

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

This evening we continue our study through the book of 1 Samuel.

In scripture, we have example after example of individuals and nations that have fallen into sin.

Sometimes, in the examples we see a progression that leads to sin and sometimes the scriptures do not provide us with evidence of a progression.

For example, a few weeks ago when we the events of Achan in the book of Joshua, we were given no progression – Achan appears in scripture and the first thing that is mentioned of him is that he sinned against God – by taking of the accursed things.

Saul, however, over the past couple of chapters, he is doing things that he wasn't doing at the beginning.

When he was first appointed king, the scriptures tell us that he was very humble.

But in chapter 13, we saw that Saul was taken credit for Jonathan's victory.

We saw Saul make the unlawful sacrifice in or order to keep the rest of his soldiers from abandoning him.

Saul is beginning to show signs that his only interest is the adoration of the people.

That's all he cares about – are the people still going to like me.

And here in chapter 14, we are going to see that progression continue.

[1Sa 14:1-52 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.

At the end of chapter 13, we saw that the Israelites appeared to be in trouble.

The Philistines had amassed a huge army and they were ready for war against the Israelites.

Not only were the Israelites outmanned – they also lacked weapons. And the reason that they lacked weapons was that the Philistines were the ones that would supply them with weapons.

The only ones with swords and spears were Saul and his son Jonathan.

Now, Jonathan is different than his father, as Saul is progressing toward further disobedience, Jonathan is placing his trust in the Lord.

Jonathan is prepared to do something – he doesn't care about how big the Philistine army is – or how well equipped they are. His focus is on how big his God is.

I asked you to make a note of Jonathan not telling his father.

Maybe he knew his father would have disapproved and try to talk him out of it or maybe he just saw the bad decision making that his father had been making.

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.

In verse 2, we have the king sitting, surrounded by his bodyguards while his son is taking the necessary steps of faith as he walks toward the enemy.

Along with his bodyguards, we see that one of the high priests was there with Saul as well.

I asked you to make a note of the word ephod, an ephod was an outer garment that the high priests would wear. Almost like an apron. (Exodus 39:2 – provides us with some of the details of how it was supposed to be made)

I also asked you to make note that no one was aware that Jonathan was going to confront the Philistines.

Jonathan wasn't doing it for attention. If he was, he would have told others. It was between him and God.

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 Seneh. 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.**"

One of the great missionaries, William Carey, once said, "Attempt great things for God and expect great things from God"

Many times, we do not attempt great things for God because we feel that we are insignificant. We feel that we are too weak.

However, church, that is when God uses us.

You see, He wants all the glory.

Gideon in the book of Judges (7) started off with 32,000 men to go against 150,000 and God told him that was too many. And God continued to cut the number until it went all the way to 300.

And God gave them the victory.

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. 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."

Even though Jonathan is walking by faith, he wants to make sure that what he is about to do is really God's will and not just something crazy that he decided to do.

So if it is God's will, they expect the Philistines to ask them to come over where they are at – if it is not God's will, the philistines will want to come to them and if that is the case – they can run away.

It is always important to make sure that God is the one leading us into taking those steps of faith.

I cannot simply say, I am going to go start a church in Iran.

Because if it is not in God's will, I am going to be in big trouble.

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." 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.

So Jonathan shows himself to the Philistines and they call Jonathan over – showing it was God’s will – and when Jonathan and his armor bearer get there, the Philistines are caught off guard and they kill 20 Philistines.

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.

So as Jonathan and the armor bearer kill the Philistines, God causes an earthquake in the area and this leads to mass confusion where the Philistines now start to fight among themselves.

And as all of this is going on, Saul's spies are watching.

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]. 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."

When the spies tell Saul what's going on with the Philistines, instead of joining Jonathan in the attack, Saul decides to take roll call.

You see, Saul takes roll call because he wanted to see who was leading the fight against the Philistines.

He was worried about who was going to get the credit.

So Saul finds out that it was Jonathan and he calls on the priests – he wants to make it appear that he is being spiritual by calling on the priest and bringing in the Ark of the Covenant.

But as the noise gets louder and louder coming from the Philistines camp – Saul didn't want to seek the council of the Lord.

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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. 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.

Saul and his men join the fight and they see the Philistines fighting among themselves.

And in verse 21, there were Hebrews that pretended to be

Philistines, they came out and fought along the Israelites as well.

And all of this is a response to Jonathan's step of faith. It encouraged others and gave them boldness.

Jonathan was willing to trust God and see what He would do.

As a result, all the people that had been hiding out of fear were encouraged to join the battle.

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

God really used Jonathan, but it wasn't Jonathan's victory. It wasn't Saul's victory.

It was the LORD's victory. God was just waiting for someone with the bold trust of Jonathan.

Someone who was going to take a great step of faith.

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.

At the end of verse 23, we saw that the battle had shifted to Beth Aven.

Beth Aven is an 18 mile walk from where they were.

The people had been fighting all day and walking all day and then Saul makes this foolish oath.

Why would Saul make this foolish oath?

Because he wanted to make it appear that that he was being spiritual. He orders a fast. And he does this through an oath and a curse.

You see, what Saul really cared about was getting revenge on the Philistines.

Saul took something spiritual, like fasting, which should draw us to the Lord – that should be the focus when we fast – and Saul made the focus all about him.

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. 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?"

The Israelites are chasing the Philistines and they go into the forest and there is honey on the floor – who provided the honey on the floor? God – this was His provisions. They were all tired and hungry, they needed energy to continue the pursuit and finish the battle. However, Saul's oath prevented that.

Jonathan ate some – and when he did his countenance brightened. He had energy because he ate of God's provisions.

And when he is told of Saul oath, Jonathan replies that his father was wrong.

Because if his father had not given the oath, the men would have eaten the honey and be energized to continue the fight.

But the oath only make them weak and they were unable to finish the fight.

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

Here we have another consequence of Saul foolish oath.

Because they were so tired and hungry – Saul oath provoked the people to defile themselves by not properly draining the blood from the animals before they ate.

[Deu 12:23-25 NKJV] 23 "Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for the blood [is] the life; you may not eat the life with the meat. 24 "You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water. 25 "You shall not eat it, that it may go well with you and your children after you, when you do [what is] right in the sight of the LORD.

Their obedience to Saul's foolish command led them to disobey God's clearly declared command.

When they tell Saul that the people are eating the meat mixed with blood – he blames the people instead of himself.

This is something that we are going to see Saul do next week.

He never takes responsibility for his actions – he never repents - it is always the someone else's fault.

You might remember in our last chapter when he offered the unlawful sacrifice – he blamed Samuel for showing up late instead of repenting for what he has done.

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.

As Saul is once again barking orders, the priests come to him and suggest that they seek the council of the Lord and when Saul seeks council – no answer.

Turn with me to the book of Psalms.

[Psa 66:18 NKJV] 18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

Saul had iniquity in his heart and chose not to repent.

There are times, when God doesn't answer our prayers – and it is because something is not right in us. Especially when we know we are doing wrong and fail to confess our sin and repent.

Now, it gets worse.

Saul then attempts to find out why the Lord did not speak to him.

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

Saul comes to the conclusion that the reason that God didn't speak to him was because someone ate honey. Someone broke the fast and he proceeds to make another oath – even if the culprit was his son, he would die.

And then it was revealed through lots that it was Jonathan that ate the honey and Jonathan accepts the judgment.

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

Saul was willing to kill his son rather than to humbly admit that he was really at fault.

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.

The people finally stood up to Saul's foolishness as they would not allow Jonathan to be executed.

And because Saul was always looking for their approval, he did not harm Jonathan.

However, these oaths allowed the Philistines to get away.

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]. 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.**

When the Israelites demanded a king – Samuel warned them that a human king would take all their sons and all their daughters so that they might serve him.

As Saul continues his reign over the Children of Israel, he built his army with the best that the Israelites had.

Just like Samuel had prophesied 2 years earlier.

Next week, we will see Saul's progression continue.

Once again he will fail to repent and once again he will place the blame on someone else.

Let's pray...