

Introduction

- 1 Samuel 13 really goes with 14, but we are going to consider 13 on its own just now
 - chapter 11 gave **great hope for the new monarchy...**
 - though Samuel's assessment in chapter 12 took a bit of the **shine off**
 - but we still come to chapter 13 with **some expectation of better things**
- Just in passing, you might have noticed that **some figures are missing from 13:1!**
 - the Hebrew texts available have the figures missing and say Saul began his reign when he was one and it lasted two years!
 - **Acts 13:21** tells us that he reigned for forty years (which may be a round figure, so making the NIV forty-two years)
 - and the Greek translation of the Old Testament made before Christ was born (Septuagint) suggests Saul was thirty when he began to reign - although that could simply be copying David's age from **2 Samuel 5:4**

Getting Going...

- **One mistake can ruin a life-time of good:**
 - one little match has burnt down acres of forest
 - you might have heard of the **typhoid outbreak in Aberdeen in 1964** - 500 people hospitalised!
 - it was traced to a **single tin of corned beef**, bought from British Army surplus supplies
 - one tin, but it ruined Wm Low's in the city
 - **confidence can evaporate in a moment!**
- Jonathan, Saul's son, struck a blow against the Philistines, and there was every reason to cheer (**v.3**)
 - but don't expect the Philistines to take no notice!
 - wait, though - it was **Jonathan** who did that, not **Saul**
 - why didn't Saul do it? He is the king...
 - of course, Saul saw to it that he got the credit, but does it indicate some lack in the king?
 - signs of later trouble? we'll find that out from chapter 14
- **What really matters takes place in verses 8-15**
 - the Philistines may be pressing, but does that justify disobedience of God? **From a distance we say "no" so very easily!**
 - but can we really blame Saul for his disobedience?
 - and isn't the penalty rather arbitrary and severe?
 - Saul had waited seven days for Samuel to come
 - his army was evaporating while he was waiting
 - the enemy could attack at any moment
 - wasn't he really taking **initiative?**
- **Can we not understand his predicament?**
 - well, maybe, **but let's look at the facts!**
- **It is unlikely the Philistines would attack Saul at Gilgal**
 - **1.** all Israel had been summoned there - lots of troops
 - **2.** it is an isolated place, and Israel could expect to assemble there safely
- What happened was that Saul blamed Samuel for being late:
 - but remember, that's our tendency - **"it's not my fault,"** somebody else is to blame
 - Saul did not, however, wait the full time - he only waited up to seven days not to the end of seven days
- In any case Saul was told to wait for Samuel to come, who would then tell him what he was to do next
 - instead Saul tried to second guess God

- he went ahead without God's word - not waiting for Samuel was tantamount to undermining his spiritual authority, and the authority of God on whom Samuel called!
- for Saul **sacrificial ritual** was the essential, not **prophetic direction**
- he proceeded without the General's orders
- it was insubordination!!
- Saul was saying that certain emergencies made God's word **unnecessary!**
- *when the chips are down, function on your own!!*

Drawing things together

- What Saul had succumbed to was **pride**:
 - James VI of Scotland was notoriously rude when attending worship services
 - he had a habit of talking to his courtiers during sermons
 - Robert Bruce was preaching one day, and the king began his chatter, so Bruce stopped
 - the king fell silent!
 - Bruce carried on.... so did the king!
 - Bruce stopped again and so did the king... and then again
 - Bruce turned directly to the king and said, "**When the lion roars, all the beasts of the field are quiet. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah is now roaring in the voice of his Gospel, and it becomes all the petty kings of the earth to be silent.**"
- Kings easily forget they are subjects too
 - they can blatantly ignore God as James did or they can silently do the same as Saul did
 - **both amount to disobedient insubordination**
 - Saul lost his kingdom as a result of it, not only for himself but for his family
- **But there is an even sadder loss that Saul suffered**
 - **Samuel got up and left Gilgal**
 - and so **Saul lost the guidance of the Lord**
 - he lost God's word through God's prophet
 - Saul was on his own....
 - this was **far worse than having been overrun by the Philistines**
- **Now we can expect the worst for a king without God**
 - it would be the worst for Israel, too, because they have no direction from God and how will they be delivered...?
 - large numbers from the army had already left
 - Jonathan's victory paled into insignificance
 - the Philistines divided into three detachments to surround Israel
 - no one could stop them - not only did they raid, they left Israel with no weapons
 - the Israelites even had to go to the Philistines to get their farm tools sharpened!
- **It looks as if Israel is finished:**
 - but it is into such hopeless scenarios, when his people are helpless, that God acts and brings deliverance
 - his true people don't totally despair in such straits - but turn to wait upon the Lord!
- **Will we?**