

# 1 Samuel 14-16 Chapter Study

## INTRO

### II. Saul Chs. 9-15

#### D. War Against Philistines Chs. 13-14

#### 5. Jonathan's faith-venture 14:1-46

##### a. Jonathan's proposal vs. 1-10

##### b. the rout vs. 11-15

[2 Sundays ago summary]

During WWI when the British were fighting the Turks in this area, a major remembered the name 'Michmash' from his Bible. Using a candle one night he located the text here in 1 Sam 14 & read Jonathan's story.

He woke his commander & read him the story, They agreed to look for the place to see if it would give them an advantage over the Turks who were camped nearby.

The patrol found the pass as described & a way up the cliff that lead to a half acre of flat land where there was a small Turkish sentry post.

A company was dispatched which surprised the Turkish guards & quietly dispatched them.

The British then took up positions on the top of the hill & waited for sunrise.

When the Turks woke the next morning they saw an *entire company* of British sitting just across from them & thinking they were about to be surrounded by General Allenby's army they began a hasty retreat. They were all either killed or taken prisoner.

**<sup>15</sup>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.**

We get a glimpse of what God may have been *intending* to do.

Jonathan walked by faith in God & brought forth this might victory.

God *exponentially* increased the effect of it & caused the entire enemy camp to *panic*.

What turned their fear *into* terror was that the *earth itself* began to shake.

This was just too much of a coincidence for the superstitious Philistines & they began to run around like a bunch of screaming girls.

##### c. Saul joins the battle vs. 16-23

**<sup>16</sup>Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and there was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there.**

**<sup>17</sup>Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Now call the roll and see who has gone from us." And when they had called the roll, surprisingly, Jonathan and his armorbearer were not there.**

When the watchmen reported the enemy was in disarray, what Saul *ought* to have done?

Attack! But he—calls roll? Yeah—he wanted to know *who* was responsible

for this bold action.

Instead of doing his business as king & leading the fight, he's worried about *who's going to get the credit*.

**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).

Saul had called for the ark to be brought from Kirjath Jearim to Gibeah so it could be used as a *weapon*.

He'd forgotten the earlier lesson of the ark's *capture* by the Philistines when the Jews had a superstitious belief in its power.

Or maybe he knew of the devastation it had worked while in Philistia & hoped the enemy would be terrified by its presence among them. Either way – this was an *improper* use of the ark.

Saul seems to have no qualms about *using God* to his own ends.

**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.”

The priest was using the Urim & Thummin, 2 pebbles which were in a pouch behind the breastplate.

They were used for determining the will of God about something, a form of drawing lots.

Saul realized the answer to whether or not he should attack was not going to be obtained by the Urim & Thummin.

The answer lay across the field where his son was single-handedly conquering the enemy.

**20**Then Saul and all the people who were with him assembled, and they went to the battle; and indeed every man's sword was against his neighbor, and there was very great confusion. **21**Moreover the Hebrews who were with the Philistines before that time, who went up with them into the camp from the surrounding country, they also joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

Jewish defectors who'd gone over to the Philistines turned back to fight *for* Israel.

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

They pushed the Philistines westward out of Israelite territory.

#### d. Saul's foolish vow vs. 24-46

**24**And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, “Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies.” So none of the people tasted food.

“Big man” Saul has to save face after his constant hesitation in the face of battle.

Twice now it'd been his son who'd gone forth to do what he was supposed to do – fight the Philistines.

Jonathan didn't need a priest, or the Urim & Thummin, or the ark – He had a

simple but confident faith in God.

In the face of Jonathan's dramatic courage, Saul tried to *save face* by making this high sounding vow!

"No one eats; no one stops for their *personal needs* until we've utterly defeated MY enemies!"

Your enemies?!? If you mean this then why'd you wait so long to attack? This is nothing but *grandstanding* & an attempt to salvage his tarnished image.

Battle is thirsty work & the people were dragging as the day wore on. But no one could eat because of Saul's foolish vow.

**25**Now all *the people of the land* came to a forest; and there was honey on the ground. **26**And when the people had come into the woods, there was the honey, dripping; but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. **27**But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his countenance brightened. **28**Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed *is* the man who eats food this day.'" And the people were faint. **29**But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. **30**How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now would there not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

Jonathan *politely* pointed out the foolishness of his father's vow.

We can learn a lot from the way Jonathan handles this.

He points out the error in his father's vow without making it a personal attack against him.

He doesn't demean Saul, or use his error as a wedge to swing the loyalty of the people to himself, which is what many would do at this point.

There are going to be times when we disagree with others, when the decisions those in authority over us are foolish.

It's easy during those times to get angry and to attack the person who messed up.

When we do, then they feel duty bound to defend themselves and the conflict builds.

