

Jonathan's Faith, in Contrast to Saul, Speaks to Us

1 Samuel 14:1-23

- Jonathan's victory over the Philistines is designed to portray the necessity of trust in God and acting on it, and it dramatically contrasts with Saul's failures here and beyond. This is the trust, and acting on it, that God calls us to have.
- I. The events of chapter 13 have led to what happens here.
 - Jonathan's initial victory. Philistines' response. Saul's sinful offering. Samuel's verdict. The sense of hopelessness.
- II. The account portrays Jonathan's faith, in contrast with Saul's failure to trust and obey.
 - As we go through the verses, we can see the author's intent of contrasting Jonathan and Saul. This is between Saul's failures in chps. 13 and 15 (Besides Saul's issues here.). There is purposefulness of contrast between Saul and Jonathan before Saul and David. As we read through the verses I will try to particularly emphasize Jonathan's trust.
 - Samuel told Saul in 13:14 that his kingdom wouldn't continue. This could have been the next king.
- A. Vs. 1-15 - Jonathan and his armor-bearer defeat a garrison of Philistines, highlighting his trust in God and acting on it.
 - **Vs. 1 -** One day Jonathan **the son of Saul** (13:16, 22) said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison (Military outpost) on the other side (This is across a ravine from where the Israelites were at Geba.)" **But he did not tell his father.** **Vs. 2a - Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah in the pomegranate cave (or, under the pomegranate tree) at Migron. Show map.**
 - **Vs. 2b -** The people who were with him were about **six hundred men** (13:15), **Vs. 3 - including Ahijah** the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, the priest of the Lord in Shiloh, wearing an ephod (His brother, Ahimelech, and Ahimelech's son, Abiathar, held David later. But he is Eli's grandson, and the judgment on Eli's descendants persists. Vs. 18, 36.). **And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.**
 - **Vs. 4-5** describe the passes by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison. There were two crags (Steep rocky cliffs.) named Bozez and Seneh (Slippery and thorny. Inaccessible.), in front of Michmash and Geba. Emphasis on strategic advantage of height. Difficult terrain. Possible later memorial.
 - **Vs. 6 -** Jonathan says, "Come, **let us go over** to the garrison of these **uncircumcised** (Contempt). **It may be that the Lord will work for us** (Recognition. Trust. Sovereignty.), **for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few** (2!)." **Vs. 7 -** His armor-bearer said, "Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, **I am with you heart and soul** (With Jonathan: Armor-bearer. People in vs. 45. The Lord. Not Saul.)."
 - **Vs. 8-10** describe Jonathan's strategy: They'll cross over and reveal themselves. If the Philistines say they'll come to them, they'll stand their ground (They have to descend. Still fight, but even ground?). If they say, 'Come up to us,' they'll go up (Vs. 13 - Climbing.), for, he says, "**the Lord has given them into our hand. And this shall be the sign to us** (Comment on "signs.')." This will enable them to get into the camp without alarm. "No threat." Hard climb.
 - Vs. 11-12a - They show themselves. The Philistines said, "Look, Hebrews (Derogatory.) are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves (13:6)." They say to them, "Come up to us, and we will show you a thing."
 - Vs. 12b-14 -Jonathan says to his armor-bearer, "**Come up after me, for the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.**" They climb up on their hands and feet. **And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him:** about twenty men within a small area.
 - **Vs. 15 -** **And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and even the raiders trembled, the earth quaked** (Only God's doing.), **and it became a very great panic** (From the Lord.).
- B. Vs. 16-23 - Saul and the rest of the army join in the battle, and God brings victory as the Philistines flee, but this serves to contrast Saul's failure to trust God and act on it with Jonathan.
 - **Vs. 16 -** The **watchmen of Saul in Gibeah** of Benjamin see the Philistines dispersing here and there, panicking.
 - **Vs. 17 - Saul demands a count to see who's missing.** Jonathan and his armor-bearer aren't there.
 - **Vs. 18-19 -** Saul says to Ahijah, "**Bring the ark of God here.**" **For the ark of God went at that time with the people** (Some manuscripts say, "Bring the ephod.") **of Israel** (4:1.). The tumult in the camp of the Philistines increases more and more. So Saul says, "**Withdraw your hand** (Can't ignore it now. **God has made it plain. Ritual vs. faith. 13:9.**)"

- **Vs. 20** - **Then** Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. **Every Philistine's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion** (No mention of Israel doing anything. It's God. And Jonathan's faith.).
- **Vs. 21-22** describe the response of those **who had joined the Philistines**: They **turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan**. Those **who had hidden themselves** in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle.
- **Vs. 23** is clear that **the Lord saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven** (Retreating west.).

III. How do Jonathan's faith and Saul's failure, and what God is doing here, speak to us?

A. We must first look at this through the lens of the gospel, for the categories here are purposeful in relation to Jesus.

- Jn. 5:39 - You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,
 1. First we have to see ourselves as Saul before we can think about what Jonathan teaches us (Ro. 3:10 - None is...)
 2. Then, we see the one acting when no one else does. This connects to God saving by many or by few (Ro. 5:19 - For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be...)
 3. Additionally, the true King is immeasurably unlike Saul (Jn. 10:11 - I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.).
 4. God turns things upside down in the ways he provides rescue and blessing (1 Co. 1:23 - We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.).

B. How can we then embrace the faith in the Lord Jonathan displays?

1. Know the Lord's capability (Vs. 6 - Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few.).
2. Rely on his grace and enablement (Vs. 12 - The Lord has given them into the hand of Israel. He. 12:2 - Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith).
3. Acknowledge his sovereignty (Vs. 6 - It may be that the Lord will work for us.).
4. Cultivate partnership and support (Vs. 7 - I am with you heart and soul.).
5. Possess a proper view of enemy (Vs. 6 - Uncircumcised.).
6. Act, obey, and be used of God, no matter what (Vs. 13 - Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet.).

C. What does this reveal to us about God's character?

1. As Jonathan affirms in verse 6, nothing can hinder him (Ps. 135:6 - Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.).
2. His supernatural ability demonstrated in verse 15 may not always be as dramatic, but it is just as real, and for us (Ro. 8:31 - What then shall...).
3. His sovereignty is comprehensive (Ro. 8:28 - And we know that for those who love...).
4. He allows us to join in when others have exercised faith and he works.
5. He is trustworthy, and he rewards trust and obedience (He. 11:11 - By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.).