
Becoming Christlike – Learning How from Old Testament Kings and Prophets

Session 14 – I Samuel 13

Persecution of Christians

Excerpts were read from an article “Major power moving to eliminate any 'visible evidence of Christianity', Tightening the screws about even more persecution of Christians in China. Published on Sept. 17th.

<https://www.wnd.com/2023/09/major-power-moving-eliminate-visible-evidence-christianity/>

“Now it's illegal to post evangelical Christian content online without special permission from the Communist Party.”

China desires to eliminate Christianity.

India desires to eliminate Christianity.

A 4.8-million-dollar church was recently destroyed in China due to “building code violations”.

“A large Protestant church in the city known as “China’s Jerusalem” was demolished on the orders of local leaders. Sanjiang church, in the eastern city of Wenzhou, took six years and 30 million yuan (\$4.8 million) to put up, but officials said it had violated building codes. Local Christians gathered at the church but were unable to stop the demolition. Unregistered “house churches” have long been the target of government crackdowns, but Sanjiang was part of the officially approved church.”

Artificial Intelligence

An article in Vanity Fair Magazine was cited about AI (Artificial Intelligence) stating that AI might be the last invention ever created by man. “We are creating God. We are creating conscious machines.” Makes one think we are getting close to the end. Will God allow it or pull the plug?

C.T Studd – Only One Life

Only One Life, Twill Soon Be Past

by C.T. Studd

Two little lines I heard one day,
Traveling along life’s busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart,
And from my mind would not depart;

**Only one life, ’twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.**

Only one life, yes only one,
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in ‘that day’ my Lord to meet,
And stand before His Judgement seat;

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Only one life, the still small voice,
Gently pleads for a better choice
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,
And to God's holy will to cleave;

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Only one life, a few brief years,
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its clays I must fulfill.
living for self or in His will;

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

When this bright world would tempt me sore,
When Satan would a victory score;
When self would seek to have its way,
Then help me Lord with joy to say;

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Give me Father, a purpose deep,
In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Oh let my love with fervor burn,
And from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Only one life, yes only one,
Now let me say, "Thy will be done";
And when at last I'll hear the call,
I know I'll say "twas worth it all";

**Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.**

I Samuel 13

All we have done to date has been laying the foundation for studying the first king of Israel: Saul. Saul disobeys God. We look at that poem because it says:

Bidding me selfish aims to leave,
And to God's holy will to cleave;

I can go toward what pleases me or I can go toward God's Will, remembering how short this life is.

He also says

Give me Father, a purpose deep,
In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;

So many lack purpose. Our purpose is to please God.

We are seeking to understand God, ourselves, mankind. We want to understand why we are the way we are. We seek to understand why the Old Testament characters did what they did.

Recap

Hannah who was barren, prays to God for a child. She gives birth to a son whom she named Samuel and dedicates him to God. Samuel grows up to become a judge and prophet. In spite of being raised by Eli and in the presence of his two corrupt priest sons, Samuel thrives as a godly man. Eli and his sons are put to death. The Philistines capture but return the Ark of the Covenant. The people cry out to God wanting a king. Samuel warns the people of the things a king will do. God grants them their request. In Chapter 10 Samuel anoints Saul as king. Last session we covered Samuel's farewell address full of pleading to do God's Will.

I Samuel 13 – Saul's Disobedience

I Samuel 13

1 Saul lived for one year and then became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel,^a **2** Saul chose three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent home, every man to his tent.

Jonathan is Saul's son.

In Chapters 13-18 we will be focusing on Saul, Jonathan, and David. We will contrast their hearts. We will look in detail at what they do and why they do it.

3 Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines that was at Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." **4** And all Israel heard it said that Saul had defeated the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become a stench to the Philistines. And the people were called out to join Saul at Gilgal.

5 And the Philistines mustered to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude. They came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth-aven. **6** When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble (for the people were hard pressed), the people hid themselves in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns, **7** and some Hebrews crossed the fords of the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

So here is Saul, the king. They had previously defeated the Philistines but now they are again rallying and gathering energy to go up against Israel. Israel is frightened, freaked out, hiding.

Samuel had previously instructed Samuel to go and wait 7 days for him.

8 He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, **and the people were scattering from him.** **9** So Saul said, "Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings." And he offered the burnt offering.

The fact that the people were scattering from him is very important. Saul goes ahead and offers the burnt offering instead of waiting for Samuel to arrive.

10 As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him. **11** Samuel said, "**What have you done?**"

Samuel immediately confronts Saul: WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

Saul begins his rationale, his viewpoint, show us the lens he is viewing through.

And Saul said, "When **I saw that the people were scattering from me**, and that **you did not come within the days appointed**, and that **the Philistines had mustered at Michmash**, **12** I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and **I have not sought the favor of the Lord.**' So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering."

13 And Samuel said to Saul, "**You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you.**"

This act of disobedience is a HUGE Big Deal!

One might ask why is this a big deal? Saul's reasons and rationale seem reasonable on the surface. But there is a PROBLEM!!! He had disobeyed God.

