

Saul's Fall - Let's live like a Jonathan

1 Samuel 13

Saul's Unlawful Sacrifice

13 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, 2 Saul chose for himself three thousand *men* of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent.

Now, did any of you notice a different wording for verse one?

Because if any of you are reading from the NIV... or the NLT or... the NASB or even the ESV... you'll notice ... the first verse of 1 Samuel 13 provides us some interesting wording difference, *just for fun, let's check it out!*

So the KJV version and the NKJV which I just read...both say, "Saul **reigned** one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel"...

But let's look at the NIV... it says "Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years, which is the same as the NLT and the NASB versions.

Then we have the wording of the ESV: it say's...

*“Saul **lived** for one year and then became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel”...*

That’s an odd wording, he lived one year and then became king?

Okay, just one more, the YLT or (Young’s Literal Translation) says, *“A son of a year {is} Saul in his reigning, yea, two years he hath reigned over Israel”*.

So, is this ‘nitpicking’ or *a genuine concern for those who want to question the authority of the Scriptures?*

Well, I place it in the arena of nitpicking and I even looked up the definition for you and here it is.

Meaning of nitpicking in English:

Giving too much attention to details that are not important, especially as a way of criticizing: If you spent less time nitpicking, you'd get more work done. SMART Vocabulary: *related words and phrases*. Disapproving & criticizing.

The reality is, that the differences in translation are not a concern, *in fact some manuscripts of the Septuagint simply omit the problem verse altogether*.

What we do know and can all agree on, is that Saul was a *mature man when he came to power*, with a son old enough to go to war.

So, to wrap up this little side bar, most Bible Scholars believe that the KJV and the NKJV are the best translation of this verse, *which is, **Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel.***

Now, let's refocus and continue with verse, **2 Saul chose for himself three thousand *men* of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent.**

Now, in verse 2, this is the first time we hear mention of this young son of Saul, Jonathan, *and he's going to be a very prominent and wonderful part of this great book.*

"This is the first place in which this brave and excellent man appears; a man who bears one of the most amiable characters in the Bible." (Clarke)

So let's go back a ways to 1 Samuel 4:9 to get some context regarding what's happening here in these verses.

We know from 1 Samuel 4:9 that the Israelites were, *in a very real sense*, being oppressed by the Philistines and their impressive military, so why would the Philistines allow King Saul to maintain a standing army of 3,000 men.

Well the text doesn't clarify this point, but perhaps it seems safe to consider that the Philistines could tolerate an army of 3,000 men without feeling threatened, and it would allow the Israelites to defend themselves against people like the Ammorites.

It's interesting because the Philistines have another way to keep the Israelites under their control and one of them was, as we will soon discover in verse 19, that the Israelites were not permitted to have blacksmiths and so they would have to go to the Philistines to have their plows, their mattocks, which we know as pickaxes for farming, as well as axes and sickles sharpened. The Israelites were forced to rely on the Philistines for this essential service.

In fact it was a booming business for the Philistines, and as a bonus, their *blacksmiths were not permitted* to make *swords* for the Israelites.

So they tolerated Israel's first "regular" army.

In the past, Israel made due with a militia that assembled in times of national threat. But now, under King Saul, Israel did in fact have a professional army, *albeit without swords*.

3 And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, “Let the Hebrews hear!”

4 Now all Israel heard it said *that* Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel had also become an abomination to the Philistines. And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal.

Now we quickly discover in the first part of verse 3 that Jonathan was a remarkable and courageous military leader, and he will repeatedly demonstrate his ability to lead successful attacks, *but as effective as this attack was, it merely awakened the Philistines.*

He definitely got their attention and it would appear that the “peace” that Israel was enjoying was about to be threatened.

In his decision to attack this Philistine garrison... Jonathan was proclaiming, *“We’ve had enough, we won’t meekly surrender to the Philistines any longer.”*

*But look what his father does, He takes the credit! **Saul** blows the trumpet,* trying to make it appear as though this victory was his alone.

