

# 1 Samuel 13:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

## Analysis

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**When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.**

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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**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## **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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וְאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל	כִּי רָאוּ	כִּי לֹא	צָר	כִּי לֹא
When the men	of Israel	saw	H3588	that they were in a strait	H0 H3588
H376	H3478	H7200		H6887	
וַיִּשְׁתָּדְּדוּ	הָעָם	וַיִּתְּחַבְּאוּ	הָעָם	בְּמַעְרֹת	וְהָעָם
were distressed	for the people	did hide	for the people	themselves in caves	
H5065	H5971	H2244	H5971	H4631	
וּבְחַזְזִים	וּבְסֻלְעִים	וּבְצֻרֹת	וּבְבִקְרוֹת:		
H2336	and in rocks	and in high places	and in pits		
	H5553	H6877	H953		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Judges 6:2** (References Israel): And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.

**Hebrews 11:38** (Parallel theme): (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.