

General Church Education



# Jonathan's Heroism

1 Samuel 14

## Lesson 8

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 5: The Lord Is King of Kings

For ages 10-11

## Jonathan's Heroism

1 Samuel 14:1-46

### Teacher Background

Saul was afraid to attack the Philistines. As he sat under a tree with 600 men his son Jonathan went to investigate a Philistine garrison. They overcame the garrison and the earth shook as the Philistines began to melt away. Saul discovered Jonathan and his armorbearer were missing. He called for the Ark and as it arrived he saw that the Philistines were confused. This gave Israel the courage to go into battle. However, Saul rashly forbade anyone to eat until evening. Jonathan did not know this and ate some honey. The people were so hungry they devoured animals without killing them properly. When Saul inquired of the Lord he received no answer. So he cast lots to find out what had happened and discovered Jonathan's sin. Saul was prepared to kill Jonathan, but the people spoke up for him, saving his life.

The Philistines symbolize a tendency to be satisfied with knowing what is right without necessarily doing it. Jonathan stands for the power of the truth to protect the church. He was not disheartened by not having weapons and courageously climbed up to meet the Philistines.

### Focus Points

- Jonathan and his armorbearer attacked the Philistines so Saul could lead the army to victory.
- Saul made a rash oath, forbidding the army to eat until the Philistines were turned back. Jonathan unwittingly disobeyed him by eating, so he had to die.
- The people spoke out for Jonathan's life and he was spared.

### Readings from the Writings

“All the war that the sons of Israel waged against the Philistines represented the combats of the spiritual person with the natural person, and thence also the combats of truth conjoined with good against truth separated from good, which in itself is not truth but falsity.” *Apocalypse Explained* 817.6

“Jonathan's eyes were opened by tasting the honey” because “honey” corresponds to natural good and its delight, and this good gives intelligence and enlightens, from which Jonathan knew that he had done evil....” *Apocalypse Explained* 619

“This providence is also meant therefore by an atmosphere of protecting and maintaining those who cannot protect and maintain themselves. For it exists from creation that things created must be preserved, safeguarded, protected, and maintained—otherwise the universe would fall to ruin. But because this cannot be done by the Lord directly in the case of living beings to whom He has bequeathed free judgment, He does it indirectly through His love implanted in fathers, mothers and nurses.” *Conjugal Love* 391

## Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers students the following choices:

### Recitation

Learn the Lord's Word by heart.

"I will love You, O Lord my strength.  
The Lord is my rock and my deliverer;  
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;  
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." (Psalm 18:1-2)

### Projects and Activities (see back for answers)

Who Said It?

Read sentences and decide who said them. Was it Saul, Jonathan, or the Israelites?

Crossword

Use the clues from the lesson to complete a crossword.

### Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Signs from the Lord

Jonathan asked the Lord for a sign that he should go up and fight the Philistines. The Lord gave Jonathan a sign by following the sign he had success. The Word contains many accounts of people receiving signs. Think of some other stories and write them in a table. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-signs-from-the-lord-1samuel14.pdf>

Writing Activity

Jonathan did something very brave. What is the difference between something brave and foolish? Have you ever been brave? Being brave is doing the right thing even though it is frightening or difficult. Write about a time when you did something brave.

Discussion: Eating and Sleeping

Part of the reason that Saul's army was not completely successful against the Philistines was that the soldiers were hungry and tired. Like Saul's army, we do not do as well when we are hungry or tired. It is hard to be active without nourishing our bodies. Sometimes lack of food or sleep makes it harder for us to treat others kindly as well. Encourage students to try to eat nutritious foods. Pay attention to whether this helps your energy level and your attitude.

# Jonathan’s Heroism

## 1 Samuel 14:1-46

### Vocabulary

**gorge**—deep narrow valley with steep sides

**oath**—a solemn promise before the Lord

**reckless**—acting without thinking or caring about the consequences

### The Lord Is the Hero of War

The Israelites thought Saul would be a good king to lead their fight against the Philistines. However, they discovered that it was not enough for him to be tall and brave and strong. They forgot who really won the battles for them. They forgot that the Lord is the Hero of War.

Saul gave the Israelites confidence that he could defeat their enemies. But he was not as strong on the inside as he looked on the outside. He did not always trust and obey the Lord.

Jonathan, Saul’s son, was different. He was brave like his father but unlike Saul, he trusted the Lord to fight for him.

