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a Production of
Precept Ministries International
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SERIES: I Samuel, Part 1 (The Heart of a Leader)

THURSDAY

OPEN

You know what you're supposed to do. The instructions of the Lord are very clear, but the circumstances, well that's another story. And you think my goodness Lord, if I obey You, then I'm going to mess up or I'm going to miss out. What do you do then beloved? What do you do when the circumstances are saying, go this way and the command of God is saying un, un; you dare not go that way? We'll look at it today as we look at God's precepts for life. We'll look at it today as we look at God's precepts for life.

PART ONE

We have come to 1 Samuel, chapter 13. And as we come to this chapter in this book of Samuel, it's almost like the author stops and says wait a minute let me bring you up to date. So let me read 1 Samuel 13 and then we'll see why God is doing this. In 1 Samuel 13 it begins with: "Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty two years over Israel."(1Samuel 13:1) So it's like he pauses and he says okay, I want you to

know how old Saul was when he began and I want you to know how long that he reigned. Now we're in the book of 1 Samuel and Samuel is the account of God's gracious intervention into the affairs of His people before they totally self-destruct. It's a book that begins with the fervent prayers of a single woman, a single woman by the name of Hannah, who had known the bitterness of disappointment, the disgrace of a barren womb and the taunting reproach of her peers. And yet, what does she do? She stands faithful. Well as we go through 1 and 2 Samuel, we have to realize that 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book, even as 1 and 2 Kings was. However, when the Old Testament was translated into the koine Greek, the common Greek language for the day, the 70 translators of this translation, which came to be known as the Septuagint divided Samuel and Kings into two parts so that they could handle it easier. Well when we look at 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Samuel is the account of three men, a judge, which is Samuel and two kings. We're looking at the first king now, which is Saul. But the next king that is to come is the king of Israel who, from whose genealogy would come the Christ. Now as we look at Saul God wants to take Saul's life and He's going to contrast it with another man, which is David that He's going to bring to the fore, because He wants you and me to learn some important lessons. So we need to pay careful attention to Saul. Now remember in 1 Samuel, chapter 12 Samuel has stood before the people with Saul at his side. And as he stood there he has let the people know that they have sinned in asking for a king. And yet he reminds them also that if they will continue and walk with the Lord and fear the Lord and serve the Lord and keep His commandments, listen to the words coming out of His mouth that He will bless them. ["But they are to serve Him with all their heart. They are not to turn aside and, and go after futile things, which cannot profit or deliver because they're futile."](12:20-21 paraphrase) And then He makes this statement and I want you to hear it in the light of 1 Samuel, chapter 13. He says, "For the Lord will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the Lord has been pleased to make you a people for Himself."(12:22) In other words, what is he saying to them and what does

that mean to us? It means that once God chooses you, once you become part of His family, His people, His elect people, then God is with you and God keeps His covenant. And that means that he keeps His covenant for you too, Beloved, that when you come to God, believing in Jesus Christ and entering into the new covenant, the covenant of grace, the covenant that promises you everything that God is in Jesus Christ made available to you, when He promises you forgiveness of sins, when He promises you that He will come into you and He will be your God and you will be His people, when He promises you that He will never leave you nor forsake you, you become His covenant people. You and I become part of the church of Jesus Christ, Jew and Gentile in one body. And because we belong to Him, then He, as Philippians 1 says, "...who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6b NKJV) So He has just let His people know that He will not abandon them, but He does expect obedience to His commandments. And if they do not obey, then God will have to deal with them. Now watch what he goes on to say. He says in verse 24 of chapter 12: "Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king [shall] be swept away." (1 Samuel 12:24-25) In other words, judgment has to come. God cannot bless disobedience. Now Samuel is speaking this; Saul is standing beside him. Saul hears all these words. God does this stunning thing when He brings in the middle of the wheat harvest thunder and rain, and as the people quake when they see this, so Saul sees that. He knows that God is God. He knows what God expects. Now let's see how he lives in the light of that. So now we move into chapter 13 and we come to verse 2. "Now Saul chose for himself 3,000 men of Israel, of which 2,000 were with Saul in Michmash and in the hill country of Bethel, while a 1,000 were with Jonathan..." and Jonathan is his son, "...at Gibeah of Benjamin. But he sent away the rest of [his] people, each to his tent. [And] Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout the land, saying, 'Let the Hebrews hear.' [And] All Israel heard

