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## The Decline of King Sha'ul

### First Samuel 13:1 to 15:35

Although the story of **Sha'ul's** decline begins in **Chapter 13** and is highlighted in **Chapters 13 to 15**, it continues sporadically to the end of **First Samuel** and is inextricably intertwined with the story of **David's** rise ([to see link click Cl - The Rise of David](#)). The entire account of the interaction between the two men as recorded in **Chapters 13 to 31** can be called "crossing fates." As one man's fate goes down, the other goes up.

The people had demanded **a king**, and **ADONAI** had selected one: a young man named **Sha'ul** from **the tribe of Benjamin**. As we have seen, **he** was tall, strong, wealthy, and probably well educated. **He** had everything going for **him** from the world's perspective. Furthermore, **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** had come upon **him** and given **him** a new outlook on life. As our passage begins, **Sha'ul** has been **king** for just two years and already experienced many victories from **the LORD**. **He** had successfully rallied **the people** to defend against the threat from **the Ammonites**, who were terrorizing **the people of Jabesh-Gilead** (see [Bz - The Ammonite War](#)). After that great military victory, all the people came to **Gilgal** to **confirm Sha'ul as their king in the presence of ADONAI**. **There they presented sacrifices as peace offerings before ADONAI, and Sha'ul and all the people of Isra'el celebrated with great joy (11:15). The people of Isra'el were happy to have such a king, and Sha'ul was happy to be such a king.**



While **the people** were assembled together at **Gilgal**, in **his** farewell address (see [Ca - Samuel's Farewell](#)), **Samuel** had said: **If you will fear ADONAI, serve him, obey what he says and not rebel against His commands - if both you and the king ruling over you remain followers of ADONAI your God - then things will go well for you. But if you refuse to obey what ADONAI says and rebel against His commands, then ADONAI will oppress both you and your leaders (12:14-15).** This would prove to be a telling prophecy. **Sha'ul** rode **his** wave of success into **his** next battle against **the Philistines** (see [Af - Isra'el and the Philistines](#)). At first, things go well, just as **they** had before against **the Ammonites**. But when the battle grew fierce, and **Sha'ul's** army started to desert **him**. It proved to be the big test of **his** faith. Whom would **he** serve? Would **he** be willing to submit **himself** to **the LORD** as **the** true **King of Isra'el**? Or would **he** take that authority upon **himself**? This would truly be the moment when **Sha'ul** would either show **he** was a man of faith after **God's** own heart or a man of weakness in pursuit of **his** own interests. In the final analysis, **he** would choose **himself**, and **because he rejected the word of God, ADONAI would reject Sha'ul as king.** As **Samuel** declared to **him**, **"Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams (15:22-23).**

**Chapters 13-15** may be outlined as follows. **Samuel's initial rebuke of Sha'ul (A)** parallels **God's final rejection of Sha'ul (A)**; **Sha'ul's victory against the Philistines (B)**

parallels **his** victories against various enemies, including **the Philistines (B)**; **the hinge of the section is Sha'ul's determination, however reluctant, to execute his firstborn son, Jonathan, heir to the throne (C).**

**A. Samuel Rebukes Sha'ul (13:1-15)**

**B. Isra'el Routs the Philistines (13:16-14:23)**

**C. The Cursing of Jonathan (14:24-46)**

**B. Further Wars of Sha'ul (14:47-52)**

**A. God Rejects Sha'ul (15:1-35)**