

1 Samuel 13:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

Analysis

And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

Saul's failure demonstrates that partial obedience is disobedience, and religious activity cannot substitute for heart surrender. His pattern of excuses, blame-shifting, and selective compliance while maintaining outward religious appearance warns against external religion without internal transformation. The pronouncement that 'to obey is better than sacrifice' establishes that God desires humble submission over impressive religious performance. Saul's rejection teaches that prolonged disobedience, even mixed with apparent faithfulness, eventually results in God's withdrawal of calling and blessing.

Historical Context

The establishment of monarchy around 1050-1010 BCE represented a dramatic political and theological shift for Israel. Unlike surrounding nations where kings were considered divine or semi-divine, Israel's kings were supposed to function under God's ultimate authority as laid out in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. The

Benjamite tribe occupied strategic territory between Ephraim and Judah, making Saul's selection a politically astute choice to balance tribal rivalries. Archaeological remains from this period show increased fortification and centralization of settlements, confirming the transition to state-level organization. Levitical priests served hereditary roles mediating between God and people through sacrificial system. Corruption among priests was not uncommon in this era, as demonstrated by biblical criticism of Eli's sons and later Jeremiah's condemnations. Proper sacrificial procedure was critical for maintaining covenant relationship, making priestly misconduct particularly heinous.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen our understanding of God's character, purposes, and ways of working in human history?
2. What specific heart attitudes, thought patterns, or life practices does this passage call you to examine or change?
3. How does the emphasis on obedience over sacrifice point toward Christ's perfect submission to the Father's will?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	שָׂא	וְלֹא	אָמַר	עָשָׂה	יְתֵּן	הֵן	שָׁמוּאֵל	לֵאמֹר	וַיֹּאמֶר
	said			And Samuel					
	H559			H8050			H4100		H6213
לֹא	וְאֵתָהּ	מַעַל	יְ	הָעָם	נָפְצוּ	כִּי	רָאִיתִי		
	What hast thou done			said			And Saul		
	H3588			H559			H7586		
וּפְלִשְׁתֵּי יָם	הָיָה יָם	לְמוֹעֵד	בָּךְ	אֶתְּ					
	from me and that thou camest			appointed			not within the days		and that the Philistines
	H935			H4150			H3117		H6430
מִכְמָשׁ:	וַיִּסְבּוּ	יָם							
	gathered themselves together			at Michmash					
	H622			H4363					

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 13:23 (Parallel theme): And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

1 Samuel 13:16 (Parallel theme): And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

1 Samuel 13:2 (Parallel theme): Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

1 Samuel 13:5 (Parallel theme): And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven.