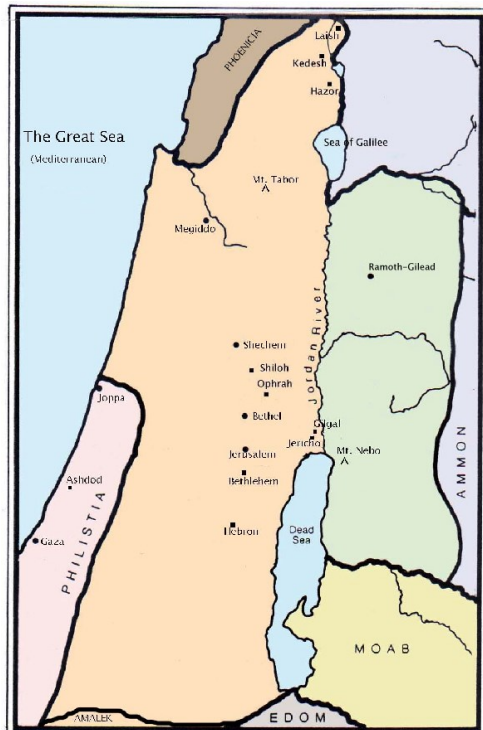
### The Two Enemies

The map on the left shows a pink shaded area on the bottom left labeled Philistia. This is where the Philistines lived. It was near the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

At the time of this story Philistine soldiers also controlled many towns in Israel. One of the ways in which they did this was by outlawing blacksmiths. This meant that the children of Israel could not make swords and spears for their soldiers. Even the farmers had to go to the Philistine blacksmiths to have their farm tools sharpened. So the army Saul raised to fight the Philistines had few weapons.

### Saul Is Afraid to Attack

Saul’s army was much smaller than the Philistine forces. The Philistines had more men, horses and chariots than the children of Israel could count.



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The Philistines were camped in Michmash, at the top of one side of a steep gorge. Saul and Jonathan positioned their men on the other side of the gorge, at Gibeah. They could see the Philistine forces across the valley. Saul was too afraid to attack, but Jonathan was not afraid. The Lord had shown the Israelites many times that He could conquer a frightening enemy with just a small army.

### Jonathan's Plan

Jonathan and his armorbearer made a plan. The important part of the plan was that they would wait for the Lord to give a sign that it was the right time to attack. They would go over to the Philistines and show themselves. If the Philistines said, "Wait until we come to you," they would stay where they were and not go to them. But if they said, "Come up to us" they would go. It was a sign that the Lord bring victory over the Philistines.

When the Philistines saw them they shouted, "Come up to us!" So Jonathan, with his armorbearer behind him, climbed the steep rocks on hands and knees, confident the Lord would be with him.

As they approached the camp, the Philistines fell before Jonathan and his armorbearer. About twenty Philistines were killed. Now it was the Philistine army that was filled with terror.



“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.” (1 Samuel 14:15)

### Saul Attacks

The watchman in Saul's army saw the enemy melting away. What could it mean? Who had left his camp to attack his Philistines? Saul decided to number his men and find out who had left the camp. He discovered Jonathan and his armorbearer were missing.

Saul gathered his army and pursued the Philistines. The men who had hidden in the mountains came out to fight with Saul. Some Hebrews who had been in the Philistine camp joined Saul. The trembling Philistines were so confused that they attacked each other! The Lord saved Israel that day.

### Saul's Rash Oath

Once again Saul showed that although he was strong, he was not very wise. He made a quick and foolish oath.

“Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies.” (1 Samuel 14:24)

Without food Saul's soldiers were hungry and weak. They would have won a bigger victory if they were not hungry. They acted recklessly. They rushed on the Philistines' sheep, oxen and calves and ate them without preparing the meat according to the Jewish law.

### Saul's Oath Causes Trouble

Saul's oath had another unfortunate consequence. Jonathan was not in the camp when Saul gave the order not to eat. He did not hear his father's oath. When he came to a forest with his soldiers, Jonathan dipped his rod into a honeycomb and ate the honey.

Later, when Saul asked the Lord if he should go after the Philistines in the night and kill them all, the Lord did not answer him. Saul knew someone must have done something wrong! They drew lots to see who it was.

The first draw was between Saul and Jonathan on the one side, and the people of Israel on the other side. The lot fell to Saul and Jonathan! Then a lot was cast between Saul and Jonathan. The lot fell on Jonathan. Saul said, “Tell me what you have done.” And Jonathan replied, “I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand.”

