

1 Samuel 13:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

Analysis

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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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

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

וְעַתָּה מַמְלָכָתְךָ לֹא תִּקְרַב יְמֵינוּ בְּקַשׁ יְהוָה: H3808
H6258 But now thy kingdom H4467 shall not continue H6965 H1245 and the LORD H3068

לֹא יְשַׁלֵּח בְּלָבָבְךָ אֶל־אִישׁ כִּי־אֶל־אִישׁ יְהוָה: H3824
H0 him a man H376 after his own heart H3824 commanded H6680 and the LORD H3068 him to be captain H5057

עַל־עַמּוֹ לֹא־כִּי־עַמּוֹ שְׁמָךְ רְתַּבֵּל אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה
H5921 over his people H5971 H3588 H3808 because thou hast not kept H8104 H853 H834

אֶל־אֶל־יְהוָה: H3068
commanded and the LORD H6680

Additional Cross-References

Acts 13:22 (Kingdom): And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

1 Samuel 15:28 (Kingdom): And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.

Psalms 78:70 (Parallel theme): He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:

1 Samuel 16:1 (Kingdom): And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

Acts 7:46 (Parallel theme): Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

1 Samuel 16:12 (References Lord): And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

2 Kings 20:5 (References Lord): Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

1 Samuel 9:16 (Parallel theme): To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

1 Samuel 2:30 (References Lord): Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

2 Samuel 5:2 (Kingdom): Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.