned & blamed the serpent; & the serpent said, "wait, I don't have a leg to stand on!" :) Excuses only make matters worse. Q: Are you skilled at minimizing your own sins & emphasizing the faults of others like Saul was? (1) This isn't the way a man of God leads God's people. I saw (1Sa 13:11) - maybe indicates he was walking by sight & not faith.

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Rod Mattoon - Saul got ahead of God and ended up losing his crown. It is interesting to note the changes in Saul's life in chapters 13–15.

\* In chapter 13, Saul runs ahead of God.

\* In chapter 14, Saul hesitates and vacillates.

\* In chapter 15, He lags behind. He knew what he was supposed to do but did not do it. Saul was unstable. Why? He was a double-minded man (James 1:8). At the start, Saul wanted to do God's will. His victory went to his head and he became proud. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee (Psalm 32:9). Saul was like a horse rushing ahead and he was like a mule too, lagging behind.

Saul offered the sacrifice and guess who shows up right afterwards.... Samuel. Samuel asks, "What have you done?" Saul gives his excuses.... the people were scattered and you didn't show up! He is blaming Samuel. He does it again in chapter fourteen, blaming Jonathan and in chapter fifteen, blaming the people. Saul never blames himself. He will not take responsibility for his own actions. Saul suffers from the "Pass the Buck Syndrome." People today who act like Saul continue through life with constant clashes with people because they will not recognize they have a pride problem. They will not look at themselves as they really are and they will do anything to not look bad.

**1 Samuel 13:12 therefore I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not asked the favor of the LORD.' So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering."**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:12 κα ε πα ν ν καταβ σονται ο λλ φυλοι πρ ς με ε ς Γαλγαλα κα το προσ που το κυρ ου ο κ δε θην κα νεκρατευ μην κα ν νεγκα τ ν λοκα τωσιν

LXE 1 Samuel 13:12 Then I said, Now will the Philistines come down to me to Galgala, and I have not sought the face of the Lord: so I forced myself and offered the whole-burnt-offering.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

NET 1 Samuel 13:12 I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down on me at Gilgal and I have not sought the LORD's favor.' So I felt obligated to offer the burnt offering."

CSB 1 Samuel 13:12 I thought: The Philistines will now descend on me at Gilgal, and I haven't sought the LORD's favor. So I forced myself to offer the burnt offering."

ESV 1 Samuel 13:12 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."

NIV 1 Samuel 13:12 I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering."

NLT 1 Samuel 13:12 So I said, 'The Philistines are ready to march against us at Gilgal, and I haven't even asked for the LORD's help! So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering myself before you came.'

NRS 1 Samuel 13:12 I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down upon me at Gilgal, and I have not entreated

the favor of the LORD'; so I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering."

NJB 1 Samuel 13:12 So I thought: Now the Philistines are going to fall on me at Gilgal and I have not implored the favour of Yahweh. So I felt obliged to make the burnt offering myself.'

NAB 1 Samuel 13:12 I said to myself, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not yet sought the LORD'S blessing.' So in my anxiety I offered up the holocaust."

YLT 1 Samuel 13:12 and I say, Now do the Philistines come down unto me to Gilgal, and the face of Jehovah I have not appeased; and I force myself, and cause the burnt-offering to ascend.'

- **said:** 1Ki 12:26,27
- **I forced:** 1Sa 21:7 Ps 66:3 Am 8:5 2Co 9:7
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TALKING TO YOURSELF CAN BE DECEIVING

**Therefore** (conclusion) **I said** - Saul concludes his excuse by asserting he spoke to SELF. Self, in the unregenerate state, is fleshly, sinful, godless so is not generally a good "PERSON" with whom to have a conversation, especially when critical decisions must be made!

**'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not asked the favor of the LORD-** Saul continues his rationalization. He did not need to carry out a sacrifice in order to speak **to the LORD!** He could have simply spoken to the LORD like David did when Saul was seeking to kill him (1Sa 23:11+, cf 2Sa 7:27, 2Sa 15:31)!

**Life Application Study Bible (Borrow)** - Saul had plenty of excuses for his disobedience. But Samuel zeroed in on the real issue: "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you." Like Saul, we often gloss over our mistakes and sins, trying to justify our actions because of our "special" circumstances (ED: I'VE NEVER DONE THAT YOU? RHETORICAL!). Our excuses, however, are nothing more than disobedience. God knows our true motives. He forgives, restores, and blesses only when we are honest about our sins. By trying to hide his sins behind excuses, Saul lost his kingship (1Sa 13:14).

**So I forced** ([aphaq](#)) **myself and offered the burnt offering** - NET = "So I felt obligated" **Forced** myself implies that his conscience was clearly sounding the alarm "Do not do this sinful thing! Wait!" But the flesh of Saul overrode the voice and reason of his conscience and he committed a sin against the LORD. This was as we often say "**the beginning of the end**" for Saul's regal reign! [Wiersbe](#) agrees "This was the beginning of the end: if God could not trust him in this little matter, how could He trust him with the kingdom? Saul's impatience cost him His kingdom." The Septuagint translates **forced** ([aphaq](#)) with the verb [egkrateuomai](#) which pictures one as exercising self-control, of keeping their emotions, impulses and desires under control! In Saul's case that was a blatant lie! Saul instead of self-control, gave control to self and surrendered to the desires of his flesh out of his lack of trust in God's Word and out of fear of man! Proverbs 29:25 says "The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted." Saul was ensnared by his fear and dethroned by his lack of faith!

**THOUGHT** - Saul's example should be a lesson for all of us, a lesson not to imitate! First, we need to be careful judging him and failing to look in the mirror at our own heart, for as Paul warned "let him who thinks he stands **take heed** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) that he does not fall." (1Co 10:12+) And secondly, we do well to learn from Saul's fall by heeding Paul's (another man named "Saul"! ) words "Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved....Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." (1Co 10:6, 11+)

The psalmist Asaph describes the "**offering**" Saul should have made in his moment of distress writing

**"Offer** (command) to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving And pay your vows to the Most High.  
**Call** (command) upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me." (Psalm 50:14, 15)

**Brian Bell** - I felt compelled - Really? Why didn't you feel compelled to pray? Or, to cry out to God. Compelled to wait. Why didn't you feel compelled to do the right thing?

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**Forced** ([0662](#)) ([aphaq](#)) means to hold, to be strong, summon strength, compose oneself. **Aphaq** may be translated a variety of ways, depending on the context. The governing concept, however, is always the control of one's emotions in spite of great passion whether positive or negative. For example Joseph **controlled himself** (Ge 43:31) when going back in to meet his brothers (still



unaware of his true identity). In Isa 63:15 of the stirrings of Yahweh's heart being **restrained**. **Gilbrant** adds that "An unusual usage of this word occurs in 1 Samuel 13. After Saul's disobedience at Gilgal, Samuel asked Saul the reason for sacrificing instead of waiting for the prophet. Saul's reply was not only rationalizing, but was inherently a lie. (In fact, Saul's reply to Samuel was the exact opposite of the truth with regard to his motivation). Saul said that he "forced himself" (KJV) or "overcame himself" (Keil & Delitzsch) and made the sacrifice. The real reason Saul went ahead with the sacrifice, however, was out of fear of the Philistines, rather than because of any noble actions." ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Aphaq - 7x/7v - control(1), controlled(2), forced(1), restrain(1), restrained(2).** Gen. 43:31; Gen. 45:1; 1 Sam. 13:12; Est. 5:10; Isa. 42:14; Isa. 63:15; Isa. 64:12\

**1 Samuel 13:13 Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:13 κα ε πεν Σαμουηλ πρ ς Σαουλ μεματτωτα σοι τι ο κ φ λαξας τ ν ντολ ν μου ν νετε λατ σοι κ ριος ς ν ν το μασεν κ ριος τ ν βασιλε αν σου ως α νος π Ισραηλ

LXE 1 Samuel 13:13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; for thou hast not kept my command, which the Lord commanded thee, as now the Lord would have confirmed thy kingdom over Israel for ever.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

NET 1 Samuel 13:13 Then Samuel said to Saul, "You have made a foolish choice! You have not obeyed the commandment that the LORD your God gave you. Had you done that, the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever!

