

Adult Bible Class

The Book of First Samuel

Lesson 6 - May 22, 2022

Our Story So Far

Because of their pattern of idolatry, God sent heathen nations to oppress the people of Israel. The Philistines and the Ammonites are two of these nations. God did this to motivate His people to call on Him and to repent. When the people had had enough, they would cry out to God, and He would send a judge to deliver them and lead them into battle and victory over their oppressor.

However, during the time of Samuel's judgeship, the people demanded that God give them a human king to lead them in battle. This request was an affront to God since they were asking for a human king to take the place of God as their king and general in battle. It was also an insult to Samuel who had led them well and had borne with them during their many seasons of idolatry. Samuel warned them what a king would demand of them. However:

1 Samuel 8:19 (NLT) But the people refused to listen to Samuel's warning. "Even so, we still want a king," they said. **20** "We want to be like the nations around us. Our king will judge us and lead us into battle."

Though it was a mistake and though it was insulting to God and Samuel, God gave them their request and chose for them a king that matched exactly what they were looking for. God gave them Saul.

1 Samuel 9:1 (NLT) There was a wealthy, influential man named Kish from the tribe of Benjamin. .
.2 His son Saul was the most handsome man in Israel—head and shoulders taller than anyone else in the land.

Saul started out well, walking in humility. He was filled with the Spirit of God. He was humble when presented to the people as their anointed king. He rose up in righteous indignation to help the people of Jabesh across the Jordan River to fight against the Ammonites who threatened to gouge out their right eyes!

But in today's chapters, things will change. Saul is not the one that *God* would have chosen. Instead, he is the one *the people* asked for. In future chapters, we will be introduced to David, God's choice for Israel's king.

1 Samuel Chapter 13

1 Samuel 13:1 (NKJV) Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,
2 Saul chose for himself three thousand *men* of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent.

In chapter ten, Saul is publicly proclaimed to be king. Verse 26 of that chapter says, *And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant men went with him, whose hearts God had touched.* Saul was now going to add to this group of men other elite soldiers. He wanted to build up his standing army. First Samuel 15:52 says,

Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself. This was one of the warnings that Samuel had given the people when they asked for a king - that the king would draft their sons as warriors.

For the first time in Scripture Saul's son, Jonathan, is named. Jonathan was stationed in Gibeah, Saul's hometown, with 1000 of these specially chosen men.

Things have changed in Israel. During the time of the judges, men were called to serve in the army on an "as needed" basis. But now, since Israel asked for a king, a need arose for a standing army. This group would be ready at all times.

1 Samuel 13:3 And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!" **4** Now all Israel heard it said *that* Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel had also become an abomination to the Philistines. And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal.

In the Scriptures, from beginning to end, there are examples of the fight between good and evil. In the first few chapters of the Bible we see the serpent in the Garden. What was he doing there? Here, we see the Philistines in Israel. What are the Philistines (idol worshipers) doing in Israel?

When Israel asked for a king, the purpose was to rid Israel of her oppressors - the Philistines being the greatest and most formidable. Jonathan (no doubt directed by his father) attacked a garrison of Philistines in Geba. The rest of the Philistines heard about it and were not going to let it happen without retaliation. War was on!

Saul blew the trumpet - a call to war! A Philistine garrison had been attacked, the Philistines were stirred up to retaliate, and the Israelites needed to gather themselves together for battle. Israel had become an abomination to the Philistines because they were fighting back instead of bowing to their oppressors. The land was theirs by right, given to them by God. They were going to take it back and cast the enemy out.

Likewise, our Christian experience stirs us up to war against the enemy of our souls. By nature, submitting to Jesus Christ means war with the devil. But we have many precious promises in the Word of God, and we know that we shall be victorious. The devil wants to live in our territory, exalting himself as superior to us, but we must resist him and cast him out. He doesn't belong there. We know that *"we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Ephesians 6:12).

5 Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven.

Understand this - when we resist the devil, he is going to fight back. It is the devil's tactic to try to show himself strong and to intimidate us to fear and doubt. We must be like Elisha who told his servant, *"Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them"* (1 Kings 6:16).

New converts must be instructed that living this Christian life will result in some spiritual battles and some resistance from people who do not like it that we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ (not everyone will be thrilled that you love and serve the Lord). Again, people are not our enemy. The devil and spiritual wickedness that desires to rule - that is the enemy.

