

## Getting in a Bind

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**1Sam. 13:1** Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

**1Sam. 13:2** Saul chose him three thousand *men* of Israel; *whereof* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

**1Sam. 13:3** And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it*. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

**1Sam. 13:4** And all Israel heard say *that* Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

**1Sam. 13:5** 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 Bethaven.

**1Sam. 13:6** 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.

**1Sam. 13:7** 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.

**1Sam. 13:8** 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.

**1Sam. 13:9** And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

**1Sam. 13:10** 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.

**1Sam. 13:11** 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;

**1Sam. 13:12** 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.

**1Sam. 13:13** 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.

**1Sam 13:14** 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.

I. Look at the things that brought Saul to this blunder

- ❖ Not paying attention to the Lord's timetable (v. 8) - Note that the seventh day had not ended yet. Notice also, that Samuel came before the 7th day ended (v.10)
  - The children of Israel got themselves in trouble in the wilderness over this same thing (**Ex. 32**)
  - **Psalms 31:15** "My times *are* in thy hand" is more than an expression about the readings on the hand of a clock. This Hebrew phrase covers the idea that the unfolding of events and experiences as to when and where are in God's hand.
- ❖ A real and present threat **causing over-reaction** (v.5) " the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel" (and v. 9)
  - It is unusual among human communities for there NOT to be some threat to our peace and calm if we live long enough
  - But, like Saul, we can get ourselves into trouble when we get in a bind like this and over-react to it.
- ❖ Presumption and trying to help the Lord (v.12) "offered a burnt offering"
  - An important step for believers in learning to be a true disciples is for us to **learn the difference** between acting with boldness because we have clarity about the Lord's leading, and running before the Lord with actions that are the feverish imaginings of our own minds
  - Haste makes waste is more than an axiom when trying to work for the Lord
  - Many times remembering God's advice to Moses and Israel, "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord" (Ex. 14:13) is the wiser route to take when confronted with a great challenge in our lives
  - On the other hand, sometimes we may need to take the advice given by the Lord to the church in **Song of Solomon 8:14** "Make haste, my beloved, "
  - But it is **imperative that we know when to do one and when to do the other**, and if we let presumption and some misdirected notion that we need to help the Lord, we will not discern the difference and may be in the same boat with Saul.
- ❖ Not asking the Lord for the help needed (v.12) " I have not made supplication unto the LORD"
  - Last week in the afternoon session, during praise time, one of you reminded us how we so often do everything else before we call on the Lord for the help we need...this is what Saul had apparently done. Because of that, he imagined himself to be in a bind and did the wrong thing.
    - **This verse speaks of first-things-first: Psalms 5:3** My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct *my prayer* unto thee, and will look up.

## II. Look at the way Saul himself viewed all these things

- ❖ He became convinced that he was losing influence, authority, and popularity (v.11) "the people were scattered from me"
  - There are some folks who cannot stand the idea of losing some influence over their family, friends, or acquaintances. They are susceptible to seeing things like Saul was seeing them here and using that fear to convince themselves that they are in a bind-which leads to some carnal blunders in thinking and behavior.
  - Saul had apparently forgotten that any influence he had over his citizens was because of the Lord's influence over both him and them
  - A sure way to make some folks think, "I've got to do something" is for them to get the notion that they are losing influence and their controlling skills are beginning to slip.
- ❖ He obviously felt like God was waiting too long (v.11) " thou camest not within the days appointed"
  - One of the greatest demands on a believer is to wait on God...to wait...and wait...and wait.
  - Impatience was what got the steward in trouble with his master in Luke 12:45 "My lord delayeth his coming...."
- ❖ He believed the forces of the world were about to overwhelm him (v.11) " the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash"
- ❖ He felt like he was in a bind that had only one way out (v.11) "I forced myself"
  - Thinking like this leads to making human decisions that are in error
  - We should never get to the place in dealing with challenges and stresses of life where we get the idea that we are forced to do wrong in order to address a problem
    - The bank robber was forced to rob the bank because he was broke and had no work to earn any money
    - The drug user started taking drugs because he was driven almost crazy by worries, debts, etc. and had no other way out but to begin using
    - The liar had to tell a lie because there was no other way to stay out of trouble

## III. Look at the way the Lord viewed all these things (v.13)

- ❖ Saul's decision and action was a foolish choice (v.13)
- ❖ Saul had transgressed the commandment of the Lord (v.13)
  - Few people think of the fact that choosing a solution born of the limited understanding of the human mind can lead to transgression
  - Blessings were withheld because of the blunder ("for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever")
    - Use the example of sports among American kids today (everybody gets a trophy or a prize) to demonstrate how far our society is from the pattern set by the Lord

- ❖ The Lord will still get his objectives accomplished, but he may use someone else to do it (v.13) " 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."