

Handout: 1 Samuel Lesson 5

Some of Israel's Battles during Saul's Reign			
Battle	Victor	Description	Scripture
Jabesh-Gilead	Israel	Saul delivered the people of Jabesh from the Ammonites.	1 Samuel 11:1-11
Gibeah	Israel	Jonathan killed the Philistine governor at Gibeah and the Philistine garrison was driven out.	1 Samuel 13:3-4
Michmash	Israel	Philistines defeated by Jonathan and Saul	1 Samuel 14:6-23
Amalek	Israel	Saul's forces defeat the Amalekites.	1 Samuel 15:1-9
Mt. Gilboa	Philistia	Israel is defeated. Saul and his sons are killed.	1 Samuel 31:1-13

Other enemies are only given a brief mention in 14:14:47 and include wars with other kingdoms including Moab, Edom, and the king of the independent Aramaean city-state of Zobah.

There are three possible reasons Saul demanded Jonathan's death in 14:43:

1. Saul could have been infuriated that Jonathan had initiated the attack on the Philistine outpost without his consent.
2. He could have been angry if he had been told that Jonathan had criticized Saul's vow as foolish and diminished his reputation among the soldiers.
3. He could have been jealous of Jonathan's victory and his popularity with the soldiers.

The key Hebrew word in this chapter is *kol/qol*, which has the double meaning of "voice" and "sound." Saul was commanded to literally listen to the "voice" of Yahweh (literal translation in Samuel's discourse in 12:14, 15). But now Samuel tells Saul that all that can be heard is the bleating and lowing "sounds/voices" of the flocks and herds which according to God's "voice" should have been destroyed in consecration to God in their victory of the Amalekite holy war. The word *kol* is repeated six times in 14:1, 14, 19, 20, 22, and 24.

Saul's excuses for his failure to enact *herem* on the Amalekites in 15:15 and 15:20-21:

1. It was the people and not Saul who spared the animals.
2. The animals were not brought back for selfish reasons but to be offered to Yahweh.

The first excuse is contrary to verse 9 and the second, while it turns out to be true (see verses 24-25) is still a violation since it was a deliberately contrary to God's command in verse 3 and the very act of *herem* consigned all the animals as a holy sacrifice to Yahweh.

In addition, according to Samuel, Saul's whole reason for offering the "best of the animals" turns out to be theologically unacceptable (see 15:22-23; Ps 51:16-17).

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