

# 1 SAMUEL OVERVIEW - PART 2 – LESSON 4

## I. 1 SAMUEL

### A. Chapters 13-14

1. (13.1) The reign of Saul denoted
2. War begins (13.2-4)
  - a. Unclear how long between Chapter 12 and this
  - b. Saul raised a standing army of 3,000
    - 1). 1,000 with him
    - 2). 1,000 with Jonathan at Gibeah
    - 3). 1,000 at Bethel
  - c. Jonathan initiated hostilities
    - 1). Struck the Philistine garrison at Geba
      - a.) 5.7 miles north of Jerusalem
  - d. Saul alerted the Hebrews to this event
    - 1). A retaliatory attack could be expected
    - 2). Then he summoned the people to Gilgal
3. Philistines attack (13.5-7)
  - a. Heavy army concentration
    - 1). 30,000 chariots & 6,000 horsemen
    - 2). Innumerable foot soldiers
  - b. Pushed into Saul's HQ at Michmash
    - 1). Army fled
    - 2). People hid wherever the terrain offered them cover
    - 3). Those still following Saul to Gilgal were frightened and trembling

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4. Saul's impulsiveness (13.8-14)

a. Saul grew impatient waiting for Samuel to appear

- 1). Samuel had ordered him to wait for him (10.8)
- 2). He made the necessary sacrifices to God himself

b. Samuel immediately appeared

1). He was furious with Saul for offering sacrifices himself

a.) He demanded to know why Saul had done that

b.) Saul gave three "reasons"

- Samuel had said he would be there in seven days  
.. vs 11: "...you did not come.." / "you" is emphatic in Heb
- Saul felt the pressure of soldiers deserting
- The Philistines were assembling to attack Gilgal

c.) Finally he "forced" himself to make the necessary sacrifices before a holy war himself

2). Samuel told Saul he had sinned against God's commandments

a.) He has performed a priestly function God forbade others to do

- No matter what our best intentions, not following God's commands results in punishment

b.) As a result, God would not allow him to have the long dynasty He had planned

c.) God said that He already had sought out "...a man after His own heart..." and appointed him to be king

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5. Saul's worsened challenge (13.15-23)

a. Not much to defend with

- 1). Samuel took his counsel away to Gibeah
- 2). Saul counts up how many troops he has > 600
- 3). He sees the raiding parties heading NE, SE, and SW [map]
- 4). So he decides to at least defend his tribal area of Benjamin

b. Worse, inadequate weaponry

1). Philistines had assured that Israel had no iron swords and spears

- a.) Had taken all of the blacksmiths away
- b.) They had a monopoly on smelting and working of iron
- c.) Forced Israelites to come to them for agricultural tools, and sharpening, at exorbitant prices

2). Only Saul and Jonathan had swords, others had clubs etc, possibly bronze weapons

c. The Philistine army began to move into the valley of Michmash

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MAP

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6. Things to watch in Chapter 14

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- a. Saul acts pious, but its effectiveness is questionable
- b. The development of Jonathan
  - 1). Might have been king after Saul, but later accepts God's choice of David as king
  - 2). His courage in battle wins the day
- c. God's tremendous power applied once again to Israel's salvation

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7. Yahweh carries the first victory (14.1-15)

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- a. Saul was not taking any action against the Philistines
- b. Jonathan decided to take his armor bearer & attack the outpost at the Michmash pass between Michmash and Geba
  - 1). A strong contrast against Saul's reticence
  - 2). Saul had a high priest there (wearing the ephod) and vs 18 says that the Ark was also there > God's presence and leadership
- c. Jonathan encourages his armor bearer by two facts
  - 1). The Philistines were uncircumcised
    - a.) Looked at the Philistines as underdogs, beatable
  - 2). God does not need many to work a victory
    - a.) But note he says "Perhaps" God will give the victory
    - b.) He didn't want to be presumptive of God's will
- d. Jonathan's plan took into account waiting on God's will
  - 1). They would climb to the outpost while hidden
  - 2). When they showed themselves, they would act by what happened next
    - a.) If they were ordered to halt, they would stop there
    - b.) If they were asked to come up, then they would assume that God was giving the enemy into their hands

