

**A Study of I Samuel**  
*The Desiring for a King*  
**Saul and the Philistines**

**Chapter 13**

**The First Battle Skirmish (13:1-4):** This battle skirmish leads the Philistines to embark on a great battle against Israel (see vs. 5). The narrative picks up following Saul's 2 years reign (1). A small garrison of the Philistines assembled at Geba (3). Saul gathered 3,000 men in total, 2,000 with him at Michmash in mount Bethel and 1,000 with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. It is Jonathan that smites the Philistine garrison at Geba (3).

**The Philistines Massive Battle Campaign (13:5-7):** Following the first battle skirmish the Philistines mount a massive battle campaign against Israel. The Philistines with their 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen with an innumerable amount of foot soldiers push back Saul's army all the way to Gilgal (5).

Saul's delay was allowing the Philistine army to grow ever stronger. As the Philistines army continued to strengthen the Israelites fled from Saul, hiding in caves, thickets, rocks, high places and pits (6). Some even going so as to flee over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead (7).

**Saul's Sin at Gilgal (13:8-16):** As the armies of the Philistines mount and the Israelites flee in fear, Saul and his scant army are at Gilgal awaiting Samuel's arrival, as he was told to do 2 years earlier (10:8). Pressure is mounting on Saul at this point; his people are fleeing; the Philistines army is strengthening and now Samuel has not arrived at the appointed time (8). AS a result, Saul makes a very foolish decision. Saul does that which is unlawful for him to do, he makes a burnt offering to the Lord (9). No sooner had Saul finished making a burnt offering to the Lord when "behold" Samuel appeared (10). Saul is caught and Samuel states, "what has thou done?" (11). Saul puts the blame on the stressfulness of the situation, the people had fled, Samuel delayed and the Philistines gather a massive army at Michmash and it would not be long before they are at this very location Gilgal. (11-12).

Samuel's response to Saul is "thou has done foolishly" and "now thy kingdom will not continue" (14). God is going to seek Himself out a man after His own heart (Acts 13:22).

If Saul could not be faithful in little things, then he could not be trusted in big things. If he could not wait for Samuel and be obedient to the commandments of the Lord, he would not be entrusted with the Kingdom (13-14).

Following this event Saul gathers his army of 6,000 from Gilgal unto Gibeah with the Philistines gathering at Michmash (15-16).

**The Philistines Divide and Conquer Campaign (13:17-18):** The Philistines take the offensive dividing themselves into three companies leaving a small garrison at Michmash (see 23):

1. One turned north of Michmash toward Ophrah unto the land of Shual
2. The second southwest toward Beth Horan
3. The third east toward the valley of Zeboim



**No Smiths Found in the Land (13:19-23):** The Philistines, to keep the Israelites from defending themselves removed all the smiths from the land, the only smiths were those of the Philistines. Thus, Israel's army fought with common farming instruments sharpened into weapons such as a share (*The broad blade of a plow which cuts the ground*), coulter, axe, mattock (*similar to a spade or hoe*) forks, and goads (20-21). Therefore, when Israel went to battle there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan, only Saul and Jonathan had swords and spears (22).

**A Study of I Samuel**  
*The Desiring for a King*  
**Saul and the Philistines**  
**Chapter 14**

**Jonathan's Venture (14:1-23):** Jonathan devises a plan to attack the small garrison of troops still left at Michmash while his father tarried at Gibeah (1-3). Jonathan knew of a passage that would lead to the small garrison upon the hill at Michmash. This passage was marked by two sharp rocks on either side, one by the name of Bozez and the other the name Senah<sup>1</sup> (4-5).

Jonathan knowing that a minority is a majority with God decides that he will make himself known into the Philistines and if they will say into him and his armorbearer, "Tarry until we come to you" then Jonathan will stand still and not go up (9). However, if they should say, "Come up unto us" then Jonathan will go up, for this will be a sign from God that God will deliver the Philistines into their hands (10).

The Philistines answer the latter saying, "Come up unto us" indicating to Jonathan that "the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel" (11-12).

Jonathan and his Armorbearer slew the first group of men they encounter about 20 men within a half an acre of land (13-14). About this time the earth also quacked the LORD fighting for Jonathan causing the remaining Philistines in the field to tremble very great (15).

Saul's watchmen spots the chaos ensuing from the camp of the Philistines. The Philistines in utter chaos start beating down one another (15). Saul who assumes it is because of some Israelite involvement number the people to see who is gone from them of which it is made known that Jonathan and his armorbearer are not there.

Saul asks the for Ahiah the priest to bring the Ark up from **Kirjathjearim** (18). As Saul talked with the priest the noise from the host of the Philistines increased which causes Saul to leave off consulting the Urim and Thummin (19) and go to the battle to see firsthand all the Philistines engaged in battle against themselves! For every man sword was against his fellow (20). Israel's visitor causes the Israelites that had defected to the

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 2

Philistines to returned to side with Saul and Jonathan (21). And likewise, all the men of Israel that hid themselves in the land of Ephraim followed hard after the fleeing Philistines (22-23).

**The Declaration of a Fast (24-26):** Saul utters a foolish vow, forbidding his soldiers to eat any food until evening. The people followed the oath of Saul even when honey was literally dripping on the ground! (25-26).

**Jonathan's Honeycomb and the Peoples Act (27-35):** Jonathan however had not heard the oath of Saul his father and as such partook of the honeycomb enlightening his eyes, having received nourishment (27).

Jonathan was told by one of the Israelites how Saul had commanded they were not to eat, however the people were faint (28, 31). Jonathan said, "My father hath troubled the land: see I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey." (29-30).

The people however keep the oath and head into battle smiting the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon (31).

However, because the people were now VERY faint, they sinned a great sin by eating meat without draining the blood (31-32). This sin was worse than breaking a vow.

**Saul's Hasty Reaction and the Restraint from the People (36-46):** Saul seeking to plunder the Philistines further seeks confirmation from God however, Saul could not get an answer from the LORD (26-27). Saul took this to mean that someone had broken the vow and in his anger he vowed that who so ever it landed on would be put to death even if it were his son Jonathan (38-39). Saul sought by casting of lot, most likely through the Urim and Thummin until it fell on Jonathan (40-43).

As insanely as this sounds, Saul was still willing to kill Jonathan, his own son, only to be restrained by the people (44-46).

**The Major Campaigns of Saul (47-52):** Listed in verses 47-48 are the major military campaigns against the Philistines which lasted all the days of Saul (52). The royal family consisted of Saul, his wife Abinoam, his three sons, Jonathan, Ishui and Malchishua and his daughters Merab and Michal (David's first wife I Sam. 18:27).