Saul would have to honor his oath. Jonathan must die. But the people did not want their hero to die. He had delivered them from the Philistines. They came to his rescue and said,

“As the Lord lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.” (1 Samuel 14:45)

So Saul did not kill Jonathan. He also stopped following the Philistines, and the Philistines went home to their own country.



## Activity Overview

### Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“I will love You, O Lord my strength.  
The Lord is my rock and my deliverer;  
My God, my strength, in whom I will trust;  
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” (Psalm 18:1-2)

### Projects and Activities (answers at back)

Choose one or two.

Who Said It?

Read sentences and decide who said them. Was it Saul, Jonathan, or the Israelites?

Crossword

Use clues from the lesson to complete a crossword.

## Who Said It?

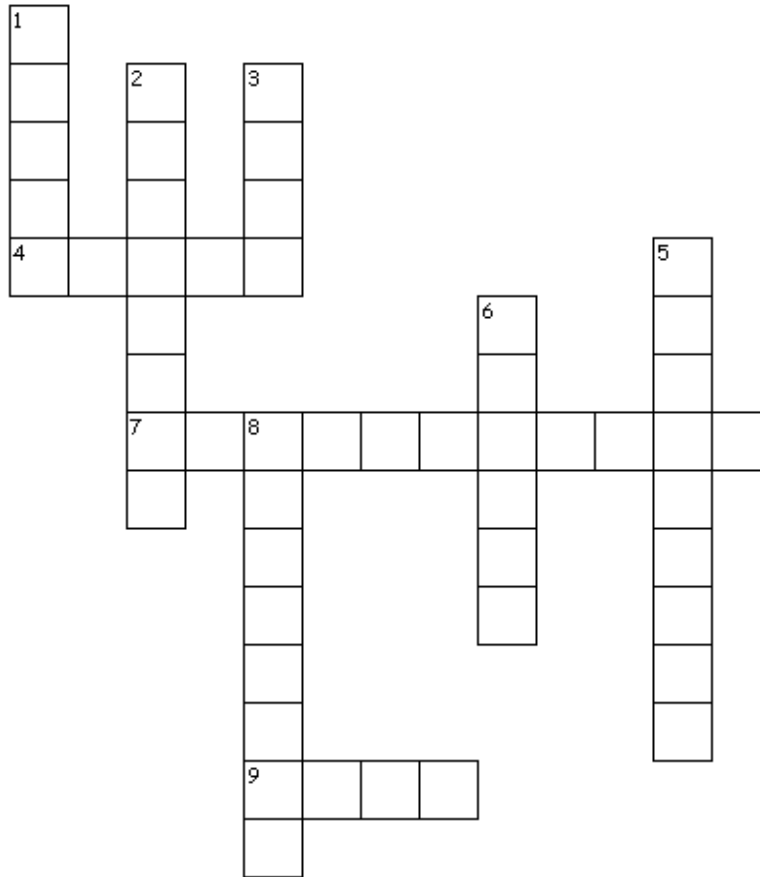
Read the following quotes and write the name of the person who said it on the line. Who said the following: **Saul** (the king), **Jonathan** (his son) or the **Israelites**? These quotes are taken from the New King James translation of the Bible. If you are reading a different translation the words may be slightly different. Look at 1 Samuel 14 if you need to.

Quote	Who said it?
1. “For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few.”	_____
2. “The Lord has delivered them into the hand of Israel.”	_____
3. “Now call the roll and see who has gone from us.”	_____
4. “Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening.”	_____
5. “Do what seems good to you.”	_____
6. “Tell me what you have done.”	_____
7. “I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand.”	_____
8. “God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan.”	_____
9. “Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel?”	_____



## Crossword Puzzle

Use the clues below to fill in the puzzle. Look back the lesson if you need help.



### Across

4. The punishment for breaking an oath.
7. He went with Jonathan to the Philistines' garrison.
9. The Lord gave this to Jonathan so he would know if he could attack.

### Down

1. The people sinned by eating this with their meat.
2. He had confidence in the Lord.
3. Saul made one of these.
5. Jonathan ate some of this.
6. Jonathan killed about this many Philistines.
8. The place where the Philistines were camped.

# Answers

## Lesson 8

### Who Said It?

1. Jonathan, 2. Jonathan, 3. Saul, 4. Saul, 5. Israelites, 6. Saul, 7. Jonathan, 8. Saul, 9. Israelites.

### Crossword

#### Across

4. Death, 7. Armorbearer, 8. Sign

#### Down

1. David, 2. Jonathan 3. Oath, 5. Twenty, 6. Honeycomb, 8. Michmash.