

# 1 Samuel 13:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

## Analysis

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**And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.**

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

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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

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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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

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|                  |                         |                     |                |                     |             |           |           |           |           |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| אָשָׁר           | פָּלֶשֶׁת               | יָם                 | נָצַר          | יְבָמָה             | אֶת         | יְוָנָתָן | וְיָנָתָן | וְיָנָתָן | וְיָנָתָן |
| smote            | And Jonathan            | H853                | the garrison   | and the Philistines |             |           |           |           |           |
| H5221            | H3129                   |                     | H5333          | H6430               |             |           |           |           | H834      |
| בְּשִׁזְׁוףּ     | רַקֵּעַ                 | וְשָׁאֹל            | פָּלֶשֶׁת      | יָם                 | נָצַר       | יְבָמָה   | וְיָנָתָן | וְיָנָתָן | וְיָנָתָן |
| that was in Geba | hear                    | and the Philistines | of it And Saul | blew                | the trumpet |           |           |           |           |
| H1387            | H8085                   | H6430               | H7586          | H8628               | H7782       |           |           |           |           |
| בְּכָל           | בְּאָזְן                | לְאַמְתָּר          | וְיָנָתָן      | לְאַמְתָּר          | בְּעָרֵב:   |           |           |           |           |
| H3605            | throughout all the land | saying              | hear           | Let the Hebrews     |             |           |           |           |           |
|                  | H776                    | H559                | H8085          | H5680               |             |           |           |           |           |

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Samuel 10:5** (Parallel theme): After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:

**Judges 3:27** (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them.

**Judges 6:34** (Parallel theme): But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.