

1 Sam 14:1-23 [18]-JONATHAN v. SAUL

PRELIMS. The honeymoon is over for Saul. His offering the sacrifice instead of waiting the full time for Samuel meant he had broken trust with God. “*You have done **foolishly**. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God...your kingdom shall **not** continue*”[13:13]! In this chapter there a **contrast** made between Jonathan and Saul. If Saul had been faithful, Jonathan would have inherited the kingdom – but that has now been lost through Saul’s **disobedience**. We can see here how much better a king Jonathan would have been than Saul – but that is not now to be. Here, Israel is at war with the Philistines.

SAUL’S LACK of VISION

We read “*Where there is **no vision** the people perish*”[Pro 29:18]! Saul is king here, and he has 600 men with him and he is close by the Philistines “*in the outskirts of Gibeah*”[2]. Saul is quite ‘comfy’ and does not even notice that his son Jonathan has gone for a walk! Later, when he sees the panic and disarray of the Philistines, he has to **ask** “*Count and see **who** has gone from us*”[17]. You see, Saul has **lost** the help of God. He is no longer a ‘great man’, vigilant and eager to lead the people of God. God no longer ‘inspires’ him in leadership. He is not alert to see any **opportunity** to engage the enemies of God. Saul has **lost his vision!** You see, a man with vision to has a great gift – a gift which **only** God can give! Vision is from the Lord!

Saul’s kingdom has been rejected by God, and his spiritual mentor Samuel, has **gone away** from him![13:15] Saul is also sitting with **Ahijah** the **priest**, whose priestly line, I understand has **also** been **rejected!** **APP** So what hope for Israel when their spiritual leaders don’t have God’s mind, and are unable to guide, direct, encourage them on the right road? What hope for a nation when the **Church is spiritually dead** and voiceless? The biggest judgment is when God removes His discerning people – people who had a **voice** for God in the **public** square!

The VISION of JONATHAN

However, all is not lost – there is a Jonathan! He has gone for a walk, and likely for wise reasons, “*he did not tell his father*” [1c]. But like many casual ‘strolls’ people take there is a hidden **agenda!** “*Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison...*” [1] Jonathan, a **godly** young man is anxious to promote God’s name among the heathen. He is **interested in promoting** the God of Israel among “*these uncircumcised*” [6] That is the term Israelites gave to unbelievers. The one great task of Israel was to demonstrate that Yahweh was the **only real God!** That was Israel’s calling – just like the Xn’s – to make God known!

Jonathan had **vision**. Like the 2 ‘good’ spies who went to spy out the land of Canaan, he saw things **differently** from those who did not have the ‘vision of God’—and yet they saw the **very same things!** The 10 spies saw nothing but **problems**. The 2 spies saw **great opportunities**. Depends on your ‘vision’!! It depends on what ‘drives’ you and motivates you! It depends where your **heart** is! It depends on what your **ambition** is!

So, what **motivated** Jonathan? The **spiritual aspect!** “*It may be that the Lord will work for us*” [6] He wanted the Phils to see the **power** of Israel’s God, how He can save by many or by few! To be able to ‘see’ God’s hand at work in the ‘secular’ world requires **faith!** To see ‘behind the scenes’, a great God fulfilling His plan, requires true faith! To know and discern God’s hand in **history** and in daily life is **not** the same as believing in **fate**, ‘You never know, anything can happen, remember such and such..?’ Believing in ‘anything can happen, because you have seen it already happen in life’, is **fatalism!**

Fatalism is **not** the same as believing God has a **purpose** in life to glorify His name and He can do it in very unlikely situations. You see, Jonathan’s **desire** was to glorify **God**, not himself. Jonathan was **not** saying ‘God can do this because I am taking a risk **for** Him’! **APP** Because you/I are doing something great

and good **for** God, does **not necessarily mean** He will do something wonderful on our behalf! God might not even **alleviate** pain! There are plenty people who are **suffering** greatly for Christ – who **could** have **avoided** that suffering if they chose to disobey. But God is **not** running to their rescue! He is **allowing** them suffer for His name! That is a **tremendous privilege** and, of course they **will** have their reward, a **great reward** in heaven – but in the meantime, they suffer!

You see, Jonathan does **not know if** God is going to give the victory. Like the 3 in fiery furnace “***If this be so, then our God is able to deliver us...But if not...we will not serve your gods***”! [Dan 3:18]. Faith in God does not necessarily mean we **know** what God is going to do for His glory. **Trust** in God means we **trust** that He will do **whatever** glorifies **Himself** most! And we mortals do not know what that is. It might mean unfair and unjust humiliation! **Faith is faith**, not knowledge of the future!

Neither is Jonathan’s faith in **his faith**! Jonathan is **not** saying ‘God can do this **because** I have faith in Him and I have prayed about it, therefore God is **obligated** to help me’! **APP** I have Xns say ‘God wouldn’t do that, would He? After what has already happened to me?’ Yes, He might! (And He did!) Because it was **glorifying** to Him! The world is here for God, not us! **Read** [about tea-planters in Sri Lanka in BarFun 7 Aug 09!](#) But such people can have the “*joy of the Lord*” which **surpasses** any other joy! Psalmist “*To God my **chiefest joy***”

JONATHAN’S FAITH

Now Jonathan, like Gideon, ‘puts out a fleece’ to ‘test’ God! “***If they say to us, Wait until we come to you then....But if they say ‘Come up to us’ then...***”[9,10] You see, even at this stage there is **still uncertainty** as to what will happen. But he has a **plan** which he puts up to God. **APP** We must always **pray** and **put up** to God what we think is best and most honourable to Him – and **let Him decide**!! It is for us to **acquiesce** in His

will! *Be assured – He **will** do what is best for **you** as well!

To an Israeli **military** mind, a Philistine invitation to “*Come up to us and we will show a thing*”[12] was **contempt** and **mockery!** It was equivalent in our culture to saying ‘Come and we will show you a thing or two about fighting and **teach** you a **lesson**’! Here, for Jonathan was the **green light** to take the risk – an **insult** to God’s people was cause enough to attack!

So – Jonathan and his armour-bearer climbed up and over the wall to attack them and killed “*about twenty...within an acre of land*”[14] Maybe others were present too – but however, a **wonderful thing happened** - “*there was a **panic** in the camp... the earth **quaked** and it became a **very great panic***”[15] And “*...the tumult in the camp of the Philistines **increased more and more***”[19] Amazing! A small handful of soldiers creating panic

Here is Jonathan winning a great battle – and King Saul is close by and **doesn’t know** what is going on! “*Bring the ark of God here...*” What Israelites are doing this? Whose missing? Whose leading Israel? Jonathan – he is doing what his father should be doing – leading his army into battle. However he sees a victory in sight and tells the priest to “*Withdraw his hand*” from seeking guidance and lets all go and join in the battle! “*Saul and all the people...rallied and went into the battle*”[20]!

Do you know one the ‘**tools**’ God uses to destroy the wicked? **Confusion!** God can send confusion among his enemies “*Every Philistine’s sword was **against his fellow** and there was very great **confusion***”[20] *God even made the Philistines **join** the Israelites “*even they also **turned** to be **with** the Israelites*” [21] Many want to join the ‘winning side’! *And the **fearful** among Israel got **strength** those “*who had **hidden** themselves ...they too followed hard after them in the battle*”[22] Jonathan was showing **leadership** qualities in **opposition** to his father weakness!! **Not good** for **relationships** with a **jealous** Saul!!
Lesson: