

An Invitation to Move from Fear to Faith
Jonathan's Faith vs. Saul's Control
Invitation to Leadership Series - Part 7

1 Samuel 14:1-52
May 31-June 1, 2025

Introduction

- How we process life – I want to begin our time together **discussing how we process life decisions. I think that our beliefs directly impact our thoughts, and our thoughts directly impact our decisions.**
- What do we do when we face challenges? **Do we connect with the Lord about it or do we try to fix it personally?** Interestingly we all have different ways that we handle things and different categories of what we do ourselves and what we bring to the Lord. Let me share with you **a list of struggles and think to yourself whether you would just handle it yourself:**
 - Investment strategy for retirement
 - Our kids falling into a bad group of friends
 - Changing jobs
 - Cancer diagnosis
 - Rocky marriage
 - Getting sued in court
- Do you assume that God is on your side in scenarios like this or do you wonder if He is?
- Do you assume that the clearest answer is right? Or do you consider whether or not you could have a blind spot?
- How do you respond if things start to get out of control? What's your reaction if the scenario starts to slip away?
- How do you handle no-win situations? Give up or fight anyway?

Faith leads to **BOLDNESS**; Control leads to **FEAR**

- Faith vs. Fear - **Faith** means '**CONFIDENCE**. It usually **speaks to confidence in whoever or whatever is responsible to handle a situation. FEAR**, on the other hand, comes from **INSECURITY**. **They are not complete opposites**, because you can have faith even while processing fear, but they tend to lead to different conclusions. **When we are faith-filled we move forward. When we are fearful and insecure we tend to stop or draw back.**
- Attempts at control stimulate fear – **when we try to control things ourselves, we are forced to look at what we CAN do. That means we look at the challenge facing us and assess our resources to overcome the challenge. The problem is that IF everything is in our hands, then we need to have an answer to every problem.** This means that fear lurks at every decision. What if you can't do it? If there's no greater help, then you have to solve everything. No human can control life and certainly not God, which makes us insecure.

- BUT, God – but IF God is in charge, then it’s even more His problem than our problem and He is more than just a support or partner, He is the leader in the solution.
- Last Week – Youth Takeover – Let’s appreciate Pastor Cliff Woodward for bringing the Word!
 - We learned
 - Ammonite attack, Saul rises up - Saul had returned to normal life after being anointed but then the Ammonites attacked an Israelite city (on the Transjordan side, the east side on the other side of the Jordan river) and Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit¹, with a holy anger, and rallied Israel together (330,000) to defeat them.
 - Opposers pardoned - Those who opposed him being king along the way were threatened but Saul didn’t want them harmed.
 - Saul made official king - A year after being anointed, He was officially brought on as king of Israel from the whole nation.
 - Samuel announces his official leadership resignation² – reminds Israel of their habitual turning from the Lord. He tells them IF they and the king follow the Lord, it’s going to go well. If not, watch out. He reminds them that asking for a king was a bad idea and to prove that it offended God he said that God was going to bring a surprise thunderstorm. The people freak out.
 - 2 years into Saul’s reign, Saul and Jonathan pick a fight (3,000 Israelites) with the Philistines (who dominate them) and the Philistines rally in force for retaliation. All Israel is afraid. Samuel told him that he was going to come and offer sacrifices to the Lord for their victory in the Lord’s name. Samuel was late.
 - Saul offered the holy sacrifice himself out of fear and frustration (couldn’t wait for Samuel).³ Samuel walks up at the end of it.

¹ “Even though the expression the spirit of God rushed upon is the same in 10:6 and here, the result differs. In 10:10 Saul began prophesying in the midst of the band of prophets; here he was filled with anger and power, like Samson (Judg. 14:6, 19; 15:14), “to undertake heroic feats of arms.” Note also the similar experiences of Othniel (Judg. 3:10), Gideon (6:34), and Jephthah (11:29). “Saul appears for the present to have more of the charismatic ‘judge’ than the constitutional monarch. However, his symbolic act and accompanying message do seem to presuppose a certain amount of authority on his part.” Apparently the recipients of the message needed no further identification as to who “Saul” was.” NICOT

² “The present chapter has been traditionally taken as Samuel’s “farewell speech” and compared with that of Joshua (Joshua 24). As McCarter points out, the two speeches renew the Deuteronomistic covenant at critical historical junctures. One is at the time of the completion of the conquest and the beginning of Israel’s life in the land, and the other, at the end of the age of the judges and the beginning of life under the kings and before the erection of the temple.” NICOT

³ “But Saul judged the situation according to what he saw, not by faith in the Lord. Note the sharp contrast between Saul here and Jonathan in ch. 14: while Saul is concerned with the reduction in his troops, Jonathan does not concern himself about the great number of the enemy and totally depends upon the Lord (14:6).” NICOT

- Samuel rebukes Saul⁴ – IF you would have done this right, God would have established your reign and your lineage as kings. But now that you’ve disobeyed, **He will choose another royal family line.**⁵
- War time – the Philistines had an innumerable army, while Israel only had 3,000 soldiers (2,000 with Saul and 1,000 with Jonathan), down in the tribe of Benjamin region (the rest of the soldiers were sent home), and **Jonathan attacked with his 1,000** (like to do an assassination of one of their key leaders – governor/prefect) **agitating the Philistines.** It seems that Saul and Jonathan were trying to root out Philistine strongholds in their home-tribal area. The Philistines were angry and were storming into the area in retaliation. By this time **Saul and Jonathan’s army was whittled down to about 600 warriors left** at this time (seemingly due to desertion) and few weapons. Everyone was hiding out. Saul had his warriors, and Jonathan went ahead to do some scouting with one other guy. **In a straight fight, Israel will get wiped out.**
- What’s going to happen??? – The Philistines aren’t going home, and they outnumber Israel with stunning odds. Israel has to fight somehow, but how? What’s going to happen? That’s today’s message.