1 Samuel 13:6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. **7** And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

Will you stand your ground and fight (against spiritual strongholds), or will you flee and hide or even renounce what God has done for you? Don't do it! You must be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. *"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand"* (Ephesians 6:13).

The Israelites were used to being oppressed. They were not used to being victorious. They needed a new mindset.

As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

The people followed Saul, but they were trembling. They knew just how many of the enemy were assembled, ready to attack them and put them back in their places. The situation was not good. Many had fled, and there was not a spirit of unity and trust in God for victory like there should have been.

8 Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. **9** So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering.

Everyone of us who serve Jesus Christ will be tested; but this time of testing is for our good. Saul was being tested to prove "what spirit he is of." Sometimes the test itself doesn't seem like much, but it can prove an important principle. Eve was tested to see if she would obey the word of God. Eating fruit doesn't seem like a big deal, but when God says, *"You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die,"* then it becomes a big deal.

1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. **9** Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. **10** But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

Saul had been commanded by God through the prophet Samuel to wait seven days until Samuel came to offer the sacrifices. Saul, who was king and head of the military power, was supposed to wait on the prophet to offer the burnt offerings and

peace offerings for the army. God has an order to things. When we line up with his order, there is victory. The seven days were almost to an end, but there were still a few moments of time left. Saul, why didn't you wait? Why wait so long without seeing it through?

Saul, as king, was subject to the Great King, Jehovah God. He was undergoing this test to see if his loyalty to his King would not fail.

1 Samuel 13:10 Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him.

11 And Samuel said, "What have you done?"

Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, **12** then I said, 'The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord.' Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering."

Saul's conscience was speaking - that what he had done was not right. Samuel was looking for repentance but found none. Like Adam and Eve in the Garden, Saul made excuses. He said he felt like he had to do it. There are a thousand excuses for disobeying the voice of God, but there is one reason for obeying it - God gave the command, and we should trust him to work all things out.

If someone had told Saul in advance, "God is going to test you to see if you will obey His command," do you think that Saul would have been more patient to wait on Samuel? The truth is that none of us are told in advance when something is a test.

Trusting God is the business of the church. Having faith that God will fulfill His promises is our job. Through experience and teaching we learn what is God's business and what is our business.

As in the case of Eve in Genesis and also in the case of Saul in this chapter, they were both looking for something good to happen through their disregard of God's word. Oh, how people are deceived by this! Saul said, "*I felt compelled.*" He had to do it, or so he thought. These examples are in God's word to warn us about presumptuous behavior - behavior that goes out of bounds but thinks itself righteous.

13 And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly."

No one wants to be called a fool, yet Saul has behaved foolishly. He took matters into his own hands instead of patiently waiting on God. His sin was the sin of unbelief (see Hebrews 3:12, 19).

You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. **14** But now your kingdom shall not continue.

Adam and Eve suffered for their error and presumption. Now Saul will suffer for his disobedience. He failed the test. His dynasty will end. He sinned and did not repent but instead made excuses.

The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him *to be* commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."

Saul was *the people's choice*. Even though God picked him for the people, he exactly fit the description of what the people wanted. The self-willed people now had a self-willed king. But now that Saul has failed, God will find a man "*after His own heart*."

Paul said:

Acts 13:21 And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. **22** And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after My *own heart*, who will do all My will.'

Who is a man after God's own heart? He is a man who will do the will of God. At this point in time, David may not have been born, or he may have been a young child, but God knew him in the future and could see him as the future king of Israel. David would serve the will of God, and because of it his dynasty would be established forever.

Psalms 89:34 (NLT) No, I will not break my covenant;

I will not take back a single word I said.

35 I have sworn an oath to David,
and in my holiness I cannot lie:

36 His dynasty will go on forever;
his kingdom will endure as the sun.

37 It will be as eternal as the moon,
my faithful witness in the sky!"

1 Samuel 13:15 (NKJV) Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people present with him, about six hundred men.

Unfortunately, Saul's standing army has dwindled to only 600 men. As far as bad days go, this had been one of the worst for Saul.

In the Old Testament, a burnt offering was offered to God in consecration. The whole animal was burnt up as a symbol that a person gave himself wholly consecrated to God. When it was wrongly offered, it dishonored God and became an abomination in His sight.

