

Lesson 5

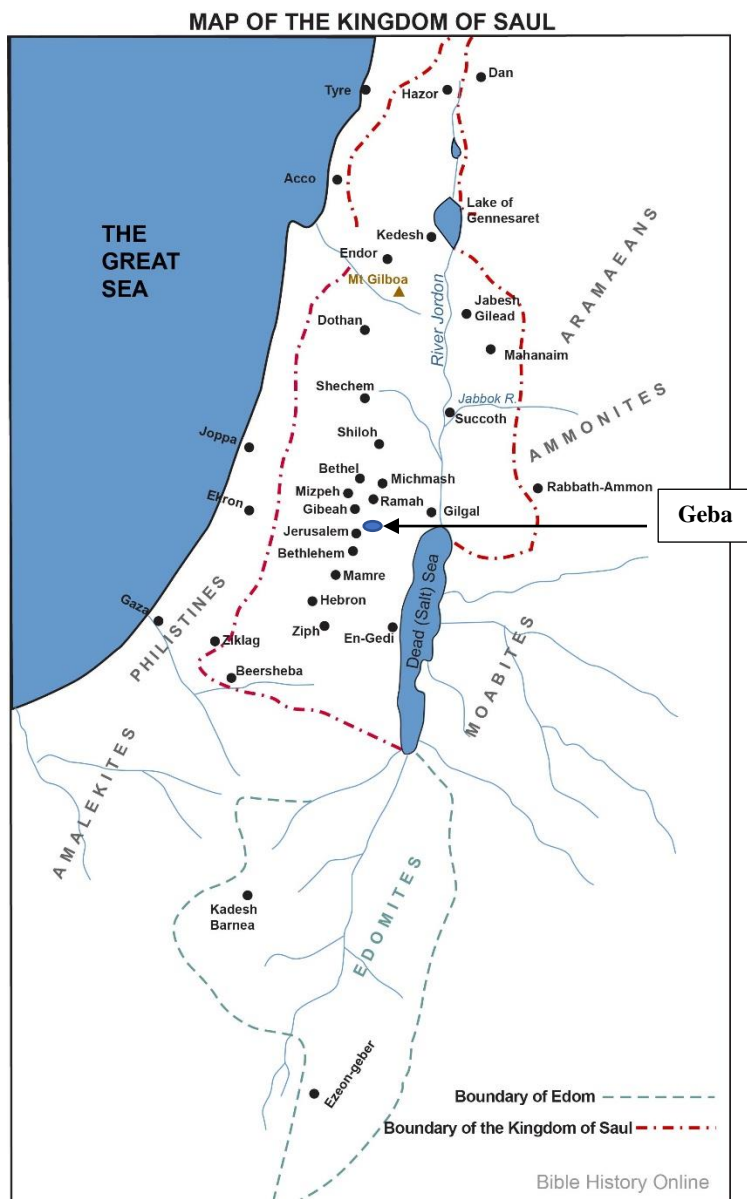
1 Samuel Chapters 13-15

Saul's Disobedience

Chapter 13-Saul is Rejected as God's Anointed

Vs. 1-7-Saul's Victory Over the Philistines

- Saul was possibly 30 years old when he began to reign. He reigned 40 years over Israel.



<http://www.bible-history.com/maps/Map-Kingdom-of-Saul-enlarged.jpg>

- The Philistines waged war against Israel.

- Saul chose for himself 3,000 men of which 2,000 were with him in Michmash (about 7 miles NE of Jerusalem). The other 1,000 men were with Jonathan (Saul's son) at Gibeah of Benjamin. For whatever reason, Saul sent the rest of his army back home.
- **Jonathan** smote the garrison of Philistines in Geba. Unfortunately, we begin to see the true character of Saul. Instead of giving credit to Jonathan, he gathered the people together and took the credit for the victory.
- After this defeat, the Philistines assembled **30,000** chariots and 6,000 horsemen to fight Israel. The Philistines camped at Michmash (I wonder whether Saul now wished he had given the credit to Jonathan-lol).
- The Israelites were terrified and hid in caves, thickets, cliffs, cellars, pits, and some crossed east of the Jordan River into the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul, however, remained in Gilgal.

Vs. 8-12-Saul Oversteps His Bounds and Offers the Burnt and Peace Offerings

- **Gilgal** was the appointed place that Samuel had told Saul to wait for him in Chapter 10:8. Saul was to wait seven days for Samuel to arrive. For some reason, Samuel did not arrive at the appointed time and some of the people began to leave Gilgal.
- To **unify** the people, Saul did not wait for Samuel but offered the burnt and peace offering himself.
- The peace offering was an offering to give thanks to God for “doing good.”¹ The burnt offering was made by fire unto the lord and symbolized completeness. It was the highest order of sacrifice to the Lord in the Old Testament.²
- Saul was symbolizing that he wished to rule as an **autocrat** in civil and sacred matters.
- It was possible that Samuel waited to test Saul's character and obedience to God.
- Immediately after the offerings, Samuel arrived and asked what Saul had done.
- Saul answered that he offered the sacrifices because the people were scattering; Samuel was late; and the Philistines were assembling at Michmash.
- Saul said that he “**forced**” himself to make the sacrifice-yea-right!