the news that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become odious to the Philistines. The people were then summoned to Saul at Gilgal.”(1Samuel 13:2-4) Now you know, when I read this, I stop and think wait a minute, all Israel hears the news that Saul has smitten the garrison of the Philistines when it’s really Jonathan that did it. I mean is God trying to tell us something about the character of Saul here? Does He, He want us to see that, that Saul is a man that’s not going to share glory with any other? If anything happens he’s going to see that his name is on the marquee, that his name is in headlights, that he is the one that is pictured as the hero. I don’t know, but it seems like that doesn’t it, when you read it? Well you see also that Saul takes with him 2,000 men and Jonathan, his son only takes 1,000. Whatever happens, we know this, that when Israel hears the news, then they realize hey, we have inflamed the Philistines. And now we’re going to be in danger. So it goes on to say, “Now the Philistines assembled to fight with Israel...” And when they assembled listen to what they had; “...30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen, and people like the sand, which is on the seashore in abundance; and they came up and camped in Michmash, east of Beth-aven.”(13:5) Now if you want to know where all these things are you have a map and that map is in the free study guide that you can download from preceptsforlife.com. You just go to preceptsforlife.com and we want you to study along with us. The purpose of this program is to establish you in truth, to teach you beloved, how to study your Bible so that you will know truth for yourself, so that you can be a person, a man, a woman used of God and not ashamed because you handle His Word accurately. And you need to handle it accurately because it is God’s Word. So look at the map and see where Saul is, see where the Philistines are and catch the ratio. Remember Saul has 2000, Jonathan has 1000; now the Philistines are assembling and they have 3000 chariots. That means those chariots have to be driven by 3000 soldiers. They have 6000 horsemen and on top of that people that are like the, the sand on the seashore, and now they’re coming against them. And it says in verse 6: “When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were

hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits.”(13:6) I mean they were just paralyzed and they thought all these people are coming against us and look at how few there are and they ran to hide. Now verse 7: “[And] Also some of the Hebrews crossed the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead. But as for Saul, he was still in Gilgal...,”(13:7a-b) So he’s in Gilgal. Now remember this is where he has summoned these people to him. It is some time now since he has been with Samuel, there’s some time between 1 Samuel 12 and 1 Samuel 13. Now it goes on to say this: “...But as for Saul...,” I’m in the middle of verse 7, “...he was still in Gilgal...,”(1Samuel 13:7b) Now remember we want to mark geographical references or locations because they tell us where. So double underline that in green. “...and all the people followed him trembling. Now he waited seven days, according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, ‘Bring to me...burnt offering[s] and the peace offering[s]....’” And he offered the burnt offering. “[And it came about] As soon as he finished offering the burnt offering, [that] behold, Samuel came...,”(13:7c-10a) Beloved, there is about to be a great clash. You say why. My goodness, I mean the people were running away. What should he have done? Why the clash? It sounds wise to me. Does it? We’ll look at it right after this important announcement.

PART TWO

Welcome back my friend, my faithful, faithful student. I am so proud of you, and I know God is. You know to find people that honor your word so much that they’re willing to discipline themselves to learn your word, I mean really says a lot. And it says a lot to the heart of God, because what you’re doing is you’re saying God, Your words are so important I’m going to hang on your every word. You know my son Mark is our COO and he and I were talking the other day and he said, “Mom, you know who we are. We are people who are looking for people who are looking for truth.” And you

