

Kings of Israel and Judah – The Reign of Saul I Sam. 13:1-15

Thesis: To help us learn from the mistakes of Saul, and become better Christians.

Introduction:

The reign of Saul is summed up in this chapter.

It is a reign that was surrounded by disobedience to God.

I. Saul offers an unlawful sacrifice to God (13:1-15).

A. Saul fights with the armies of the Philistines (13:1-7).

1. Saul had done what was prophesied about the people of Israel (13:1-2).
 - a. He had taken the men of Israel for use of himself.
 - b. I Sam. 8:11-12 - And he said, “This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. {12} He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.”
 - c. Just one year into his reign, Saul had begun to fulfill the word of Samuel.
2. When the Philistines came against Israel, the people of Israel were afraid of them (13:5-7a).
 - a. Notice the size of the armies of the Philistines (13:5).
 - 1) 30,000 Chariots
 - 2) 6,000 horsemen
 - 3) The people were “as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude.”
 - b. Because of this army, the people hid anywhere they could find a place (13:6-7a).
3. Saul stayed in Gilgal (13:7b).

B. Saul offers an unlawful sacrifice to God (13:8-10).

1. Samuel had already told Saul what to do.
 - a. I Sam. 10:8 (Samuel speaking to Saul) - You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do.
 - b. This was clear, and Saul easily understood it.
2. Saul, instead of waiting for Samuel, offered the sacrifice on his own.
 - a. Saul’s problem is that he was not qualified to offer this sacrifice on his own.

- 1) This was something that only the priest could do.
 - 2) Because Samuel grew up in the house of the Lord, he was able to offer a sacrifice to God (I Sam. 1-3).
- b. Because Saul did something that was unlawful according to God, God did not accept his sacrifice.
- C. God condemns and punishes Saul because of his disobedience (13:11-15).**
1. Saul began to offer excuses as to why he did what he did (13:11-12).
 2. Samuel tells Saul that God will not accept these excuses, and that he will have his kingdom removed from him (13:13-14).

Practical Application:

II. We cannot disobey God and expect to be pleasing to Him.

- A. God does not accept our excuses when we fail to obey Him (13:11-12).**
1. Saul says that he needed to offer the sacrifice because the Philistines were coming upon him; and he had yet to make a sacrifice to God.
 2. Later, Saul is going to offer another excuse to God concerning Agag, king of the Amalekites (15:1-21).
 - a. Saul and the people were supposed to destroy all of the people and the things of the Amalekites.
 - b. However, they kept back the best for themselves; they only destroyed the worthless things (15:9).
 - c. Saul blames these things on the people.
 - 1) **I Sam. 15:13-15** - Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, “Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD.” {14} But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” {15} And Saul said, “They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.”
 - 2) **I Sam. 15:20-21** - And Saul said to Samuel, “But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. {21} But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal.”
 - d. The point is that God will not accept our excuses when we fail to fulfill His will.
 3. Today, we cannot offer excuses when we do not do the will of the Father.
 - a. We are either faithful to God, or we are unfaithful to Him.

- b. There is no middle ground.
- c. **Jn. 14:15** - **If you love Me, keep My commandments.**
- d. We must be willing to take responsibility for our own actions.
 - 1) When we sin, we must admit it and ask for forgiveness.
 - 2) We cannot make excuses as to why we sinned.
 - 3) We need to figure out why we sinned, so that we can keep from it again; but we cannot use it as an excuse for sin.

B. Feelings are not a proper guide to spiritual matters (13:11-12).

- 1. Saul felt as though he was doing the right thing by offering this sacrifice (13:11-12).
 - a. He thought that this is what God would want him to do.
 - b. Even though he felt compelled, he was wrong.
 - c. In fact, Samuel tells Saul that he acted foolishly (13:13a).
- 2. Today, we cannot allow our feelings (only) to dictate what we do in fulfilling God's commandments.
 - a. We are saved by the gospel of Christ, which is the word of God.
 - b. It is not emotion-based; it is logical.
 - c. The things that we read of in the Bible are written according to logic.
 - 1) Baptism is a logical process.
 - a) **Acts 2:37-38** - **Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" {38} Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**
 - b) **Rom. 6:1-6** - **What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? {2} Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? {3} Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? {4} Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. {5} For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, {6} knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**
 - 2) Those who are converted are converted because they have understood the word of God.
 - 3) While there is emotion involved, it is based on a logical understanding of the word of God.

C. There is a great punishment for disobeying God (13:13-14).

1. Saul's kingdom was taken away from him.
 - a. Because of this instance and the time with King Agag (I Sam. 15), the kingdom is removed from Saul.
 - b. I Sam. 15:26 - But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."
 - c. Because of His disobedience, the kingdom of Israel was removed from Saul.
2. Today, when we are unfaithful to God, we will be punished.
 - a. This is not an earthly punishment, but rather it is eternal.
 - b. I Cor. 5:10-11 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. {11} Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.
 - c. II Thes. 1:8 - Christ will come "in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - d. Heb. 10:26-31 - For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, {27} but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. {28} Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. {29} Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? {30} For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." {31} It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Conclusion: