

## The Jewish Kingdom - Lesson 13

### Saul's Kingdom Declining

With Saul firmly established in the monarchy, we now see the beginning of its fall and the character of Saul's leadership.

#### **32. Saul's Campaign against Philistine Garrisons - I Samuel 13:1-7**

- vs. 1 - note that this is early in Saul's reign. We know from Acts 13:21 that he will reign forty years
- The setting here that we jump into is one of battle and war. The Philistines have made incursions into Benjamin's territory. The region is quite hilly with many steep crevices dividing the hills.
- Michmash - means "hidden". A village situated on a north-south road that ran through a wide canyon, or pass.
- Mount Bethel - northwest of Michmash, believed to be same as mentioned in Genesis 12:8
- Gibeah - ancestral home of Saul.
- Geba - town on the border of Judah and Benjamin. This would be south of Jonathan's position.
- vs. 3 - Jonathan leads Israel to a victory over on small garrison. The Philistines are ready to avenge this loss. Saul calls the people to gather to battle (which he had just sent home in verse 2!).
- vs. 4 - we could read into Saul getting the credit here, but it is likely that Jonathan was working under his command.
- vs. 4 - Israel being "in abomination with the Philistines" speaks of the latter's contempt and hatred for the former.
- vs. 5-7 - When faced with a seemingly innumerable and powerful army, the people of Israel hide or run. This cannot be over emphasized in explaining the way Saul will act next.

#### **33. Saul's Unlawful Sacrifice- I Samuel 13:8-14**

- vs. 8 - See I Samuel 10:8. It seems that Samuel made the promise that when needed he would arrive within seven days. It appears what happens here takes place on the afternoon of the seventh day.
- vs. 9 - Saul makes a desperate and terrible decision here. With his back against the wall he turns to his own strength and authority. He encroaches upon the priest's office (remember, he's a Benjaminite, not a Levite). He displays a lack of patience and discernment.
- vs. 11-12 - Saul is really with an excuse. The first point that the people were scattered is valid. The second point that Samuel had not arrived appears to be invalid as Samuel was there, just not when Saul wanted him. The third point about the approaching Philistine force is valid. The fourth point about needing to make supplication in case of battle is misguided at best. The fifth point is absurd,

that Saul had to “force” himself to do it. Who forced him? Pressures mounted but no one was to blame for his actions except himself.

- vs. 13-14 - Judgment is passed upon Saul and his kingdom, but it will be years before that judgment is executed.

### **33. Sad State of Saul's Situation - I Samuel 13:15-23**

- vs. 15 - I think it is worth pointing out that Samuel just goes home, which means heading towards the enemy (36,000+ in number). Saul has to stop and take stock of his forces (only 600 men!) before moving.
- vs. 17-18 - “spoilers” are basically raiding parties. One heads southwest into Benjamin, another northwest into Ephraim, another southeast toward Jericho.
- vs. 19-21 - Hmm, so gun control isn't a new idea? Worked pretty effectively here in keeping Israel suppressed.
- vs. 22 - Let this sink in. Only two swords in the entire nation. What is everyone else fighting with? Farming equipment, rocks, or whatever else they could get their hands on. This is versus chariots (vs. 5), basically the ancient world's equivalent of the modern tank.