CSB 1 Samuel 13:13 Samuel said to Saul, "You have been foolish. You have not kept the command which the LORD your God gave you. It was at this time that the LORD would have permanently established your reign over Israel,

ESV 1 Samuel 13:13 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.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:13 "You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:13 "How foolish!" Samuel exclaimed. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. Had you kept it, the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:13 Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you. The LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever,

NJB 1 Samuel 13:13 Samuel said to Saul, 'You have acted like a fool. You have not obeyed the order which Yahweh your God gave you. Otherwise, Yahweh would have confirmed your sovereignty over Israel for ever.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:13 Samuel's response was: "You have been foolish! Had you kept the command the LORD your God gave you, the LORD would now establish your kingship in Israel as lasting;

YLT 1 Samuel 13:13 And Samuel saith unto Saul, 'Thou hast been foolish; thou hast not kept the command of Jehovah thy God, which He commanded thee, for now had Jehovah established thy kingdom over Israel unto the age;

- **you have acted foolishly** 2Sa 12:7-9 1Ki 18:18 21:20 2Ch 16:9 19:2 25:15,16 Job 34:18 Pr 19:3 Mt 14:3,4
- **have not kept:** 1Sa 15:11,22,28 Ps 50:8-15
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 24:10 (**DAVID HIMSELF RECOGNIZED HIS FOOLISH ACTION**) Now David's heart troubled him



after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for **I have acted very foolishly.**"

2 Chronicles 16:9 "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. **You have acted foolishly in this. (CONSEQUENCES TO KING ASA)** Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars."

1 Samuel 15:11 (THE WORD OF JEHOVAH) "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and **has not carried out My commands.**" And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night.

1 Samuel 15:22 Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? **Behold**, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams.

1 Samuel 15:28 So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.

1 Samuel 12:20-25+ (THIS CLEAR DIRECTIVE WAS NOT JUST TO THE PEOPLE BUT ALSO TO KING SAUL! KINGS ARE NOT ABOVE THE LORD'S AUTHORITY!) Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet **do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.** 21 "You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. 22" For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself. 23 "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way. 24 **"Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.** (HE HAD MADE SAUL KING!) 25 "But if you still do wickedly, **both you and your king will be swept away.**" (CF "YOUR KINGDOM SHALL NOT ENDURE" - v14).

## **SAUL'S FOOLISH ACT HAS CONSEQUENCES**

**Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly ([sakal](#)); you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you** - Here is another lesson we can learn - Do not lie to a prophet! Note what is foolish from God's perspective! Not keeping His command, which He clearly has given. Saul himself would use the same verb for acted foolishly declaring "**Behold**, I have played the fool and have committed a serious error." (1Sa 26:21). As we often say, for Saul his recognition was "**too little, too late!**" The **Septuagint** translates **acted foolishly ([sakal](#))** with the verb [mataioo](#) which describes one (Saul) as being given over to deceptive and meaningless thinking (as in Ro 1:21+ - thus to become worthless or foolish, be unable to think clearly or correctly) and in the **perfect tense** signifies this occurred at a point in time and would persist or have enduring effect, which proved all too true in Saul's case!

**for now** - Term of explanation, explaining the high cost of a moment of foolish behavior!

**The LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever** - The implication is that cost to Saul is that his lineage would not endure, and this was soon fulfilled, for he was the ONLY true king in his line, although [Ish-bosheth](#) did reign over 11 tribes of Israel for 2 years.

[Guzik](#) - This was no small sin. "To disobey God in the smallest matter is sin enough: there can be no sin little, because there is no little God to sin against." (Trapp)

Saul should have counted the cost (of sin) which extracts a high price from its victims...

Sin will take you further than you ever wanted to stray!  
Cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay!  
Keep you longer than you ever thought you would stay!

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**Acted foolishly ([05528](#))([sakal](#))** means to be a fool, to act foolishly. Having or showing a lack of good sense, judgment, or discretion. It means acting in an indefensible manner, without reason, in foolish haste (Ge 31:28); especially in disobeying God's instructions (1Sa 13:13; 1Ch 21:8; 2Ch 16:9). Uses an idiom, Saul would later say "Behold, I have played the fool and have committed a serious error." (1Sa 26:21).

**Sakal - 8v - acted foolishly(2), acted...foolishly(1), done\*(1), done...foolishly(1), foolishly(1), foolishness(2), make(1), played the fool(1).** Gen. 31:28; 1 Sam. 13:13; 1 Sam. 26:21; 2 Sam. 15:31; 2 Sam.

## Gloom and Doom Samuel's messages to Israel

1. 1 Samuel 3:11-14 Judgment will come to the house of Eli.
2. 1 Samuel 7:1-4 The nation must turn from idol worship.
3. 1 Samuel 8:10-22 Your kings will bring you nothing but trouble.
4. 1 Samuel 12:25 If you continue in sin, you will be destroyed by God.
5. 1 Samuel 13:13, 14 Saul's kingdom will not continue.
6. 1 Samuel 15:17-31 Saul, you have sinned before God

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**G Campbell Morgan** - Thou hast done foolishly.—1 Sam. 13.13.

What had this man done? A reference to a previous statement (ro. 8) will show that in the day of his anointing Saul had been implicitly instructed by Samuel as to what would take place at Gilgal, and as to what line of action he was to follow. Many years had passed, but undoubtedly that command had been the revelation of a rule of conduct for the king, viz. that he was to undertake no enterprise, apart from the making known of the Divine Will through the prophet, in connection with the offering of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. The circumstances in which Saul found himself were particularly trying. The people were filled with fear in the presence of the Philistines and were scattering. Saul waited seven days, according to instructions, and then, in order to stop the rout, he arrogated to himself the function which was that of the prophet only. This was his foolishness. It is an arresting story. The action seems plausible; judged by ordinary political standards, it was justifiable. As a matter of fact, it was an action which denied the root principle of theocratic monarchy. It was an act of insubordination to the one King, Jehovah. It cost this man his kingship. We may learn from it that plausibility is no justification for disobedience. However dark the day, or difficult the circumstances, we are never justified in following our own reasonings, when they bring us into conflict with the Divine order. That order is always that of the utmost wisdom, and anything which controverts it is foolishness, however much it may seem to be in harmony with reason. (Borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#))

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**Walter Kaiser - Hard Sayings of the Bible - scroll to page 176-** 1Sa 13:13–14 Would God Have Established Saul's Kingdom?

How was it possible for Samuel to say that Saul's house could have had perpetuity over Israel when Genesis 49:10 had promised it to the tribe of Judah (not Benjamin, from which Saul hailed) long before Saul's reign or downfall? Of course, the Lord had planned to place a king over Israel, as Deuteronomy 17:14 had clearly taught. But if the family that was to wield the scepter was from Judah, how could God—in retrospect, to Saul's disappointment—say that Saul could indeed have been that king?

The solution to this problem is not to be found in Samuel's vacillating attitudes toward Saul, for it is clear that Saul was also God's choice from the very beginning (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1, 24; 12:13).

The Lord had allowed the choice of the people to fall on one whose external attributes made an immediate positive impression on people. Saul's was strictly an earthly kingdom, with all the pageantry and showmanship that impress mortals.

Unfortunately, Saul was not disposed to rule in humble submission to the laws, ordinances and commandments that came from above. As one final evidence of his attitude, he had refused to wait for the appointment he had made with Samuel. As he went ahead and took over the duties of a priest, in violation of his kingly position, God decided that he would not keep his appointment with him as king.

The type of kingship Samuel had instituted under the direction of God was distinctive. It was a theocracy; the Israelite monarchy was to function under the authority and sovereignty of Yahweh himself. When this covenantal context was violated, the whole "manner of the kingdom" (1 Sam 10:25) was undermined.

While this explanation may suffice for what happened in the "short haul," how shall we address the issue of God's having promised the kingship to the family of Judah, rather than to the Benjamite family of Kish? Would God have actually given Saul's family a portion or all of the nation, had Saul listened and kept the commandments of God? Or did the writer, and hence God also, regard the two southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin as one? In that case, perhaps what had been promised to Judah could have gone to

Saul just as easily as to David.

There is evidence from Scripture itself that the tribes of Benjamin and Judah were regarded as one tribe: 1 Kings 11:36 says, “I will give one tribe to [Solomon’s] son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem.” If these two could later be regarded as “one,” no objection can be made to doing so earlier.

Ultimately, this is one of those questions that are impossible to resolve fully, since we are asking for information that belongs to the mind of God. However, it seems important that we be able to offer several possible solutions.

Another possible solution is that it may well have been that God fully intended that Judah, and eventually the house of David, would rule over Israel and Judah. But it is also possible that Saul’s family would have been given the northern ten tribes of Israel after the division of the kingdom, which God in his omniscience of course could anticipate. That would resolve the question just as easily.

