

The Jewish Kingdom - Lesson 14

Saul's Faulty Leadership

The Philistines are marching in ready to annihilate the fledgeling Jewish Kingdom. Saul further exacerbates the situation by his impatience in waiting for Samuel and God has rejected Saul as king. Now Saul heads to battle, continues to make costly mistakes, and is eclipsed by his son.

35. Jonathan's Great Victory - I Samuel 14:1-23

- An uncertain amount of time has passed, but these events take place during the Philistine invasion we saw last week.
- vs. 1 - Jonathan's actions here strange from a military standpoint. He's going on a mission without command from his superior and without their knowledge. Perhaps Saul had given him a great deal of leeway, but I think more likely we are seeing a breakdown in Saul's leadership. Why else would Jonathan undertake this mission?
- vs. 2 - Note that Saul is at home and doesn't seem too distressed by his situation.
- vs. 3 - Ahiah is here acting as High Priest, though the is from the rejected line of Eli (I Samuel 2:36). I think I'd rather have Samuel, but Saul has burned that bridge!
- Bozez means "slippery" and Seneh means "treading down".
- vs. 6 - "for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few." Good stuff!
- vs. 8-10 - Jonathan's plan. Relying a lot on God.
- vs. 11 - the first move the Philistines make is to ridicule.
- vs. 12 - I don't think the Philistine's ever expected Jonathan to climb to them or even attack.
- vs. 13 - Teamwork! Jonathan is incapacitating the Philistines and his armor-bearer is finishing them off. Speaks to the speed at which they are striking.
- vs. 15 - This sudden attack on one of the Philistine's outposts caused the main camp to panic. Add to this that God sends an earthquake and you get hysteria amongst the Philistines.
- vs. 16-19 - Note Saul's reaction to the situation. He knows the enemy is melting away, but does not join into the fight immediately. Instead he takes time for a roll call to find who is absent and perhaps responsible for what he is seeing. He then calls for the High Priest, but withdraws this request as he sees the battle continuing in Israel's favor. All of these actions are questionable at best.
- vs. 20-23 - The battle has turned in to a rout. Israelites, who had been hidden or even prisoner, begin joining into the battle. Saul is working hard to press the advantage.

36. Saul's Vow - I Samuel 14:24-46

- This section gives us insight into the actions that took place during the battle we just saw.

- vs. 24 - Anxious to press the advantage, Saul command the people to not stop and eat. The people obeyed this stupid demand.
- vs. 27 - Jonathan, weary from battling all day, eats some honey and is reenergized.
- vs. 28 - Don't you love how people show up to tell you what you did wrong instead of being there to stop you in the first place!
- vs. 29-30 - Jonathan see his father's mistake but is helpless to reverse it.
- vs. 32 - Illustrates just how hungry the people were.
- vs. 33 - see Genesis 9:4 and Leviticus 19:26 for prohibitions against eating blood.
- vs. 34-35 - I can't help but feel that Saul overreacts here. He's suddenly taking charge and inspecting things when he is the cause of the issues.
- vs. 35 - The first altar he has built? I think that is telling!
- vs. 36 - So, he starved the people in battle and not will press them without rest or sleep. Not a good plan.
- vs. 38-39 - Saul is seeking to blame someone for the silent treatment he is receiving from God. Perhaps he should have started by looking in a mirror!
- vs. 41-42 - I think Saul expected the blame to fall on the people. He never expected himself or the hero of the day to be selected.
- vs. 44 - Basically Saul had blamed everything that has gone wrong on Jonathan.
- vs. 45 - Saul is definitely not winning any popularity contests at this point, and Jonathan has been the hero. He's probably lucky that the people didn't dispose of him and install Jonathan as king.
- vs. 46 - All of Saul's mistakes culminate in the Philistines being allowed to escape and the battle halted though greater victories probably lay ahead.