Proverbs 21:27 (NKJV) The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination;
How much more *when* he brings it with wicked intent!

Saul was so concerned about the outward show of religion (offering sacrifices) that he totally missed the spirit of its meaning. His self-will and pride ruined the spirit of the burnt offering.

1 Samuel 13:16 (NLT) Saul and Jonathan and the troops with them were staying at Geba in the land of Benjamin. The Philistines set up their camp at Micmash. **17** Three raiding parties soon left the camp of the Philistines. One went north toward Ophrah in the land of Shual, **18** another went west to Beth-horon, and the third moved toward the border above the valley of Zeboim near the wilderness.

19 There were no blacksmiths in the land of Israel in those days. The Philistines wouldn't allow them for fear they would make swords and spears for the Hebrews. **20** So whenever the Israelites needed to sharpen their plowshares, picks, axes, or sickles, they had to take them to a Philistine blacksmith.

21 The charges were as follows: a quarter of an ounce of silver for sharpening a plowshare or a pick, and an eighth of an ounce for sharpening an ax or making the point of an ox goad. **22** So on the day of the battle none of the people of Israel had a sword or spear, except for Saul and Jonathan. **23** The pass at Micmash had meanwhile been secured by a contingent of the Philistine army.

The Philistines surely oppressed the people of Israel. They “*hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits.*” Some of them fled across the Jordan. Followers of Saul were “trembling.” Saul’s army dwindled to 600 men. And here we read that they were not allowed to sharpen their weapons. For that matter, they couldn’t even sharpen their sickles to harvest grain.

This is where the self-will of the people of Israel has got them. This sounds nothing like the victorious spirit of Joshua some 400 years ago. Sin and willfulness is a hard taskmaster.

Saul made the classic mistake - he asked God to bless what he was doing instead of seeking and following God’s will, as a servant of God should do.

Some may look at Saul’s sin and say, “It was a small thing to lose patience and to offer sacrifices before Samuel arrived.” However, the principle here is very important. Saul was definitely told to wait on Samuel. It was a test of his character. He failed the test, going against God’s command, placing religious activity ahead of obedience to the command of God, then making excuses instead of repenting. Self-willed Saul was behaving just like the self-willed Israelites.

Saul continues to be king (for a total of forty years), and he will be tested again, but this incident reveals his character.

1 Samuel Chapter 14

1 Samuel 14:1 (NKJV) Now it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armor, “Come, let us go over to the Philistines’ garrison that is on the other side.” But he did not tell his father. **2** And Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men. **3** Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod’s brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord’s priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

Saul is sitting under a tree. With him is Ahijah the priest, nephew of Ichabod, of the line of Eli, the high priest. Eli was rejected by God as priest (as well as his descendants), and Saul was rejected by God as king. They make quite a team.

But Jonathan takes his armor bearer and purposes to go to the Philistine garrison nearby.

4 Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines’ garrison, *there was a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side.* And the name of one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. **5** The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

The way is not easy. No wonder the Philistines wanted Micmash. It was a place easy to defend and hard to attack. The Philistines have them literally “between a rock and a hard place.” One rock, Bozez, means “slippery.” The other rock, Seneh, means “thorny” or “bramble bush.” This was not an easy path, yet Jonathan went this way on purpose.

1 Samuel 14:6 Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few."

7 So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

How refreshing to hear some words of faith and to see two men on the offensive instead of playing defense! Jonathan's words are bold and daring, but they are full of faith in the promises of God. Jonathan can say all these things because he is a part of God's covenant people! He has privilege, and he's using it!

Notice that Jonathan is not presumptuous. He says, "*It may be that the Lord will work for us.*" Then he follows that statement with a statement of complete faith in God's ability to save Israel. "*For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few.*" Also notice that Jonathan's armor bearer believes the same. Here are two Israelites who believe God is able and are acting upon that belief.

8 Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to *these* men, and we will show ourselves to them.

9 If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. **10** But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the Lord has delivered them into our hand, and this *will be* a sign to us."

Each situation in life needs the guiding hand of God. Jonathan lays out a plan that gives God the authority to guide the situation. Jonathan needs a sign so he can know the will of God. He says, *if this happens we will stay in our place, but if that happens, we will know that God has delivered them into our hand.*

11 So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden." **12** Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something."