The best suggestion, however, is that God had agreed to appoint Saul king in deference to the people’s deep wishes. Though the Lord had consented, this was not his directive will; he merely permitted it to happen. Eventually, what the Lord knew all along was proved true: Saul had a character flaw that precipitated his demise. Nevertheless, it is possible to describe Saul in terms of what he could have been, barring that flaw, in the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the Israelites.

A combination of these last two views is possible—that in his permissive will God would have given Saul the northern ten tribes in perpetuity without denying to the house of Judah the two southern tribes, according to his promise in Genesis 49:10. An interesting confirmation of this possibility can be seen in 1 Kings 11:38, where King Jeroboam is promised an enduring dynasty, in a parallel to the promise God had made to King David. Since the promise to Jeroboam in no way replaced the long-standing promise to the tribe of Judah and the house of David, it is similar to God’s “might-have-been” to Saul. God offered the ten northern tribes to Jeroboam just as he had offered them to Saul.

One final possibility is that Saul was given a genuine, though hypothetical, promise of a perpetual dynasty over (northern) Israel. However, the Lord surely knew that Saul would not measure up to the challenge set before him. God had chosen Saul because he wanted him to serve as a negative example in contrast to David, whose behavior was so different. This, then, set the stage for the introduction of the legitimate kingship as God had always intended it.

[See also comment on 1 SAMUEL 8–12 - scroll to page 174](#)

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## Toxic Living

Samuel said to Saul, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord.” — 1 Samuel 13:13

Today’s Scripture: 1 Samuel 13:7-14

Picher, Oklahoma, is no more. In mid-2009, this once-bustling town of 20,000 went out of business. In the first quarter of the 1900s, Picher was a boomtown because of its abundant lead and zinc. Workers extracted the ore, which was used to help arm the US during both World Wars.

The town faded as the ore began to run out—but the biggest problem was that while the lead and zinc brought wealth, they also brought pollution. Because nothing was done to deal with the pollution, Picher became a toxic wasteland, and the government condemned the land.

What happened to Picher can happen to people. Prosperity can look so good that it’s hard to think about possible downsides. Actions that are detrimental to long-term spiritual health are accepted, and unless the problem is corrected, destruction follows. It happened to King Saul. He began as a good king, but in seeking success he failed to see the damage he was doing. Turning his back on God’s commands, he acted “foolishly” (1 Sam. 13:13) and lost his kingdom (v.14).

In our attempts to find success, we need to watch out for spiritual pollution that comes when we fail to follow God’s clear scriptural guidelines. Godly living always beats toxic living. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Lord has given us commands  
And told us to obey;  
Our own designs are sure to fail  
If we neglect His way!  
—Bosch

No one can be a real success without God.

**1 Samuel 13:14 "But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:14 καὶ νῦν βασιλεὺς σου οὐ στήσεται καὶ ζητήσει κύριος αὐτὸν ἄνθρωπον κατὰ τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ θέλει τίς κύριος αὐτὸς εἰσρχομένῳ πρὸς τὸν λαόν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ φελάξαι· σὰν ἐτε λατρεῖς κύριος

LXE 1 Samuel 13:14 But now thy kingdom shall not stand to thee, and the Lord shall seek for himself a man after his own heart; and the Lord shall appoint him to be a ruler over his people, because thou hast not kept all that the Lord commanded thee.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

NET 1 Samuel 13:14 But now your kingdom will not continue! The LORD has sought out for himself a man who is loyal to him and the LORD has appointed him to be leader over his people, for you have not obeyed what the LORD commanded you."

CSB 1 Samuel 13:14 but now your reign will not endure. The LORD has found a man loyal to Him, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not done what the LORD commanded."

ESV 1 Samuel 13:14 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."

NIV 1 Samuel 13:14 But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command."

NLT 1 Samuel 13:14 But now your kingdom must end, for the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart. The LORD has already appointed him to be the leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command."

NRS 1 Samuel 13:14 but now your kingdom will not continue; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart; and the LORD has appointed him to be ruler over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

NJB 1 Samuel 13:14 But now your sovereignty will not last; Yahweh has discovered a man after his own heart and designated him as leader of his people, since you have not carried out what Yahweh ordered you.'

NAB 1 Samuel 13:14 but as things are, your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and has appointed him commander of his people, because you broke the LORD'S command."

YLT 1 Samuel 13:14 and, now, thy kingdom doth not stand, Jehovah hath sought for Himself a man according to His own heart, and Jehovah chargeth him for leader over His people, for thou hast not kept that which Jehovah commanded thee.'

- **But now:** 1Sa 2:30 15:28
- **the Lord:** 1Sa 16:1,12 2Sa 7:15,16 Ps 78:70 89:19,20-37 Ac 13:22
- **ruler over:** 1Sa 9:16 2Sa 5:2 2Ki 20:5 Heb 2:10
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAMUEL'S OMINOUS PROPHECY TO SAUL

**But now your kingdom shall not endure-** Ponder this statement beloved. One sin resulted in loss of an enduring kingdom for Saul!

**THOUGHT** - The questions we must all ask ourselves are "Do I truly grasp the gravity and cost of my sin against a Holy God? Do I too often presume upon God's great mercy and forgiveness? God, let this lesson

sink deep into my heart, so that the next time I am tempted to commit some presumptive sin against You, Your Spirit might check and overwhelm my sinful flesh and kill the temptation before it births sin that kills me. (cf Ro 8:13+, Gal 5:17+). In the victorious, sin-conquering Name of Jesus. Amen

**The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you** - Saul was **a man after** his (little h) own **heart, a man after** man's **heart**. God declares the keynote of the entire book (and really the entire Bible) in declaring He would seek for Himself **a man after His own heart**, which would turn about to be David. David an imperfect man did have a heart sensitive to the will of God and from his line, would come the greater David Who would be the perfect Man after His own Heart, the Man Christ Jesus, Who would reign forever as King of kings. Amen!

**THOUGHT** - O, that every one of us, as His beloved children, would cry out "[Lord, Reign in Me](#)," and that by His Spirit and His Word, this cry would prove to be the reality of our lives from this day forth and unto eternity in Christ Jesus. Amen. Sing it as your prayer as if you sincerely mean it...

### **LORD REIGN IN ME**

Over all the earth  
You reign on high  
Every mountain stream  
Every sunset sky

But my one request  
Lord, my only aim  
Is that you reign in me again

Lord, reign in me  
Reign in your power  
Over all my dreams  
In my darkest hour  
You are the Lord of all I am  
So won't you reign in me again?

Over every thought  
Over every word  
May my life reflect  
The beauty of my Lord

'Cause you mean more to me  
Than any earthly thing  
So won't you reign in me again?

Lord, reign in me  
Reign in your power  
Over all my dreams  
In my darkest hour  
You are the Lord of all I am  
So won't you reign in me again?

Over all the earth  
You reign on high  
Every mountain stream  
Every sunset sky

But my one request  
Lord, my only aim

Is that you reign in me again

Lord, reign in me  
Reign in your power  
Over all my dreams  
In my darkest hour  
You are the Lord of all I am  
So won't you reign in me again?

Lord, reign in me  
Reign in your power  
Over all my dreams  
In my darkest hour  
You are the Lord of all I am  
So won't you reign in me again?

Won't you reign?  
Won't you reign in me again?  
Come and praise the Lord  
Won't you reign in me again?

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**Guzik - A man after His own heart:** What does this mean? We can discover this by looking at the man who was not a man after His own heart (Saul) and comparing him to the man who was a man after His own heart (David).

**i. A man after God's heart honors the Lord.** Saul was more concerned with his will than God's will. David knew God's will was most important. Even when David didn't do God's will, he still knew God's will was more important. All sin is a disregard of God, but David sinned more out of weakness and Saul more out of a disregard for God.

**ii. A man after God's heart enthrones God as king.** For Saul, Saul was king. For David, the Lord God was king. Both David and Saul knew sacrifice before battle was important. But David thought it was important because it pleased and honored God. Saul thought it was important because it might help him win the battle. Saul thought God would help him achieve his goals. David thought that God was the goal.

**iii. A man after God's heart has a soft, repentant heart.** When Saul was confronted with his sin he offered excuses. When David was confronted with his sin he confessed his sin and repented (2 Samuel 12:13).

**iv. A man after God's heart loves other people.** Saul became increasingly bitter against people and lived more and more unto himself, but David loved people. When David was down and out he still loved and served those who were even more down and out (1 Samuel 22:1-2).