Why would he do that?. Perhaps because of his own sense of insecurity, he just can’t allow any of the men around him (***not even his own son***) to receive the credit.

Sadly, Saul desired man's praise, like thirsty men drink water, and that is just one of the character flaws that will destroy him.

Church, *up until this moment*, Saul's reign as King was going well. Gifts had been given to Saul and Grace had been poured out upon him, but now we see cracks in his character, cracks that are going to eventually lead to his tragic downfall.

As it Cleary states in verse 4, "Israel had now become an abomination to the Philistines." Church, as long as the Israelites stayed in their weak, defeated place, the Philistines thought they were good guys.

But as soon as the Israelites, *through Jonathan*, showed boldness and courage against the LORD's enemies, what happened?

The Philistines considered the Israelites an abomination... *a disgusting loathsome group of people who needed a reminder of who was really in control.*

Church, that can be true of us, if we operate just under the enemies radar in our spiritual lives. True, we don't war against armies of Philistines; but who does the Bible say our enemies are, our enemies are principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).

In reality, our spiritual enemies have the same attitude as the Philistines. As long as we're weak and subjected to our spiritual enemies, hey, they don't mind us at all. *They may even kind of like us.*

I remember the first time I read the first two chapters of the book of Job.

My first reaction was to think, Oh! Oh! *I better stay under Satan's radar*, I don't want God pointing me out to him if that's what happens, so I'll Love the Lord, *but just keep a low profile.*

In my early walk with the Lord, I was afraid to show boldness and courage against the LORD's enemies, *because what if they take notice and consider me an abomination. But I soon found out that, that's no kind of life to live for the believer.*

It's been said, If peace with the devil is more important to you than victory in the LORD, you will often be defeated and subjected, *and it's so true.*

Let me repeat that, It's been said, If peace with the devil is more important to you than victory in the LORD, you will often be defeated and subjected...

So Church!!! Let's be Jonathan's! Amen!

I think we had another example of a ‘*Jonathan*’ in our culture, *which the world has seen played out very recently*, in the person and life and now murder of Charlie Kirk. Here was a man that stood strong and proclaimed God’s truth in love, *without fear of what the enemy might do* and the spiritual enemies did notice and they tried to silence him, but as we have seen’ what the enemy meant for evil, our Lord meant it for good and the Gospel has gone out in ways we have never seen before, and people are getting saved and many are being emboldened to live for Christ.

I believe, that Charlie Kirk, has heard our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ say, “*Well done! My good and faithful servant!*”

5 Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. 6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (*for the people were distressed*), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. 7 And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

So Jonathan had enough courage and faith to launch the initial attack against the Philistines, and now the Philistines were going to teach the Israelites a lesson, but instead of rising to the occasion, what did the men of Israel do? Instead of standing strong to defend the women and children, they panicked out of fear and they hid anywhere

they could... (in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits) some even fled across the Jordan River (to the land of Gad and Gilead).

To say the least, this was a low point for Israel.

So, what did their King do? Well, it's not going to be good! Verse 7 continues...

As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. 8 Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

We read that Saul was in Gilgal for many months and things had been going pretty good for him, but now he is presented with this current crisis and the people that he was chosen to lead, would be looking to him for leadership and strength, because as we have just read, ***the people followed him trembling!***

With each passing day Saul knew the Philistines were assembling a huge army against him *and that once they were organized*, they would become seemingly impossible to beat.

I'm sure Saul knew that a quick response gave them the best chance to win the battle, *and that was definitely some strategic thinking*, but there was a catch, he needed to wait for Samuel.

Samuel told Saul to wait for him at Gilgal and he was told to wait seven days and then Samuel would preside over sacrifices and Israel would be spiritually ready for battle.

Church, Who truly wins these battles? God does!

And Samuel knows how important it was to prepare spiritually for battle, but Saul, *in his flesh*, was getting anxious because he knew, that time was his enemy as the men he needed to fight the battle, *were scattering everywhere*.