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- e. The plan worked as he had crafted it
    - 1). The Philistines were overconfident and bid them to come up to the outpost
    - 2). Jonathan and his armor bearer killed all 20 of them
    - 3). Then God caused a tremendous earthquake that scared the Philistine garrison into not coming to the aid of the outpost
      - a.) vs 15 "great" is Heb Elohim
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8. The Israelites react to the initial victory (14.16-23)

a. The watchtower guards at Gibeah noted mass confusion at the Philistine garrison

- 1). Saul was alerted
- 2). Suspecting some of his men had been attacking, he ordered a count to see who was missing
- 3). The count revealed that Jonathan & his armor bearer were gone

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b. Saul called the high priest

- 1). He ordered a priest to ask God what to do next
- 2). But the tumult among the Philistines caused him to not wait for the answer
- 3). He ordered his army into battle

c. Saul's approach to the Philistine garrison encouraged him

- 1). The Hebrew mercenaries within the Philistines rebelled
- 2). Israelites in hiding came out to attack the Philistines
- 3). They routed the Philistines to beyond Beth-aven, more than 2 miles NW of Michmash

d. This was a significant victory for the Israelites

- 1). Fully the work of God

9. Saul's rash curse and order

a. (14.24) The curse

1). Saul shows little regard for his people in saying this

- a.) They will face the physical challenges of battle and the day's heat without any of food's restorative energy
- b.) Perhaps he is trying to be religious by ordering a form of a fast
- c.) But fasts and fighting don't go together, and that is not the purpose or way of biblical fasting
  - OT fasts were conducted to appease God's wrath, and assure Him that the prayers were in serious repentance

2). He also has forgotten that the Philistines were God's enemies not his

- a.) He didn't understand the concept that he was God's instrument, fighting God's battle against evil forces
- b.) Governments today have no concept either, which is reflected in the world's increasing global problems

3). This curse of not eating produced many negative consequences

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- 4). It is also the beginning of a number of bad judgements and decisions by Saul as he wrestles with not understanding spiritual matters, but trying to do what he thinks they require
- a.) Likely that Saul, knowing the kingdom will not continue in his line, is belatedly trying to pay more attention to God's matters to minimize further damage
- b. (vss 25-30) Jonathan falls under the curse
- 1). He had not heard his father's curse, so he ate some honey in the forest
  - 2). He dipped his staff in the honeycomb and tasted the honey
    - a.) "... his eyes brightened..." = he felt a surge of energy
  - 3). The men told him of Saul's oath & pointed out his violation
  - 4). He pointed to his energy level over theirs
    - a.) He blamed his father's curse for keeping enemy casualties low the Israelite men were tired
      - He was closer to understanding and following God's ways than his father
    - b.) However, blaming his father in front of the men was probably not a good idea
- c. (vss 31-35) The troops defile themselves
- 1). The Israelites continued to strike the Philistines throughout the day
  - 2). At the end of the day, they had fought over 20 miles from where the battle had begun
  - 3). When the day was over, Saul's curse was at an end
    - a.) They slaughtered the animals among the spoil for food
    - b.) But they didn't follow the Mosaic laws about draining the blood (Lev 19.26, Deut 12.16)
  - 4). When Saul heard they had broken the Mosaic law, he called it treachery
    - a.) He ordered a stone rolled to the spot for an altar
    - b.) The people were ordered to bring animals for proper slaughter and preparation to eat under the Mosaic laws
    - c.) Saul erects his first altar to God at the stone, probably to offer a sacrifice to appease God for the people's violation of the law
- d. (vss 36-39) The oracle is silent
- 1). Saul decides to further pursue the Philistines during the night
    - a.) The army has been refreshed
    - b.) He feels confident that a decisive blow can finally be struck
  - 2). The priest advises to consult God and wait for an answer
    - a.) Saul agrees and the priest consults God's advice
    - b.) But God does not answer, probably because of Saul's rash assumption in making the fasting oath

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- 3). Once again, Saul makes hasty spiritual decisions
- a.) He decides there must be sin in the camp
  - b.) He is determined to find the source and put him to death, even if it is Jonathan
  - c.) Even though many knew it was Jonathan, no one would tell him

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- e. (vss 40-45) Jonathan's fate
- 1). No one would admit who had earned the curse, so Saul asks the Lord to indicate the person by sub-setted lots
  - 2). When the lot fell eventually to Jonathan, Saul asked what he had done
    - a.) Jonathan admitted he had eaten during the day
    - b.) Saul indicated that he would die, and wanted the Lord to do the same to him
  - 3). But the troops stepped forward and refused to let Saul condemn Jonathan
    - a.) They credited him with the victories
    - b.) They saw that he had worked with God
- f. (vs 46) The battle parts
- 1). Saul's troops were in rebellion, so he gave up any further pursuit of the Philistines
  - 2). The Philistines left Israelite territory

