

# Old Testament History

## Lesson #13

1 Samuel 14:1-26:25

### Outline

#### I. ***Saul Rejected As King (1 Samuel 13:1-15:35)***

- A. Saul's campaign against the Philistines (13:1-14:52).
  - 1. Jonathan's heroics and Saul's poor leadership (14:1-52).
- B. Saul's failure to destroy the Amalekites (15:1-35).

#### II. ***David's Rise And Saul's Decline (1 Samuel 16:1-31:13)***

- A. David rises to prominence (16:1-18:30).
  - 1. David privately anointed by Samuel (16:1-13).
  - 2. David's music soothing to Saul (16:14-23).
  - 3. David and Goliath (17:1-58).
  - 4. David's successes provoke Saul's jealousy (18:1-30).
- B. Saul seeks David's life (19:1-23:29).
  - 1. Saul attempts to kill David (19:1-24).
  - 2. Jonathan helps David escape (20:1-42).
  - 3. David prepares for Saul's pursuit (21:1-22:5).
    - a) David eats and arms himself at Nob (21:1-9).
    - b) David seeks refuge in Gath (21:10-15).
    - c) David gathers forces at Adullam (22:1-2).
    - d) David hides his parents at Mizpah (22:3-5).
  - 4. Saul slaughters the priests at Nob (22:6-23).
  - 5. David saves Keilah from the Philistines (23:1-6).
  - 6. The Philistines save David from Saul (23:7-29).
- C. David spares Saul's life (24:1-26:25).
  - 1. David spares Saul in the cave (24:1-22).
  - 2. Abigail keeps David from bloodshed (25:1-44).
  - 3. David spares Saul in the camp (26:1-25).

### Notes

#### ***1 Samuel 14:1-46***

- Facing the Philistines once, again it is the noble figure of Jonathan which comes to the foreground. He single-handedly planned an expedition against the Philistine outpost at Michmash.
- From the uppermost height of Gibeah, the watchmen noticed the growing confusion in the Philistine camp, and there could only be one reason for the confusion. Knowing that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were missing, Saul wanted to ask of the Lord by the well-known means of the Urim and Thummim.

- Without divine direction, Saul made a rash vow for his soldiers not to eat. By their silence, Israel had given their consent and it was a heavy burden upon them. Finding out by lot that Jonathan had broken the vow, Saul insisted on killing him. However, the people objected.
- The pursuit of the Philistines was abandoned, and the campaign abruptly ended. It was started in self-willed disobedience and distrustfulness of God, and it ended in sorrow and disappointment.

### **1 Samuel 14:47-15:35**

- The successful war against the Philistines had secured the throne for Saul. From this point, his reign was marked by wars against the various enemies of Israel, in all of which he was victorious.
- Israel's oldest and hereditary enemies were the Amalekites. Descended from Esau (Genesis 36:12, 16; 1 Chronicles 1:36), they occupied the territory to the south and southwest of Palestine. They had been the first to deliberately attack Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 17:8).
- From 1 Samuel 15:33 we infer that at this time the Amalekites were not only openly hostile against Israel, but behaved with extreme and unprovoked cruelty. The ban was pronounced against this unrelenting enemy of the Israelites long ago (Deuteronomy 25:17-19).
- The former trial of Saul in chapter 13 had been a test of his moral qualification for the kingdom; this second trial in chapter 15 was the test of his moral qualification for being king. The former trial determined the fate of his line and the second decided his own fate as king.
- The motives for the sparing of Agag are unclear. Did they wish to have a physical guarantee for the future conduct of Amalek? Did it flatter the national as well as the royal vanity to carry with them a captive like Agag? Or did they really want an alliance with what remained of the Amalekites?
- The Saul whom God had made king was not the same Saul whom God repented to have exalted; the essential conditions of their relationship had changed because of Saul's sin. Just as Saul's earlier impetuous disobedience had brought the full force of Samuel's rebuke (13:14), so now his halfhearted fulfillment of the divine command removes him from royal office. Rejection begets rejection.
- Once more Saul sought to disguise his conduct by pretending to be religious. Saul showed incredible weakness by attempting to blame the people. He should have been obeying the voice of God through the prophet all along. Evidently Saul's main worry was not about his sin, but about its consequences.
- Samuel prepared for what personally must have been the hardest duty ever laid upon him. He had to hack Agag to pieces as a message to Israel of the seriousness of God. From that day forward Samuel did not

come to see Saul. But still Samuel mourned for him; mourned as for one cut off in the middle of his life; dead while living -- a king rejected by God.

