

The Wise Son of a Foolish Father

I Samuel 14:1-52

Introduction:

- Jonathan may appear as one who was punished because of his foolish father- he didn't live that way. He humbly served the Lord in whatever capacity the Lord opened up to him. He is remembered as one of the great Bible characters who displayed great faith, and was a great friend.
- I. Jonathan again seen as a great leader
 - a. Jonathan- his name means "whom Jehovah gave"
 - b. He took initiative- v. 1
 - c. (1Sa 14:4-5) Jonathan found a strategic position to launch his attack
 - d. "God is ever on the outlook for believing souls, who will receive his power and grace on the one hand, and transmit them on the other. He chooses them, that by them he should make his mighty power known." (FB Meyer)
 - e. The Israelites were in a military conflict where victory seemed impossible. They were vastly outnumbered and greatly surpassed in military technology. Yet Jonathan was bold enough to go over to the Philistine garrison just to see what the Lord might do.
 - f. Saul was sitting: This was a big contrast to Jonathan. The bold, brave, king was simply sitting... under a pomegranate tree while his son boldly went over to the Philistine garrison.
 - i. Ahiah, the son of Ahitub - Phinehas, son of Eli the high priests had two sons, Ahitub and Ichabod; the latter was born when the ark was taken, and his mother died immediately after. Ahiah is also called Ahimelech, 1 Samuel 22:9.
 - ii. Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother: The mention of Ichabod seems almost unnecessary. Why would we need to know that the priest with Saul was the nephew of Ichabod? Probably, God wants us to

associate the meaning of Ichabod's name with where Saul is at spiritually. Saul's royal glory is almost gone, and it is appropriate that he associates with a relative of the man named "The Glory Has Departed."

- g. Jonathan had imaginative faith (visionary, resourceful, inspired) - v. 6
 - i. It may be that the Lord will work for us
 - ii. This will be a sign to us: In his step of faith, Jonathan wanted to know if God was really leading. He proposed a test based on the response of the Philistine guards.
 - iii. V. 11-14- It was reasonable for the Philistines to think these were Hebrew deserters surrendering to the Philistines because they thought it was better than hiding in a hole.
 - h. Armorbearer: Every "officer" in the Israelite army had an "assistant" known as an armor bearer. The armor bearer helped the officer in battle and in the administration of the army.
 - i. "Armor-bearers in ancient times had to be unusually brave and loyal, since the lives of their masters often depended on them." (Youngblood)
 - ii. The blessing of loyal friends and co-laborers- v. 7
- II. Victory is the Lord's
- a. V. 14- 20 men were slain, which led to a giant uproar, a panic!
 - b. Jonathan rightly recognized that any victory he had came from God – v. 6, 12
 - c. Only the Lord brings deliverance! - v. 23 The fingerprints of God are all over this chapter
 - d. The Lord will work for us...- the work is the Lord's! It's not Jonathan plus God- it's all God through Jonathan.
 - e. II Kings 6:16- "And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Romans 8:31- "...If God be for us, who can be against us?"
 - f. (1Sa 14:15) God attacks the Philistines.
- III. Saul's Foolish Oath

- a. 1Sa 14:16-19- Saul learns of the battle.
 - i. He calls a roll, consults the priest, and brings out the ark
 - ii. Now was not the time for this- there is a time to go aside and pray but there is also a time to go out and fight
 - iii. Eventually he joins Jonathan and God in the battle
 - iv. V. 20-21- Everyone wants to fight when the victory is almost won, but where are the Jonathan's to make the initial confrontation?
- b. (1Sa 14:24) Saul's foolish oath and its consequences.
 - i. V. 24-52- Saul's rash orders, and foolishness on display
 - ii. V. 24 Saul proclaims a curse for eating before the evening
 - 1. See v. 28, 31
 - 2. Jonathan unknowingly disobeys the commanding orders
 - iii. Vengeance on **his** enemies?? He had the wrong focus
 - iv. V. 24, 29-30- The men of Israel were distressed that day: This shows that the result among the army of Israel was wrong. No matter what Saul's motive was, this was foolish. When the morale and the physical energy of Israel should have been the strongest, the army was weak and discouraged.
 - v. The people rushed on the spoil... and the people ate them with the blood: God specifically commanded Israel that they should always properly drain the blood from an animal before they butchered it (Deuteronomy 12:23-25). On this day of battle, because of Saul's foolish command, the people were so hungry they broke this command. Their obedience to Saul's foolish command led them to disobey God's clearly declared command.
 - vi. V. 38- Jonathan is found guilty- Of course, if Saul knew that it was Jonathan who violated his oath, he would never had said this. But he was so caught up in being "right" that he added this foolish vow to his previous foolish commandment.

- vii. How bizarre! Saul who was so permissive as to spare wicked Agag in chapter 15, is now ready to destroy his own son.
- c. Saul finally builds an altar to the Lord- v. 35
- d. Saul asks counsel from God, but God did not answer that day- v. 37
- e. (1Sa 14:40-44) Jonathan is implicated by the casting of lots.
 - i. Casting lots- v. 39-42
 - ii. Saul is ready to punish whoever broke his command- only to find out the guilty one was none other than his own son, Jonathan!
 - iii. (1Sa 14:45-46) The people rescue Jonathan from execution. They stopped the mess from continuing

Conclusion:

- Summary of Saul's reign- v. 47-52
 - Warfare on every side
 - Historically he might be viewed as successful, fruitful- yet we know his rule was tarnished by sin and rebellion.
- Here we see Saul's strength on display, but the next chapter will reveal his weakness
- Though Saul was a bad example for us, Jonathan is a great example of faith, obedience, and courage for the Lord!