Saul, in his flesh, couldn't wait any longer, look at verse 9

9 So Saul said, “Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me.” And he offered the burnt offering.

Church, this is where Saul's downfall begins, because this was plainly sinful.

First, Saul flat out disobeyed Samuel.

Second, Saul was a king, not a priest, and only priests were to offer sacrifices. There were no exceptions, no worst case scenario, *like the one Saul believed he was in*.

Saul had no business doing what only a priest should do. Scripture tells us not to combine religious and civic authority and God forbids the kings of Israel to be priests, and the priests to be kings.

In 2 Chronicles 26... King Uzziah tried to do just that by doing the work of priest and God struck him with leprosy.

(Trapp) said, Out of fear, out of panic, out of not knowing what else to do, Saul did something clearly sinful. “If Saul was among the prophets before, will he now be among the priests? Can there be any devotion in disobedience? O vain man! What can it avail to sacrifice to God, against God?”

10 Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him.

So, Saul decided to perform the sacrifice before Samuel arrived. He had been obedient and waited for seven days, whether or not it was exactly 7 days to the minute, the Scripture doesn't say, *but his flesh one out over his obedience to God* and he wasn't waiting another minute for Samuel and that decision was the moment his fate was set.

If he had trusted God and waited just one more hour, *how different things could have been!*

Yes it's true, *that the last moments of waiting...* are usually the most difficult and they can powerfully tempt us to take matters into our own hands... ***but don't do it!***

This is the lesson for us, *that this is often how God works in our lives*, He waits until the very last minute to step in. Why? It's not to tease us, but to test us.

James 1:2-3 says, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience."

Church, God will take us right down to the wire, *not to taunt us, but to train us*, so that we will develop endurance.

This life we live as believers isn't a sprint to the finish,
No, it's a marathon and there will be many times in our lives, where our obedience and patience will be tested.

Maybe you've prayed, "*Lord make me a man (or woman) of God, produce in me depth of character and wisdom.*"

"Okay," God says, "I'm going to take you through some experiences in which you will have the choice, either to panic and try to solve the problem yourself or perhaps you *lean on the world's wisdom, or to simply trust in me.*"

Well, here comes trouble as Samuel shows up on the scene in the first line of verse 11.

11 And Samuel said, "What have you done?..."

It's interesting to me, because it would seem that Saul greeted Samuel in such a way that Samuel *knew* that **Saul had done something wrong.**

Maybe he could smell the sacrifice in the air and perhaps Saul seemed *a little too* priest like in his greeting.

It's kind of like when your wife asks you how your recent fast from food is going and you can't look at her or answer... because your mouth is full!

She knows what you've done and there are no excuses.

Samuel knew something was up and I'm pretty sure he knew what Saul did, but Samuel was not wanting to hear reasons or excuses for what Saul did, *because there was nothing he could say that would make what he did okay..*

All Samuel at this point was wanting to hear, was confession and repentance.

Well, listen to Saul's *classic example* of how you make excuses *to justify your failure to trust God*, which in it's self... only makes your sins worse.

Saul said, “When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* you did not come within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, 12 then I said, ‘The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord.’ Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering.”

Saul basically said, *Hey Samuel*, I was just taking care of business, *you didn't show up*, so I stepped up!

It's kind on you!

Now Saul did have some *valid concerns* regarding the gathering of the Philistines and about the people scattering and his ability to put together an army, because time seemed to be running out and *I'll give him that*.

But then he *wrongfully and sinfully blames Samuel* for his actions..

He says that Samuel didn't come within the appointed days. *But he did just as he said he would*, but Saul couldn't wait, *no he needed to make a move* so that he could look good to the people. "He was basically saying, *"I had to do something to impress the people and gain back their support."*

Sadly, *Saul in his flesh*, wanted to hear the people say, "Now *there's a man of action, he's a leader who's going get things done!*" Perhaps Saul wanted to be seen as the man his son Jonathan already was.

But unlike his son, what Saul failed to realize, is that, had he obeyed and trusted in our Lord... our Lord would have given him the victory over the Philistines *with or without* the help of the *weak, fearful, and scattering men* Saul was surrounded by.

So what's really happening here as the people continue to scatter. Saul begins to take matters into his own hands. He issues orders for the burnt offerings and the peace offerings to be brought to him.

Remember way back in 1 Samuel 7... all of Israel gathers at Mizpah to repent and renew their covenant commitment to God, *and the Philistines think this burnt offering might be for military intent* and they encircle the Israelites preparing to attack.

Well, during that time, it was Samuel who was busy offering the burnt offering and as he did, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD **thundered** with a great **thunder** on that day against the Philistines and He confused them, so much so that they were defeated and retreated before Israel ([1 Samuel 7:9-10](#)).

Perhaps Saul is remembering this incredible defeat and is desperate to get that sacrifice offered, *with or without* Samuel so that he could defeat the Philistines.

Saul tells Samuel, “Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt sacrifice.

In other words, Saul said, “I had to, It was the right thing to do and I couldn’t wait any longer.”

At that may be true, that Saul **felt compelled**, but he was not supposed to be ruled by his feelings.

Church, likewise, we are not to be ruled by our feelings because our feelings can betray us. We need to obey God’s Word, regardless of our feelings.

He didn’t have to sin though, *he felt like sinning*.

The whole manner of Saul's explanation makes it clear, this was no misunderstanding. He didn't say to Samuel, "Did I do something wrong?" He knew exactly what he did and probably thought of the excuses ahead of time.

13 And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have *established your kingdom over Israel forever.*

14 But now *your kingdom shall not continue.* The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him *to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.*"

What did Samuel mean when he said, "*You have done foolishly?*" We sometimes think of foolish as being silly or senseless, but the Bible speaks of the *fool* as someone who is *morally and spiritually* lacking.

Despite Saul's excuses, and his reasons and blaming someone else, the bottom line was, still the bottom line and Samuel put it plainly: **you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God.**

God commanded him to do something and he did the opposite, he blatantly disobeyed!

And this is where Samuel drops the bombshell. Saul, you were to be King and establish a dynasty, one where your son would sit on the throne after you and his son after him, *but because of your disobedience*, there will be no monarchy and your kingdom shall not continue.

It's interesting to note that Saul would reign as king of Israel for 20 more years, *but they would not be good years for Saul*.

Saul now knows that God has chosen another man to be king, a man after his own heart.

Though God rejected Saul, He did not reject Israel. Because God loved Israel, He would raise up a king, a man after His own heart.

15 Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people present with him, about six hundred men.

So Samuel gets to his feet heartbroken and leaves Gilgal and heads to Gibeah of Benjamin without any further discussion with Saul.

And notice, that after Saul heard the announcement of judgment upon him, how did he respond? *He chose to be silent and went on with his regular activities.*

Church, *Judgement was an invitation to repentance* and Samuel seemed convinced that Saul would not repent.

...and Saul numbered the people present with him, about six hundred men.

We read in verse one that Saul had about 3,000 in his regular army, but Now he's down to 600, because so many soldiers scattered in fear while Saul waited for Samuel.

I can only imagine what Saul was thinking as the days progressed and his army of men were scattering, rather than preparing to fight.

I'm sure that the loss of so many men, was probably the reason why Saul went ahead and offered the sacrifice without Samuel, *and in his flesh it made sense to go ahead with the burnt offering*, but it actually displayed a heart of distrust and disobedience to God.

According to [1 Samuel 13:5](#) the Philistines already had a huge army, easily outmatching Saul's 3,000 men, but when Saul saw his *already mismatched force shrink to one-fifth of its previous size, he began to panic* and take matters into his own hands, not realizing, *that God allowed this to happen in order to test Saul's faith*, to see if he believed **God was great enough** to conquer so many, with so few.

Saul, like I have at times, failed the test, by failing to trust!

16 Saul, Jonathan his son, and the people present with them remained in Gibeah of Benjamin. But the Philistines encamped in Michmash. 17 Then raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies.