### **1 Samuel 16:1-18:4**

- Samuel was sent to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be Saul's successor. Jesse of the tribe of Judah (cf. Ru 4:12, 18-22) and his hometown, Bethlehem in Judah, would forever become associated with the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1-3, 10; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:1, 5-6, 16-17; 2:4-6).
- Samuel was apparently in the habit of visiting various places in the land for the purpose of offering sacrifices and teaching. It was lawful as long as the ark was not in the central sanctuary.
- Jesse's family must have held a prominent place in Bethlehem and been known as devoted to the Lord's service. In David, we see the same humble submission to a lowly calling, a faithful charge of menial toil, and the same subjection to his parents as we see in the life of Christ who humbled Himself to become David's son.
- At his anointing, the Spirit then given to him made Saul "another man" (1 Samuel 10:6, 10). But Saul had rebelled, and he never repented of his pride and disobedience. From this point, the Spirit of God departed from Saul (1 Samuel 16:14), and by the judgment of God he was left to be influenced by an evil spirit. Sadly, because of his natural disposition and the circumstances of his position, he was very susceptible (cf. Matthew 12:43-45). The evil spirit sent from God "troubled him," filling him with sadness, and bringing him to the edge of madness -- but not to repentance.
- Once more the shadow of war stretched across the land by Israel's old enemy the Philistines, who, probably encouraged by their knowledge of Saul's state, had advanced into Judah all the way to Bethlehem.
- Just as Samuel's anointing of Saul (1 Samuel 10:1) was followed by Saul's defeat of Nahash and the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11:1-11), so also Samuel's anointing of David is followed by David's defeat of Goliath and the Philistines. Each victory demonstrated the courage, determination, and military expertise of the newly anointed leader. Goliath's challenge for forty days showed how low Israel had sunk in their dependence upon God.
- David threw off the king's armor because his victory over Goliath was the Lord's deliverance, achieved through faith in Him. In the victory, Israel would learn the long-forgotten lesson that the "sword and spear" are to no avail when God is involved in the battle.
- The covenant between Jonathan and David was only one of many agreements made over a long period of time (20:16-17; 23:18; 2

Samuel 3:13, 21; 5:3). When Jonathan took off his robe and gave it to David, he was in effect transferring his own status as heir apparent to him. Their close friendship is one point of light in a history which grows darker and darker as it proceeds.

### **1 Samuel 18:4-20:42**

- After David's victory over Goliath, Saul made him a permanent fixture in his court. When Saul heard the song of the women, he became angry, assuming that David was receiving more praise than he. Saul began to fear for his throne.
- It deserves special notice that Saul's attempts against the life of David are never attributed to the influence of the evil spirit from the Lord, although they were no doubt made when that spirit was upon him.
- Whatever David did prospered while all that Saul attempted had only turned out to the advantage of David. The dark resolve was now settled in the heart of the king, and cast its shadow over every other consideration -- David must be murdered.
- Michal, like Rachel (Genesis 31:19), had Teraphim -- the old Aramaean or Chaldean household gods, which were probably associated with fertility. This most ancient form of Jewish superstition appears to have continued in Israelite households. Michal put the image in David's bed.
- The fact that Saul was overcome by the Spirit of God and prophesied proved that God was with David. Saul simply could not contend nor resist the Spirit. As Saul continued his murderous intent against David, the contest was between Saul and God, not Saul and David.
- The account between David and Jonathan is heart-rending. Jonathan, in deep faith and full trust, submitted to God's will, but he still loved his close friend. Saul, on the other hand, bluntly told his son that his love for David would cause his own and his family's ruin.
- After giving David the signal, Jonathan retraced his lonely way back to the city, while David quickly traveled south to Nob. Only once again, and in sadly different circumstances, did these two good men meet.

