

1Chronicles 10.13-14

Saul, a Life of Self

These words are among the saddest in all of scripture. The final end of Saul, first king of Israel is fitting for the tortured life he led. But as hard as the judgment is, we still have much to learn about what God requires of us by examining this life. This is an age of doing your own thing and believing that the end justifies the means. And nowhere is that more dangerous than in the church. We are warned of God that we are not to do things in the manner of the heathens among whom we dwell, and that His ways and His plans are far beyond us. But the church today often chooses man's methods for their expedience and seemingly good results with no regard for the spiritual consequence... this is Saul in a nutshell. Do whatever seems best at the time to accomplish what you want, nevermind the cost...

Brief Overview of Saul's life

- Israel cried for a king
- God gave them Saul
- He was chosen and crowned king

- He delivered Israel for a season but was not a man who loved God and would not remain king.
- His son Jonathon could have been king and a good one, but was rejected for his father's sake.
- Saul disobeyed God and refused to kill Agag and the kingdom was stripped from him
- David is anointed king and bursts onto the national scene in his conflict with Goliath
- David is brought into Saul's house to drive away the evil spirits God sent to torment him
- Saul is insane with jealousy about David and seeks his life in a manner of ways
 - ❖ Hurls spears at him
 - ❖ Sends him into numerous battles
 - ❖ Sends him to kill 100 philistines as bride price for his daughter's hand
 - ❖ Tries to enlist his son and servants to kill him
- David finally flees the palace and is then hunted by Saul for decades
- Jonathon and David swear friendship and loyalty
- David has Saul's life in his hands 2x and refuses to slay him

- Saul finally is slain after seeking counsel from Samuel's shade, whom he had raised by a witch against all God's law.
- He is killed in battle the next day

I. NATION IN REBELLION

A. The nation rejected God to have a king –

1Samuel 8.7

B. They were warned that a king would oppress them

1Samuel 8.10-18

C. They desired to have a man to lead them in order that they would be like all the other nations –

1Samuel 8.20

D. They did not desire the same things that God desired

E. God still treated with them in mercy

1Samuel 12.20 – 25

II. KING OF REBELS

A. Saul was chosen for his appearance –

1Samuel 9.2

B. He had no godly character - in fact he prophesied as a sign of God's selection and his religious fervor was so out of character that it became a proverb –

2Samuel 10.9-11

C. He was chosen for much the same reasons that the judges were chosen, to deliver the people and to restrain their madness

1Samuel 10.16-17

III. KINGS AND PRINCES

A. God did not call Saul king –

1Samuel 2.16-17

1. It is worth noting that Saul is declared by God to be a "prince" or a leader. The Hebrew is <na-gid> it is a leader or commander - literally it means "the one in front." which was the desire of Israel.

1 Samuel 8:20 (ESV)

²⁰ that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

B. God had promised a King –

1Samuel 2.8-10

C. God teaches a prince

1. Jonathon was a man to inspire devotion and honor
2. God gave him what he would become to David, a faithful friend who would follow and submit.
3. Jonathon gains a victory (I think chapter 14 is a detailed account of chapter 13) - he trusts in the Lord to grant his plea, and to guide his path and be his defender.
 - a. He goes out to attack the Philistines while Saul hides in a cave. (14.2 --> cf: 13.6)
 - b. Saul had 600 men, including the priests of the Lord
 - c. Jonathon had his armor bearer
 - d. The devotion inspired here is beautiful –

1Samuel 14.6-7

4. Jonathon was not invested in retaining the kingdom, he recognized that God had given it to David and he wanted to serve the true king, despite his own human claim to the throne. –

1Samuel 19.13-17

D. God chose a king –

1Samuel 16.1

1. The word here is <me-lek> it is exactly what it says, a king. This is pronounced long before one was even on the human horizon, [Jesus is, of course, the final fulfillment of this promise] but take note: this is also God's declaration about David. "I have provided for myself a King"

E. God prepared a King –

1. All of the trials of David's life were intended to prepare him for the task ahead
2. God gave him all that he needed to grow into the man he was to be. Jonathon was a large part of that.
3. David inspired devotion in his men for decades, he learned the practice of friendship in the most trying circumstances

4. He learned military wisdom through battle and practice
5. He learned to trust in God from his childhood being forged in combat against all manner of beast, both 4 footed and 2 footed

F. God delivered a King

IV. REBEL KINGS SEEK GOD

- A. Saul's first religious act was an act of presumption - offering the sacrifice although he was not supposed to do...