One company turned onto the road to Ophrah, to the land of Shual, 18 another company turned to the road to Beth Horon, and another company turned to the road of the border that overlooks the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

Clearly the Philistines dominated the countryside and were a powerful force to be reckoned with. They vastly outnumbered the Israelites and with so many troops at the ready, the Philistines could raid anywhere, *anytime*.

They were a fearless and fearsome army, ready to attack Saul and Israelites.

Look at verse 19.

19 Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, “Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears.”

One of the reasons the Philistines were were so confident in their ability to defeat the Israelites, is that, as a seafaring people, *who traded with technologically advanced cultures to the west*, they had acquired weapons and battle know-how from these other cultures. They found ways of keeping that technology out of the hands of the Israelites.

So much so, that the military that Saul put together, didn't even have swords or spears. They couldn't even sharpen the farming tools that they had.

20 But all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to sharpen each man's plowshare, his mattock, his ax, and his sickle; 21 and the charge for a sharpening was a pim for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to set the points of the goads. 22 So it came about, on the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan. But they were found with Saul and Jonathan his son.

I want to share a comment with you from Jon Courson, because when I read it, it really spoke to me and I hope it does to some of you too!

Jon Courson wrote:

It is always the way of the enemy to take away your **Sword**. "You can still farm. You can still do your work. I'll give you tools," Satan says. "I'll give you the instruments you need to succeed. But I don't want you to have the **Sword**." Self-help and advice books fill the shelves of many who won't open the **Sword of the Word** because Satan has tricked them into thinking they don't need it. I suggest, however, that the sixty-six-book library you hold in your hand contains enough material to keep you busy studying for the rest of your life.

I truly thought that by this point in my life I would have a much better handle on this book than I do. I know the Word not nearly like I want to. I don't have Zephaniah down like I ought to. I don't have passages in Romans memorized like I wanted to. I'm still sketchy on the flow of certain sections of

Revelation. Time is running out. My memory is fading and I need to give myself to the **Sword**. I am more and more convinced that everything I need to know is in this book - about parenting and grand-parenting, about finances and family, about faith and the future. It's all right here. Satan will try to give us other tools - but it's the **Sword** we need.

You know, Pastor Jon mentions some of the Scriptures that he wishes he had memorized, or, had gotten a better understanding of, and yet he is leaps and bounds more grounded and knowledgeable than I will ever be.

In fact, My wife and I often watch the game show Jeopardy and they will occasionally have a Bible category and I think, I should do pretty well in that category, and then it happens, someone who is clearly not a follower of God, answers the question that I should have known.

You know, It's been a few decades since Pastor Jon wrote these words and I couldn't help but think about how true his words are and how Satan has continued to give us *more and more and more* of these tools to distract us.

We now have things like the *internet*, Social Media like *Facebook, Youtube, Tik Tok, Telegram*, we have *AI search engines, AI Jesus, AI Marriage Counsellors, (prone to be disastrous) to marriages and families by the way as well as Super computers...* it goes on and on and on.

Church, what you need, what I need, what the entire world needs, is the ***Sword of the Word***. And really, truly, *it's all you need*.

23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash had meanwhile been secured by a contingent of the Philistine army.

The swords of the Israelites were stripped away, but God was still at work, and in chapter 14, which were going to try and get through some of it, *Jonathan was that man*. And *we'll see just how God wants to work through those who are willing to let him*.

“God is ever on the outlook for believing souls, who will receive his power and grace on the one hand, and transmit them on the other. He chooses them, that by them he should make his mighty power known.” (Meyer)

and in chapter 14 - Jonathan was that man... let's take a look

Samuel 14:1-23.

Jonathan Defeats the Philistines

14 Now it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armour, “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.

So here we have Jonathan at the start of what seems to be a normal day.

