

The danger of not living according to the Scriptures

Text: 1 Samuel 13:1-14

Introduction:

In our previous lesson we considered "The danger of making decisions that are contrary to the Scriptures, the Word of God". Today we consider the "Danger of not doing and not living in accordance with the Scriptures". Our lesson is taken from 1 Samuel 13:1-14. Let us read this passage. In our previous lesson we saw how the nation of Israel put pressure on the prophet Samuel to install a king for them just like the other nations.

Well, the nation of Israel got their king by the name of Saul. It wasn't long before they were attacked by the Ammonites and Saul conquered that nation. However, the victory in one battle doesn't make a hero of that person, he needs to be watchful and expect to be attacked again. Through that, we as believers, are taught that yesterday's victories or yesterday's blessings are not enough for today - we need strength for this day.

In the verses that we have read we are told that *"The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with thirty thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore."*

In our lesson for today we find Saul defeated by the Philistines, but before this, we find certain things with him and the nation that were precursors of this defeat:

1. He walked by sight instead of by faith. (Unbelief)
2. He failed to be patient (Impatience)
3. He failed to be faithful (Dishonesty)

1. Instead of walking by faith Saul walked by sight

- a. He saw the numerous Philistine soldiers, their 30 000 chariots; he saw the 6 000 Philistine charioteers; he saw the soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. (v.5)
- a. He saw the the troops of Israel running away, being scattered, deserting him. The troops who remained with him were quaking with fear and began to scatter.
- a. He saw the empty seat where Samuel the prophet was supposed to be seated but he had not come.

When he saw those things, he was afraid, he was sorely afraid. Here we see how Satan found room in Saul because of him "walking by sight" rather than "walking by faith".

In Gods word we read of many believers whose lives Satan ruined through their eyes in that they started walking by sight rather than by faith.

- Lot
Lot 'saw' the plains of Sodom as a place suitable for him and his livestock. It wasn't long before Lot built a house in Sodom and was given a position in the judiciary there. At the time God was about to destroy Sodom, Lot hesitated, not wanting to leave. He was not eager to leave because Sodom had entered into his heart. (Gen. 19:15 - 17)
- Eve
Eve was made to fall by Satan in that he made her see the fruit of which God had commanded them they should not eat.
- The spies Moses sent to spy out the land of Canaan

Satan used their eyes. Ten of the spies 'walked according to sight' while two 'walked by faith'. Those who lived by sight saw the Canaanites as giants and themselves as grasshoppers in comparison. The other two spies, Joshua and Caleb, although they saw the giants, did not walk by sight but rather by faith. They saw the same giants as bread to them, that Israel would swallow up - because God was with them. (Num. 13:33)

- Saul

Saul failed to do as those two spies who, when they saw the giants of Canaan, decided to walk by faith, trusting in their God. When Saul saw the Philistine army, he did not 'walk by faith' but 'by sight'. For that reason he was in conflict with God.

During the times in which we live there are many believers who live by sight instead of walking by faith.

1. Saul's impatience - the second thing that brought Saul into conflict with God and brought about his downfall

At the time that the Israelites under Saul were attacked by the Philistines, the second thing that brought Saul into conflict with God was his failure to be patient. The prophet Samuel promised Saul that he would come before the end of seven days to pray with the soldiers of Israel and to bring a burnt offering, but the seventh day arrived without Samuel's arrival. The Philistines had surrounded Israel and could attack them any time.

When Saul saw the critical situation, he brought the burnt offering to God. He was not anointed to do that because it was the task of the priests or prophets chosen by God. Just after he had done that, Samuel arrived. The prophet could see that something had gone wrong and asked Saul what had happened. Saul said what he had done and the prophet rebuked him sharply saying that he had acted foolishly and that he had not kept the command of God that he had commanded him. (1 Samuel 13:13)

The prophet Samuel told Saul that he had sinned against God because he had failed to be patient. Someone else who made the same mistake was king Uzziah. Because of that sin God struck him with leprosy which he had until he died. Both kings knew very well who had the right to bring burnt sacrifices to God for this was recorded in God's Word. It is of paramount importance that we act "in accordance with the Scriptures" and that we speak "in accordance with the Scriptures". God had instructed Moses to write down everything with regards to the temple service. This is recorded in Numbers 18:7, where we find words directed at Aaron. Saul knew this Scripture but because he no longer lived 'by faith', but instead 'by sight' and because he failed to be patient, he transgressed God's law and did as he saw fit.

1. Examples of people who lived in accordance with the Scriptures, "They walked in accordance with the Scriptures and they talked in accordance with the Scriptures"

- a. God's promise to Abraham that He would bless him by giving him offspring
- b. The Recabites (Jeremiah 35:1-8)
- c. The oath Joseph made his brothers swear concerning his bones

Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, servants of the King of Kings, we too are not from this world, we are citizens of heaven. Therefore, let us live as the Scriptures say, let us speak and preach as the Scriptures say and let us do as the Scriptures say!

Let us take after our Lord Jesus, who at all times would say "It is written", and would at times ask "What is written? What do the Scriptures say?"

Let us not be like Saul who was rejected as king because he did not honour the Scriptures.

Let us pray.