Vs. 13-23-Samuel Reprimands Saul

- Samuel **rebuked** Saul and said that his kingdom would not last but God would establish another king for Himself, a man after God's own heart. This man would eventually be David. Apparently, the Messiah would have come from Saul's line but now it would come from the line of David.
- There was no apparent **apology** from Saul. Scripture simply states that Samuel went up from Gilgal to Gibeah.
- The Philistines were preparing a raid against Israel.
- Saul numbered **600** men who were with him.
- The Philistines had a monopoly on iron and metal-working craftsmen until the time of David. As a result, the Israelites went down to the Philistine camp to sharpen their farming tools. Apparently, the Israelites did not have adequate weapons. The Philistines saw a profit to be made and charged the Israelites a high price.

¹ <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11966-peace-offering>

² <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3847-burnt-offering>

Chapter 14-Saul's Unwise Vows

Vs. 1-23-Jonathan's Victory Over the Philistines

- The Philistines were camped at Michmash while Saul was camped on the outskirts of Gibeah. Saul had about 600 men with him.
- Apparently, **Ahijah**, the great-grandson of Eli the priest, was nearby but Saul did not consult him concerning the will of the Lord.
- The Lord gave Jonathan tremendous courage. He took his armorbearer and crossed over to the Philistine camp.
- Jonathan threw out a "**fleece**" (a test) and said to his armorbearer, "If the Philistines come over to where we are then we will not fight them, however, if they tell us to come to their side then we will know that the Lord has delivered them into our hands."
- The Philistines called Jonathan over and both he and his armorbearer knew the Lord was with them. Jonathan and his armorbearer killed about **twenty** men.
- The Lord sent a great trembling throughout the camp and a great earthquake shook the land.
- Saul heard the commotion and realized that Jonathan and his armor bearer were gone. Saul summoned Ahijah to consult with the Lord. As the commotion increased, Saul-in haste-ordered the priest to **stop** his inquiry.
- Saul rallied the people and the Israelites scattered the Philistines.

Vs. 24-52

- The Israelites were very tired because Saul had placed the people under an oath. Saul had ordered the people not to **eat** until he had avenged the Israelites.
- Unfortunately, Jonathan had not heard about the oath and he tasted some honey that was on the ground.
- Because the people were so hungry, they began eating the Philistines' animals without **cooking** it. Eating blood was a violation of God's Law.
- By Ahijah's request, Saul inquired of the Lord as to whether they should continue pursuing the Philistines and gather the spoils. The Lord did not answer Saul because of Jonathan's disobedience to Saul's oath.
- When Saul learned that Jonathan had eaten the honey, he condemned Jonathan to **die**. Apparently, Saul was more concerned with his positional authority than he was with the life of his son.
- Fortunately, the people rescued Jonathan from Saul's judgment.
- Saul continued to pursue and inflict punishment upon the enemies of Israel. He acted **valiantly** and expanded Israel's borders.
- As a reference-Abner was Saul's captain of the army and was the son of Saul's uncle. This will be important in passages to come.

Chapter 15-Saul's Partial Obedience

Vs. 1-9-Saul Disobeys God's Order to Destroy the Amalekites

- Samuel was sent by God to **anoint** Saul as king over Israel.
- The Amalekites were descendants of Esau and had attacked Israel in the desert during the days of Moses. Because of their harsh treatment to Israel, God was now sending judgment upon the Amalekite nation. Saul was told to destroy everything-whether living or nonliving.

- Saul disobeyed and saved the king of the Amalekites and the people kept the **best** animals and material goods.

Vs. 10-35-God Rejects Saul as King

- God told Samuel that he **regretted** making Saul king. Samuel was deeply grieved over Saul's failure to serve God.
- Saul had set up a monument for himself in Carmel and was going down to Gilgal.
- Samuel asked about all the spoils. Saul tried to make an excuse by saying the animals were for **sacrifice**.
- Samuel reprimanded Saul for his disobedience. Instead of asking for forgiveness, Saul said, "I did obey the voice of the Lord, and went on the mission on which the Lord sent me..."
- Saul blamed the people for keeping the best of the spoils. It is interesting that Saul said, "But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord **your God** at Gilgal."
- Vs. 22 is a powerful verse for believers, "...Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice..."
- Samuel told Saul that God had **rejected** him as king.
- As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe and it tore. Samuel made the analogy that the kingdom was also torn from Saul.
- Saul admitted that he had sinned. However, Saul was more concerned about his **image** for he wanted Samuel to accompany him so that it would not appear Saul had lost Samuel's support.
- Samuel killed Agag king of the Amalekites.
- Samuel went to his home in **Ramah** and Saul went up to his house at **Gibeah**.
- Samuel never saw Saul alive again and yet he grieved over Saul. The Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Summary

It is always better to obey the Lord than to disobey. Sometimes obeying means to wait patiently for the Lord to work. It can be difficult to know when to act and when to wait. God understands our weaknesses and is an ever-present help in times of trouble. When faced with tough decisions, it is not always clear as to the best course of action. In situations such as these, we need to spend time with God, His Word, and with fellow Christians. We need to ask and seek advice. Sometimes decisions will be clear to us and sometimes there will be uncertainties. What is most important is that we take God with us each step of the way. Trust Him-He will lead.