1 Samuel Chapter 14

Please **pray before beginning to read and study your bible**. **Repent of any sin or attitude** that would prevent you from hearing the Holy Spirit and ask him to guide your heart and mind as you read. **Read through the entire chapter first** before going back to read and answer questions. **Take notes** when God reveals Himself to you.

Chapter 14

1. While Saul sits close to home in Gibeah under a pomegranate tree with 600 troops at his command, Jonathan decides to face the Philistines with the help of his single armor-bearer, brandishing one of the two swords available to the army. The Philistines had positioned themselves on the high ground, protected from the advance of Saul's garrison by two lofty, craggy rocks through which only one person at a time could pass. Jonathan doesn't see this obstacle as anything the LORD can't overcome. This account gives insight into the bond that later forms between Jonathan and David. What similarities can you find between this account and that of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel chapter 17?

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2. What motivates Jonathan to take a risk in confronting such a formidable enemy?

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3. What is the difference between Jonathan's and Saul's approach to war strategy and command over their men? How does this difference affect the Israelites' loyalty to each in v. 45? _____

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4. Why did the deaths of just 20 men in a half-acre spread, out of thousands of Philistines, stir up panic in the whole Philistine army – "those in the camp and field and those in outposts and raiding parties?" (v. 15) Can God still confuse and thwart the plans of the enemy today?

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5. Who was Ahijah? Why does he enter into the picture at this time? What does Saul ask Ahijah to do to help guide his response to the chaos in the Philistine camp? Why

does he change his mind? Do you get the feeling Ahijah acted with the same God-given courage and authority that Samuel did? Why or why not?

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6. What prompted King Saul's command that the men fast during their pursuit and battles against the Philistine? Was he focused on the well-being of his fellow Israelites?

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7. Jonathan and the Israelite army were famished. What did God provide to nourish them for battle? How do we know that it was God's intention to provide this nourishment and the land to the Israelites (Exodus 3:8)?

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8. Did Jonathan know about the oath when he ate the honey? What was his opinion about Saul's decree?

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9. After the outnumbered Israelite army pursues and battles the Philistines for 15 miles, from Micmash to Aijalon, they are so famished that they kill sheep, cattle and calves and eat the raw meat "with the blood in it." Read Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:10-12, and Deuteronomy 12: 20-25.
    a. How far back did the LORD strictly forbid the eating of bloody meat?
    b. What were the consequences of breaking this law?
    c. Does God give a reason for the law?
    d. What do vs. 33-36 reveal about Saul's knowledge of the law and about his ego and desire for control?

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10. Did the LORD honor Saul's efforts to gain His favor by rebuking his men for their sin, building an altar, and enquiring of him before the second planned assault on the Philistines? Why or why not?

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11. What does Saul blame for God's silence? What does he propose to expose the offender? _____

12. What were the chances that the lot would fall on Saul and Jonathan, then later on Jonathan? Would you say the chances were high the lot would fall on Jonathan without the LORD's guidance? How does Saul's test of the LORD's will compare to proofs previously provided through Samuel?

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13. Who did Jonathan sin against, God or Saul? _____
14. Although Saul excused but redirected his men for eating the blood, the Levitical penalty for which is excommunication, he offers no such leniency to Jonathan. Why couldn't the king brush this offence under the rug?
15. Although his subjects obeyed his brash command to abstain from food and quietly waited for Saul to pass unfair judgement upon them for their sin, they raised their voices in unison against his condemnation of Jonathan. What stayed Saul's hand? What does this indicate about the effectiveness and duty of the people to courageously defend the just and innocent before abusers of political power?

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16. What did Saul do after settling the internal conflict originating from his heavy-handed and uncompassionate fasting decree? Did the division hinder continued focus on the external battle?

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17. What people's did the LORD promise to drive out of the promised land before the Hebrews? (Deuteronomy 20:17) Does the list include the Philistines? Read Judges 3:1-4) Why did God leave the Philistines as close neighbors to the Israelites?

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18. There was "bitter" or "sore" war against the Philistines all the days of Saul's life and Saul took whatever mighty or strong men he could find into his service to fight these wars. Saul wanted to "avenge" himself on "his" enemy in v. 24. Does it appear the war against the Philistines may not have been directed by God? At this point, how many of God's commands for the king is Saul following? (Deuteronomy 17: 14-20)

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