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Samuel (Rise of the King) - Lesson 18

Saul's Test of Trust and Obedience (1 Samuel 13)

I. ISRAEL PROVOKES THE PHILISTINES (1 Samuel 13:1-4)

A New Stage of Saul's Reign

- Saul is established as king; a **NEW** (1) phase of his reign begins.
- The question is no longer whether Saul can lead, but whether he will obey.

Saul Builds a Standing Army

- Saul chooses 3,000 men: 2,000 with Saul and 1,000 with Jonathan.
- The remaining troops return **HOME** (2).

Jonathan Strikes the Outpost

- Jonathan attacks the Philistine garrison at Geba.
- A local strike becomes a **NATIONAL** (3) crisis.

"Let the Hebrews Hear"

- Saul blows the ram's-horn trumpet and summons Israel to Gilgal.
- The repeated word "heard" signals that both sides know war is coming.

Israel Becomes a "Stench"

- Israel has become repulsive to the Philistines; they will not **IGNORE** (4) the attack.
- The pressure is rising, and Saul will soon be tested by God's command to wait.

II. ISRAEL IS OVERWHELMED BY FEAR (1 Samuel 13:5-7)

The Philistines Respond

- They gather 3,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and troops like **SAND** (5) on the seashore.
- Their camp at Micmash presses directly into Israel's territory.
- The enemy is formidable, but God is not intimidated by numbers.

Israel Is Driven into Hiding

- The people hide in caves, thickets, rocks, holes, and cisterns.
- Others cross the **JORDAN** (6) into Gad and Gilead.
- Fear replaces the unity God had given Israel in chapter 11.
- Those who remain with Saul are gripped with fear, not **CONFIDENCE** (7).

"Guilt makes men cowards." — Matthew Henry

III. SAUL TAKES MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS (1 Samuel 13:8-12)

Saul Waits at Gilgal

- Saul waits **SEVEN** (8) days, as Samuel had directed.
- Waiting was Saul's required act of obedient dependence; crisis did not cancel God's word.

Pressure Becomes Personal

- Samuel does not appear when Saul expects, and the people scatter from him.
- The crisis becomes **PERSONAL** (9): Saul sees his authority and army slipping away.

Saul Offers the Burnt Offering

- Saul commands the offering; Samuel **ARRIVES** (10) immediately afterward.
- Saul's problem was not merely sacrifice; he ignored God's command to wait.
- Religious activity never substitutes for obedient trust.

Samuel's Searching Question

- Samuel asks, "What have **YOU** (11) done?"
- The question invites confession, but Saul begins to defend himself.

Saul's Excuses

- He blames the people, Samuel's delay, and the Philistine threat.
- His deeper problem is **SELF-RELIANCE** (12): he trusts his judgment above God's command.

"He wanted the "ordinary standards," when he was called to a much more than ordinary calling." — James Philip

IV. SAMUEL ANNOUNCES GOD'S JUDGMENT (1 Samuel 13:13-15)

"You Have Done Foolishly"

- Saul acted foolishly by placing human judgment above God's revealed word.
- Difficulty never cancels obedience.

A Dynasty Forfeited

- God would have established Saul's royal house, but Saul's dynasty will not endure.
- The succession, not yet the throne, is taken from him here.

A Man After God's Own Heart

- God seeks a ruler committed to His **PURPOSES** (13), not his own will.
- David is not named yet; the reader is left waiting for God's chosen king.

God's People Need God's Ruler

- The Lord appoints a ruler over His **PEOPLE** (14).
- Israel belongs to God; the king must serve under God's authority.

The Prophet Departs

- Samuel leaves Gilgal; Saul counts the men who remain - about **600** (15).

V. ISRAEL FACES THE ENEMY UNARMED (1 Samuel 13:16-23)

Philistine Domination

- Three raiding parties spread through Israel to plunder and intimidate.
- The Philistines maintain military and economic **CONTROL** (16) over Israel.

Israel Is Disarmed

- No blacksmith is found in Israel, so the people cannot make weapons.
- They depend on Philistine craftsmen even to sharpen farming tools.

Only Saul and Jonathan Have Weapons

- Only Saul and Jonathan possess **SWORDS** (17) and spears.
- Humanly speaking, Israel has no reason to expect victory.

The Enemy Holds the Pass

- The chapter ends with Israel weak and unable to save itself by **ORDINARY** (18) means.
- God is preparing the way for Jonathan's confession: "Nothing can keep the Lord from saving."

ANSWER KEY

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|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. NEW | 10. ARRIVES |
| 2. HOME | 11. YOU |
| 3. NATIONAL | 12. SELF-RELIANCE |
| 4. IGNORE | 13. PURPOSES |
| 5. SAND | 14. PEOPLE |
| 6. JORDAN | 15. 600 |
| 7. CONFIDENCE | 16. CONTROL |
| 8. SEVEN | 17. SWORDS |
| 9. PERSONAL | 18. ORDINARY |