know everybody's not looking for truth. Thank you for looking for truth. Jesus prayed for you. And this is what He prayed; He said, "[Father,] I do[n't] ask You to take them out of the world, but [I ask You] to keep them from the evil one." (John 17:15) And then He prayed, ["Father Sanctify them, set them apart through Thy truth...,"] And then He made this statement: ["...Thy word is truth."] (John 17:17) Well now watch, because in a sense Saul really missed this point. He missed the point that God's word is truth and therefore it is to be honored. And if you haven't been studying Samuel with me and you haven't carefully put this together, you could miss it. So let's see what's happening right now. 1 Samuel, chapter 13, remember the Philistines have all this huge army and there's debates on the number of chariots and the numbers of horsemen, depending on the translation that you're reading. But just know this: Israel was really outnumbered. And the people are hiding. They're scared to death because Jonathan has hit one of the Philistine's garrisons and they are coming at them and saying you're not going to do that to us. So here is Saul and he is at Gilgal and he is waiting seven days. Now look at verse 8: "...according to the appointed time set by Samuel..." (1 Samuel 13:8b) It's a very important phrase. Now what is this appointed time that is set by Samuel? Well we have to go back to 1 Samuel, chapter 10, verse 8. And so what I would suggest that you do if you have a good Bible, you have that cross-reference already there. But sometimes we miss those cross-references because they're so small, so with a pencil or a pen next to verse 8, write big enough for you to see and not to miss, 1 Samuel 10:8, and let's go back to 1 Samuel 10. Now beloved, this is the benefit of going through the Word of God, of starting at the beginning of a book and going through it chapter by chapter and verse by verse, because you're building precept upon precept, one truth upon another truth, so that when you come to situations like this you say O, wait a minute I'm observing the text carefully. And the reason that he's waiting seven days, and you mark that, because it's a time phrase, in 1 Samuel, chapter 13, verse 8, is because there's an appointed time set by Samuel. So then we go back to 1 Samuel, chapter 10, verse 8, and this is when Samuel has just anointed

Saul as the ruler over his inheritance. The Spirit of God is going to come on Saul and change him into a different man and this is what Samuel is telling him. And then in verse 8 this is what he says: “And you shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice peace offerings. You shall wait seven days until I come to you and show you what you should do.”(10:8) Okay, now what have just found out? Well by reading this we have just found out that all the events that we have just covered in 1 Samuel, chapter 11 and 12 and now into 13 have to happen within a seven-day period. Isn’t that interesting? So some time has passed, but it’s not much time. But you don’t know that until you go back and look very carefully and you observe your time phrases. So he’s gone to Gilgal; he is waiting there for seven days until Samuel gets there. He’s waiting and Samuel doesn’t show up. Now watch what it says in 1 Samuel, chapter 13, verse 8. “Now he waited seven days according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him.”(13:8) In other words, he’s losing his army. He’s losing these 2,000 men that are supposed to be there with him that are warriors. “So Saul said, ‘Bring to me the burnt offering[s] and the peace offerings.’ And he offered the burnt offering.”(13:9) Well now, let’s go back to 1 Samuel 10, verse 8. And there he’s saying, “...you shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice peace offerings. You shall wait seven days until I come to you and show you what you should do.”(10:8) Who’s going to offer the offerings? Who’s going to offer the burnt offerings and sacrifice the peace offerings? It is supposed to be Samuel, not Saul. But Saul now is anxious. He’s losing his people. The circumstances are saying hey, you better get with it, so he goes ahead and he offers the sacrifices. Verse 10 of 1 Samuel 13. Are you going back and forth with me? I hope I haven’t lost you beloved. And it came about, “As soon as he finished offering the burnt offering, [that] behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him and to greet him. But Samuel said, ‘What have you done?’ And Saul said, ‘Because I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come

within the appointed days, and that the Philistines were assembling at Michmash, therefore, I said, “Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not asked the favor of the Lord,” So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering[s].”(1Samuel 13:10-12) Now watch this guy. I forced myself. What is he saying? He’s saying I didn’t want to do this, but I just really had to do it. And I had to do it because of the circumstances. In other words, I knew what the command was, I knew I was to wait seven days, but you hadn’t showed up and the people were scattering. And the Philistines were assembling at Michmash. I mean you understand the circumstances. You understand that I had no choice and I forced myself to do this. Now let’s watch Samuel’s response to Saul in verse 13. It says, “[Then] Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have acted 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.’”(13:13) I mean put a time clock over forever. “But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart...,” Mark heart. “...and the Lord has appointed him as ruler over His people, because...,” underline it, “...you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.”(13:14) How important is obedience? And what if the circumstances just seem to be so pressured that to wait and to obey is just going to mess you up? Well beloved, if you stop and you meditate on these things, and that’s where I’m going to leave you, you can see that the most important thing is a passionate obedience to the Lord. You don’t look at the circumstances, you listen to the word that has come out of the mouth of God, and you know that your responsibility is to obey; and it is God’s responsibility to take care of the circumstances.