His dad, who was supposed to be the bold, brave, King is hanging out in the outskirts of Gibeah, *relaxing under a pomegranate tree along with his 600 sword-less bodyguards and Eli the priest.*

While he's relaxing, his son Jonathan comes up with an idea and says to his amour-bearer, Hey! Let's go over to the Philistines' garrison that's on the other side, *but let's not tell my dad.*

Why is Jonathan being so secretive? Well, one reason might be that he believed his dad might not allow him to go, but I also believe that Jonathon didn't want anyone to know, *because, unlike his father, he had no desire for personal glory,* only obedience to God and a desire to see God do a mighty work against the Philistines.

Now we know that the Israelites were facing a military conflict where victory seemed impossible, simply because they were vastly outnumbered and had far superior military technology for their day.

Yet Jonathan was bold enough to **go over to the Philistine garrison... just to see what the LORD might do.**

One commentary suggested that Jonathan perhaps thought of Shamgar... and how in Judges 3:31 it described Shamgar's victory over 600 Philistines with a sharp stick.

Maybe Jonathon was thinking... “Well, if God could do it through Shamgar, maybe He could do it through me!”

Or... Jonathan could have strengthen himself in promises such as Leviticus 26:8: that says... Five of you shall chase a hundred... and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.

I'll be honest, I question my faith and courage to willingly go to where the enemy is and see what the Lord might do, even though I know and believe that God can and still does fight for us against our enemies, whatever or whoever they might be...

Church, in our day on a bigger scale, we're seeing God working miraculously in the ongoing war between the modern day *Middle East Arab's* and Israel.

God keeps His promises!

And we all need to do... is be more like a Jonathan! Amen!

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.

So for interest sake only, Bozez means “*glistening*” and Senez means “*thorny*”. These were the two rocks that stood between Jonathan and his armour-bearer and the formidable enemy on the other side.

Jon Courson says,

“That’s the way it is for us as well. There are all kinds of glistening rewards and riches if we’ll engage in battle. But there is also no shortage of thorny challenges and difficulties.

How true is that!

On his way to the Philistine garrison, Jonathan, *boldly trusting God*, was lead by the Lord to a strategic position, a narrow path through a pass with large, sharp rocks on either side, where only a few men could easily fight against a much larger number of men and it was the perfect place for Jonathan to initiate his challenge.

6 Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armour, “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.”

This is some very wise courage in God... Jonathan believed and took to heart, Scripture like Judges 3:31 *After him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox goad; and he also delivered Israel.* and Leviticus 26:8. *Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.*

Many in Israel probably believed these verses as theological truth, or had head knowledge, but few believed it enough in their heart to *do something this courageous.*

Jonathan's faith was demonstrated by his works. James 2
18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works."
Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

What comes next is verse 7 is the response of his armour-bearer.

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

Okay, this is what I'm thinking my response would be... Are you nuts! What are you thinking? We don't stand a chance! Were going to die!

But that's not his response. He says, Go for it, I've got your back!

Wow! Now that's some loyalty, courage, bravery and obedience, well, that's something most employees certainly don't have today!

But in those days, every "officer" in the Israelite army had an "assistant" known as an armour-bearer.

The armour-bearer helped the officer in battle and in the administration of the army. They often carried the armour and weapons of the officer.

Commentator - (Youngblood) said, "Armor-bearers in ancient times had to be unusually brave and loyal, since the lives of their masters often depended on them."

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."

Jonathan now had his armour-bearers full support and this was confirmation for him to move ahead to the next stage of this 2 man confrontation.

In his next step of faith, Jonathan wanted to know if God was really leading him, so he proposed a test which would be used to determine whether to fight, or switch to flight, based on the response of the Philistine guards to their presence.

Jonathan showed real wisdom.

To this point, he's not looking for a specific, confirmed word from the Lord. Instead, he followed the bold hope and impression of his heart, *being humble enough to know his heart might be wrong on this day*, so Jonathan simply asked God to guide him.

The reality is, Jonathan did not doubt a word from God; he doubted his own heart and mind.

I know how my mind works, and perhaps some of you are the same. I can have all the faith in the world, if I know the full plan, but Jonathan was prompted by *faith*, without needing to know the whole battle plan from God in advance. He was willing to take it one step at a time and let God's plan unfold regardless of the cost he might have to pay.