Let's follow Jon's example here. When dealing with the poor decisions of others, keep the focus on the issue at hand – don't turn it into an attack on the person.

And when pointing out the error that's been made, *use words* that leave the door to *correction open*.

**31**Now they had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. So the people were very faint. **32**And the people rushed on the spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered *them* on

**the ground; and the people ate *them* with the blood.**

Saul's vow had driven the people to the point of *desperation*.

[Story of backpacking & no water – giardia]

They were so hungry, when the battle was done, they began eating meat that had not been properly butchered, according to the requirement of kosher law.

Remember, they were not to eat meat that hadn't been properly bled.

**<sup>33</sup>Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood!" So he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone to me this day." <sup>34</sup>Then Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and say to them, 'Bring me here every man's ox and every man's sheep, slaughter *them* here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.'" So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night, and slaughtered *it* there. <sup>35</sup>Then Saul built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD.**

This is after 2 full years on the throne – yet it's his *first* altar.

The way this is penned, we can see that it's shown as a *plus*; what Saul did here was *commended*.

After his great start in chs. 9-11, he crashed in chs. 13 & 14, but this looks like maybe he's wising up.

Certainly he realized his hesitation in going against the Philistines had led to his problems.

His son had shown him *twice* now how much better it is to trust God & go for it.

So he built an altar for worshiping God for the victory He'd given.

And he told the people to stop sinning by eating improperly prepared meat.

**<sup>36</sup>Now Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and plunder them until the morning light; and let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." Then the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."**

Oops – bad counsel on the priest's part. Saul said "Let's go" & the people were gung ho – but Ahijah, the rejected priest, counseled that they ought to ask of God, meaning using the Urim & Thummim again.

He suggests this because he wants to have a hand, a role, in the success of their war.

He's throwing in his lot with what he deems the winning bet.

The problem is – God wasn't speaking either *through* the high priest or *to* Saul.

**<sup>37</sup>So Saul asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him that day.**

Because Saul has been *rejected* as king. & Ahijah has been rejected as priest, a definitive answer does not come from the Urim & Thummin.

Saul *assumes* the reason God isn't answering is because *someone else* is the problem; someone must have broken the vow he'd placed on the people that day.

<sup>38</sup>And Saul said, “Come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today. <sup>39</sup>For as the LORD lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die.” But not a man among all the people answered him. <sup>40</sup>Then he said to all Israel, “You be on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will be on the other side.” And the people said to Saul, “Do what seems good to you.” <sup>41</sup>Therefore Saul said to the LORD God of Israel, “Give a perfect *lot*.” So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped. <sup>42</sup>And Saul said, “Cast *lots* between my son Jonathan and me.” So Jonathan was taken. <sup>43</sup>Then Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you have done.” And Jonathan told him, and said, “I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand. So now I must die!” <sup>44</sup>Saul answered, “God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan.” <sup>45</sup>But the people said to Saul, “Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.” So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die. <sup>46</sup>Then Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

The people let this whole process go to see how far Saul would go with it. When they realized he was *serious* about executing his own son, they intervened & said, “No way, Jay! Not at all, Saul!”

At this point they have to realize their king isn’t such a hot shot after all. His son is pretty excellent though.

And I have to say that in light of the *absolutely brilliant way* Jonathan is presented throughout 1 & 2 Samuel, I wonder why the throne couldn’t have passed to him.

My consolation is in seeing the man God chose to *replace* Saul – David.

It may very well be that it was God’s *grace* that kept Jonathan **OFF** the throne. Just as Saul started well but *the crown ruined him*, maybe the same would have happened to Jon.

## 6. Saul’s military campaigns 14:47-52

<sup>47</sup>So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he harassed *them*. <sup>48</sup>And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.

Saul seems to have *overcome* his tendency to avoid battle & went out in numerous campaigns to push back those who’d encroached on Israel’s territory.

<sup>49</sup>The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Jishui, and Malchishua. And the names of his two daughters were *these*: the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal. <sup>50</sup>The name of Saul’s

wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

<sup>51</sup>Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel. <sup>52</sup>Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.

Just as Samuel had warned, Saul conscripted all the able-bodied men into his army.

### ***E. Special Assignment: Annihilate Amalek Ch. 15***

**1. The assignment given 15:1-3**

**2. The assignment botched 15:4-9**

**3. Saul rejected as king 15:10-35**

We covered this last Sunday.

<sup>34</sup>Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. <sup>35</sup>And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

Samuel took the rejection of Saul really hard.

It's tragic watching a person who starts out really well, go so very bad.

It's distressing to see someone who has huge potential for greatness, felled by something petty & useless.

While Samuel was *totally against* the whole idea of a human king to begin with, Saul had won him over.

And now to see Saul handle things so incredibly poorly is a major disappointment Samuel has a hard time dealing with.