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## 1 Samuel 13:1-15 Costly Consequences

I always knew that disobedience has consequences, but it came home to me forcibly in basic training during World War II. I had traveled beyond the distance allowed on my weekend pass to be with my wife Ginny, and I returned to camp late because the train had broken down. I paid for my rule-breaking—20 hours of extra duty washing pots and pans!

King Saul also learned the high cost of disobedience. He faced the prospect of fighting a huge well-equipped Philistine army with his small band of frightened and untrained followers. While waiting for Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice before going to battle, Saul became impatient and offered the sacrifice himself, even though he knew that God had given that right only to the priests. It was a costly mistake.

Saul had begun his reign with humility and compassion, and he gave God the credit (1 Samuel 11). And the prophet Samuel told him that God would have kept the kingship in his family if he had obeyed God's command (1Sa 13:13-14). But that one act of disobedience changed the course of his life. From that point on, it was a sad downhill journey.

Never forget that disobedience has consequences. And some of them may be very costly.—Herbert Vander Lugt [Our Daily Bread](#).  
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O help me, Lord, to be afraid  
Of disobedient ways;  
And may I seek what pleases You,  
What gives You highest praise.  
—Sper

### The way of obedience is the only way of blessing

**1 Samuel 13:15 Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:15 καὶ ἐν τῇ Σαμουήλ καὶ πλῆθεν κ Γαλαλῶν ἐς δὲ νῦν αὐτοῦ κατὰ λείμμα τοῦ λαοῦ ἐβή  
πρὸς Σαουλ ἐς πνιγὴν πρὸς τοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ πολεμιστοῦ αὐτοῦ παραγενομένων κ Γαλαλῶν ἐς Γαββὰ Βενιαμὴν  
καὶ πᾶσιν ὡς Σαουλ τὸν λαόν τινες ἐρεθίσαντες μετὰ τοὺς ἑκακοὺς ἄνδρας

LXE 1 Samuel 13:15 And Samuel arose, and departed from Galgala, and the remnant of the people went after Saul to meet him after the men of war, when they had come out of Galgala to Gabaa of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people that were found with him, about six hundred men.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:15 And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men.

NET 1 Samuel 13:15 Then Samuel set out and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin. Saul mustered the army that remained with him; there were about six hundred men.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:15 Then Samuel went from Gilgal to Gibeah in Benjamin. Saul registered the troops who were with him, about 600 men.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:15 And Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal. The rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the army; they went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:15 Then Samuel left Gilgal and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:15 Samuel then left Gilgal and went on his way, but the rest of the troops went with Saul to meet the army. They went up from Gilgal to Gibeah in the land of Benjamin. When Saul counted the men who were still with him, he found only 600 were left!

NRS 1 Samuel 13:15 And Samuel left and went on his way from Gilgal. The rest of the people followed Saul to join the army; they went up from Gilgal toward Gibeah of Benjamin. Saul counted the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:15 Samuel then got up and left Gilgal to continue his journey. Those people remaining followed Saul as he went to join the warriors, and went from Gilgal to Geba of Benjamin. Saul reviewed the force that was with him; there were about six hundred men.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:15 Then Samuel set out from Gilgal and went his own way; but the rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the soldiers, going from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. Saul then numbered the soldiers he had with him, who were about six hundred.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:15 And Samuel riseth, and goeth up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin; and Saul inspecteth the people who are found with him, about six hundred men,

- **about six:** 1Sa 13:2,6,7 14:2
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin** - If this is the true reading, Samuel remained with Saul in his first battle (cf 1Sa 11:7,12), but now he departs! **And Saul numbered the people who were present (found) with him, about six hundred men** - In 1Sa 13:2 he had 3000 men. Can you recall anyone else in the OT whose army shrank instead of swelled? Of course, Gideon actually began with 22,000 that shrunk to 10,000 (Jdg 7:3) and then down to 300 in Jdg 7:6! And he still won the



battle! God is not interested in how big our army is but how big our heart is, how obedient our heart is!

**TECHNICAL NOTE - TSK** - The LXX. have, "Samuel arose and went away from Gilgal, and the remainder of the people went up along with the men of war after Samuel from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin." This is probably the true reading; for it does not appear that Samuel went to Gibeah, which was Saul's usual residence; and the Hebrew copyist, as Dr. Wall observes, seems to have missed a line, and added to the sentence concerning Samuel, that which ended the sentence concerning Saul. One MS. instead of Samuel, in the beginning of the sentence, reads Saul.

**Brian Bell** - Following the tense confrontation between prophet & king, Saul abandoned his plans to attack the Philistines that day & returned instead to his home town of Gibeah. Only 600 troops were still with him at this time. [Yet can't God do it w/only 300? Gideon - Jdg 7:16-25+]

**1 Samuel 13:16 Now Saul and his son Jonathan and the people who were present with them were staying in Geba of Benjamin while the Philistines camped at Michmash.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:16 κα Σαουλ κα Ιωναθαν υ ς α το κα λα ς ο ερεθ ντες μετ α τ ν κ θισαν ν Γαβεε Βενιαμιν κα κλαιον κα ο λλ φυλοι παρεμβεβλ κεισαν ε ς Μαχεμας

LXE 1 Samuel 13:16 And Saul and Jonathan his son, and the people that were found with them, halted in Gabaa, of Benjamin; and they wept: and the Philistines had encamped in Machmas.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:16 And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

NET 1 Samuel 13:16 Saul, his son Jonathan, and the army that remained with them stayed in Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin, while the Philistines camped in Micmash.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:16 Saul, his son Jonathan, and the troops who were with them were staying in Geba of Benjamin, and the Philistines were camped at Michmash.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:16 And Saul and Jonathan his son and the people who were present with them stayed in Geba of Benjamin, but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:16 Saul and his son Jonathan and the men with them were staying in Gibeah in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Micmash.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:16 Saul and Jonathan and the troops with them were staying at Geba in the land of Benjamin. The Philistines set up their camp at Micmash.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:16 Saul, his son Jonathan, and the people who were present with them stayed in Geba of Benjamin; but the Philistines encamped at Michmash.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:16 Saul, his son Jonathan, and the force that was with them took up their quarters in Geba of Benjamin while the Philistines camped at Michmash.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:16 Saul, his son Jonathan, and the soldiers they had with them were now occupying Geba of Benjamin, and the Philistines were encamped at Michmash.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:16 and Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people who are found with them, are abiding in Gibeah of Benjamin, and the Philistines have encamped in Michmash.

- **Gibeah:** 1Sa 13:3
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE OPPOSING FORCES ARE ALIGNED

**Now Saul and his son Jonathan and the people who were present with them were staying in [Geba](#) of Benjamin (~6 miles north of Jerusalem) while the Philistines camped at [Michmash](#) (~10 miles north of Jerusalem) - NLT has "Geba near Gibeah." On**

the map above, note how close they were to their enemy's camp - only about 4 miles away! Saul and Jonathan's forces were now together (earlier about 3000 men).

[Geba](#) - 16v - Jos. 18:24; Jos. 21:17; Jdg. 20:33; 1 Sam. 13:3; 1 Sam. 13:16; 1 Sam. 14:5; 2 Sam. 5:25; 1 Ki. 15:22; 2 Ki. 23:8; 1 Chr. 6:60; 1 Chr. 8:6; 2 Chr. 16:6; Ezr. 2:26; Neh. 7:30; Neh. 11:31; Neh. 12:29; Isa. 10:29; Zech. 14:10

### 1 Samuel 13:17 And the raiders came from the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual,

BGT 1 Samuel 13:17 καὶ ἔλθεν διαφθερῶν ἐξ ἑκτὸς τριῶν ὁμίλων ἡμιπύλαι πρὸς τὴν ὁδὸν πρὸς τὴν Σωγαλ

LXE 1 Samuel 13:17 And men came forth to destroy out of the land of the Philistines in three companies; one company turning by the way of Gophera toward the land of Sogal,

KJV 1 Samuel 13:17 And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual:

NET 1 Samuel 13:17 Raiding bands went out from the camp of the Philistines in three groups. One band turned toward the road leading to Ophrah by the land of Shual;

CSB 1 Samuel 13:17 Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp in three divisions. One division headed toward the Ophrah road leading to the land of Shual.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:17 And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual;

NIV 1 Samuel 13:17 Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp in three detachments. One turned toward Ophrah in the vicinity of Shual,

NLT 1 Samuel 13:17 Three raiding parties soon left the camp of the Philistines. One went north toward Ophrah in the land of Shual,

NRS 1 Samuel 13:17 And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies; one company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual,

NJB 1 Samuel 13:17 The raiding company sallied out of the Philistine camp in three groups: one group made for Ophrah in the territory of Shual;

NAB 1 Samuel 13:17 Meanwhile, raiders left the camp of the Philistines in three bands. One band took the Ophrah road toward the district of Shual;

YLT 1 Samuel 13:17 And the destroyer goeth out from the camp of the Philistines -- three detachments; the one detachment turneth unto the way of Ophrah, unto the land of Shual;

- **in three companies:** 1Sa 11:11
- **Ophrah:** Jos 18:23
- **Shual:** Jos 19:3
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THREE COMPANY RAIDING STRATEGY

**And the raiders** ([shachath](#) - destroying band) **came from the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual** - Ophrah was located about seven miles north of [Michmash](#) as shown on the map above. The Philistine raiding parties were for the purpose of taking strategic locations that would impede to influx of reinforcements to aid Saul who was camped centrally. As you study the three locations of the raiding parties, one can see that Saul was cut off on the north (Ophrah), the west toward the sea (Ben-horon) and the east toward the valley of Zeboim and the wilderness (see next verse).

