Elder's Corner

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.
(2 Cor. 13:5)
And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. 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. But now your kingdom shall not continue. 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."
(1 Sam. 13:13, 14)

Just a couple of portions of Scripture from my reading this morning. One from the NT and the other from the OT, and after reading them both, a connection between them became evident. Let's take a look and learn from them.

The church at Corinth was beset with several issues as well as sin in its midst. We know this because Paul addressed these matters in his epistles to the church. Something that Paul dealt with in particular in his second epistle to the Corinthians was defending himself against attacks from some who cast doubt on whether he was a true **apostle**. Even though he had just reminded the saints there, **"Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds (2 Cor. 12:12),** yet those casting doubts about Paul persisted. Paul refers to them several times in this epistle and just one example is found in **2 Cor. 13:3** where Paul refers to their scrutiny or examination of him**, "since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me."** Is there such a thing as righteous sarcasm? This author can't help but wonder if that is what we see Paul exercising in **2 Cor. 13:5** above. The words **"examine"** and **"test"** both have to do with determining whether something is genuine or counterfeit. Was the **Spirit of God** actually dwelling in ***them*** **(Rom. 8:9)?** Paul asks if they realize that **Jesus Christ in you is your hope of glory**, He is your life, in Him you are a **new creation (Col. 1:27; 3:4; 2 Cor. 5:17)?** Furthermore, Paul tells them to determine not only the reality of their justification, but to determine if their lives reveal the presence of **Jesus Christ** in them. Did you notice that Paul directed the Corinthians to **examine** themselves. Earlier in this epistle Paul had cautioned them not to **"measure themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves was not wise" (2 Cor. 10:12).**[1] **Examine yourselves, test yourselves** against **Jesus Christ** who **is in you** to make sure you don't fail the **test**—and be **disqualified.** That admonition from the pen of Paul is real for each of us today as well. Let's heed it.

Let's look at one that failed **the test. Israel** had asked **the Lord** for a **king**. The Lord conceded to their request, and **Saul** was **anointed** and confirmed as king over **Israel (1 Sam. 10:1; 12:13**). From a human standpoint the children of Israel couldn't have asked for a better selection, for **"There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people" (1 Sam. 9:2).** He would be the one who would, **"go out before us and fight our battles" (1 Sam. 8:20).** After about two years of his monarchy, the **Philistines** posed a serious threat to **Israel and Saul.** His son **Jonathan** was stationed about five miles away in Gibeah of **Saul and** he greatly agitated **the garrison of the Philistines** by attacking them **(1 Sam. 13:3, 4),** thus causing them to gather for fight **Israel. The men of Israel** realized that they were not only outnumbered, but the **Philistines** had horses and **chariots** as well **(1 Sam. 13:5).** This caused **trembling** in the camp and led to **the men of Israel** hiding **in caves** and even defecting to the **Philistines (1 Sam. 13:6, 7; 14:21).** A few years before, immediately after **Samuel** anointed him, **Samuel** had instructed **Saul** that in when circumstances required, he should go to **Gilgal and wait seven days for Samuel, "till I come and show you what you should do" (1 Sam. 10:8).** In the latest matter with the **Philistines** we find **Saul in Gilgal** having **waited** for **seven days** only to find that **Samuel** had **not come (1 Sam. 13:7, 8).** So, he took matters into his own hands and **offered the burnt offering (1 Samuel 13:9).** One who has studied the matter writes:

> But after seven days of waiting, the impulsiveness of the flesh drove Saul to disobedience. The impatient king had never considered that delay should be his strategic response. Had he attacked the amassed armies of Philistia at that point, his badly armed, poorly-trained troops would have been decimated. Ever restive and having regard to the growing numbers of defections, Saul arrogated to himself priestly rights and proceeded to offer a burnt offering.[2]

Samuel's words to him are found above**. Saul** had acted **foolishly** and he had **not kept the commandment of the Lord** his **God**. He had been entrusted by **the Lord God** to be Israel's first **king**, but in this instance, he went ahead and made himself a **king**-priest. He had been tested and was found wanting. There would be additional failures on his part before he died in battle. As a result of his failure here, all of his descendants were **disqualified** as well, **"your kingdom shall not continue."** Saul was not a **man after** God's **own heart.** Let us each **examine** ourselves. Maranatha.

[1] I'm not as bad as him. I do better than her are examples .

[2] T. Wilson, *What the Bible Teaches: 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel,* ed. W. S. Stevely, D. E. West (Kilmarnock, Scotland: John Ritchie Ltd. 2014), 121.