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Kings and Prophets 1 Samuel 13-14 By Kirk Gambrell

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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



In Chapters 13 and 14 of 1 Samuel, we see Saul settle in as king. The Philistines are still a major enemy and are threatening the livelihood of the Israelites. Jonathan shows faith by attacking the Philistines with the confidence that God is in control and that God is with them. However, Saul lacks patience in waiting on God and, ultimately, takes matters into his own hands. Today we will look at how important it is to wait on God to act, and not to take matters into our own hands. Often, it is tempting to want God to tell us to move in one direction or the other, and not allow for the option that God wants us to wait for His timing.

**Patience
is the companion
of wisdom**

Augustine

Read 1 Samuel 13-14 (NET)

13 ¹ Saul was [thirty] years old when he began to reign; he ruled over Israel for [forty] years. ² Saul selected for himself three thousand men from Israel. Two thousand of these were with Saul at Micmash and in the hill country of Bethel; the remaining thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin. He sent all the rest of the people back home.

³ Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost that was at Geba and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul alerted all the land saying, "Let the Hebrews pay attention!" ⁴ All Israel heard this message, "Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel is repulsive to the Philistines!" So the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

⁵ For the battle with Israel the Philistines had amassed 3,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and an army as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven. ⁶ The men of Israel realized they had a problem because their army was hard pressed. So the army hid in caves, thickets, cliffs, strongholds, and cisterns. ⁷ Some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan River to the land of Gad and Gilead. But Saul stayed at Gilgal; the entire army that was with him was terrified. ⁸ He waited for seven days, the time period indicated by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the army began to abandon Saul. ⁹ So Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." Then he offered a burnt offering. ¹⁰ Just when he had finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel appeared on the scene. Saul went out to meet him and to greet him.

¹¹ But Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul replied, "When I saw that the army had started to abandon me and that you didn't come at the appointed time and that the Philistines had assembled at Micmash, ¹² I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down on me at Gilgal and I have not sought the Lord's favor.' So I felt obligated to offer the burnt offering."

¹³ Then Samuel said to Saul, "You have made a foolish choice! You have not obeyed the commandment that the Lord your God gave you. Had you done that, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever! ¹⁴ But now your kingdom will not continue! The Lord has sought out for himself a man who is loyal to him and the Lord has appointed him to be leader over his people, for you have not obeyed what the Lord commanded you."

¹⁵ Then Samuel set out and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin. Saul mustered the army that remained with him; there were about six hundred men. ¹⁶ Saul, his son Jonathan, and the army that remained with them stayed in Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin, while the Philistines camped in Micmash. ¹⁷ Raiding bands went out from the camp of the Philistines in three groups. One band turned toward the road leading to Ophrah by the land of Shual; ¹⁸ another band turned toward the road leading to Beth Horon; and yet another band turned toward the road leading to the border that overlooks the valley of Zeboim in the direction of the desert.

¹⁹ A blacksmith could not be found in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines had said, "This will prevent the Hebrews from making swords and spears." ²⁰ So all Israel had to go down to the Philistines in order to get their plowshares, cutting instruments, axes, and sickles sharpened. ²¹ They charged two-thirds of a shekel to sharpen plowshares and cutting instruments, and a third of a shekel to sharpen picks and axes, and to set ox goads. ²² So on the day of the battle no sword or spear was to be found in the hand of anyone in the army that was with Saul and Jonathan. No one but Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

²³ A garrison of the Philistines had gone out to the pass at Micmash.

14 ¹ Then one day Jonathan son of Saul said to his armor bearer, "Come on, let's go over to the Philistine garrison that is opposite us." But he did not let his father know.

² Now Saul was sitting under a pomegranate tree in Migron, on the outskirts of Gibeah. The army that was with him numbered about six hundred men. ³ Now Ahijah was carrying an ephod. He was the son of Ahitub, who was the brother of Ichabod and a son of Phineas, son of Eli, the priest of the Lord in Shiloh. The army was unaware that Jonathan had left.

⁴ Now there was a steep cliff on each side of the pass through which Jonathan intended to go to reach the Philistine garrison. One cliff was named Bozez, the other Seneh. ⁵ The cliff to the north was closer to Micmash, the one to the south closer to Geba.

⁶ Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come on, let's go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised men. Perhaps the Lord will intervene for us. Nothing can prevent the Lord from delivering, whether by many or by a few." ⁷ His armor bearer said to him,

“Do everything that is on your mind. Do as you’re inclined. I’m with you all the way!”

⁸ Jonathan replied, “All right! We’ll go over to these men and fight them. ⁹ If they say to us, ‘Stay put until we approach you,’ we will stay right there and not go up to them. ¹⁰ But if they say, ‘Come up against us,’ we will go up. For in that case the Lord has given them into our hand—it will be a sign to us.”

¹¹ When they made themselves known to the Philistine garrison, the Philistines said, “Look! The Hebrews are coming out of the holes in which they hid themselves.” ¹² Then the men of the garrison said to Jonathan and his armor bearer, “Come on up to us so we can teach you a thing or two!” Then Jonathan said to his armor bearer, “Come up behind me, for the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel!”

¹³ Jonathan crawled up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer following behind him. Jonathan struck down the Philistines, while his armor bearer came along behind him and killed them. ¹⁴ In this initial skirmish Jonathan and his armor bearer struck down about twenty men in an area that measured half an acre.

¹⁵ Then fear overwhelmed those who were in the camp, those who were in the field, all the army in the garrison, and the raiding bands. They trembled and the ground shook. This fear was caused by God.

¹⁶ Saul’s watchmen at Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin looked on as the crowd of soldiers seemed to melt away first in one direction and then in another. ¹⁷ So Saul said to the army that was with him, “Mustering the troops and see who is no longer with us.” When they mustered the troops, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there. ¹⁸ So Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring near the ephod,” for he was at that time wearing the ephod. ¹⁹ While Saul spoke to the priest, the panic in the Philistines’ camp was becoming greater and greater. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand!”

