

## **“WHEN A KING ACTED FOOLISHLY”**

Jay Lockhart

Gary Montgomery was an associate minister at West Erwin during the late 60's and early 70's, during the ministries of Dean Brookshire and George Stephenson. Gary, who is now preaching for the church in Hico, Texas, has always effectively served Christ in every church with which he has worked and has been a friend of mine through the years. In a recent bulletin from Hico, Gary printed a Guest Editorial written by the highly respected and widely known Mack Lyon, the host of the international television program “In Search of the Lord's Way.” In the article Mack called attention to a passage found in I Samuel 13:11-13 which states that when Samuel was delayed in his arrival for the sacrifice, King Saul “felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, ‘you have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord, your God which He commanded you.’” Why was Saul's action called foolish by Samuel? How had Saul failed to keep the commandment of the Lord? After all, God had not said a king could not offer sacrifice. God had not told Saul, “You shall not offer sacrifice.” What had God said? In I Samuel 10:8 God had said through Samuel that Samuel would meet Saul at Gilgal and that Samuel would offer the sacrifice. God did not say Saul could not offer sacrifice. God had designated priests to offer sacrifices in Israel and that Samuel was to offer the sacrifice at Gilgal. Saul was neither a priest nor Samuel, so wherein did he err? Saul erred in that he presumed that God would be pleased, or at least not displeased, by the offering of the king instead of by the one God had designated. Saul could have said, “But the Lord didn't say I

couldn't offer the sacrifice." Precisely! That's the point. God has said nothing about Saul offering sacrifice. God's designation of Samuel to offer the sacrifice excluded Saul from doing it. A failure to honor what God had said and to respect what God had not said (the silence of God's Word) cost Saul the kingdom. What can we learn from this story?