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The end of v. 35 says God *regretted* He had made Saul king.

Some are troubled by this because it makes it appear as if God didn't have foreknowledge of Saul's failure.

Where's God's omniscience, they ask. How can God have regret if He knows ahead of time what's going to happen?

The answer lies in the subtlety of the Hebrew of this passage.

There are *other places* where it says that God "regretted" something that came to pass.

And every one of them comes at a point of *major change*; when God *initiates a new work*, a new phase of His plan for history.

God's regret is less an *emotional thing* as it a *practical implementation* of closing out an era of human failure so that a new phase of God's grace can begin.

That's what we see right here;

Israel had demanded a king like all the other nations – they got what they wanted in Saul, who was a colossal failure.

So God brings Saul's reign to an end & gives them a king after His own image – David.

### **III. David Chs. 16-31**

## **A. David Anointed King 16:1-13**

**<sup>1</sup>Now the LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.”**

Mourning & grief are appropriate emotions in the face of loss.

But there comes a time when we have to move beyond them & return to life. Samuel’s work wasn’t finished – he had one final work to perform – really, it was his capstone, his greatest work of all.

So God told him to take his horn of oil to Bethlehem in the region of Judah and go to the house of Jesse, the *grandson* of Boaz & Ruth. Saul replacement lived there.

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Animal horns were often used as containers for liquids such as oil.

**<sup>2</sup>And Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears *it*, he will kill me.” But the LORD said, “Take a heifer with you, and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’ <sup>3</sup>Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you.”**

Samuel knew that Saul had become ultra *jealous of & insecure in* his role as king.

Like many rulers, he was on the lookout for anyone who might pose a threat to his reign.

Samuel didn’t trust Saul to assassinate him if he found out he was on his way to anoint a new king.

God told Samuel to go under the cover that he was offering a special sacrifice, something he as a priest had done many times throughout the years.

In fact, it was as just such a invitation only special sacrifices that Saul & Samuel had first met in Ramah many years before.

**<sup>4</sup>So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, “Do you come peaceably?” <sup>5</sup>And he said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.**

For years Samuel had served as a judge, traveling to different places throughout Israel to bring either a word of commendation or rebuke.

So as he approached Bethlehem the leaders wondered if he was coming to rebuke or bless them.

He tells them he’s come for blessing – which after his little episode with Agag, gave them a huge relief.

He told them a special sacrifice would be made & to make sure Jesse’s family was invited.

**<sup>6</sup>So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, “Surely the LORD’S anointed *is* before Him!”**

Eliab was Jesse’s eldest son, & much like Saul had earlier *looked* the royal part, Eliab was a fine physical specimen.

Since he was the 1<sup>st</sup> born – Sam assumed he was the one. He wasn't.

**7**But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*”

While I'd love to elaborate, I'll save it for Sunday. This verse has much to teach us. We need to take the time to install it in our hearts & minds.

So, just in summary, God says that His criteria for choosing is not what appears to the eye but what lies in the heart. According to that criteria, Eliab doesn't qualify.

**8**So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” **9**Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” **10**Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.” **11**And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” Then he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.”

Jesse had 8 sons & 2 daughters. He only presented the eldest 7 sons to Samuel because he figured if it wasn't one of them there's no way it could be the youngest.

And knowing Samuel's search criteria, though he called for the youngest to come, he was probably thinking the same things Jesse was.

This was a formality – the youngest would arrive & it would be the same.

After all, if the boy's *father* hadn't bothered to summon him, how out of contention must he be?

I'll bet there was a certain amount of confusion on Samuel's part. Had he heard right? Was there something he was missing? Should he look elsewhere?

**12**So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this *is the one!*”

Of course, this is David – the youngest of Jesse's sons.

He was out tending his father's flock when Samuel came to anoint him king, just as Saul was out looking for his father's lost donkeys when *he* met Samuel & was anointed.

David is described as *ruddy*—meaning he had a red-complexion. & hair.

His eyes were *bright*, meaning they weren't the dark brown common among so many of his relatives.

They were either green or blue.

Though he was slender, as later events will make clear, he was overall a good looking young man.

And as soon as Samuel laid eyes on him., God indicated he was the one.

**13**Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that



## day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

Samuel unstopped his horn and poured its contents liberally over David's head in the presence of his family and probably the other elders of Bethlehem invited to the feast of the sacrifice.

Following the festivities, Samuel returned home.

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In the OT, the Holy Spirit came upon people to empower & equip them for a specific task or office.

Then that task was complete, or their terms was finished, then Spirit left them.

David was unique in that the Spirit remained with him from this point forward, right up to the time of his death.

This doesn't mean he was perfect or that everything David did was approved by God.

As you well know, he made some major boo-boos.