²⁰ Saul and all the army that was with him assembled and marched into battle, where they found the Philistines in total panic killing one another with their swords. ²¹ The Hebrews who had earlier gone over to the Philistine side joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

²² When all the Israelites who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines had fled, they too pursued them in battle. ²³ So the Lord delivered Israel that day, and the battle shifted over to Beth Aven.

²⁴ Now the men of Israel were hard pressed that day, for Saul had made the army agree to this oath: “Cursed be the man who eats food before evening! I will get my vengeance on my enemies!” So no one in the army ate anything.

²⁵ Now the whole army entered the forest and there was honey on the ground. ²⁶ When the army entered the forest, they saw the honey flowing, but no one ate any of it, for the army was afraid of the oath. ²⁷ But Jonathan had not heard about the oath his father had made the army take. He extended the end of his staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb. When he ate it, his eyes gleamed. ²⁸ Then someone from the army informed him, “Your father put the army under a strict oath saying, ‘Cursed be the man who eats food today!’ That is why the army is tired.” ²⁹ Then Jonathan said, “My father has caused trouble for the land. See how my eyes gleamed when I tasted just a little of this honey. ³⁰ Certainly if the army had eaten some of the enemies’ provisions that they came across today, would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?”

³¹ On that day the army struck down the Philistines from Micmash to Aijalon, and they became very tired. ³² So the army rushed greedily on the plunder, confiscating sheep, cattle, and calves. They slaughtered them right on the ground, and the army ate them blood and all.

³³ Now it was reported to Saul, “Look, the army is sinning against the Lord by eating even the blood.” He said, “All of you have broken the covenant! Roll a large stone over here to me.” ³⁴ Then Saul said, “Scatter out among the army and say to them, ‘Each of you bring to me your ox and sheep and slaughter them in this spot and eat. But don’t sin against the Lord by eating the blood.’” So that night each one brought his ox and slaughtered it there. ³⁵ Then Saul built an altar for the Lord; it was the first time he had built an altar for the Lord.

³⁶ Saul said, “Let’s go down after the Philistines at night; we will rout them until the break of day. We won’t leave any of them alive!” They replied, “Do whatever seems best to you.” But the priest said, “Let’s approach God here.” ³⁷ So Saul asked God, “Should I go down after the Philistines? Will you deliver them into the hand of Israel?” But he did not answer him that day.

³⁸ Then Saul said, “All you leaders of the army come here. Find out how this sin occurred today. ³⁹ For as surely as the Lord, the deliverer of Israel, lives, even if it turns out to be my own son Jonathan, he will certainly die!” But no one from the army said anything.

⁴⁰ Then he said to all Israel, “You will be on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will be on the other side.” The army replied to Saul, “Do whatever you think is best.”

⁴¹ Then Saul said, “O Lord God of Israel! If this sin has been committed by me or by my son Jonathan, then, O Lord God of Israel, respond with Urim. But if this sin has been committed by your people Israel, respond with Thummim.” Then Jonathan and Saul were indicated by lot, while the army was exonerated. ⁴² Then Saul said, “Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan!” Jonathan was indicated by lot.

⁴³ So Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you have done.” Jonathan told him, “I used the end of the staff that was in my hand to taste a little honey. I must die!” ⁴⁴ Saul said, “God will punish me severely if Jonathan doesn’t die!”

⁴⁵ But the army said to Saul, “Should Jonathan, who won this great victory in Israel, die? May it never be! As surely as the Lord lives, not a single hair of his head will fall to the ground! For it is with the help of God that he has acted today.” So the

army rescued Jonathan from death. ⁴⁶ Then Saul stopped chasing the Philistines, and the Philistines went back home.

⁴⁷ After Saul had secured his royal position over Israel, he fought against all their enemies on all sides—the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. In every direction that he turned he was victorious. ⁴⁸ He fought bravely, striking down the Amalekites and delivering Israel from the hand of its enemies.

⁴⁹ The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malki-Shua. He had two daughters; the older one was named Merab and the younger Michal. ⁵⁰ The name of Saul’s wife was Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the general in command of his army was Abner son of Ner, Saul’s uncle. ⁵¹ Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

⁵² There was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. So whenever Saul saw anyone who was a warrior or a brave individual, he would conscript him.

EXAMINE His Word (Observation) (For personal preparation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the foregoing passages.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.
2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.
3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.
4. Is there anything repeated?

5. What is emphasized?

6. Is there anything in these passages that is related to other areas of scripture?

7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unlike such as similes and metaphors?

🕒 EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation) (For Community Group discussion)
What does God MEAN?

8. Why do you think Jonathan attacked the Philistines at the beginning of Chapter 13:3?

9. Why did Saul's army hide from the Philistines?

10. At the beginning of Chapter 14, Jonathan attacks the Philistines again, but this time it was just him and his armor bearer. Why did he attack them this time?

11. Saul made two oaths, one in 14:24 and one in 14:39. Do you think the oaths were wise oaths? Why or why not?

12. Why did the army seek to save Jonathan from the oath that Saul made?

13. In these two chapters, what mistakes did Saul make when looking for the direction of the Lord?

③ EMBRACE His Word (Application) (For Community Group discussion)

Why does this MATTER to me?

14. How can we avoid making the mistakes that Saul made when it comes to seeking the direction of the Lord?

15. In these chapters, Saul has a difficult time balancing faith in the Lord and patience while waiting for God to act. How can we balance these two things both in our personal life and the life of our church?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage

Write about what God wants you to **KNOW**, to **FEEL**, and to **DO**...

SERMON NOTES