Faith, is willing to let God know the whole plan and for us to move forward, *only knowing our part, one step at a time*.

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 armour-bearer, 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 armour-bearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armour-bearer killed them.

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

Remember what it said in verse 6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (*for the people were distressed*), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits.

The Philistines' were aware of what was happening to their enemy and that many Israelite men had fled and hid in holes. Now as they see Jonathan and his armour-bearing coming out from between the rocks, it's reasonable for the Philistines to think that these were Hebrew deserters surrendering to the Philistines, because they thought it was better than living in a hole.

So here it comes, the centurions spotted them and said, "Come up to us and we'll show you a thing or two." That was the green light for Jonathan and his armour-bearer to engage the enemy!

So they started climbing with their hands and feet," really just scrambling up that hill to get into the camp of the Philistines and they jumped right into the middle of the garrison.

Jonathan started knocking the guys over and his armour-bearer was running them through. Within about about a half acre of ground, they had wiped out twenty of the 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.

Now the rest of the garrison is waking up and they're under divine confusion.

They can't make sense of how two men are killing so many of their own *and then there's a divine earthquake*, which takes the panic and confusion to new heights, thinking their fellow Philistines might be the enemy and began to fight and kill one another.

Church, It didn't matter that the Philistines greatly outnumbered the Israelites and had far better weapons.

God was more than able to set the Philistines against each other. If the Israelites had no swords, the LORD would use the swords of the Philistines, *against the Philistines*.

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 armour-bearer *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.”

So now we learn that the watchmen of Saul, who were tasked with keeping watch on the army of the Philistines, *were noticing the army melting away.*

So what does Saul do? He wants to call the roll to see who's missing. This was not the time to be concerned about the who *and it was a waste of valuable time!*

Instead, *Saul should be ordering the troops to go and engage in the fight against the Philistines.*

Unfortunately, he was probably too caught up being concerned about who was leading this battle and who's going get the credit.

The roll results told him what he should have suspected.

It was his son Jonathan and his armour-bearer, again!

So what does Saul do? He tells the priest to grab the 'Ark of God', *which again, it's not the time for that,* when the battle is well underway.

This was again useless at that moment.

Saul is probably trying to look spiritual here, but there was nothing to seek God about. God was already engaged and rocking and shocking and confusing the Philistine army.

Yes, there is a time to go aside and pray, and there is a time to get your sword out and fight, *and as usual, Saul just didn't know what time this was.*

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 neighbour, *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.*

As this amazing victory unfolded, the Israelites who had previously sided with the enemy, suddenly found courage to change alliances. Others, hiding away because they were intimidated left their caves and began to move in glorious unity.

Church, It only took two young men who were willing to say, “*Let's go see what the Lord might want to do*” to cause fearful men hiding in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits, to rise up and join the battle.

We tend to have an older crowd on Wednesday nights, but I'm sure that there are still many of us that are young at heart. Maybe you're retired and tired of the mundane and the predictable, tired of doing what's easy to do in your own strength. Maybe the Lord is saying to you, "There's something I want you to do that will be ground shaking, something that will cause other people who are fearful, to get fired up and to get right with the Lord." Maybe God is speaking to you this evening.

If so... prayerfully consider taking the first step.

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

As the Philistines fought each other and fled in their confusion, Saul suddenly gets involved and makes yet another decision that will harm and not help anyone...

But that's for next time...

As we close, remember, it only took two young men who were willing to say, "*Let's go see what the Lord might want to do.*"

Jonathan was willing to take it one step at a time and let God's plan unfold regardless of the cost he might have to pay.

Church, Faith, is willing to let God know the whole plan and for us to move forward, *only knowing the first step of God's plan* and in faith, taking that first step of *God's plan*.

Again tonight... I just reflect back to how Charlie Kirk lived like a Jonathan and trusted in Jesus and in His Word and never backed down... even though it cost him his earthly life and the world has taken notice!

John 14:6 ***Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Amen!***