Yet even with these goof-ups, David's unchanging central desire was to be one with God.

### **B. David Brought to Saul 16:14-23**

**14**But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him.

Only one can be anointed as king at a time. Since the Spirit now rests on David, He could *not* be on Saul.

It was the Spirit that had empowered Saul to do anything good as ruler.

Without the Spirit, he would become totally ineffective.

All his flaws & weaknesses would become clear to all since he would be left to his own pitiful resources to rule.

And as often happens – when *rebellion* causes the *removal* of the Spirit of God, other spirits of rebellion come in. Such was the case with Saul.

What troubles us is that it says this distressing spirit was “from the Lord.”

How's this possible? This sounds demonic, so how can its origin be God? Does God have a special holding-pen of such evil spirits He occasionally turns to when he wants to mess someone up? Hardly!

This simply refers to God's sovereignty over the angelic realm, both angels & demons.

Why – the Book of Job shows us that even the devil can only do what God permits him to do.

That's what's going on here. Saul's repeated rejection of God had resulted in God's removal of protection around him, allowing an evil spirit that troubled Saul.

The specific nature of the trouble isn't given. But as we follow his story from this point forward, we can take a good guess.

Saul becomes filled with a paranoia & jealousy that drive him into a condition today referred to as bi-polar, or manic-depressive.

He alternates between seasons of rage marked by frantic, erratic action & sour, dark depression.

I can say from my own limited exposure to depression that it began & was deepened by thoughts I later came to realize were suggested to me – lies that kindled jealousy & insecurity.

Deliverance came by resisting the lies and cleaving to the truth. Anyone who reads Saul's story from this point forward would have to conclude some kind of mental condition.

Yet here we see that its origin was *spiritual*.

This is not to say that all mental illness has a spiritual root – but certainly some of it does.

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For Saul, there was no relief since he'd rejected God.

What *we need* to see is that God had a purpose in allowing this demon to distress Saul.

Though it's a form of judgment, & Saul's distress was really nothing more than the result of his own choices, God had a plan to bring relief for Saul – to work real repentance in him, if he would only surrender to the Lord.

Watch . . .

**15And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. 16Let our master now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well."**

Whether this diagnosis & remedy was something God gave them, or they simply *observed* how music brought a measure of peace to Saul when he was having a fit, we're not told.

The power of music to *soothe* and comfort a troubled mind has been known since early history.

The Greeks prescribed different songs to soothe the passions, heal mental disease; even to quell riots.

But just as music can *soothe*, it can also stir up. It's been used to move people to action.

Music speaks powerfully to something deep in the soul, touching us at a spiritual level.

It's no wonder that over & over in scripture we find music being used in the expression of worship to God.

In Revelation, we find several instances of the hosts of heaven singing their praises to the Lord.

While worship transcends music, music is a powerful medium for the expression of worship.

That means the ministry of the *worship leader* is incredibly important.

He/she's using a powerful tool that touches people at a deep level.

If he/she isn't careful, the worship that is supposed to go to God could be misdirected.

Worship can degenerate into little more than a selfish pursuit of an emotional high.

The worship leader has to keep in mind that worship's whole aim is the glory of God.

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I believe music was the key to Saul's relief because God wanted to bring him to his senses & see him repent & be restored.

He was no longer King, that role had passed to David.  
So God worked to bring Saul to the place where he would *look to David's leadership*.

Now – Saul's never going to do that because he's a power hungry, paranoid tyrant.

So God sets this up so Saul will look to David to lead him – in the only thing Saul would consent to be led in – worship.

**17** So Saul said to his servants, "Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring *him* to me." **18** Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the LORD is with him.*"

This is an interesting description of David – specially since he's a young guy.

How has he earned a reputation as a mighty man of valor & a man of war?

A bit later when his brothers go off to fight the Philistines, he's deemed to young to go.

This makes me wonder if this so-called servant wasn't an angel – another evidence of God's grace in trying to bring Saul to his senses.

**19** Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, *who is with the sheep.*" **20** And Jesse took a donkey *loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent them by his son David to Saul.*

Because you always take a gift to the King.

**21** So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armorbearer.

Saul had an immediate strong affection for David, giving him the trusted position of being his personal attendant.

**22** Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Please let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight."

As Saul had done with some many of the young men of Israel, David was conscripted into his service.

**23** And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play *it* with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.

From the Psalms we know that David's compositions on the harp were worship songs.

Take careful note what's happening here –

The distressing spirit came because of Saul's rebellion & rejection of God.

It left to be replaced by a refreshed heart & peaceful mind when he submitted to David's leading in worship.

Lesson: What was true for Saul is true for everyone,

*Self-will that resists* God brings distress & trouble.

*Submission* to God brings peace & satisfaction.