

Failing Leadership



Sunday January 6, 2022

Lesson Preview

- Previous lesson, Jonathan attacks a garrison of Philistines.
- King Saul takes credit for victory and attempts to build an army without weapons
- In this lesson we will see - Good and bad leadership
- What a bad leader is as seen in King Saul. Content to sit under Philistine rule.
- What a good leader is as seen in Jonathan. With the Lords help taking on the enemy.

Bible Lesson

- **1 Samuel 14:1-3 (NKJV)**

¹ Now it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that *is* on the other side." But he did not tell his father.

² And Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron. The people who *were* with him *were* about six hundred men.

³ Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD'S priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

- **1 Samuel 14:4-8 (NKJV)**

⁴ Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side. And the name of one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other SeNehemiah

⁵ The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

⁶ Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few."

⁷ So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

⁸ Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to *these* men, and we will show ourselves to them.

- **1 Samuel 14:9-12 (NKJV)**

⁹ If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them.

¹⁰ But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this *will be* a sign to us."

¹¹ So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden."

¹² Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel."

- **1 Samuel 14:13-17 (NKJV)**

¹³ And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them.

¹⁴ That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.

¹⁵ And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling.

¹⁶ Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and *there* was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there.

¹⁷ Then Saul said to the people who *were* with him, "Now call the roll and see who has gone from us." And when they had called the roll, surprisingly, Jonathan and his armorbearer *were* not *there*.

- **1 Samuel 14:18-21 (NKJV)**

¹⁸ And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here" (for at that time the ark of God was with the children of Israel).

¹⁹ Now it happened, while Saul talked to the priest, that the noise which *was* in the camp of the Philistines continued to increase; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

²⁰ Then Saul and all the people who *were* with him assembled, and they went to the battle; and indeed every man's sword was against his neighbor, *and there was* very great confusion.

²¹ Moreover the Hebrews *who* were with the Philistines before that time, who went up with them into the camp *from the* surrounding *country*, they also joined the Israelites who *were* with Saul and Jonathan.

- **1 Samuel 14:22-26 (NKJV)**

²² Likewise all the men of Israel who had hidden in the mountains of Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, they also followed hard after them in the battle.

²³ So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Beth Aven.

²⁴ And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed *is* the man who eats *any* food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food.

²⁵ Now all *the people* of the land came to a forest; and there was honey on the ground.

²⁶ And when the people had come into the woods, there was the honey, dripping; but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

- **1 Samuel 14:27-30 (NKJV)**

²⁷ But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that *was* in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his countenance brightened.

²⁸ Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed *is* the man who eats food this day.' " And the people were faint.

²⁹ But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.

³⁰ How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now would there not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

- **1 Samuel 14:31-34 (NKJV)**

³¹ Now they had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. So the people were very faint.

³² And the people rushed on the spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered *them* on the ground; and the people ate *them* with the blood.

³³ Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood!" So he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone to me this day."

³⁴ And Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and say to them, 'Bring me here every man's ox and every man's sheep, slaughter *them* here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.' " So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night, and slaughtered *it* there.

- **1 Samuel 14:35-38 (NKJV)**

³⁵ Then Saul built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

³⁶ Now Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and plunder them until the morning light; and let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." Then the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."

³⁷ So Saul asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him that day.

³⁸ And Saul said, "Come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today.

- **1 Samuel 14:39-43 (NKJV)**

³⁹ For *as* the LORD lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not a man among all the people answered him.

⁴⁰ Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."

⁴¹ Therefore Saul said to the LORD God of Israel, "Give a perfect *lot*." So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped.

⁴² And Saul said, "Cast *lots* between my son Jonathan and me." So Jonathan was taken.

⁴³ Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, and said, "I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in my hand. So now I must die!"

- **1 Samuel 14:44-47 (NKJV)**

⁴⁴ And Saul answered, "God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan."

⁴⁵ But the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die.

⁴⁶ Then Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

⁴⁷ So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he harassed *them*.

- **1 Samuel 14:48-52 (NKJV)**

⁴⁸ And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.

⁴⁹ The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Jishui and Malchishua. And the names of his two daughters *were these*: the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal.

⁵⁰ The name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army *was* Abner the 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 Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.

What do we see?

- Jonathan asks his armor bearer to go with him to search out the enemy's camp.
- Jonathan did not tell his father.
- Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree.
- The people did not know that Jonathan had gone.
- Jonathan's trust was in the Lord. "It may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few."
- Jonathan and his armor bearer's slaughter caused fear in the enemy and an earthquake. "The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling."

Comments

- Seeing his father's inactivity, **Jonathan** slipped away with **his armorbearer** to attack **the Philistines**. This was not a brash stunt or a foolish suicide mission. Jonathan was looking to God to provide a great victory. It did not matter that there were only two of them. Jonathan's confidence was: "**For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.**" Jonathan's faith would be rewarded. God showed him that he would have success when the Philistines would invite him up, perhaps thinking he was a deserter. As soon as the Philistines said "**Come up to us,**" ... **Jonathan climbed up** to their **garrison**, and soon laid **twenty** of their number in the dust. As the survivors fled, God sent an earthquake which caused great confusion in the Philistine camp. The *faith* evidenced by **Jonathan** ([v. 6](#)) and **his armorbearer** ([v. 7](#)) was all God needed to deal with the Philistines. Too bad that Saul's *foolishness* lessened the fruits of victory!