10. Summary of Saul's accomplishments

- a. (vss 47-48) He freed Israel from nomad and other plunderers
- 1). All the tribes listed were located in, or roamed as nomads, the area southeast of Israel
  - 2). Saul led expeditions to defeat them, and stop their routine plundering of Israel
  - 3). So Saul was doing what the Judges had done in the past
- b. (vss 49-51) Saul's family listed
- c. (vs 52) A shift in military policy
- 1). Previously, the army was quickly raised when an emergency called for it
  - 2). Now Saul started a selective draft of capable fighting men  
>> (I Sam 8.10-12a) !!

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B. Chapter 15

1. Ch 15 is about Saul's battle with the Amalekites

a. Amalek was Esau's grandson by his son's concubine

1). Amalek inherited the feud between

Esau and Jacob

a.) The antagonism continued to these times

b. His nomadic tribal group centered in the Negeb

1). Became allies of the Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Ishmaelites, and Midianites

2). Their territory variably extended from south of Beersheba southeast to Elath and Ezion-geber on the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba

3). Often raided westward and north westward, including to the coastal plain

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MAP

2. (15.1-3) God's charge to Saul about the Amalekites

a. Amalekites had blocked Israel's entry into

Canaan by attacking them from the rear

1). Moses had held the staff up all day to assure the Israelite victory

2). (Ex 17.14) God promised to wipe Amalekites out in the future

b. Four+ centuries later, God set His revenge in motion

1). Amalekites had shown no repentance during this time

a.) They again opposed Israel's entry into Canaan

b.) They were a constant enemy, attacking during the Judges period

c.) 15.33 notes that they had committed numerous recent atrocities

2). Note Saul was charged to not spare a living thing

a.) This was the ban that God originally delivered to Israel in Deut 7.2 and 20.17 regarding the occupants of Canaan

b.) Amalekites have now been added because of God's justice and their lack of repentance

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- 3). Saul's disobedience to the command (15.4-9)
- a.) Saul "numbered" = mustered the troops to stage the war that God had commanded
  - b.) The Kenites had shown favor to Israel when they came into the country, so he warned them to leave the Amalekites
    - Descendants of Moses' father-in-law
  - c.) Saul defeated the Amalekites, but didn't fulfill the ban instructed by God
    - He spared their king, Agag, for an unknown reason
    - The army also kept the best livestock

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- c. God's reaction expressed through Samuel
- 1). (vs 10-11) God informed Samuel of Saul's disobedience
  - 2). (vss 12-13) Samuel found out that Saul was at Gilgal
    - a.) He had erected a victory monument at Carmel, a village 7 miles south of Hebron
    - b.) He then traveled to Gilgal, by Jericho, 35 mi to NE
    - c.) Saul greeted Samuel with "great" news
      - He thought he had fulfilled the Lord's commands
      - Apparently one of those who think partial obedience satisfies the command
  - 3). (vs 14) Samuel cut him short with the famous pointed statement
    - a.) Heb word translated "bleating" and "lowing" > *qol* = "sound"
    - b.) (vs 15) Saul blamed "the people" = troops who he said spared them
      - Tried to bend the truth into an intended sacrifice to God
      - Saul's two great mistakes
        - .. Shifted the blame to others
        - .. Used a religious pretext to excuse his disobedience
        - = Religious sincerity substitutes obedience to God
        - PRINCIPLE: Obedience is one form of worshipping God, but it is accepted by God ONLY when done as God dictated !

