



Lessons 66

SAUL'S FOOLISH SACRIFICE

Story Elements

- **Text:** I Samuel 12:1 – 13:14
- **Setting:** approx. 1050 B.C.
- **Main Characters:** God, Samuel, and Saul
- **Plot:** Saul's impatience leads to an foolish sacrifice before battling the Philistines at Michmash.
- **Key word(s):** "Thou hast done _____" (vs. 13:13)
- **Climax:** "And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him." (13:10)

Samuel's Farewell Sermon

1. Previously, Saul's victory over the Ammonites encouraged the Hebrews and confirmed his kingdom. Samuel summoned Israel to renew the kingdom at Gilgal. It was there that Samuel delivered his farewell address in which he emphasized three main points:
 - a. (12:1-5) That Samuel lead Israel with _____ and integrity.
 - b. (12:6-12) That God has been good to Israel, while they have been largely _____.
 - c. That if Israel and their new king would follow the LORD wholeheartedly they would be blessed, and if not, then they would be cursed. (This point was driven home with a miraculously timed thunderstorm; see 12:15-18). The final words of Samuel's address are especially poignant, considering what happens next in the life of Saul.

1 Sam. 12:25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your ____.

Saul's Foolish Sacrifice

2. (13:1-4) Following Jonathan's victory over a Philistine garrison at Geba, Saul summoned reinforcements to face a larger, more imminent Philistine force. The Hebrews gathered at Gilgal while the Philistines swelled their ranks at _____.
3. (13:5-7) Philistine chariots numbered thirty thousand and their cavalry numbered six thousand. The sheer size of the Philistine force struck fear in the Hebrews. Many hid in the nearest ____ and rocky outcroppings, while others fled across the Jordan into Gad.
4. (13:8-10) To make matters worse, Samuel was seemingly delayed in coming to Gilgal, and the longer Saul _____, the more afraid his troops became. Foolishly, Saul made the sacrifice without Samuel.

- 5. (13:11-12) As soon as he had finished the sacrifice, Samuel arrived and rebuked Saul for his foolishness. Why was Saul wrong for doing what he did?
 - a. Making a sacrifice as a king wasn't wrong, *per se*, but he should have waited for _____ assistance from Samuel. This was no private devotion, but an important situation that would impact the entire nation.
 - b. Samuel had instructed Saul to wait in Gilgal _____ days to receive instruction from the prophet. Though this initial command was given in 10:8, it seems to have been the constant *modus operandi* of Samuel towards Saul regarding important matters of state.
 - c. Saul knew he should wait for priestly assistance and prophetic counsel; his actions towards Samuel indicate a guilty conscience: he shifted blame to Samuel and _____ himself.
- 6. (13:13-14) Samuel rebuked Saul for breaking the commandment of God and acting foolishly, saying, "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own _____, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee."

Application

- 7. Saul's humility gave way to impatience and fear. He was walking by sight, not by faith. He felt it was better to act in his own strength than to wait for the LORD's _____.

Psalm 27:14 Wait on the LORD: Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: Wait, I say, on the LORD.

Answer Key

Key word(s): foolishly • 1. a) honesty; b) disobedient; 1 Sam. 12:25 – “king” • 2. Michmash • 3. caves • 4. waited • 5. a) priestly; b) seven; c) justified • 6. heart • direction