There it was! They heard the words, "*Come up to us,*" and this was the sign that they should attack. They had allowed the Lord to lead them, and now they were ready to follow.

Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the Lord has delivered them into the hand of Israel."

As far as Jonathan was concerned, the battle was as good as won.

13 And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them. **14** That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.

15 And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling.

How quickly things can change! Now look who's trembling! God helped things out a bit by causing an earthquake to help them tremble even more.

16 (NLT) Saul's lookouts in Gibeah of Benjamin saw a strange sight—the vast army of Philistines began to melt away in every direction. **17** "Call the roll and find out who's missing," Saul ordered. And when they checked, they found that Jonathan and his armor bearer were gone.

18 Then Saul shouted to Ahijah, "Bring the ephod here!" For at that time Ahijah was wearing the ephod in front of the Israelites. **19** But while Saul was talking to the priest, the confusion in the Philistine camp grew louder and louder. So Saul said to the priest, "Never mind; let's get going!"

The ephod contained the urim and thummim that were used for determining the will of God. However, Saul and Ahijah didn't know it, but the will of God was taking place all around them as the Philistines were trembling and scattering.

1 Samuel 14:20 Then Saul and all his men rushed out to the battle and found the Philistines killing each other. There was terrible confusion everywhere.

Well! The Israelites didn't have swords, but God caused the Philistines to use their swords *against each other!* God really is able to save by many or by few!

21 Even the Hebrews who had previously gone over to the Philistine army revolted and joined in with Saul, Jonathan, and the rest of the Israelites. **22** Likewise, the men of Israel who were hiding in the hill country of Ephraim joined the chase when they saw the Philistines running away. **23** So the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle continued to rage even beyond Beth-aven.

Apparently some of the Israelites had been forced to be soldiers in the Philistine army (or they joined out of fear). This shows just how completely the Philistines had oppressed Israel. These soldiers went back to the side of Israel. The ones who had hidden in fear now came out bravely and fought for Israel.

Saul's Foolish Oath

24 Now the men of Israel were pressed to exhaustion that day, because Saul had placed them under an oath, saying, "Let a curse fall on anyone who eats before evening—before I have full revenge on my enemies." So no one ate anything all day,

Right after the Lord brought a mighty victory to the people, the people were distressed - they were faint from not eating. And the one responsible for it was Saul.

Saul was not acting as a good leader. In his eagerness to pursue the enemy without any delay, he commanded his men not to take time to eat. But "an army marches on its stomach." As Israelites, they knew the seriousness of an oath, so they followed Saul's command.

25 even though they had all found honeycomb on the ground in the forest. **26** They didn't dare touch the honey because they all feared the oath they had taken.

27 But Jonathan had not heard his father's command, and he dipped the end of his stick into a piece of honeycomb and ate the honey. After he had eaten it, he felt refreshed. **28** But one of the men saw him and said, "Your father made the army take a strict oath that anyone who eats food today will be cursed. That is why everyone is weary and faint."

29 "My father has made trouble for us all!" Jonathan exclaimed. "A command like that only hurts us. See how refreshed I am now that I have eaten this little bit of honey. **30** If the men had been allowed to eat freely from the food they found among our enemies, think how many more Philistines we could have killed!"

Saul had acted rashly, imprisoning the people in an oath. Here, God had provided sustenance that was in easy reach. The soldiers could have quickly eaten it and marched on. But because of Saul's rash oath, they could not partake.

Jonathan is right. They would have been much more effective if they had not been put under the oath. It is good to fast, but now was not the proper time - when Israelite soldiers needed all their strength to rout their enemies.

1 Samuel 14:31 They chased and killed the Philistines all day from Micmash to Aijalon, growing more and more faint. **32** That evening they rushed for the battle plunder and butchered the sheep, goats, cattle, and calves, but they ate them without draining the blood. **33** Someone reported to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the Lord by eating meat that still has blood in it." "That is very wrong," Saul said. "Find a large stone and roll it over here. **34** Then go out among the troops and tell them, 'Bring the cattle, sheep, and goats here to me. Kill them here, and drain the blood before you eat them. Do not sin against the Lord by eating meat with the blood still in it.'" So that night all the troops brought their animals and slaughtered them there.

Because of the oath, by nightfall the people were so hungry that they slaughtered animals and didn't drain the blood. It was a part of the ceremonial law in Israel that no one was allowed to eat blood (Lev. 3:17). Blood was offered as an atonement for sin on the altar, so therefore it was not to be eaten. When an animal was slaughtered for food, the blood was drained from it before the meat could be eaten. Even in the New Testament, this was still to be observed (Acts 15:19-20).

Saul does right by telling his men to slaughter the animals correctly so they would not eat blood. He helped them to do this.

35 Then Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first of the altars he built to the Lord.

36 Then Saul said, "Let's chase the Philistines all night and plunder them until sunrise. Let's destroy every last one of them."

His men replied, "We'll do whatever you think is best."

But the priest said, "Let's ask God first."

37 So Saul asked God, "Should we go after the Philistines? Will you help us defeat them?" But God made no reply that day.

Saul continues to demand more from his men. He wants them to continue pursuing the Philistines all night. Notice that Saul did not inquire of the Lord, but the priest insists that they ask God.

God did not answer Saul that day. Saul had separated himself from the word of God when he disobeyed the command to wait on Samuel. He did not listen to God's word then, so God was not offering his word now.

And now we see the erratic behavior and impulsive temperament of Saul.

38 Then Saul said to the leaders, "Something's wrong! I want all my army commanders to come here. We must find out what sin was committed today. **39** I vow by the name of the Lord who rescued Israel that the sinner will surely die, even if it is my own son Jonathan!" But no one would tell him what the trouble was.

40 Then Saul said, "Jonathan and I will stand over here, and all of you stand over there."

And the people responded to Saul, "Whatever you think is best."

41 Then Saul prayed, "O Lord, God of Israel, please show us who is guilty and who is innocent." Then they cast sacred lots, and Jonathan and Saul were chosen as the guilty ones, and the people were declared innocent.

42 Then Saul said, "Now cast lots again and choose between me and Jonathan." And Jonathan was shown to be the guilty one.

43 "Tell me what you have done," Saul demanded of Jonathan.

"I tasted a little honey," Jonathan admitted. "It was only a little bit on the end of my stick. Does that deserve death?"

44 "Yes, Jonathan," Saul said, "you must die! May God strike me and even kill me if you do not die for this."

45 But the people broke in and said to Saul, "Jonathan has won this great victory for Israel. Should he die? Far from it! As surely as the Lord lives, not one hair on his head will be touched, for God helped him do a great deed today." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

Saul once again behaves rashly. He blurts out rash oath after rash oath, all in the name of routing out the "sinner." Instead of genuinely seeking the will of God to obey, he recklessly and willfully demands that the sinner who is supposedly impeding the will of God be killed! If only Saul had considered that *he* was the reason that God was silent!

Jonathan had won a great victory when he and his armor bearer slew the enemy at Micmash. Jonathan did not know about the oath when he ate the honey. The people loved Jonathan, and they stood by him and would not allow Saul to kill him. Cooler heads prevailed.

1 Samuel 14:46 Then Saul called back the army from chasing the Philistines, and the Philistines returned home.

The overthrow of the Philistines could have been complete if not for Saul's foolishness and rashness.

Saul's Military Successes

47 Now when Saul had secured his grasp on Israel's throne, he fought against his enemies in every direction—against Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. And wherever he turned, he was victorious. **48** He performed great deeds and conquered the Amalekites, saving Israel from all those who had plundered them.

49 Saul's sons included Jonathan, Ishbosheth, and Malkishua. He also had two daughters: Merab, who was older, and Michal. **50** Saul's wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. The commander of Saul's army was Abner, the son of Saul's uncle Ner. **51** Saul's father, Kish, and Abner's father, Ner, were both sons of Abiel.

52 The Israelites fought constantly with the Philistines throughout Saul's lifetime. So whenever Saul observed a young man who was brave and strong, he drafted him into his army.

In Conclusion

The people had asked God for a human king like all the other nations had. God gave them Saul to show them what the will of men produces. Saul started out well, but his inconsistent nature soon takes over. He does not respect the word of God or the prophet of God. He does not take God's command seriously (regarding the sacrifices), but he elevates his own command so high that his own soldiers have to intervene to save a good man's life. What a mess!

As we read the Scriptures, we will continue to see the ups and downs of Saul's personality and behavior. Yet, he was a good soldier and general, and much territory that was given by God to Israel was taken back from enemies of God.