**Raiders** (destroy, corrupt)([07843](#)) **shachath** means to decay, to go to ruin, to corrupt, to destroy (Sodom and Gomorrah = Ge 13:10, Ge 18:28, 31-32), to lay waste (Egypt from swarms of flies -Ex 8:24). **Shachath** is used of Israelites who worshiped the golden calf (Ex 32:7; Dt 9:12; 32:5, Hos 9:9). God warned He would **destroy** Israel if they were turned away from following Him (Nu 32:15). **Shachath** describes Israel's behavior as more corrupt after a judge died (Jdg 2:19). **Shachath** is used again to describe **raiders** (*spoilers, ravagers*) in 1Sa 14:15.

**OPHRAH** - A town in the territory allotted to Benjamin named between Parah and Chephar-ammoni (Josh 18:23). It is mentioned again in 1 Sam 13:17. The Philistines who were encamped at Michmash sent out marauding bands, one of which went westward, another eastward, down "the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness"; the third "turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual." This must have been northward, as Saul commanded the passage to the South. Eusebius, Onomasticon places it 5 Roman miles East of Bethel.

**1 Samuel 13:18 and another company turned toward Beth-horon, and another company turned toward the border which overlooks the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:18 κα μ α ρ χ πιβλ πουσα δ ν Βαιθωρων κα ρ χ μ α πιβλ πουσα δ ν Γαβεε τ ν ε σ κ ππουσαν π Γαι τ ν Σαβιν

LXE 1 Samuel 13:18 and another company turning the way of Baethoron, and another company turning by the way of Gabae that turns aside to Gai of Sabim.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:18 And another company turned the way to Bethhoron: and another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

NET 1 Samuel 13:18 another band turned toward the road leading to Beth Horon; and yet another band turned toward the road leading to the border that overlooks the valley of Zeboim in the direction of the desert.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:18 The next division headed toward the Beth-horon road, and the last division headed down the border road that looks out over the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:18 another company turned toward Beth-horon; and another company turned toward the border that looks down on the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:18 another toward Beth Horon, and the third toward the borderland overlooking the Valley of Zeboim facing the desert.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:18 another went west to Beth-horon, and the third moved toward the border above the valley of Zeboim near the wilderness.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:18 another company turned toward Beth-horon, and another company turned toward the mountain that looks down upon the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:18 one group made for Beth-Horon; and one group made for the high ground overlooking the Valley of the Hyenas, in the direction of the desert.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:18 another turned in the direction of Beth-horon; and the third took the road for Geba that overlooks the Valley of the Hyenas toward the desert.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:18 and the one detachment turneth the way of Beth-Horon, and the one detachment turneth the way of the border which is looking on the valley of the Zeboim, toward the wilderness.

- **Beth-horon:** Jos 10:11 16:3,5 18:13,14 1Ch 6:68 2Ch 8:5
- **Zeboim:** Ge 14:2 Ne 11:34 Ho 11:8
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Philistines controlled routes on (1) NORTH - Ophrah,  
(2) WEST- Upper Beth-horon and (3) EAST - Zeboim (not shown)

and another company turned toward **Beth-horon** ("house of the hollow" - see map), and another company turned toward the border which overlooks the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness (midbar - desert, barren wilderness) - SEE THE MAP ABOVE for areas the Philistine raiding parties now controlled. The twin towns of **Beth-horn** (Upper and Lower - 800' lower) were located west of Geba, about two miles apart on a ridge guarding the approach to the hill country from the coastal plain.

[Nelson Study Bible: NKJV Edition](#) - Raiding parties secured the access roads to Michmash. The Ophrah road ran northwest of Michmash. Beth Horon lay to the west, an important ridge route toward the coast. The Valley of Zeboim was located to the east toward the wilderness region leading to the Jordan Valley.

**ISBE - The Pass of the Beth-horons:** When (Josh 10:10) Joshua discomfited the kings of the Amorites "he slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them by the way of the 'Ascent of Beth-horon.' " When the Philistines were opposing King Saul at Michmash they sent a company of their men to hold "the way of Beth-horon." This pass ascends from the plain of Ajalon (now Yalo) and climbs in about 3/4 hr. to Beit Ur el tachta (1,210 ft.); it then ascends along the ridge, with valleys lying to north and south, and reaches Beit Ur el foqa (2,022 ft.), and pursuing the same ridge arrives in another 4 1/2 miles at the plateau to the North of el Jib (Gibeon). At intervals along this historic route traces of the ancient Roman paving are visible. It was the great highroad into the heart of the land from the earliest times until about three or four centuries ago. Along this route came Canaanites, Israelites, Philistines, Egyptians, Syrians, Romans, Saracens and Crusaders. Since the days of Joshua (Josh 10:10) it has frequently been the scene of a rout. Here the Syrian general Seron was defeated by Judas Maccabeus (1 Macc 3:13-24), and six years later Nicanor, retreating from Jerusalem, was here defeated and slain (1 Macc 7:39 ff; Josephus, Ant, XII, x, 5). Along this pass in 66 AD the Roman general Cestius Gallus was driven in headlong flight before the Jews.

**ISBE on Zeboim** - The Valley of Zeboim, "the valley of hyenas," one of three companies of the Philistines left their camp at Michmash and "turned the way of the border that looketh down upon the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness" (1 Sam 13:18). There are several valleys with names derived from the hyena, so common in these parts. There is a small branch valley called Shakked dab`a, "ravine of the hyenas," North of the Wady kelt (Grove), a, Wady abu dab`a, "valley of the father of hyenas, which joins the Wady kelt from the South (Marti), and a large and well-known Wady dab`a, "valley of hyenas," which runs parallel with the Wady kelt, some 3 miles farther South, and ends at the Dead Sea. The first of these, which apparently leads to Mukhmas itself, seems the most probable.

**1 Samuel 13:19 Now no blacksmith could be found in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears."**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:19 κα τ κτων σιδ ρου ο χ ε ρ σκετο ν π σ γ Ισραηλ τι ε πον ο λλ φυλοι μ ποι σωσιν ο Εβρα οι ομφα αν κα δ ρυ

LXE 1 Samuel 13:19 And there was not found a smith in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make themselves sword or spear.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears:

NET 1 Samuel 13:19 A blacksmith could not be found in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines had said, "This will prevent the Hebrews from making swords and spears."

CSB 1 Samuel 13:19 No blacksmith could be found in all the land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, "Otherwise, the Hebrews will make swords or spears."

ESV 1 Samuel 13:19 Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears."

NIV 1 Samuel 13:19 Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!"

NLT 1 Samuel 13:19 There were no blacksmiths in the land of Israel in those days. The Philistines wouldn't allow them for fear they would make swords and spears for the Hebrews.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:19 Now there was no smith to be found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, "The Hebrews must not make swords or spears for themselves";

NJB 1 Samuel 13:19 There was not a single blacksmith throughout the territory of Israel, the Philistines' reasoning being, 'We do not want the Hebrews making swords or spears.'

NAB 1 Samuel 13:19 Not a single smith was to be found in the whole land of Israel, for the Philistines had said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears."

YLT 1 Samuel 13:19 And an artificer is not found in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, 'Lest the

Hebrews make sword or spear;'

- **there was no:** Jdg 5:8 2Ki 24:14 Isa 54:16 Jer 24:1
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NO BLACKSMITH MEANS NO IRON WEAPONS

**Now no blacksmith could be found in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears** - The Canaanites and Philistines learned how to forge iron from the Hittites which gave them a massive strategic edge over any enemy without iron weapons. This passage gives us background to even make Israel's situation that much more desperate. No blacksmith meant no iron weapons like the Philistines possessed! The Philistines were not stupid and sought to allow Israel no advantage in war! It is probable that the Philistines in previous wars had carried away all the blacksmiths from Israel. The Philistines kept control of the blacksmiths until the time of David (see 1Ch 22:3) which gave them a significant military advantage with their iron weapons and chariots.

[Life Application Study Bible \(Borrow\)](#) - Israel was in no position to conquer anyone. The army had no iron weapons, and there were no facilities for turning their tools into weapons. In fact, if an Israelite wanted to sharpen his tools, he had to pay a Philistine blacksmith to do it because the Philistines had a carefully guarded monopoly on iron and blacksmithing. And they charged high prices for sharpening farm implements. The Philistines' tight control over the technology, along with their surprise raids, demoralized the Israelites and kept them in subjection. Against such superiority, the Israelites were at a serious disadvantage. How could they hope to rout their oppressors? Only with God's help. **God wanted to give Israel victory without swords so they would realize their true source of strength.**

**1 Samuel 13:20 So all Israel went down to the Philistines, each to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, and his hoe.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:20 καὶ κατὰβαινον πρὸς Ἰσραὴλ ἐς γυνήλοφλων χαλκεῖν καστός τε θρίστρον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ σκερὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ καστός τε ξιφὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ δρεπάνον αὐτοῦ

LXE 1 Samuel 13:20 And all Israel went down to the Land of the Philistines to forge every one his reaping-hook and his tool, and every one his axe and his sickle.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:20 But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.

NET 1 Samuel 13:20 So all Israel had to go down to the Philistines in order to get their plowshares, cutting instruments, axes, and sickles sharpened.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:20 So all the Israelites went to the Philistines to sharpen their plows, mattocks, axes, and sickles.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:20 But every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle,

NIV 1 Samuel 13:20 So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plowshares, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:20 So whenever the Israelites needed to sharpen their plowshares, picks, axes, or sickles, they had to take them to a Philistine blacksmith.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:20 so all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen their plowshare, mattocks, axes, or sickles;

NJB 1 Samuel 13:20 Hence, the Israelites were all in the habit of going down individually to the Philistines to sharpen their ploughshares, axes, mattocks and scythes.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:20 All Israel, therefore, had to go down to the Philistines to sharpen their plowshares, mattocks, axes, and sickles.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:20 and all Israel go down to the Philistines, to sharpen each his ploughshare, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock;

- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#6 = [The Plowshare](#) - The Cutting Edge

## HEBREWS USE OF BLACKSMITHS IN PHILISTIA

**So all Israel went down to the Philistines, each to sharpen (forge) his [plowshare](#), his mattock, his axe, and his hoe** - During times of relative peace this was the practice. Clearly now the Hebrews were odious and the is no sharpening happening! The **plowshare** ([Wikipedia](#)) is the metal part of the plow that penetrates and breaks up the soil. A **mattock** is like a pickax but has blades instead of points. It is used for digging and breaking up soil that cannot be reached by a plow.

**1 Samuel 13:21 The charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to fix the hoes.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:21 καὶ ἡ τρυγητὶς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶν ὁ σκεῆμα τῶν σκλοπέων τῶν δυνάμεων καὶ τῶν κατὰ ὄρεα πύσσας καὶ ἄλλων

LXE 1 Samuel 13:21 And it was near the time of vintage: and their tools were valued at three shekels for a plough-share, and there was the same rate for the axe and the sickle.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:21 Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulter, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads.

NET 1 Samuel 13:21 They charged two-thirds of a shekel to sharpen plowshares and cutting instruments, and a third of a shekel to sharpen picks and axes, and to set ox goads.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:21 The price was two-thirds of a shekel for plows and mattocks, and one-third of a shekel for pitchforks and axes, and for putting a point on an oxgoad.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:21 and the charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:21 The price was two thirds of a shekel for sharpening plowshares and mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing goads.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:21 (The charges were as follows: a quarter of an ounce of silver for sharpening a plowshare or a pick, and an eighth of an ounce for sharpening an ax, a sickle, or an ox goad.)

NRS 1 Samuel 13:21 The charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and one-third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:21 The price was two-thirds of a shekel for ploughshares and axes, and one-third for sharpening mattocks and straightening goads.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:21 The price for the plowshares and mattocks was two-thirds of a shekel, and a third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the ox-goads.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:21 and there hath been the file for mattocks, and for coulter, and for three-pronged rakes, and for the axes, and to set up the goads.

- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[A Mattock](#)

## PHILISTINE BLACKSMITHS "PRICE GOUGING" THE HEBREWS

"**Price gouging**" is "a [pejorative](#) term used to describe the situation when a seller increases the prices of [goods](#), [services](#), or [commodities](#) to a level much higher than is considered reasonable or fair."

**The charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares (see picture), the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to fix the hoes** - These were high prices, gouging their pocketbooks (at least not their eyes). A **mattock** as shown above.

**Ryrie** A better translation would be, "And the charge was a pim (two-thirds of a shekel) for the goads and mattocks, for the forks and axes, and to fix the goad points." For sharpening potential weapons to be used against them, the Philistines naturally charged a high price.

**1 Samuel 13:22 So it came about on the day of battle that neither sword nor spear was found in the hands of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan, but they were found with Saul and his son Jonathan.**

BGT 1 Samuel 13:22 καὶ γένθη ντας μραις το πολμου Μαχεμας κα ο χ ε ρ θη ομφα α κα δ ρυ ν χειρ παντ ς το λαο το μετ Σαουλ κα μετ Ιωναθαν κα ε ρ θη τ Σαουλ κα τ Ιωναθαν υ α το

LXE 1 Samuel 13:22 And it came to pass in the days of the war of Machmas, that there was not a sword or spear found in the hand of all the people, that were with Saul and Jonathan; but with Saul and Jonathan his son was there found.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:22 So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.

NET 1 Samuel 13:22 So on the day of the battle no sword or spear was to be found in the hand of anyone in the army that was with Saul and Jonathan. No one but Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:22 So on the day of battle not a sword or spear could be found in the hand of any of the troops who were with Saul and Jonathan; only Saul and his son Jonathan had weapons.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:22 So on the day of the battle there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan, but Saul and Jonathan his son had them.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:22 So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:22 So on the day of the battle none of the people of Israel had a sword or spear, except for Saul and Jonathan.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:22 So on the day of the battle neither sword nor spear was to be found in the possession of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan; but Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:22 So it was that on the day of the battle, no one in the army with Saul and Jonathan was equipped with either sword or spear; only Saul and his son Jonathan were so equipped.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:22 And so on the day of battle neither sword nor spear could be found in the possession of any of the soldiers with Saul or Jonathan. Only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:22 And it hath been, in the day of battle, that there hath not been found sword and spear in the hand of any of the people who are with Saul and with Jonathan -- and there is found to Saul and to Jonathan his son.

- **neither:** 1Sa 17:47,50 Jdg 5:8 Zec 4:6 1Co 1:27-29 2Co 4:7
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ISRAEL'S LACK OF IRON WEAPONS

**So** - Now it the story picks back up to the looming battle.

**it came about on the day of battle that neither sword nor spear was found in the hands of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan, but they were found with Saul and his son Jonathan** - In light of the previous context, we are now told that the Hebrews were ill-equipped for war with an enemy "armed to the teeth!" Weapons in the hands of Saul and Jonathan would mean nothing to the Hebrews waging hand to hand combat.



## 1 Samuel 13:23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

BGT 1 Samuel 13:23 κα ἔλθεν ἡ ποστ σεως τῶν λοφῶν τῶν πρὸν Μαχμας

LXE 1 Samuel 13:23 And there went out some from the camp of the Philistines to the place beyond Machmas.

KJV 1 Samuel 13:23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

NET 1 Samuel 13:23 A garrison of the Philistines had gone out to the pass at Micmash.

CSB 1 Samuel 13:23 Now a Philistine garrison took control of the pass at Michmash.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

NIV 1 Samuel 13:23 Now a detachment of Philistines had gone out to the pass at Micmash.

NLT 1 Samuel 13:23 The pass at Micmash had meanwhile been secured by a contingent of the Philistine army.

NRS 1 Samuel 13:23 Now a garrison of the Philistines had gone out to the pass of Michmash.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:23 A Philistine unit set out for the Pass of Michmash.

NAB 1 Samuel 13:23 An outpost of the Philistines had pushed forward to the pass of Michmash.

