

# 1 Samuel 13:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

## Analysis

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**And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.**

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

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## 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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וְעִבְרֵי יִם	עָבְרוּ	אֶת	הַיַּרְדֵּי	אֶרֶץ	גַּד
And some of the Hebrews	went over	H853	Jordan	to the land	of Gad
H5680	H5674		H3383	H776	H1410
וּגְלָעַד	אֶשָׁאֵל	עוֹדְנוּ	בְּגִלְגָּל	וְכָל	הָעָם
and Gilead	As for Saul	H5750	he was yet in Gilgal	H3605	and all the people
H1568	H7586		H1537		H5971
חָרַד וְ	אֲחֵרָיו:				
him trembling	followed				
H2729	H310				