- Quite a contrast of these two leaders is shown in this passage. With Israel at war, desperately outnumbered, and miserably equipped,
- Saul is seen under a pomegranate tree—out of the sun and safely out of reach of the Philistines. Samuel has given him no guidance after his disobedience at Gilgal ([13:1-14](#)), but he has with him a priest wearing the ephod—one of the means of determining the will of God (see [23:9-12](#); [30:6-8](#)). Yet Saul never inquires of God what he should do.
- Jonathan, on the other hand, has a definite sense of God's will that prompts him to take action. He is troubled by the influence the Philistines hold over Israel, and he is eager to do something about it. He recruits his armor-bearer to go out on a mission with him. He neither asks permission from nor informs his father. While Saul doesn't want to cause trouble with the Philistines, Jonathan wants to be troubled by them no longer. Layman's Bible Commentary

- The Israelites were trembling in 13:7, because of the enemy and caused by Jonathan.
- The Philistines are trembling in 14:15, began by Jonathan and his armor bearer.
- The ground is trembling beneath the Philistines as God sends an earthquake.
- Saul's watchmen see the enemy leaving and tells Saul.
- Saul takes roll and finds Jonathan and his armor bearer missing.
- **Saul** promptly called for **Ahijah** the priest to **bring the ark** so that he could inquire of the Lord. But quickly changed his mind when the tumultuous **noise** among the enemy increased; he told **the priest** to **withdraw his hand**—i.e., to stop seeking the Lord's will ([v. 19](#)). He rallied his forces, convinced that he did not need divine guidance to know that the Lord was delivering the Philistines into his hands.

The Oath and it's curse

- And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed *is* the man who eats *any* food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food.
- The people came into the woods, there was honey, dripping. No one ate of it because they feared the oath. Even though they were faint and hungry.
- Jonathan ate of the honey since he had not heard his father's oath. His countenance brightened.
- They told Jonathan of the oath and curse.

Jonathan's response

- But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now would there not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"
- Jonathan must have realized his father's poor leadership and inability to trust the Lord rather than trusting in himself, in numbers, in the Ark or in oaths and curses.
- When they had driven back the enemy, because of hunger and faintness the people began killing animals they had taken from the enemy and eating them with the blood.

comments

- Saul's restriction not only angered Jonathan, but it endangered the people as well. When the fighting was over, they **rushed on the spoil**, killed the livestock, and **ate** it without draining **the blood**, in violation of [Leviticus 17:10-14](#) and [Deuteronomy 12:23-25](#). When **Saul** heard this, he rebuked them and set up **a large stone** where animals were to be **brought** and slain properly. He also **built an altar**, his **first**. Believer's Bible Commentary
- Saul now becomes an obstacle, a hindrance in this battle. This crazy command was motivated by vengeance and pride, not God's glory. Saul's rash command distresses and hinders the army from total victory. They became too weak to fight. Saul was so concerned about avenging himself that he neglected the needs of his men. Our selfishness hurts and hinders others.

- Saul desires to continue fighting the enemy.
- At the prompting of the priest Saul seeks God's council.
- God does not answer causing Saul to seek to blame someone for God's silence.
- Lots are cast and Jonathan is taken.
- Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, and said, "I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in my hand. So now I must die!"
And Saul answered, "God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan."
- Saul was willing to put his own son to death because of his foolish oath and to save his own pride.

- In his zeal, Saul wanted to pursue **the Philistines** into the **night**, so he again talked to **the priest** about consulting **God**. But God **did not answer him**. This led Saul to believe that there was **sin** in the camp. As was done in such cases, the lot was brought out, and to Saul's surprise, **Jonathan was taken**, that is, shown to be the guilty one by the way the lot came out. **Jonathan** explained what had happened, and Saul, to save face, ordered him put to death. **But the people** showed more sense than did their king. Hadn't **Jonathan... worked with God** to bring this great victory? How could God be displeased with him for breaking Saul's curse, when He had used him so mightily in battle? No, Jonathan would **not die**. Thus the hero was spared an undeserved death. But while Saul was engaged in such unnecessary nonsense, **the Philistines** fled. For the second time his lack of wisdom had diminished his victory.

Chapter conclusion

- The people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die.
- Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place. Why? Had he continued what God through Jonathan had begun he may have not had the trouble with the Philistines he had later on. Saul seems to be more content under dominion of the Philistines than Jonathan was.
- Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies.
- There was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.
- The last verse is a fulfillment of Samuel's prediction that the king would draft Israel's valiant sons into military service ([1 Sam. 8:11](#)).

Leadership

- **1 Timothy 4:12 (NKJV)**
¹² Let no one despise your youth, but be an **example** to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (NKJV)**
¹² And we urge you, brethren, to **recognize** those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.
- **Proverbs 29:2 (NKJV)**
² When the **righteous** are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked *man* rules, the people groan.
- **Genesis 6:9 (NKJV)**
Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah **walked** with God.
- **Titus 2:3 (NKJV)**
³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, **teachers** of good things--
- **Titus 2:7-8 (NKJV)**
⁷ **in all things** showing yourself *to be* a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,
⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.

- Saul's decision to take things into his own hands was the start to his downfall. Here are some things we can learn from this story,
- Leader's need to be obedient to God's words and commands.
- Leader's need to be patient and trust in God's timing.
- Leader's need to be guided by God, not by emotions or what is seen.
- Leader's need to have Godly fear not worldly fear.
- Leader's should be careful of what compels them.
- Leader's should know Gods plans are higher than mans.
- We can learn a lot from King Saul. We learn more of what not to do than what to do. A person can have so much potential to be a good leader but because of bad choices and decision, they loose their ability to be a good influence on others and lead them in the right way.

- **Proverbs 3:5-7 (NKJV)**

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.