

## 1 Samuel 13:8-14 Saul's response to Samuel calling out his sin

### I. Saul's Sin

- a. However, Saul's obedience was only partial; he had also been directed to wait until Samuel arrived and administered over the prescribed sacrifices. Since sacrifices were normally offered up twice a day, in the early morning and at twilight (cf. Num 28:1–6), Samuel could have arrived at any time on the seventh day and still fulfilled his role in the process.<sup>518</sup> Unfortunately Saul did not give Samuel an opportunity to do so but offered the "burnt offering" (v. 9; Hb. *'ōlay*) himself
- b. There Saul waited for Samuel to come and offer sacrifice (13:8) as he had been told to do two years earlier (10:8; see comments on 13:1–2). But on the seventh day, the day Samuel was to arrive, Saul could wait no longer and unlawfully took on himself the priestly task of offering community sacrifice.
  - i. Saul had now violated the holy standards of the Lord by disobeying the Law of Moses (Lev. 6:8–13) and the word of His Prophet Samuel (1 Sam. 10:8).

### II. Saul's Response

- a. Saul responded to the question defensively, blaming three other parties for his act of disobedience:
  - i. his soldiers, who "were scattering";
  - ii. Samuel, who "did not come at the set time";
  - iii. and the Philistines, who "were assembling at Micmash" (v. 11).
  - iv. He was "compelled" (lit., "forced himself") to perform the sacrifice because he feared that the Philistines would attack him before he had "sought the LORD's favor" (v. 12). It is ironic—and symptomatic of Saul's spiritual dullness—that the king believed he could obtain the Lord's favor through an act of disobedience.

### III. Samuel's Response

- a. Brushing aside Saul's excuses, Samuel condemned the king's actions as those of a fool. No line of reasoning, however compelling, could ever justify disobedience

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<sup>158</sup> At least one scholar has concluded that Samuel deliberately broke his appointment at Gilgal in order to sabotage Saul's kingship; cf. Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist*, 129–31. This position is to be rejected because it is unsupported by the text—he did in fact arrive on the seventh day—and contrary to the spirit of the Samuel narratives, which consistently portray Samuel as a faithful servant of Yahweh.

to the Lord. “command” (*mišway*), used elsewhere to refer to Torah mandates (cf. Exod 24:12, etc.),

- i. Fool - he is more particularly one who lacks the wisdom which comes with the knowledge of God, someone who in his pride is wise in his own eyes but acts contrary to the will of God and thus does (intentionally or not) what is evil. His foolishness culminates in a denial of the existence of God (Ps. 14:1). The fool reveals his lack of understanding through the wicked deeds which he perpetrates, and his lack of responsibility is evident in the misuse of what has been given to him (1 Sam. 26:21; 2 Sam. 3:33; Matt. 5:22).<sup>2</sup>
- b. “the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people” (v. 14).
  - i. Unlike Saul, this new leader would be a man “after [the Lord’s] own heart,” a phrase that may refer (1) to the person’s profound commitment to the Lord or (2) to the fact that the Lord had selected that person.<sup>631</sup>
    1. Agreeing with God
    2. He did not avenge himself upon his foes by war,<sup>146</sup> he did not oppose force of arms to those that laid wait for him, but after the pattern of the Lord, whose name and whose meekness alike he foreshadowed, when he was betrayed he entreated, when he was in danger he sang psalms, when he incurred hatred he rejoiced; and for this cause he was found a man after God’s own heart. HOMILIES ON PSALM 53 (54).1.<sup>1576</sup>

## 2 Samuel 12:13 David’s response to Nathan calling out his sin; cross reference to Ps 51

### I. David’s Sin

- a. As is regularly the case with sin, David’s transgression had not only violated his relationship with God (cf. Ps 51:4 [Hb. 51:6]), but it also had ravaged human relationships as well..

### II. Nathan’s Rebuke

- a. In the restatement of David’s offenses, the Lord personalized the king’s transgression against the deity. David had not merely despised the Lord’s word; he had despised the Lord himself. **The Lord and his Word were inseparable: to neglect or offend the word of the Torah**—that is, the word of the Lord—was to neglect or offend the Lord. The writer’s effortless equation of God with the

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<sup>2</sup> Allen C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 390.

<sup>361</sup> For further discussion of translation options, cf. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 229.

<sup>416</sup> The qualities Hilary extols in David are those he exhibited in his encounters with Saul.

<sup>517</sup> NPNF2 9:243\*.

<sup>6</sup> John R. Franke, ed., *Old Testament IV: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 244.

written covenant in vv. 9–10 reflects an acceptance of Scripture as truly divine (cf. 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21).

### III. David's Response

- a. In a remarkable display of humility and contrition, David confessed his guilt in the single most significant dimension of his sinful act: "I have sinned against the LORD" (v. 13; cf. Ps 51:4 [Hb. v. 6]). David had certainly also sinned against Uriah, Bathsheba, and unnamed soldiers; but those offenses were derivative and secondary in nature. Had David not rebelled against the Lord's Word, these persons would not have been murdered or abused.
- b. David's confession came with immediacy, without denial, and without excuse; the Lord's forgiveness was equally direct and unrestrained. It also was without cost: forgiveness was granted the king without requiring him first to make animal sacrifices or give great gifts to the Lord. In an unadorned fashion Nathan responded to David by declaring that "the LORD has taken away your sin."
- c. One may wonder, perhaps, why David was not punished with death as he had so sternly advocated for the guilty man. Adultery and murder both were sufficient cause for the execution of even a king (Ex. 21:12; Lev. 20:10). The answer surely lies in the genuine and contrite repentance which David expressed, not only in the presence of Nathan but more fully in Psalm 51.

Idea

In order to discover what a man after God's own heart is, we have to figure out what God was disappointed with from Saul and then compare it to David.