YLT 1 Samuel 13:23 And the station of the Philistines goeth out unto the passage of Michmash.

- **garrison:** 1Sa 13:3 14:4
- **pass:** 1Sa 13:2,5 14:1,4,5 Isa 10:28
- [1 Samuel 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The Pass of Michmash

### PHILISTINES SECURE PASS OF MICHMASH

**And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash** -The **pass of Michmash** is the deep gorge (see picture above) that separated Michmash and Geba. The **pass of Michmash** was only a few miles north of Saul's home base and would effectively cut off Israel's ability to advance northward. [Click this map](#) and note the **dark green line** ([the pass of Michmash](#)) between Michmash on the north and Geba (and Gibeah) on the south. The battle lines are drawn, so it is time to move on to chapter 14!

### Saul's Transgression I Samuel 13:4–15 John Kitto

When Saul “blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying: Let the Hebrews hear,” he had a right to expect that they would hear. The alacrity which had been evinced by the tribes in following him to the relief of Jabesh-Gilead, evinced a degree of spirit and zeal on which he had reason to calculate. But he was mistaken. There was a sentiment in that affair, which was wanting in this. Then, the transaction to which their attention was called, was in the highest degree stimulating; and the people against whom they marched on that occasion, were those whom they had more than once signally defeated in battle. But in the present case the people generally were filled with terror when they heard that the Philistine garrison had been smitten. By the Philistines they had repeatedly been brought low in battle, and to them they had long and often been under subjection. As a dog which had dared in a moment of irritation to snap at the hand of his master, cowers in terror of, or flees from the look of punishment—so cowered, so fled, the Israelites when they heard that Saul had drawn his sword against the Philistines. Many of the people fled for safety to the land beyond the Jordan, which river the Philistines had never yet crossed. Others abandoned their houses, and hurried off to the mountains and rocky wildernesses. Some resorted to the caverns in which certain parts of the country abound; some retired to the woods, and many even sought shelter in pits, that is, in the capacious cisterns prepared to hold rain water for the use of the inhabitants, and which are often in a dry state, either from not having been filled in the last season of rain, or from the preserved

waters having become exhausted. They may also have been subterranean granaries. In both the orifice was small, and may be easily closed. We have one instance of this in the cistern wherein the messengers sent to David from Jerusalem—when that city was in the power of Absalom—were hid from their pursuers by a friendly woman, who covered the mouth with corn, so that the existence of this refuge was unsuspected.

The rendezvous was at Gilgal, and to that place some men did repair, albeit with heavy hearts and misgiving spirits. In fact, the Philistines were already in the field with an immense army, the presence of which filled the Israelites with dismay; and even the stouter-hearted men who had come to Gilgal, began gradually to steal away from the camp. The king beheld this with dismay, and it seemed to him that all would be lost unless he took some decided steps before he was altogether deserted. This he was precluded from doing by the absence of Samuel, who had promised to be there within seven days, and had intimated that nothing was to be done before he had come and offered the proper sacrifices. As he could not but know that Samuel would be able to make known to him the will of the Divine King, whose viceroy he officially was, and as he had no reason to doubt that from that source counsels and aids equal to the most extreme emergency would be provided, it was the duty of Saul to have awaited patiently the arrival of the prophet; and although his men did leave him, it behooved him to evince the same noble and pious confidence which Gideon had manifested under the like circumstances, who was content that the Lord should have all the glory, by the inadequacy of the means employed, and who contentedly beheld his men go away from him by thousands, knowing that it was the same to the Lord to save by many or by few. He had his reward; and Saul would not have failed of his, had he profited by this great example. This was in fact a test of his obedience to the principles on which he had accepted the crown; and it was, doubtless, to render it such, that Samuel delayed his coming to the very close of the period he had appointed. Saul, however, looked at these matters merely in a human point of view. He looked at them as a king and a soldier, and not as “an Israelite indeed.” It must not be concealed, that he was a vain-glorious man, covetous of military renown, and impatient of restraint from autocratic power. There is reason to suspect that he was far more desirous that the power of his own arm, the success of his own combinations, should be evinced in this transaction, than the might of the Lord’s right hand; and there is cause for more than a surmise, that he was jealous that the Lord should possess, or too manifestly share, the glory of Israel’s deliverance. That he was a patriot king, after a certain blind fashion of his own, cannot be denied; and as little can it be doubted, that self was so mixed up with his patriotism, that Israel’s deliverance would scarcely have been a joy to him—certainly not an unmingled joy, unless he had the whole credit of its accomplishment. This view of his temper, which is derived from the whole of his career, may well be brought forward now to illustrate his position under the present circumstances.

To the faithful servant of Jehovah, which Saul was officially required to be, this trial ought not to have been a hard one. It would not have been so to David, who was great in that very reliance upon Jehovah wherein Saul so signally failed. It must be admitted, however, that the trial was a hard one to flesh and blood. It was hence hard to Saul. But it was most important that he should be subjected to it. He was the first king, and his acts would form precedents for his successors. The very nature of the kingdom depended upon his conduct. It was therefore essential that his way should be hedged about, and his steps determined, whether willingly or not, according to the conditions of the monarchy. He was either to be forced into the proper position belonging to him, or by refusing to fill it, subject himself to the high penalties of disobedience. The people would then know that his measures were not to be taken as the precedents of the Hebrew regal constitution, seeing that they were taken in known contrariety to the will of Jehovah, as declared by prophet and by priest. Saul might have done well enough (for he had fine heroic qualities), in a line of hereditary kings, under whom the principles of the government had been established; but he was unfit for the responsibilities attached to the founder of a kingdom, whose acts required to be weighed with regard to their influence on the political rights of unborn generations.

Samuel had promised to join the king in seven days. The seventh day had commenced, but he was not yet come. Seeing, probably, that many of his men had taken their departure over the night, and that not more than six hundred men remained to him, Saul determined not to lose another day in waiting for Samuel, who might not arrive till the evening. He himself offered the sacrifices; not only burnt-offerings but peace-offerings. This was a two-fold offence—it was not only disobedience to the word of the Lord, and the proceeding of an independent king, but the mode of action was in itself a crime. Among the nations, kings indeed offered sacrifice, combining the offices of priest and king, but it was not to be so in Israel. Priests only might offer sacrifice—the only exception being in the case of the prophets, who occasionally claimed that right for the honor of God, by whose spirit they were moved. This, therefore, was another assumption of autocratic power, of a nature most offensive and dangerous under the theocratic institutions. The priesthood formed the constitutional check, on behalf of Jehovah and the people, upon the power of the crown, and to assume the most important of their functions was nothing less than, with a high hand, to cast down the barrier which the wisdom of God had reared up to secure the safety of the chosen people against the encroachments of regal ambition. It has been said, indeed, that Saul did not himself offer the sacrifice, but ordered a priest to do so. It has, however, all the appearance of a personal act, and the character of Saul suggests that he would be likely to take the opportunity of indicating his possession of the same functions as belonged to other kings. “Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace-offerings; and he offered the burnt-offerings.” There even seems to us an emphasis in the last clause, the burnt-offerings being, as wholly consumed on the altar, the holiest of all sacrifices—this, even this, he offered—leaving, perhaps, the peace-offerings to be offered by other hands.

Samuel came before the sacrifices were completed. He evinced the deepest concern and displeasure; and although received by the

king with respect and attention, he plainly told him that by this deplorable failure of obedience, by this utter forgetfulness of his true position, he had placed his crown and dynasty in peril.

## The Causes of Saul's Downfall

(1 SAMUEL 13:13, 14) F B Meyer

Bide thou thy time!

Watch with meek eyes the race of pride and crime,

Sit in the gate, and be the heathen's jest.

Smiling and self-possessed,

O thou, to whom is pledged a victor's sway,

Bide thou the victor's day.

—N. H. J.

THIS chapter is the story of a great tragedy, since it contains the history of the incident which revealed Saul's unfitness to be the founder of a line of kings. Had he stood this test, there is no doubt that he would have been, not only the first monarch of Israel, but the father of a royal race, and the whole after-history of the chosen people might have been different. But, as we shall see—though, at first, his kingdom augured prosperity to his fatherland—it evidently lacked the elements of permanence and continuity and of becoming Israel's permanent bulwark against the invasions of the enemy from without and the cancer of disintegration or corruption within.

Let us gather around this story, not only because it has so much to do with the history of God's people, but because it is full of instruction for ourselves. Turning from Saul to David, Samuel said, "The Lord hath sought Him a man after his own heart." It is, therefore, clear that, in some way, Saul had ceased to be "a man after God's own heart," and it becomes us carefully to inquire the reason, that we may avoid the rocks on which this good ship split and foundered.