### **1 Samuel 21:1-23:39**

- At this point, David considered himself an outlaw, whom not even the friendship of Jonathan could protect. Therefore, it was necessary for David to seek shelter. The tabernacle of the Lord was in Nob. The village is on the road from the north to Jerusalem.
- It was the morning of the Sabbath when David suddenly presented himself alone, unarmed and weary with hunger, before the high priest. The shewbread, after it had performed its symbolic function, became "a most holy part" of the customary share given to the priests, who were to eat it in the "holy" place (Leviticus 24:9). Since the commands were

for priests and their families only (cf. Exodus 29:32-33; Leviticus 22:10-16), how could Ahimelech in good conscience give the consecrated bread to David and his men, who were not priests? The answer provided by Jesus (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5) shows that a higher law, where it conflicts with a lower one, suspends or limits the lower one at the point of conflict. Therefore the higher laws of worship in the temple suspended the lower law of Sabbath observance, and the higher law of mercy suspended the lower law as to the shewbread when David took it and mercifully gave it to his men, and when God in mercy permitted this to be done.

- At first it may seem strange that on his flight from Nob, David sought shelter in Gath, the city of Goliath. On the other hand, not only may this have been the most readily accessible city to him, but David may have thought that in Gath the defection of the Israelite champion would be hailed as a tremendous victory, and that he would be welcomed in seeking its protection. However David was just as worried about Achish, so he feigned madness to get himself out of the situation (cf. Psalm 56 -- the danger; Psalm 34 -- the deliverance). Many psalms were composed during this time.
- David is now completely separated from Saul's court and is considered an outlaw and a rebel. Adullam was only a few hours from Bethlehem, and David's family, who no longer felt safe in their home, soon joined him in his new hideout. About 400 men joined David, giving him a small, formidable army.
- Saul's murder of the innocent priests at Nob shows to what extent people will go once they have rejected the Lord. Doeg was an Edomite, a descendant of Esau (Genesis 25:30), so his hatred for David and the priests is just another level in the battle between Esau and Jacob. David's presence at Nob brought death to these people, so his deception only resulted in tragedy. Sadly, Saul was unwilling to kill the Amalekites, yet he had no problem killing innocent priests.
- Once again Jonathan came to see his friend. It is hard to form an adequate concept of the courage, spiritual faith, and moral excellence of this act. Never did man more completely clear himself from collusion of guilt, than Jonathan from that of his father Saul; yet Jonathan did not say an inappropriate word about his father.
- David's own men told his hiding place to Saul, and offered to assist in his capture. So the ones who should have rallied around him were his betrayers. An invasion from the Philistines forced Saul to return home. God exercised control of all circumstances in David's life through His providence.

## **1 Samuel 24:1-26:25**

- The city of En-gedi ("the fountain of the goat") or Hazazon Tamar ("the cutting of the palm trees") is perhaps the oldest place in the world (2 Chronicles 20:2).
- God gave David the grace needed to show kindness to his enemy. David's men see in the presence of Saul inside the cave a golden opportunity to get rid of him once and for all: David now has a chance to eliminate his "enemy."
- Out of respect for Saul's divine anointing, and not willing to kill him, but at the same time he wanted to let him know that he was not in control of his own destiny, David crept in and cut a corner off of Saul's robe. David honored the king even though the king was rebelling against the will of God.
- After passing up the opportunity to cut off Saul's robe, his heart was so tender that he repented openly of his hasty deed -- he had not shown proper respect for the Lord's anointed.
- Samuel died and was mourned by all Israel. He was the link which connected two very different periods, being the last representative of a past which could never come back, and also marking the commencement of a new period, intended to develop into Israel's ideal future.
- Abigail gave us a demonstration of wise speech, and she showed that she was qualified to become one of David's companions and advisers. It is not often that God's vengeance so quickly judges sin as in the case of Abigail's husband, Nabal.
- Chapter 26 narrates the final confrontation between Saul and David, and its speeches are animated by the mutual irreconcilability of the two men. He ordered Abishai to take Saul's spear and water jug. Strangely enough, Saul's final words to David are good wishes for his greatness and triumph.