



# “Open Church – Open Bible”

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# Sunday Church School

## August 2, 2020

“Saul’s Disobedience Under Pressure”  
I Samuel 13: 5-14



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“Saul’s Disobedience Under Pressure”  
I Samuel 13: 5-14

- v. 5. “And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth–aven.
- v. 6. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.
- v. 7. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.”
- v. 8. “And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.”



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I Samuel 13: 5-14

- v. 9. “And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.
- v.10. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.**
- v.11. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;
- v. 12. Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.”**



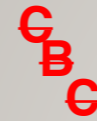
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### “Saul’s Disobedience Under Pressure”

I Samuel 13: 5-14

vs. 13. “And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

**vs. 14. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.”**



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### “Saul’s Disobedience Under Pressure”

How many of us would be willing to admit to being a bit **impatient** at times? Rarely do we like to wait, and it is probably more difficult to wait in today’s world, where instant communication and fast service are part of everyday living. Nevertheless, our lesson this week reminds us that we must learn to wait. Failure to do so can even lead to disaster. Waiting on the Lord is perhaps the most difficult challenge we encounter simply because we often assume that we know what is best. Even more **presumptuous** ( meaning overstepping our bounds, taking liberties) on occasion, we think we know exactly what God’s will is even when He has not revealed it. *Isaiah 40:31* is an often quoted passage. It reads “ ***But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.***”



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### “Saul’s Disobedience Under Pressure”

Saul And The People Fear Defeat ( I Sam 13:5-7 )

At the end of last week’s lesson, Saul had been anointed the first King of Israel. Before long, Saul’s leadership skills were tested by the Ammonites. Empowered by the Spirit of God, Saul defeated the Ammonites and was reaffirmed as Israel’s king. (I Sam 11:1-15) Samuel continued to offer spiritual guidance to Israel, encouraging them to follow Yahweh, not idols (I Sam. 12: 20-21). He promised to pray for the people and teach them (v. 23), but he sternly warned, “ But if ye shall do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king, (vs.25).

**During the first two years of his reign**, Saul seemed to be going in the right direction. That, however, was going to change very quickly. Recognizing the Philistine threat, Saul gathered a small army and **his son Jonathan** led a successful raid on a Philistine outpost. In response, the Philistines amassed a significant military force to launch a **counterattack** on Israel. The Philistines numerous chariots clearly indicated their military superiority.



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Mishmah was only about 8 miles north of Jerusalem which meant the Philistines has made a significant encroachment into Israelite territory. Facing a huge Philistine army, the Israelites feared imminent defeat. They were ‘in a strait’ meant they were cramped and thus in distress. They took cover and hid themselves wherever they could find it. While many remained in that general area some fled to the east side of the Jordan River. The people followed him trembling not knowing what the result would be. With each passing day both Saul and his men became more anxious wondering when Samuel was going to arrive.

Saul gives into Fear ( I Sam 13:8-12 )

To his credit, Saul realized he needed the Lord’s help to defeat the Philistines. It was important that he and his army be prepared spiritually



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before engaging the enemy. As believers **we also must prepare spiritually** for the ongoing conflicts we all face in today’s world. Since Samuel was Israel’s spiritual leader, he was supposed to officiate over the sacrifices that were made prior to battle. Saul and his soldiers had become **impatient** and they were starting to scatter. Saul decided to take matters into his own hands.

**Just because God chose Saul** as Israel’s first King did not mean that he could do as he pleased. Since the beginning of time ( Gen 2:16-17 ) being obedient to God’s commands has been of utmost importance. Not only must we do what God has commanded, but we must carry it out in the manner He has prescribed. Being in a position of authority or leadership should not be an occasion to abuse what we have been entrusted with. Although Saul had an impressive physical appearance, his heart did not embrace God’s priorities.



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**Tired of waiting** for Samuel to arrive, Saul commanded the proper offerings be brought to him and **he** then offered them to the Lord. Just after Saul completed offering the sacrifice, Samuel arrived. Presumably Saul had no qualms about what he had just done, as he went out to greet Samuel. Shocked because of Saul’s actions, Samuel asked, “ **What hast thou done?**” Saul had presumptuously assumed a role that was not his. This was not a sin of ignorance. This does not mean that sin done in ignorance deserves no consequences for our misdeeds, but for us to sin with our eyes wide open puts that sin in a different category. Either Saul was insensitive on spiritual issues or he was bold faced, for by his disobedience he was challenging Samuel’s authority and that of the Lord whose prophet Samuel was.

**Saul excused himself** by giving Samuel what he considered logical reasons for his actions. He was attempting to justify what he had done by **diverting blame**.



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Saul blamed the people for being afraid and fleeing, then he blamed Samuel for arriving so late, then the Philistines. **Saul blamed everyone but himself**. This was a test case! One that King Saul did not pass. At the first moment of strain, he had failed to be obedient to the Lord. There is tension in the text. Samuel had the ongoing task of intercession which he had no intention of neglecting, together with that of instruction and counseling. Saul was anointed King by God’s Divine appointment as the people wanted a ‘hero’. In essence, he was taking over Samuel’s position as Israel’s leader. Samuel however, knew God’s mind and saw prayers answered. If Saul had leaned on Samuel, he would have found reassurance.