1. He didn't wait for Samuel as he had been commanded
2. He is a king, not a priest, he had no business offering the burnt offering he stepped in out of impatience.
3. His rationalizations hold no sway in the face of disobedience
 - a. Keep people from scattering
 - b. Seek the Lord's favor
 - c. Defeat the Philistines

We may think this was not a big deal. When God's Word is known it is not to be taken lightly. Saul here is taking God's Word lightly and did what he thought he should do under the

circumstances. He said he was seeking the Lord's favor. May have looked holy, he may have saved face and kept the people from leaving.... BUT it was disobedience.

Here we see clearly that the lens God looks through is very different than the lens man looks through.

What was the consequence of this disobedience?

13 And Samuel said to Saul, **"You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 But now your kingdom shall not continue.**

Could the consequences have been any more huge? Any more devastating? Any more substantial? God would have established Saul's kingdom forever! Christ came through the line of David. Had Saul stayed obedient Christ would have come through the line of Saul! But now the kingdom of Saul **shall not continue!**

Look what God does in response to this!

14 (b) The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince^b over his people, **because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you."**

God seeks out someone to accomplish his will. This is stated in the past tense because it is surely going to come to pass. It's a done deal when this figure is used in God's Word.

15 And Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal. The rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the army; they went up from Gilgal^c to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.

Consequences of Disobedience are Not Always Immediate

Saul goes on as if nothing had ever happened. Disobedience to the Word can be devastating in its effect but you may not see it right away.

Saul goes on being king for 40 years. He is publicly recognized as the king but in God's eyes he is no longer king. Meanwhile David will be anointed king and will be the king in God's eyes but not publicly recognized as king.

Saul who had been a godly man, chosen by God to be the king turns and seeks to kill David. How could Saul do this? How could he forget (who he was, what God had called him to do, what his is responsible to do) all that God had done for him right after he was anointed king by Samuel? How did the Saul of Chapter 10 turn into the Saul of Chapters 13-18?

What could Saul have done differently? He could have waited for Samuel to arrive! Samuel's integrity was just clearly declared in chapter 12. Everyone, including Saul, knew that when Samuel spoke, he spoke for God.

Think back to Chapter 10. Samuel anointed Saul to be king. He told him there would be signs to reassure him of God's choice. Each of the signs happened. He was told he would be changed into another man and would prophesy with the prophets, and he did. In just 2 chapters Saul disobeys God and loses the kingdom forever.

See how seriously God takes his Word? We should do likewise.

I Samuel 10

...you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. **6 Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.**

I Samuel 10:7

7 Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, **for God is with you. 8** Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.”

9 When he turned his back to leave Samuel, **God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day.**

How in chapter 13 did he change into this man? He had been commanded to write in a book the whole law for himself and to read it daily. After his anointing Samuel had written down what he was to do so he would have it to refer to. Saul could not have been doing this or he would not have disobeyed God.

Saul knew what was written in Joshua.

Joshua 21:45

45 Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass,

Saul was to know that ALL God declared was to come to pass. That God would be with Him as king. He should have known from the Law of the Old Testament about the Blessings and Curses.

Joshua 23 14

14 “And now I am about to go the way of all the earth, and you know in your hearts and souls, all of you, that **not one word has failed of all the good things^a that the Lord your God promised concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one of them has failed.**

15 But just as all the good things that the Lord your God promised concerning you have been fulfilled for you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the evil things, until he has destroyed you from off this good land that the Lord your God has given you, **16** if you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you.”

Saul knew Deuteronomy 28 – the blessings and curses.

It was simple. Obedience yields fruit. Disobedience yields consequences.

I Samuel 13

15 And Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal. The rest of the people went up after Saul to

meet the army; they went up from Gilgal^c to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.

16 And Saul and Jonathan his son and the people who were present with them stayed in Geba of Benjamin, but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. **17** And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual; **18** another company turned toward Beth-horon; and another company turned toward the border that looks down on the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

19 Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, “Lest the Hebrews make themselves swords or spears.”

The Philistines had monopolized the production of the type of metal used to make swords and spears. Only Saul and Jonathan had them. This would show the Children of Israel that any victory they were to experience would be God’s doing entirely and miraculously.

20 But every one of the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen his plowshare, his mattock, his axe, or his sickle,^d **21** and the charge was two-thirds of a shekel^e for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel^f for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads.^g **22** So on the day of the battle there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan, but Saul and Jonathan his son had them. **23** And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

Samuel had prophesied that Saul would defeat the Philistines. We see God still fulfilling his promise.

In our next session we will look more closely at human nature. Why do people do what they do? We can so easily revert to “self” and forget what the Word says and what God has said to us.

Coming up...

In I Samuel 15 we will see Saul’s next great act of disobedience.

Sandwiched in between 13 and 15 is Chapter 14 in which we will see the heart of Jonathan.

We will see how Saul models disobedience while Jonathan models obedience. Consider that Jonathan is the son of Saul and the rightful heir to the throne in Israel. However he defers to God’s chosen...David.

The Big Take-Away

The big take-away of Chapter 13 is that disobedience is a very big deal. Think of Moses, he struck the rock twice and lost the possibility of entering the Promised Land. After all he had done in service to God, he still lost this. God is looking for a heart of obedience in spite of circumstances. Look at the opportunity Saul forfeited.