1Samuel 13.8-12

- B. Saul's next religious act was a rash vow with a foolish declaration –

1Samuel 14.24

1. Saul's next act was prompted by the sin of the people –

- Driven mad by hunger they killed the animals and ate them raw
 - Saul built an altar there - but not to repent, instead it was to press on with his own determination and uphold his will to attack.
2. He was determined to uphold his decree though it cost him his son –

1Samuel 14.39

3. He stubbornly pressed on, heedless
4. The lot fell to he and Jonathon then to Jonathon –

1Samuel 14.43-45

- C. Saul's next religious act was a rebellious farce
1. Disobeyed in regards to Amalek
 2. Pretended that he intended sacrifice with the stolen animals
 3. When Samuel arrived Saul:

- Lied - we did everything right - v13
 - Blamed - the people brought the best to sacrifice to God - v15
 - Misdirected and evaded - v20
 - Blamed again - v21
4. Finally God ripped the kingdom from his hand.
 5. Saul cried for mercy, or at least for the pretense to be maintained ...
 6. Saul cries for mercy - asks to be restored and lays hold of Samuel's robe, at which time Samuel announces that God has given the kingdom into the hand of another...
 - He seeks mercy, when that is denied
 - He asks for false mercy, in the eyes of the people, come back and pretend that everything is ok
 - This is granted, but Samuel also uses the time to complete the work of God and he slays Agag
 - Samuel departs and never sees Saul again until the day of his death...

V. GOD PREPARES A KING

- A. Samuel goes to anoint David -
- B. God looks on the heart –

1Samuel 16.6-7

- 1. He sees all that we are and is not deceived by the pretensions we often use to deceive ourselves. –

Jeremiah 17:9–10 (ESV)

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? ¹⁰ “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

- C. God raises up David, brings him into Saul's house and gives him much honor
 - 1. Goliath
 - 2. Saul tries to kill David 2x

3. Saul gives him military command and sends him into battle hoping the philistines will kill him - God gives him honor and esteem among the people.
4. Saul now stands in fearful awe of David.
 - The man who is clinging to what he ought not possess guards it jealously...
5. Offered his daughter to David for a bride price of 100 philistine foreskins; again hoping to kill him in battle (a lesson David learned) David brought him 200. This created more tension...

1Samuel 18.28-29

6. Saul plotted to kill him, Michal helped him escape –
 - She was fearful of her father's anger and so lied saying that David threatened her.

D. David fled to Samuel

1. Saul found out and sent warriors to bring him back.
 - They prophesied
 - He sent more, they also prophesied
 - He sent more... the same happened
 - 3x he sent, 3x they prophesied
 - Saul went... and he too prophesied this time naked for a day and a night he was in the hand of God...

E. Jonathon argues for David and Saul reveals his own heart...

1. He declares that Jonathon is a traitor to him

1Samuel 20.30-31

2. When Jonathon argues for David strenuously Saul tries to kill his own son.

F. David leaves Saul's house forever.

1. He flees to Nob where he is fed and receives Goliath's sword.
2. Saul finds out and slaughters 85 priests who were there
3. He also slaughters the whole town, men, women, children and livestock...
 - He won't destroy Amalek for God, but he will destroy God's priests for his own sake and petty revenge.
4. Saul continues to pursue David and though David has the chance to kill Saul on several occasions he does not
5. Saul seems to relent and pledges peace since David had spared him if David would promise not to kill him or his offspring.
 - Note that David had already demonstrated that intention but Saul sees David as he himself is... tortured, twisted by hate, unstable in mind... he sees evil in everyone for it is his own heart he is seeing.

VI. A KINGS END

- A. Samuel dies, and is buried. David continues to flee and to interact with the nations... he seeks assylum in the court of Achish the king of the philistines. And goes on raids for him. But instead of attacking israel, he attacks philistine towns and kills all, then lies to the king reporting that they killed Israelites. This king then trusts David and makes him part of his own guard.

- B. The Philistines again gather to attack - the army is large and Saul is afraid...

1 Samuel 28.5

- C. Saul then seeks to find answers from God ...
 - 1. God refuses to answer Saul. No method works.

1Samuel 28.6

- 2. He sends for a medium to raise the ghost of Samuel.

- The medium is terrified at her success.
- Samuel rebukes Saul
- He reminds him that all this was foretold and that the Kingdom had been given to David
- He also tells Saul that by nightfall the next day, Saul and all his sons will be with him in death.
- Saul is unmanned, and after being nursed by the witch he departs
- The next day he is killed in the battle...

VII. KINGS' EPITAPHS

A. Saul's life is summed up in the words of 1 Chronicles 10

1 Chronicles 10:13–14 (ESV)

¹³ So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. ¹⁴ He did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

B. David's in Acts 13

Acts 13:22 (ESV)

²² And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.'