

JONATHAN, SON OF SAUL

1 Samuel 13:23 TO 1 Samuel 14:35.

Hopefully, we can continue to add to what we learned from Steve's presentation, last week. There is much more dialogue. Perhaps that tells us more about the different characters.

- A) Jonathan and his armour bearer set off to attack an outpost. He did not tell his father and no-one realised he had left the Israelite camp.

Wreckless or courageous? Did he demonstrate the qualities of being a future king?

- B) "Let's go across to see those pagans" "Perhaps the Lord will help i us for nothing can hinder the Lord. He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or a few."
"I'm with you completely whatever you decide"

What do these statements inform you as to the nature of Jonathan's faith?

- C) "We will cross over and let them see us. If they say to us, 'Stay where you are or we will kill you', then we will stop and not go over to them. But if they say, 'Come on up and fight,' then we will go up. That will be the Lord's sign that he will help us defeat them."

Is this a good method of determining the Lord's will?

- D) Challenged by the Philistines, Jonathan said to his Armour Bearer, "Come on, climb right behind me, for the Lord will help us defeat them."
They killed about 20 men, causing panic to break out in the Philistine army. The Philistines fled.

Do you think this disarray was caused by human agency, or Divine agency, or a combination of both?

- E) Just then an earthquake struck and everyone was terrified!

Was this Divine intervention or a coincidental, natural happening?

- F). The Israelite lookouts saw the army dissipate, causing Saul to ask questions. Discovering Jonathan and his Armour Bearer missing, and probably concluding that they played some part in this, he decided to consult with the priest. However, the commotion in the Philistine camp grew louder. “Never mind; let’s get going.”

Saul saw a strategic, military advantage in moving quickly. Consulting with the priest may put the Israelites at a disadvantage. Was this a good idea?

- G) The men of Israel were worn out before they could conclude their military operations because of Saul’s oath. (A curse was to fall on anyone who ate before Saul had full revenge on his enemies.)

We have discussed oaths before. Do you think this oath imposed by Saul was a reflection of his tenuous hold on power?

- H) Verses 21 and 22 indicate some Israelites appear to be part of the Philistine army. Some Israelites were in hiding. When they saw Saul had the upper hand, they went over to him.

What does this tell you about the birth pangs of the state of Israel?

- J) Jonathan ate the honey because he was unaware of the oath. He felt revitalised. He realised the major blunder his father had made from a military point of view, the result of which would affect Israel for years to come. The problem was compounded by the fact that the soldiers were so desperate for sustenance they ended up eating meat with blood still present.

What lesson can we learn from this debacle?