#### **Saul’s Foolish Decision**

In response to Saul’s stated reasons for presuming to offer the sacrifice, Samuel bluntly answered, “Thou hast done foolishly” ( vs. 13 ). To disobey God



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is always a foolish ( or spiritually blameworthy) decision. God saw the actions of Saul as a **serious breach** of His Word because of the immediate judgment Samuel pronounced upon the king. Had Saul revered the Lord through obedience, his kingdom would have been established in perpetuity through a **dynasty**. Although Saul had only been King a brief time, his actions revealed that he was not the kind of man God sought for Israel’s royal throne. Instead he would be replaced by a man after God’s own heart ( David ) who knew what it meant to put God first.

**In spite of Saul’s disobedience**, Israel was victorious over the Philistines. This was not due to Israel’s military superiority as in I Sam 14:23 it says, “ So the Lord saved Israel that day.” But King Saul continued to make some **foolish decisions**. In response to a time when Samuel said he had obeyed the Lord



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when he had not, ( I Sam 15:9 ) Samuel declared, “ Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” ( vs. 22 ) Again Samuel reiterated what he said earlier, “ Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king” ( vs. 23 ). Samuel was trying to establish once and for all the difference between Israel and the other nations. Tyndale’s commentary puts it this way. “ In Israel, the Lord is King and obedience to Him must be paramount. Any sign of disobedience or independence of action becomes a disqualification. It is the equivalent of rebellion against the Lord.

Obedience does not earn God’s favor; but God’s Grace instructs us to live in a manner that reflects a regenerate heart. ( Titus 2:11-12 ) Christ was obedient to the Father’s will( John 6:38 ) as we also are to be. Christ , therefore “became the author of salvation unto all that obey Him. “ ( Hebrews 5:9 )



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#### Today’s Aim

**Facts:** to realize that man’s best laid plans are disasters waiting to happen if we are not seeking the Lord.

**Principle:** to know the danger of telling God what we want and then expecting Him to follow us.

**Application:** to accept that the only way to lead a blessed life is to follow the Lord without reservation or second guessing.



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### Let the Lord Lead You. Trust God!

#### 1. Trust God when we are in want. ( I Sam 13: 5-7)

It does not matter how great the enemy is. God is greater! Saul was no match for the Philistine army. They had to wait for their leader to arrive from where he was to where they were. Had they put their trust in God, they would have realized that because God is omnipresent, He was **already there** with them.

#### 2. Trust God while we wait ( I Sam 13: 8-10 )

While we wait, we are to remember to do what we are called by God to do. If Saul had put God first and accepted that he was called to be King and not priest, he would not have overstepped his authority. For his lack of reverence and respect to his calling and to Samuel’s calling, but most importantly, for this act of **disobedience**, he lost his kingship.



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### Let the Lord Lead You

Even when things are not going the way we expect and we are tempted to give up on God, remember not to lose patience and take matters into our own hands. In **Psalms 50:15**, God says, “And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. There are no regrets when we **acknowledge God and wait for His instructions**.

#### 3. Trust God where we go wrong ( I Sam 13:11-14 ).

No matter what reason or excuse we give for disobedience, it is still a sin. To disobey God is to doubt God’s goodness and the truth of His Word. There is never a legitimate excuse to disobey God. If we can **‘will’** ourselves to do wrong, as Saul said that he did ( vs.12 ) , then we can **‘will’** ourselves to do what is right, since all believers have His **grace and help** through His indwelling Holy Spirit.



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**“Saul’s Disobedience Under Pressure”**

Though we saw last week how the Spirit of God changed Saul, the sin nature remained and reared its ugly head in high pressure situations.

Two Natures

“Two natures beat within my breast,  
 One is foul and the other blessed;  
 One I love and one I hate,  
 and the one I feed will dominate”.

Believers will recognize the inner battle between right and wrong, good and evil, standing firm and giving in. We all face many pressures in life. These pressures should drive us to our knees in prayer, not to worldly solutions or schemes of our own devising.



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**Practical Points**

1. When we forget that the Lord is with us, our battle against enemy forces will fail ( 1 Sam. 13:5-7 )
2. **We should wait patiently on the Lord, even if it seems He will never come. ( vs. 8 )**
3. Our plans should never replace obeying God’s Word ( vss. 9-11)
4. **No amount of sacrifices can take the place of obedience to God’s Word ( vs. 12 )**
5. When we step outside of what God has shown that He requires of us. He will be displeased with us ( vs. 13 )
6. **When we disobey God’s Word, we will not be blessed to carry out His will ( vs. 14 )**



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**“Saul’s Disobedience Under Pressure ”**  
**For Further Reflection**

1. What happens when we focus our attention on the problems we face instead of on God?
2. Why must we wait on God’s timing and not go ahead of it?
3. In what ways can God’s people stray from what He has called them to do?
4. What are some typical excuses for disobedience to God’s Word? Are there any that He accepts?
5. How can God’s periods of delay test our patience?

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