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- 4). (vss 16-19) Samuel cut him off
- a.) He began with two rhetorical questions
    - Had Saul not been made king by God when he thought himself unworthy ?
    - Did God not commission him to destroy the sinful Amalekites and spare nothing living ?
  - b.) He then asked why Saul had committed evil himself by disobeying God's explicit command

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- 5). (vss 20-21) Saul rebuffed Samuel's argument
  - a.) He claimed he had killed all Amalekites except the king, and this fulfilled God's command
  - b.) He then still blamed the troops for not kill all of the livestock, intending them for sacrifice to God
    - Note he said they would sacrifice to "your" God
      - .. Saul's heart was not fully linked to God as His Lord
- A false argument, since they were under the ban, and already dedicated to sacrifice to God (Lev 27.29, Deut 13.16)

3. God's rejection of Saul

- a. (vss 22-23) Samuel rebuffs Saul's contention that religious intention justifies selective obedience
  - 1). Rebellion is as sinful as divination
  - 2). Insubordination is as sinful as idolatry because it is worshipping the person's will over God's
  - 3). God has therefore rejected Saul as king
- b. (vss 24-25) Saul realized his sin
  - 1). He confessed that he shouldn't have gone along with what the troops wanted > he's the leader
  - 2). He asked Samuel to join him in sacrificing to God
- c. (vss 26-29) Samuel rejected this request
  - 1). If he returned with Saul, he might take it as forgiveness, which God had rejected
    - a.) He was rejected as king, so Samuel could not give him any further public support
  - 2). Saul grabbed his robe as he turned to go away
    - a.) Samuel's robe tore, and he used this as an illustration that God was tearing Israel away from Saul
    - b.) His final statement was that God was not a man who changes his mind or lies
- d. (vss 30-31) Saul again asked Samuel to accompany him back to Gilgal, where he would sacrifice to "your" God
  - 1). Samuel agreed, since Saul admitted his sin again, and did not ask for a pardon
  - 2). Samuel's accompaniment would indicate that Saul had temporary hold on the kingship

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4. Conclusion to Amalekite war

a. Disposal of Agag (15.32.33)

- 1). Note that Samuel is concluding Agag, not Saul
- 2). vs 32 has two basic interpretations, opposing each other

a.) View 1

*NASB, ESV*

"... Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past.' "

*NIV*

"...Agag came to him confidently, thinking, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past.' "

b.) View 2

*NKJV*

"...Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past.' "

*Holman Christian Standard Bible*

"...Agag came to him trembling, for he thought, 'Certainly the bitterness of death has come.' "

*NRSV*

"... And Agag came to him haltingly. Agag said, 'Surely this is the bitterness of death' "

*NET*

"...Agag came to him trembling, thinking to himself, 'Surely death is bitter! ' "

c.) SO which one of these opposing views ?

- The word translated "cheerfully", confidently, cautiously, etc. is Heb mah·ad·an·naw ==> bonds, bands

- 3). In any case, Samuel puts aside any positive thoughts the king might have had because of the Israelite celebration

- a.) vs 33: Samuel pronounces his death sentence based on his depraved killings, especially of children

- b.) He hacks Agag to pieces "before the Lord", i.e. before God's altar at Gilgal

- This fulfills God's pronouncement of the ban against the Amalekites
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b. Separation of Samuel from Saul (34-35)

- 1). Each went to their own home, never to see the other again until the death of Samuel
- 2). This separation is symbolic of God's permanent separation from Saul
  - a.) As God had indicated to the people who demanded a king, Saul became disobedient & a disappointment to the Lord
    - He lost the friendship of Samuel
    - He lost the Lord's blessing
    - He lost the kingdom
  - b.) Saul's mistakes stemmed from his flaws at the root level
    - More concerned at what the people thought than what God wanted
    - He valued a reputation more than good character
    - He would not quickly admit to his sin & seek forgiveness
  - c.) In the end, Saul would become a castaway
    - He was slain by one of the Amalekites he failed to kill
  - d.) God is omniscient - He knew this would happen, but regretted the event when it did

C. Summary of Coming 1 Samuel Ch's 16-31

1. Saul's kingship is rejected
2. David's kingship is promoted, but long coming

These notes were originally written as I composed this study for our Faculty & Staff Bible Study at the local university. It is important to note that they follow the narrative in *Old Testament Survey Series: The Books of History* by James E. Smith (1995, College Press Publishing Company) very closely. It is the best summary I found, so it is the foundation for the study. In many cases, I used Dr. Smith's words directly, sometimes paraphrased them for clarity, sometimes enlarged on them with other resources. Since I didn't expect to publish the notes, I did not cite them at the time. It is now difficult to distinguish quotes from Dr. Smith, material from other resources, or what thoughts the Spirit gave me. Suffice to say that, if it is insightful to your spiritual growth, give all the glory to the Spirit, some credit to Dr. Smith, and none to me. I'm just the Spirit-led editor and teacher.

*Bob Kostrubanic, November 5, 2021*