Lesson

- Let’s Take a Look-See
 - Jonathan goes on a scouting mission
 - *1 Samuel 14:1–5 – “One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, “Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side.” But he did not tell his father. ² Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah in the pomegranate cave at Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men, 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. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. ⁴ Within the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side and a rocky crag on the other side. The name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. ⁵ The one crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.”*
 - One day Jonathan the son of Saul – This is one of the first times that we learn that Saul has kids. It’s unclear if Saul had kids when he first went looking for donkeys and when he was anointed as king by Samuel. The chronology and certainly the timeframes of this portion of Scripture (Saul’s reign) are messy and confusing. All we know is that at this point Saul has

⁴ “Following the description of the transition of leadership from Samuel to Saul in ch. 12, the narrative quickly moves on toward the rejection of Saul. At the very beginning of this section, in v. 1, the narrator seems to emphasize the shortness (i.e., just for two years) of Saul’s reign in God’s eyes. The following three chapters, chs. 13–15, are therefore a build-up toward the climax of choosing David, Saul’s neighbor (15:28), as God’s anointed. From a literary perspective, Saul’s rejection and David’s rise thus constitute a <not A but B> pattern. As R. P. Gordon comments, “the dominant feeling in chs. 13–15 is not of success, but of failure.” Saul is twice rejected by God for his disregard of God’s word (see 13:13 and 15:11, 23), despite Samuel’s warning to both the people and their king not to act wickedly (12:25), that is, to disobey the word of God.” NICOT

⁵ “It is more significant that both events happened at the same place, Gilgal; Saul was about to be rejected at the very place where he was made king in 11:15.” NICOT

adult children and his oldest seems to be a kid named Jonathan. Technically he is a prince because his dad is the king. His dad was recently announced nationally and seated as official king, so he is known as a prince. But in small nations kings and princes go to war with their people.

- Benjaminites – We need to remember that both Saul and his son are Benjaminites and most of the soldiers in this particular story are also Benjaminites. What do we know about them? **They are fiery, impetuous, hard-headed, and really good at fighting.**
- said to the young man who carried his armor, - this is an armor-bearer. Another way to say it is he's like a squire to a knight. He's the assistant and the one that fights closely alongside the main guy. Usually he is responsible for assisting with the gear and carrying some of the heavier pieces so that while the leader is leading and talking he is not having to carry the heavy stuff. It's like a portable table or rack walking with you. When you need your gear, you grab it quickly and go. There are very few people more trusted than an armor bearer because they tend to be armed even when you aren't. They are like bodyguards.
- "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." – a garrison is a post of soldiers. It can be an outpost (separate from the main area), or the main area. It simply means a group of soldiers holding a spot down and using it as a homebase. Jonathan wants to go see the closest outpost of Philistine soldiers to see what they are up against. There are already official scouts or 'watchmen' who are keeping tabs on the major movements of the Philistine army but Jonathan and his guy are sneaking around and checking out a specific fortified holdout.
- But he did not tell his father. – this is telling to me. Why wouldn't you tell someone you are doing something? Either because it slipped your mind (they didn't need to know), or you don't want them to know because they would oppose the plan. What this indicates is that although they are father and son they are clearly on different pages in certain areas. That's common but it seems to be highlighted a lot in our stories today. We will find throughout this series that Jonathan and Saul are partners in war, but have sharply different perspectives on how life should be handled and certainly about how God and people should be handled.
- Should Jonathan have checked in? – it's easy to see the outcome of all of this long-term and say, 'oh, he was fine. God was in it.' But at this point in the story, as it's happening, it's a risky thing to do. Whatever decisions he makes endangers hundreds if not thousands of people. Whatever fight he starts he's drawing in everyone else. So, he should have notified the whole team. Two things are clear to me: 1.) the whole army is in disarray and not operating on a clear plan with unity. They are a bit more like a ragtag group of violent guerilla warfare soldiers and each person is kind of doing his own thing. There have been a lot of deserters to get us to this point and the ones still around

are iffy on their loyalty. Jonathan has the most power to do his own thing in the group as the prince. He can get away with disobeying the king a little more than others although we will find out that he doesn't have a ton of leeway. 2.) Jonathan is as fiery and stubborn as his dad. They are both hotheads. The apple didn't fall far from this particular tree.

- Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah in the pomegranate cave at Migron. – Gibeah is Saul and Jonathan's homebase and home town. Although the monarchy was still in its infancy and technically the Philistines ran things around the area as the bigger nation. Saul was in his leadership area which is either near a pomegranate tree or in a cave called the pomegranate cave. It's just outside town.
 - A diminished Israel – we cannot forget that Israel as a nation is really disorganized and diminished at this point in history. They went from the mighty leadership of Joshua and Moses in conquering and lived through the dark ages of the period of the Judges. They lost a lot of people, a ton of power, and a lot of property. They are the underdogs and kind of needing to be scrappy to fight for what they need.
- The people who were with him were about six hundred men, - the army used to be 3,000 but with all the desertions it had dwindled down to 600. Morale is low but those who stayed around are likely more loyal than most and probably tougher than most. But they are fighting a MASSIVE Philistine army and the odds are terrible. This is presenting an impossible scenario. What can they do? What will they do?
- 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.⁶ – The point of this lineage is to say that Saul had a priest with him. The guy happened to be in the line of Eli and if you remember God removed Eli's sons and told Eli that his line would be wiped out eventually. this is the last vestiges of that priesthood era. The ephod was the special robe that the main priest would wear that contained the Urim and Thummim (ways of discerning the will of God).
- And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. – No one was tracking the prince and his pal. They were a bit rogue and maverick. The rest of the team were waiting for orders from king Saul but Jonathan was on his own.

⁶ "Here we are given the genealogy of the priest Ahijah, who was wearing the ephod... The name Ahijah means "My brother is Yah"; the element "brother" is a popular epithet in PN of Northwest Semites.¹⁶ He is the great-grandson of Eli and the brother of Ahimelech, priest of Nob and father of Abiathar (22:9, 11, 12, 20)... Ahijah is noted here as wearing the ephod. The term nōšē' means basically "carrying," though it is sometimes translated either as was wearing (so NIV; NASB; McCarter) or as "bearing" (JPS). Note that the ephod is carried, not worn, eight times in 1 Samuel; David uses it to seek the divine will in 23:9 and 30:7. For the ephod ('ēpôd), see on 2:28. It contained a pocket or compartment for the Urim and Thummim (see on 14:41–42). (The "linen ephod" worn by Samuel [2:18] and by the eighty-five priests of Nob [22:18] is a different, though probably related, item of clothing.) The mention of the ephod here prepares the audience to think that Ahijah was wearing the ephod when he inquired the Lord in v. 9; also see vv. 18–19 and 36–40. Note that vv. 2–3 provides background information (SETTING) since both verses begin with disjunctive waw, not wayqtl. Hence, it is not necessary to infer, like Klein,¹⁸ that Saul was already seeking an oracle here." NICOT

knows better and He's the one in charge. We can have good plans but it only matters if God thinks it's a good plan and His plan. But notice that Jonathan doesn't doubt the power and might of the Lord. He said, 'if God is with us, NO ONE can stand in our way. The odds don't matter. God can do whatever God wants to do.' In a tiny sense he's preaching both to himself and to his armor bearer.

- Do you believe that God is able? – many times our prayers and faith are weak because we doubt that God CAN. We may not be convinced that He WILL but we must be certain that God CAN.
- Are you honoring God's authority? – is there a humility in your heart, mind, life and choices that acknowledges that God is the one that gets to make the final call. We are not to try to manipulate Him, force Him, or usurp His right. We need to honor Him and check in with Him, not press our way.
- Are we taking the bold steps we need to? – Jonathan saw something difficult but needed to happen. He had confidence in the Lord and took the leap of faith. Should we be doing more of that?
 - When should we step out? – I think the key question is whether or not it's God's plan. But that doesn't really solve it because it's hard to discern God's plan sometimes. But I begin all big decisions by assessing how much self-benefit, or selfishness is involved in either the process or outcome. Anything that benefits me significantly is highly suspect. It's not that it's automatically wrong, Jonathan would benefit from a win over the Philistines. It just means it's suspect.
- And his armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul." – this is both loyalty and faith. He truly believes both in his role to Jonathan (support) and confidence that Jonathan tracks on God and makes good choices. It's fascinating that Jonathan has someone who truly trusts him when he's not able to trust his dad and was hiding his actions.
 - Who are your supporters? – too often we lack supportive people in our lives. Then again, too often we have blind supporters in our life. Either people don't back us up for the right reasons or they back us up in the wrong ways. It's critical that we assess who our support network is and make sure they are healthy and faith-filled. We need people that will tell us the truth both for correction and for encouragement.
- Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them. – This sounds like a stupid choice at first because it says, 'let's go openly show ourselves to an enemy that outnumbers us.' But if we let him finish, there's more to the plan.
- If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and we will not go up to them. But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the Lord has given them into our hand. And

this shall be the sign to us. – Jonathan is conducting an experiment to discern the voice of the Lord. He’s going to do a Gideon fleece scenario to find out what God wants. He’s going to do a test. The Philistines have no clue they are being tested so their responses will be unbiased. If they respond one way, God is saying to keep going. If they respond in the other, God is saying, ‘no. not now.’

- Jonathan’s Check First – I love that Jonathan isn’t hot headed enough to just go blindly into a rage without checking in with the Lord. It’s a serious decision. He’s actually leaving it in the Lord’s hands in the only way that he knows (flipping a coin of sorts). I think doing bold moves is important and valuable. I think that doing so with a check in with the Lord is wise and necessary.
- Sign ‘O’ the Times
 - Jonathan follows the Lord’s leading into battle
 - *1 Samuel 14:11–15 – “So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, “Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves.”¹² And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, “Come up to us, and we will show you a thing.” And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, “Come up after me, for the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.”¹³ Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him.¹⁴ And that first strike, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow’s length in an acre of land.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, and it became a very great panic.”*
 - So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. – they stepped out of the shadows and hiding spot and let the Philistines see them to initiate the test. Game on.
 - And the Philistines said, “Look, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves.” – The Philistines have no idea they are being tested and think that a few of the enemy are exposing themselves and perhaps are going to give themselves up. Other Hebrews/Jews had defected in the past to them and they assume these are doing the same. They don’t know who Jonathan is and they don’t care.
 - And the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said, “Come up to us, and we will show you a thing.” – this is kind of a weird statement and I’m not sure what they want to show them, or whether they are saying, ‘oh ya, come closer. I have something for you.’ And then they kill them. But whatever it means, it was the trigger word for

Jonathan and his buddy to go into attack mode with full confidence that God was in it.

- And Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, “Come up after me, for the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.” – Jonathan clearly heard the authorization and confirmation and bolstered his buddy and said, ‘it’s go time! Let’s do this!’
- Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. – They climbed up the rest of the way, likely looking like they were going to give themselves up for a sneak attack, rather than trying to rush into battle through climbing.
- And they fell before Jonathan,¹¹ and his armor-bearer killed them after him. – The Philistine garrison of an unnamed number of soldiers started getting slaughtered. His armor bearer was right behind him slashing and hacking too.
- And that first strike, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow’s length in an acre of land. – they killed 20 guys immediately in the area and the rest of the garrison seems to panic and start to run.
- And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and even the raiders trembled, - Once the rest of the camp starts to see one of their outposts starting to run and retreat, they take notice. It’s at that time that God strikes them with fear internally and they start to panic. It seemed to spread through the whole camp and everyone was freaking out. It was only two guys attacking them but they don’t know that and they couldn’t think straight.
- the earth quaked, and it became a very great panic.¹² – At that very moment, God strikes the ground with an earthquake and that sends everyone into a frenzy. They are freaked out already and now the only solid thing, the ground, starts to shake. They may or may not have thought that an enemy God is attacking them, but they certainly knew something was wrong and it wasn’t going their way.
 - God moved second – Jonathan got the okay and took the step of faith and THEN God did His part. That’s key. It’s similar to the priests walking into the water with the ark of the covenant before the River Jordan parted (unlike the Red Sea where they waited for it to clear first). Most often God wants to give the okay and see His kids step out in faith and belief in Him before He moves. Are we missing miracles because we are waiting for the miracle BEFORE we move?
 - This is not the first time – In 1 Samuel 7, God fought the Philistines with confusion in battle. Perhaps Israel had that in mind.

¹¹ “Jonathan and his armor-bearer climbed the cliff and killed those Philistines.” NICOT

¹² “The phrase *herdat* ‘*ēlōhīm* (lit., “the trembling of God”) means either a trembling by God, “a terror from God” (JPS), “a panic sent by God” (NIV) or, taking ‘*ēlōhīm* superlatively, “a very great panic” (NRSV), “a great trembling” (NASB). The reference to God suggests that the “trembling” was not caused simply by Jonathan’s first attack but by the hand of God; hence, our translation God caused it to tremble.” NICOT

- My Son did What?
 - Saul finds out about Jonathan's raid
 - 1 Samuel 14:16–19 – *“And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude was dispersing here and there.”¹⁷ Then Saul said to the people who were with him, “Count and see who has gone from us.” And when they had counted, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there.¹⁸ So Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ark of God here.” For the ark of God went at that time with the people of Israel.¹⁹ Now while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.”*
 - And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude was dispersing here and there.¹³ – the panic and running and yelling of the Philistine camp catches the attention of the scouts from Saul's team and they know something big is happening and they need to be ready to respond. Are the Philistines attacking? No. They are retreating. Why? Who's attacking them?
 - Then Saul said to the people who were with him, “Count and see who has gone from us.” – Immediately Saul assumes that some of his team had gone without him knowing it. Who else would have come to their aid? They had no allies. It had to be their team. But who?
 - And when they had counted, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. – the report came back almost immediately that Jonathan, the prince, and his armor bearer were gone. I feel like Saul must have thought to himself, ‘it figures. It's my kid...’
 - So Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ark of God here.” For the ark of God went at that time with the people of Israel.¹⁴ – Saul's first reaction is ‘oh shoot, we are in it now’, and then he wants to get God-back up. He calls for the priest to get the ark of the covenant for two reasons: 1.) God's presence for the battle; 2.) for the priest to check in with God near it. There's an editor's note that Israel had the ark back at that time because there were times when it was stolen by the enemies like when the Philistines got it during Eli's time. I do have to give Saul credit for wanting God involved.

¹³ “the watchmen were presumably stationed on some hill between Gibeah and Michmash. Within 2 miles of Gibeah there are several hills from which there is an unobstructed view of Michmash, 2 to 3 miles away.” NICOT

¹⁴ “However, the ephod was already being worn by Ahijah (see v. 3) when the ark was brought near there. So, the issue is not the ark or the ephod but both. Saul must have asked Ahijah to inquire of the Lord using the ephod, before the ark of God. Therefore, Saul's command to Ahijah to withdraw his hand (v. 19) was probably understood as a command to withdraw it from the ephod, not from the ark. The verb “to withdraw” is used for the ephod twice (23:9; 30:7) in the OT, while it is not used with reference to the ark of God anywhere else in the OT. The ark of God was normally “carried” (*nś'); see on 4:4. It may be that Saul's use of the verb “bring near” hints at his careless attitude toward the ark of God, which symbolizes the presence of the Lord; it is man who should go before His holy presence not the other way around. But the most obvious difficulty is that the ark was presumably in Kiriath-jearim. However, there is no reason why the ark could not have been brought from Kiriath-jearim for this campaign and then taken back, just as it was brought from Shiloh in ch. 4. For some unknown but special reason, the ark was “among the Israelites” on that day. Even to the narrator, who provides the explanatory comment for the ark of God was on that day among the Israelites, the existence of the ark there was seemingly very special. He may be trying to convey that the ark was there only on that day. The phrase on that day (bayyôm hahû') is a key phrase in this chapter, also appearing in vv. 23, 24, 31, 37. By repeating it the narrator emphasizes the specific day, rather than “at that time.” NICOT

- Now while Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the camp of the Philistines increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.¹⁵ – Saul was trying to hurry and get God on his side when the roar of war started getting overwhelming and it was getting close. He had to go into action. He tells the priest, stop talking to God and trying to do this, we have to go. Whether good or bad, with the Lord, or not, there was no more time to wait. He had to fight and fight he did.

- Not by Might Nor by Power
 - God fights for Israel
 - 1 Samuel 14:20–23 – *“Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. And behold, every Philistine’s sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion.²¹ Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.²² Likewise, when all the men of Israel 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.²³ So the Lord saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.”*
 - Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. – Saul called for all of his team to rage into battle and they all went. It seems like they had some momentum and they didn’t want to lose it.
 - And behold, every Philistine’s sword was against his fellow,¹⁶ and there was very great confusion. – when they got there they saw that the Philistines were killing each other in front of them. They didn’t know why but they weren’t going to ask questions. They were going to take advantage of this bizarre scenario. It was so confusing but hey, let’s use it to our advantage. They didn’t know that God was fighting for them.
 - Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.¹⁷ – As the tide was turning and the Philistines were killing each other the defectors who had

¹⁵ “Saul’s two commands, Bring near the ark of God and Withdraw your hand (from the ephod), show his attitude toward the divine matters; he treats both the divine object and the divine method rather carelessly. Instead of inquiring of the priest, Saul commands him to do specific things, which are primarily under the authority of the priesthood. He commands Ahijah to seek divine guidance by means of the ephod, but, at a crucial time, he interrupts the consultation. Saul is a person who prays when he should act and acts when he should pray. Such inconsistency is one of Saul’s characteristics.” NICOT

¹⁶ “Each one’s sword refers to the situation that they killed each other, rather than that they fought each other. Thus, the translation is not “against his neighbor” but into his neighbor. R. P. Gordon aptly says: “If the Israelites are ill-equipped (13:22), Philistine weapons — and hands — can do their work for them (cf. Judg. 7:22).” NICOT

¹⁷ “For the Hebrews, see on 4:6; 13:3; 14:11. The term is used by the narrator here, not by the Philistines (so in v. 3), and these Hebrews were possibly the native Israelites “who defected to the enemy in times of distress and who now return as the fortunes of war change again.” See on 13:17. This illustrates well that the meaning of a word depends on its context and its speaker. In this chapter the word Hebrews is used both as a pejorative term for the Israelites by the Philistines (v. 3) and as a designation for a group of Israelites who had sided with the Philistines (here).” NICOT

left the Jews and went over to the Philistine side had a change of mind and heart and they shifted back to supporting Israel and started killing the Philistines too. No one would have assumed that. God is brilliant.

- Likewise, when all the men of Israel 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. – At the same time there were hiding Jewish soldiers who were too afraid to fight, became emboldened and they rushed in to support their brothers. So, in one moment the Israelite army went from severe underdogs pinned down, to aggressors and swelled numbers heading toward victory. Crazy!
 - So the Lord saved Israel that day. – let's make no mistake (the Bible clarifies this), GOD WON the fight. It wasn't brilliant Israelite strategy or simply Israelite courage. It was God. He saved them. He fought for them.
 - And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven¹⁸ - the chasing of the Philistines spread the battle around as people were getting slashed down.
- Forbidden Honey
 - Jonathan accidentally violates Saul's vow
 - *1 Samuel 14:24–30 – "And the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day, so Saul had laid an oath on the people, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies." So none of the people had tasted food. ²⁵ Now when all the people came to the forest, behold, there was honey on the ground. ²⁶ And when the people entered the forest, behold, the honey was dropping, 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, so he put out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright. ²⁸ Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man who eats food this day.' " And the people were faint. ²⁹ Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See how my eyes have become bright 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 that they found. For now the defeat among the Philistines has not been great."*
 - And the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day, - it was a brutally exhausting day. Even if the enemy was running, you still had to catch them and kill as many as you can and they aren't going to go easily. God gave them victory but they had to fight for it. They were exhausted!

¹⁸ "Beth-aven (also 13:5) is located a few miles to the northwest of Michmash." NICOT

- so Saul had laid an oath¹⁹ on the people,²⁰ saying, “Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening²¹ and I am avenged on my enemies.” – Saul, for whatever reason, decides that instead of his guys tiring out and quitting before the job was done, invokes a holy vow/oath. He says that no one can eat, they must all fast, until the battle is over. No one eats until we decisively win. He wanted to win, badly. He knew he wasn’t going to get another opportunity like this, so he pressures his guys with threats of a curse. It’s an ignorant jerk move wrapped in religious language.
 - Why did Saul make the oath? – Saul has a weird relationship with God and religion. He seems to not understand any of it, so he uses it wrong. Religion in the hands or hearts of those who don’t have a personal relationship with God is dangerous. [FINISH THIS]
- So none of the people had tasted food. – All of the current army saw that things were going their way, they saw their king was a bloodthirsty madman and they obeyed. They fasted the whole day and night.
- Now when all the people came to the forest, behold, there was honey on the ground. – Meanwhile there was a contingent of soldiers that had joined up with Jonathan and his armor bearer through the fight. They were all headed into a wooded area and they were starving and tired. There was wild honey on the ground for whatever reason.
- And when the people entered the forest, behold, the honey was dropping, but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. – No one ate it because they all knew that an army-wide fast was called by the king himself. They weren’t about to suffer the wrath of an angry king and certainly not God.
- But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath, so he put out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes became bright.²² – Jonathan wasn’t there when his dad issued the oath and he had no idea of the army-wide fast. He saw food and took advantage of it. He scooped up some and ate and it shifted his whole demeanor. He got more energy to keep fighting.
- Then one of the people said, “Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, ‘Cursed be the man who eats food this day.’ ” And

¹⁹ “On vow, see 1:11. The word of oath (*’lh) Cursed be the man (’ārūr; also v. 28; 26:19) is an illocutionary or “performative” utterance and hence has a binding force; if one breaks it, he will be cursed. Only cursing, not blessing, is involved in such an oath. Joshua (Josh. 6:26) and the men of Israel at Mizpah (Judg. 21:1, 18) also pronounced such a curse. Saul is the last one mentioned in the OT to utter such a curse. “Saul imposes a fast upon the army in an attempt, apparently, to influence Yahweh by a grandiose gesture of self-denial”⁵⁴ in order to continue securing the Lord’s help.” NICOT

²⁰ “Actually, Saul probably made his oath in v. 20 just before the attack, because once they were attacking it would have been difficult for the troops to know about it. As Jonathan was not there at that time, he did not hear of the oath.” NICOT

²¹ “The phrase before the evening (’ad-hā’āreb; lit., “until the evening”) refers to “today” (as in v. 28), that is, before the sunset. See on 20:5; 30:17, where “tomorrow or the next day” means after the sunset.” NICOT

²² “Jonathan probably experienced low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). It can be caused by vigorous exercise and lack of food; today it is most commonly experienced as an insulin reaction by diabetics. A symptom occasionally experienced is a “darkening” of the eyes, in which vision is darkened, appearing similar to the darkening of vision when one stands up too quickly. Eating honey would quickly raise the blood sugar level and make vision normally “bright” again.” NICOT

the people were faint. – everyone was suffering due to this poor and rash decision of Saul. They tell Jonathan what Saul had said and how serious he was about it.

- Then Jonathan said, “My father has troubled the land.²³ See how my eyes have become bright because I tasted a little of this honey. How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies that they found. – Jonathan was so disappointed in his dad. It was a stupid and costly decision. There was no reason for it and now everyone was suffering. Everything would have gone more smooth if Saul had just kept his mouth shut but he didn’t. Jonathan publicly names it as a bad choice and why it was bad. Everyone agreed with him.
- For now the defeat among the Philistines has not been great. – Jonathan laments the cost of the stupid vow. It could have been a great day of victory and joy and now it was just difficult, exhausting and mind numbing. Saul ruined it.
 - When leaders make bad calls – what do we do when those in authority over us make terrible decisions that hurt everyone around us? [FINISH THIS]
- Tempted Beyond Limits
 - The famished people dishonor the Mosaic Law
 - 1 Samuel 14:31–35 – *“They struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very faint. ³² The people pounced on the spoil and took sheep and oxen and calves and slaughtered them on the ground. And the people ate them with the blood. ³³ Then they told Saul, “Behold, the people are sinning against the Lord by eating with the blood.” And he said, “You have dealt treacherously; roll a great stone to me here.” ³⁴ And Saul said, “Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, ‘Let every man bring his ox or his sheep and 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 they slaughtered them there. ³⁵ And Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first altar that he built to the Lord.”*
 - They struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very faint. – The battle was long and hard. Everyone was beyond tired and they were starting to get unhealthy and desperate.
 - The people pounced on the spoil and took sheep and oxen and calves and slaughtered them on the ground. And the people ate them with the blood. – when they finally got to the Philistine resource area they found all the animals being held there and dove upon them and started slaughtering them right there and eating the meat raw. You have to be pretty desperate to eat raw meat in a dirty area. The problem was not

²³ “Jonathan thus criticizes his father for having brought disaster to the country by his impractical oath. While Saul was stubbornly religious, Jonathan was, by contrast, practically God-fearing.” NICOT

that they were unmannered but they were eating meat with blood in it which was a no-no.

- Then they told Saul, "Behold, the people are sinning against the Lord by eating with the blood." – Someone reported back to Saul that this was going on and that they were going to get in trouble with God about it. Saul, who doesn't know a lot, knew that he didn't want to tick God off, so he needed to put a stop to it.
 - And he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a great stone to me here." – Saul rebukes the army who are going ballistic and asks for a set up location that they can make a makeshift altar to God where they can prepare the meat properly.
 - And Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Let every man bring his ox or his sheep and slaughter them here and eat, and do not sin against the Lord by eating with the blood.'" – Saul wasn't against them eating the meat but they needed to do it right. He told them to bring the meat so it could be drained of blood.
 - So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night and they slaughtered them there. – Everyone agreed to the idea and brought their carcasses to be properly drained before the Lord.
 - And Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first altar that he built to the Lord – the draining was done for the Lord so that made it a holy action which practically made the draining location an altar (worship = doing things for God because He's worth it). This was Saul's first established altar (holy site) he made for God. It was showing respect for the Lord, which was a good thing. Too bad it doesn't last in the right way.
- A Flip of the Coin
 - Jonathan is outed as the vow-breaker
 - *1 Samuel 14:36–44 – "Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the morning light; let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." But the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."³⁷ And Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel?" But he did not answer him that day.³⁸ And Saul said, "Come here, all you leaders of the people, and know and see how this sin has arisen today.³⁹ For as the Lord lives who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But there was not a man among all the people who answered him.⁴⁰ Then he said to all Israel, "You shall be on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."⁴¹ Therefore Saul said, "O Lord God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord, God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped.⁴² Then Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan."*

And Jonathan was taken. ⁴³ Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the tip of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am; I will die." ⁴⁴ And Saul said, "God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan."

- Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them until the morning light; let us not leave a man of them." – Saul wanted to use the army to finish the job. They were fed and ready to keep going, even though they are exhausted. Saul wants the Philistines wiped out.
- And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." – they army advisors agreed and said, 'you're the boss.'
- But the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here." – but then the priest pipes up and says, 'hey, so God has been protecting us, so don't you think that we should ask him about continuing? We are going to go into more dangerous territory if we keep going so shouldn't we check in?'
 - Who is the one in your life to check in? – do you have anyone in your life that periodically asks if you have considered God about your decisions? We talked about this two weeks ago but it's worth asking again.
- And Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel?" – Saul agreed to check in with God and prays about it. He likely asked God through the priest that was present. It's not like he did it wrong.
- But he did not answer him that day. – God gave him the silent treatment. He didn't know why. They were in no mood to wait on the Lord. There were things that needed to happen. Something was wrong.
- And Saul said, "Come here, all you leaders of the people, and know and see how this sin has arisen today. – Saul assumes that God was silent due to a sin issue. He was kind of right. But historically that was a way that God notified His people that something was wrong, go silent.
- For as the Lord lives who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." – Saul, again being rash, makes an extreme statement: if anyone has sinned they will die. I don't care if it's my own son!' This was totally unnecessary. Saul is trying to lead too hard and letting his emotions drive his decisions. Again, God didn't ask him to do this. He was going overboard because he didn't understand the heart of God.
- But there was not a man among all the people who answered him. – everyone kept silent. They didn't know what had happened or who had sinned. So they just stared.
- Then he said to all Israel, "You shall be on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you." – Saul said they were going to go to God and ask who the sinner was and the first test was to find out if it was the army or Saul and Jonathan. Everyone agreed.

- Therefore Saul said, “O Lord God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord, God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim.”²⁴ – Saul prays and asks the priest to seek the Lord through the Urim and Thummim which most scholars think are two stones (one white and one black) that were kept in the pockets of the priestly ephod, to draw out answers from God for yes and no questions. Saul is frustrated that God is silent.
 - And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. – the stones indicated that it was not the general army so that left the leadership.
 - Then Saul said, “Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan.” And Jonathan was taken. – the stones indicated that it wasn’t Saul but Jonathan. Was God in these decisions? It seems so.
 - Then Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you have done.” – Saul publicly asked Jonathan what’s going on. It’s interesting that he couldn’t have just asked him and avoided the whole God-test. Maybe he did and even Jonathan didn’t want to answer so they went this route. It again, so lacked of trust between father and son (and rightfully so, we shall see).
 - And Jonathan told him, “I tasted a little honey with the tip of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am; I will die.”²⁵ – Jonathan is not accepting his fate but questioning his fate. He admits that he ate something during the army-wide total fast. He stands up to it. He says, ‘you want to kill me for that?’
 - And Saul said, “God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan. – Ever the rash one, Saul blurts out, ‘absolutely you should die. May God kill me if I don’t kill you.’ Totally unnecessary but again he’s trying to lead but overdoing it. He’s trying to seem intense and strong to his team but ends up just looking foolish.
- The Will of the People
 - The people defend and rescue Jonathan

²⁴ “Saul appeals to the lot-casting procedure to decide who offended the oath. The term tamim (tāmīm; *tmm; adj. “complete”) here is the equivalent of tummīm, which means “completeness, Thummim,” hence “pronounced whole, acquitted” (McCarter, p. 250). For ‘urim, “accursed, condemned” (*’rr), see 28:6, where “Urim” is mentioned together with “dreams” and “prophets” as a normal way of inquiring God’s will. The phrase “to give tamim” (*yhb tāmīm) may be an idiomatic expression meaning “to give the truth,” as in the Akkadian divinatory prayers used in connection with extispicy, divination by examining the condition of the entrails of sacrificed sheep or goats... The urim and tummim are mentioned by name only seven times in the OT (Exod. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65 [“Urim and Thummim”]; Deut. 33:8 [“Thummim and Urim”]; Num. 27:21 and 1 Sam. 28:6 [“Urim”]). They may have been two stones of two different colors, a bright color and a dark color, perhaps one representing a positive and the other representing a negative answer, which were kept in the “breastpiece of judgment” of the priest’s ephod (see Exod. 28:30; Lev. 8:8). Klein suggests it is significant that their names start with the first (aleph) and last (tau) letters of the Hebrew alphabet, respectively. Houtman⁹³ takes the plural forms as plurales intensivi and the combination of the two terms as a hendiadys. On the other hand, Kitz suggests that the plural forms reflect the practice of lot casting in which “the sum of two or three casts of the lots ... ultimately decides the answer to a cleromantic inquiry,” as is reflected in the lot-casting section in the Hittite KIN-oracles as well as in the Akkadian text LKA 137. On the “psephomancy” ritual, that is, divination by means of white and black stones, in the aforementioned text from Asshur, see Horowitz and Hurowitz.⁹⁵ After enumerating eight points of contact between the Assyrian psephomancy and the biblical Urim and Thummin, Horowitz and Hurowitz conclude that both are “highly similar and perhaps somehow related.” NICOT

²⁵ “It is hard to tell whether “I must die!” (’āmût) is a statement or a question here. But whichever, it seems likely that it is spoken in protest, not acceptance, given Saul’s insistence in the next verse. Probably Jonathan thought it unbelievable that his eating the honey could be the cause of the oracular silence, and he still does not accept that he should be killed.” NICOT

- 1 Samuel 14:45 – *“Then the people said to Saul, “Shall Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation in Israel? Far from it! As the Lord lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.” So the people ransomed Jonathan, so that he did not die.”*
 - Then the people said to Saul, “Shall Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation in Israel? Far from it! – Enough was enough. The advisors and leaders in the army finally step up and say, ‘C’mon Saul, really? We just fought a battle that your son led and won and you are going to kill him? Seriously, dude? No way! What are you trying to accomplish here?’
 - As the Lord lives,²⁶ there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.” – suddenly the tough guys around Saul stand up to him and stand in the way of Jonathan protecting him and saying, ‘it’s not gonna happen on my watch.’ He’s on God’s side and on our side. We don’t kill our own.
 - So the people ransomed Jonathan, so that he did not die. – They people did what was necessary to protect Jonathan from his rash father. It demonstrated how they felt about Saul’s leadership and their respect and honor for Jonathan.
 - When is it appropriate to challenge authority? – In modern day America it seems that most of us think we can and should challenge anyone at anytime. There is very little respect for authority. But for those of us who are not rebellious in heart there is a valid question: when is it okay to challenge authority that is truly in the wrong? There is a time and place and a way to do it. I think that all leadership should be held accountable but it must be done properly. It’s not a power struggle, it’s about justice and righteousness. When a leader has clearly violated the Lord’s will or wisdom it’s important that the right leaders are chosen to present the concerns in the right way and then proper boundaries and correction is brought in.
- Team Saul
 - A list of Saul’s crew and exploits
 - 1 Samuel 14:46–52 – *“Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place. ⁴⁷When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned he routed them. ⁴⁸And he did valiantly and struck the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them. ⁴⁹Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchi-shua. And the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn was Merab, and the name of the younger Michal. ⁵⁰And the*

²⁶ “At last the people speak up and save Jonathan from this critical moment. Saul had sworn As the Lord lives (v. 39) that the man chosen by the lots as guilty would die, and the people here swear “as the Lord lives” that he will not die. David did not keep his oath to kill Nabal and his men when Abigail pointed out the wrong of it, and so at least it was considered that an oath to sin could be broken. The people here obviously think that God spoke much more clearly in the victory than in the lots.” NICOT

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 There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself."

- Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place. – This is not a glossary summary of what happened next. Saul's army got the Philistines out of the southern (Benjamin) territory and sent them packing back to their other territory. The Philistines were still big dogs in the region and still far stronger than Israel but they lost that day and it stung.
- When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, - Saul again was elevated in the people's eyes and his kingship became more formal and respected. He led the people in defeating their enemies who would attack and gaining back territory lost throughout the years. And they had a lot of enemies.
- against Moab, - the Moabites were both historic enemies of the Jews as well as relatives. The Moabites were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew. They were relatives of the Jews, but they hated one another. Ruth was a Moabitess.
 - Ge 19:36–38 – *"Thus both the daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. ³⁷ The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab. He is the father of the Moabites to this day. ³⁸ The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day."*
- against the Ammonites, - the Ammonites were the other enemy/relative group. They were brothers to the Moabites and historic enemies of the Jews.
- against Edom, - Ironically Edom are the descendants of Esau, the twin brother of Jacob, the man renamed Israel. They are enemies and relatives as well.
- against the kings of Zobah,²⁷ - these are the Aramaeans. The Aramaeans were a notable people but didn't seem to have territory of a kingdom so they are hard to track down. They seem to have originated from Syrians.
- and against the Philistines²⁸ – the Philistines were still alive and kicking and were going to be a constant problem throughout Saul's life.
- Wherever he turned he routed them. – all the enemies kept getting defeated by Saul. He wasn't a good king but he was a good warrior and he picked the right people to fight alongside him.

²⁷ "Zobah is an Aramaean city-state on the western slope of the Anti-Lebanon mountains." NICOT

²⁸ "Saul was able to gain the upper hand over the Philistines in the central, hilly region of Israel, but at the end of his reign they were as much a threat as before." NICOT

- And he did valiantly and struck the Amalekites²⁹ – the Amalekites were a specific enemy group that the Jews despised. They came from the grandson of Esau and due to their rejection of Israel during the Exodus and desert wandering, they were permanently banned from being in Israel. When they were attacked, Israel was not allowed to even keep the booty that was left behind.
- and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them. – Saul was successful just as God said.
 - 1 Sa 9:15–17 – *“Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: ¹⁶ “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me.” ¹⁷ When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people.”*
- Now the sons of Saul were³⁰ – Here we find out that Jonathan is not Saul’s only kid.
 - Jonathan, - Jonathan is the firstborn and the rightful heir to the throne at this point (at least in the people’s eyes, not so much God’s).
 - Ishvi, - we know nothing about this kid
 - and Malchi-shua. – we know nothing about this kid
 - And the names of his two daughters were these: - usually women and daughters weren’t mentioned in lists like this but one of these daughters is going to factor in David’s story coming up so they are introduced here.
 - the name of the firstborn was Merab, - Nothing significant is known of her.
 - and the name of the younger Michal. – this one is the one who is married off to David as their families merge.
 - And the name of Saul’s wife was Ahinoam³¹ the daughter of Ahimaaz. – David is listed as having a wife named Ahinoam which would be creepy if he took Saul’s wife since he also had the daughter. Perhaps it was a different Ahinoam. I hope so.

²⁹ “Saul acted valiantly (wayya’as hayil) and struck Amalek. The Amalekites are the archetypal plunderers in biblical tradition (Exod. 17:8–16; Num. 13:29; etc.). Amalek was the name of a nomadic tribe that inhabited the desert south of Judah, though they are associated with a city (see on 1 Sam. 15:5). They opposed Israel’s attempts to enter Canaan from the south (Num. 14:41–45), and in several places in Judges they are mentioned as joining with other groups against Israel. They attacked David at Ziklag (ch. 29), and David is said to have subdued them in 2 Sam. 8:12.” NICOT

³⁰ “Saul’s sons are listed five times in the OT. Among them only Jonathan and Ish-bosheth play a role in the stories. Their names and the number are not certain:...” NICOT

³¹ “Ahinoam. Note that one of David’s wives has the same name; she is distinguished as “Ahinoam of Jezreel” (1 Sam. 25:43; etc.). Saul also had a concubine named Rizpah, by whom he had two sons, Armoni and Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 3:7; 21:11).” NICOT

- And the name of the commander of his army was Abner³² the son of Ner, Saul's uncle³³ – Genealogies aren't direct son to father. Sometimes it's grandfather or ancestor. Abner becomes a major factor in David's life.
- Kish was the father of Saul,³⁴ - We've already met Kish earlier in this book.
- and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel³⁵ – Again it's a grandfather and father thing.
- There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul. – Saul's life and reign was all about war and much of it centered around the Philistines.
- And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself³⁶ - Saul was really good at recruiting the toughest men around for battle. Whenever he found one, he brought him into the fold.

Conclusion

- We are watching the arc of Saul – He has some good traits and some bad traits, but one thing is clear: He doesn't know God well. He knows how to be religious kind of but he doesn't know how to do it right. We also know that he's a hothead and seems to constantly make things worse. Why? What's driving all of this? That's what we will continue to discover.
- Are we people of FAITH or CONTROL? – it's going to be the difference between life and death for Saul. What about us?

³² "Abner ('ābînēr): MT has "Abiner" here, elsewhere spelled "Abner" ('abnēr) (e.g., v. 51). Abner held the important position of commander of Saul's army (see 1 Sam. 12:9; 2 Sam. 2:8); he appears often in the stories about Saul (1 Samuel 17, 20, 26). But during the brief reign of Ishbaal (2 Sam. 2:8ff.), he held greater power until he was slain by Joab, commander of David's army (2 Sam. 3:27)." NICOT

³³ "The phrase Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle is ambiguous, for in it "Saul's uncle" can refer either to Ner or to Abner. If it refers to Ner, Saul and Abner were cousins. However, if it refers to Abner the son of Ner, Abner and Kish were brothers. The former is possibly supported by 1 Chr. 9:36; 1 Sam. 9:1 (also Josephus, Ant. 6.130), where both Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner appear to be the sons of Abiel/Jeiel. The latter seems to be supported by 1 Chr. 8:33; 9:39, where Ner is mentioned as the father of Kish, the father of Saul. These two positions are seemingly irreconcilable. However, "Kish" in 1 Chr. 9:36 and Ner's son "Kish" in 1 Chr. 9:39 could be different persons, based on the way the genealogical data is treated in vv. 35–44. For one thing, the narrator first lists ten sons of Jeiel in vv. 36–37; then, after making a brief reference to the last son Mikloth in v. 38, the narrator moves on to trace in detail the lineage of Ner (vv. 39–44), whose first son was Kish, the father of Saul." NICOT

³⁴ "In this structure, Saul's father, Kish, is the grandson of Abiel; see "Kish, son of Abiel" (1 Sam. 9:1); this is supported by the usage of ben which sometimes refers to a grandson. If so, "Saul's uncle" in 1 Sam. 10:14 was probably Abner. There is (another) example in Saul's family of an uncle and nephew with the same name, namely, Mephibosheth (see 2 Samuel 9 and 21)." NICOT

³⁵ "The son of Abiel (so NRSV; NASB); compare "sons of Abiel" (NIV; JPS). The above-reconstructed genealogy perfectly supports this translation. Ner was "the son of Abiel," while Kish was the grandson of Abiel." NICOT

³⁶ "Like 7:15–17, which summarizes Samuel's activities, this verse summarizes the life of Saul with regard to his military activities. Saul recruited any mighty man ('iš gibbôr) and valiant man (ben-ḥayil) for his standing army." NICOT