You will remark that the chapter which tells the history of this tragedy, the overcasting of a bright morning, the spoiling of a fair and beautiful promise, also contains the story of the unutterable distress to which the chosen people had been reduced by another invasion of the Philistines. We are told, for instance, in ver. 6, that the people of Israel were in a strait, that they were distressed, that they hid themselves in caves and thickets, in rocks and in pits; indeed, some of them even crossed the Jordan, and forsook their fatherland in the hour of its extremity; while those who were yet associated with Saul and Jonathan, as the nucleus of the royal army, followed him, trembling (ver. 7). A spirit of fearfulness had settled down upon the whole people; the old national spirit had decayed; it seemed as though they could never again be induced to stand against the Philistines, any more than a flock of sheep against a pack of wolves.

We are also informed of the numbers of the vast host of Philistines which had been gathered from all parts in order to crush out the movement towards a national existence, of which the coronation of Saul and the exploits of Jonathan were symptoms (ver. 3). We can overhear the tidings brought to Saul (ver. 5) by some panic-stricken messenger, who, with the exaggeration of abject fear, described the Philistines as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude.

A further proof of the hapless misery of the people is adduced in verse 19: there was no smith found throughout the whole land of Israel, and the Hebrews had to take their implements of agriculture down to the smithies of the Philistines, in order that they might be sharpened for their use. Never in the history of the chosen people were there more dire calamity, more absolute hopelessness and despair, than reigned around Saul and throughout the entire country at this hour.

At this juncture Saul seems to have withdrawn his troops, such as they were, from Michmash, and to have taken up his position on the ancient site of Gilgal, where the act of circumcision was performed after Israel had crossed the Jordan under Joshua. There upon the level land, and therefore exposed to the assault of the Philistine hosts at any moment, Saul seems to have pitched his camps, whilst his heroic son, Jonathan, kept up a post of observation in the vicinity of the Philistine hosts.

Whilst Saul with his soldiers remained at Gilgal, every day marked the diminution of his host. This man and that stole away, either across the Jordan as a fugitive, or to hide in some hole and corner of the hills.

It may be asked why, at such a time, Saul did not make one desperate effort against the Philistines. Why did he wait there day after day, whilst his army evaporated before his eyes? Ah! thereby hangs a story—to understand which we must turn back a page or two in the inspired record. In 1 Sam. 10:8, in that early morning interview, when Samuel designated Saul for the crown, he told him that the crisis of his life would overtake him at Gilgal, a prophecy the fulfilment of which had now arrived. "Thou shalt go down before me

to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings; seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come unto thee, and show thee what thou shalt do.”

I. SAUL'S MISTAKE.—This command, uttered three years before to Saul, as he stood on the threshold of his vast opportunities, involved two things, and each of them constituted a supreme test.

First, whether he was prepared to act as God's vicegerent, not as absolute monarch determining his own policy, and acting on his own initiative, but as God's servant, receiving the marching orders of his life through the prophet's lips; not acting as an autocrat, but as one to whom there had been a delegation of Divine authority.

Second, whether he could control his impetuous nature, put the curb upon his impulse, and hold himself well in hand.

It was this embargo which Samuel had laid upon him that made him wait, day after day. Can you not imagine how his chosen advisers and warriors would come around him and urge him to do something? Might they not have pointed to the Philistine hosts encamped at Michmash, gathering like a cloud of storm? Might they not have told him how, unless he acted quickly, his paternal estate would be wiped out before the invasion? Might they not have pointed to the dwindling hosts, and said, Rise up and do something; it were better to die beneath the Philistines' hand than allow them to pounce down on you as the bird of prey on the trembling dove!

But he waited, day after day. “He tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed; but Samuel came not to Gilgal, and the people were scattered from him.” Then it would seem that within a brief space of the expiry of the allotted time he could wait no more. He thought that Samuel must have forgotten the appointment, or had been intercepted in making his way from Ramah through the Philistine lines. He had waited till within half an hour (because to offer a burnt-offering and a peace-offering could not take much longer), and then spoiled the whole, by his inability to delay further; and he said to the priest, who still lingered by the ancient site where God had been worshipped and the Tabernacle posted, “Bring hither the ephod, and let us offer the sacrifice.” “And it came to pass that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, behold, Samuel came.”

Ah! if only some sentry standing on a pinnacle of rock could have looked over into the adjacent valley and seen the form of the old man drawing nearer to the camp he might have warned the King, crying, “Samuel is coming.” But there was no one to arrest him, nothing but the monition and remonstrance of his own heart. It was shown that he could not wait for God, in absolute faith that He could not fail nor deceive. He was careful to maintain an outward rite, but the spirit of devotion and faith was altogether wanting. As he was, his successors would become, to the undoing of Israel; therefore his kingdom could not continue.

The one lesson that comes back to us with almost overwhelming force is that the man who is after God's heart is the man who will obey God to the letter, who will wait for God to the last moment, who will dare to stand amid a diminishing and dwindling army, and even see disaster imminent, but, because he has not received the marching orders of God, will stand still, until presently God sets him free.

How many religious people there are, who, as they review their past life, can recall moments when they did not know what to do. An inner voice, still, sweet, but commanding, bade them wait and trust; but many other voices, loud and strident, summoned them to act; so that the still small voice of faith, of resignation, of absolute obedience was silenced, the one rash word spoken, the one irrevocable act performed, betraying the weakness of the heart, the ineffectiveness of the resolve. When all was over, Samuel has come, and we have reproached ourselves, saying, “Oh, if I had only thought that God was so near, I would not have acted as I did; woe is me, why could not I wait?” Samuel always comes just at the last moment, but it is so hard to wait till he does come. “Master, Master, we perish; and He arose, and rebuked the storm, and said, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline and self-restraint.

Man becomes so weary of waiting, and it seems as though God were so slow. God's mighty processes sweep around a wide orbit. One day is as a thousand years, but He is coming as the morning, as the spring, as the millennium. “His going forth is sure as the morning, and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth.”

II. SAUL'S DISINGENUOUS PLEA.—Notice Saul's explanation to Samuel. He said: “I said to myself, The Philistines will come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not intreated the favour of the Lord. I forced myself therefore, and offered the burnt-offering.” That surely was insincere. He laid the blame on circumstances; he said practically: “The circumstances of my lot forced my hand; I did not want to do it, I was most reluctant, but I could not help myself; the Philistines were coming; I tell you the sceptre was wrested from my grasp, and I had to obey the imperious voice of the misfortunes that fell thick and fast upon me.” His speech reminds us of Aaron's, who stripped the people naked before God and their enemies, and sought to excuse himself by saying, “They gave me their earrings; I cast them into the fire, and there came out this calf.”

We are all prone to speak in the same tone. When the rash word has been uttered, and the proud act done; when we have refused to obey, and have seen the house of our life toppling down upon us, or consuming in the flames of our folly, then we have said, “Circumstances compelled me, I had to do it, and I did it; I forced myself, my hand was forced.”

O soul of man, thou art greater than circumstances; greater than things; greater than the mob of evil counsellors. Thou art meant to be God's crowned and enthroned king; to rule and not to be ruled; to obey God only, and to resist all other attempts to bring thee under the yoke. Rouse thee, lest it should be said of thee also, that thy kingdom shall not continue.

III. MARK THE ALTERNATIVE TO THIS.—In answer to all this, Samuel, speaking in the name of God, said, "I have chosen a man after my own heart, who shall perform all my will." In Jesse's home the lad was being prepared who could believe and not make haste. Listen to the manner in which this man after God's own heart spake in after-years, "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies" (Psa. 40:1–4).

Wait, wait thou thy Lord's leisure. Let thine heart stop its feverish beating, and thy pulse register no more its tumultuous waves of emotion! To act now would only disappoint the highest hopes, mar the Divine purposes, and set stones rolling that shall never be stopped. Wait for God, stand still and see his salvation. His servant is coming up the pass; his steps may not be quite so speedy as we would have them, but He will arrive to the moment; not a moment too soon, but not a moment too late. God's messenger is timed to come when the heart has almost failed, the steps almost gone, and hope almost vanished. "The Lord is at hand!" Oh, wait, my soul! wait, wait upon God, for God cannot be behind, as He will not be before, the allotted and appointed moment.

And when He comes there will be laughter for tears, harvest for sowing, blue skies for clouds, and long days of rapturous bliss that shall make thee forget the shame and reproach of the past!