

A Lame Duck King

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles tonight and open them to 1 Samuel.

! Find chapter 14. We looked at a little less than half of chapter 14 last time, last week.! We won't go all the way to the end of chapter 14, not because we don't have enough time, but try to pick blocks of text that have either the same theme or complete a story.

And when we get to verse 47, really verse 46 of chapter 14, we're kind of starting on something a little bit different. So our text for tonight is verses 24 through 46.

So let me go ahead. I'm going to go ahead and read the text to begin with, even though, again, I'll go back and reread some of it as we work our way through this. So starting with verse 24 of 1 Samuel chapter 14.

So none of the people tasted food.

[1 : 34] They didn't eat. I guess, you know, if you're not tasting, you're not eating. You might eat without tasting. I've often accused my sons of that.

They eat so quickly they don't even taste it. Starting with verse 25. All right, now all the people of the land came to a forest. First, there was honey on the ground.

It's kind of interesting, isn't it? Honey just there on the ground. And I was reading a commentary, by the way, and this is part of the sermon, so I'm just adding a little filler here. A commentary that it was not unusual for bees to have hives.

They're just right on the ground. There'd be honeycombs here and there. And so the ground had honey all over it. That was the case here. There was honey on the ground.

And when the people had come into the woods, there was the honey dripping. No one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan had not heard this.

[2 : 41] His father charged the people with the oath. Therefore, he stretched out the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb. Put his hand to his mouth and his countenance brightened.

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. The people were faint. But Jonathan said, My father has troubled the land.

Look now how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. By the way, this is not some supernatural thing here. It's an expression that means that he was revived.

I mean, he was hungry, as all the people were. And, you know, you're hungry and you scoop out a handful of honey and eat that.

It kind of lifts your spirit a little bit there, doesn't it? So that was the case here. How much better, Jonathan goes on, How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found?

[3 : 46] For now, would there not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistine? Now, they had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Agilon.

So the people were very faint. 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.

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.

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.

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. Then Saul built an altar to the Lord.

[4 : 48] This was the first altar that he built to the Lord. Now Saul said, Let us go down from the Philistine, 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. And the priest said, Let us draw near to God here. 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. And Saul said, Come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today. For as the Lord lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan, my son, he shall surely die. But not a man among the people answered him. 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. Therefore Saul said to the Lord God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped.

[5 : 57] Saul said, Cast lots between my son Jonathan and me. So Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what you have done. 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. So Saul answered, God do so and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan. 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.

All right. Now, if you were here last week, you may remember that Jonathan, Saul's son, along with his armor bearer, really distinguished themselves.

Jonathan distinguished himself. His armor bearer went along with him, and was very obedient, very brave himself, but it really is Jonathan that distinguished himself here.

[7 : 09] The Philistine, they had encamped there in Michmash, encamped against the Israelites, and the Philistines had a huge, they'll trump that there's an H in the word huge, huge numberless army.

And the people of Israel, how did they react? They were terrified. Terrified. So afraid. So terrified. They went hiding.

Went out hiding. Hiding in holes, in caves, and behind rocks, and any place that they could find some hiding place. They were terrified of this huge, numberless army of Philistines that had really invaded their land.

But now Saul, or set up a camp, remember, he kind of set up a, what we might call an outdoor throne room. He sat under a pomegranate tree, you know, served as king there, but he only had 600 men with him.

So it's kind of an interesting story. But Jonathan, remember, and his armor bearer, they just, they couldn't just sit there, you know, sit around and do nothing, and so he said to his armor bearer, come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised.

[8 : 33] It may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few. Now you remember this, don't you? We studied this last Sunday night.

God brought a great victory, great victory to Israel. Really, I think because of Jonathan stepping out, distinguishing himself, doing something very courageous, leading really in that sense, though Saul, his father, eventually joined him in that battle, but it was Jonathan who led the way.

All right, so that's what we studied last week. And so chapter 14 that we're in presents a very clear contrast between Jonathan and Saul.

I mean, it makes quite a distinction here between the two. In fact, if you didn't know anything about what comes next after this chapter and on into the rest of 1 Samuel, if you had not read ahead, if you've never studied it before and didn't know anything about the history that is yet to come, then you might be thinking that the author of 1 Samuel is kind of giving a foreshadowing of things to come here.

That is, namely, that Jonathan will be the next king of Israel. Now, we don't think in those terms, but you, you know, just maybe imagine that you're reading this for the very first time.

[10 : 01] And, you know, when you read other books and novels, especially historical things, and where the author presents another character in the story, and that character distinguishes himself, then you know, usually, that this is a foreshadowing of some great things that are yet to come for

this kind of new character that is being introduced into the story.

In this case, it's Jonathan, the son of Saul. And so you might be thinking that he is going to be the next king and that, unlike his father Saul, Jonathan is going to be a great king.

Now, we know that didn't happen, of course. And yet, that is kind of the way the, it reads, and it kind of lends itself to, to, to us beginning to think that Jonathan is being put forward here and that he's going to be the next king.

But Jonathan is not the next king after Saul. In fact, if you, again, you know the story, Jonathan is going to die at the end of the, of this first book of Samuel.

And he's going to die, really, as a consequence of his father's sin. He and his father are going to die on the same day in the same battle and we'll get to that sometime when we get to chapter 31 of this book.

[11:27] Now, also, you need to remember what God said back there in chapter 13 where God said in verse 13 of chapter 13, Samuel said to Saul, you have done foolishly.

You remember the, the story. Saul had, was about to go to battle and he was waiting for Samuel and he's tired of waiting for Samuel and so he offers up the sacrifice himself and he had no right to do that, no authority to do that.

And, and so, Samuel said to Saul, he's speaking for God, you've 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.

Meaning, really, primarily, that his descendants, he would be the beginning of a lineage of kings in Israel. That's what God would have done, he said, for you, but now your kingdom shall not continue. And so, right off we know. if we had been thinking about it, we look at chapter 13, verse 13, that Jonathan is not going to be the next king. In fact, it's going to end with Saul and God is going to select another man to be king, another family entirely.

[12:44] In fact, it says there in verse 13, the Lord has sought for himself a man after his own heart. But again, that man after God's own heart is not Jonathan even though Jonathan, you know, very much like David, who will come later in his relationship with God, his faith in God.

He was, in a sense, a man after God's own heart. But the man after God's own heart is not going to be Jonathan. And this passage in chapter 13 makes that clear. All right, so you see, God has already selected Saul's replacement.

We don't know that yet, or the reader doesn't know that yet. Of course, we've read ahead we know that. So, no one knows that God has selected the replacement for Saul.

No one knows who it is yet. No one knows his name yet. We do, of course. But God has rejected Saul. And God has selected a man to take his place.

And he is a man after God's own heart. And we know it's going to be David, but for now, in fact, for a number of chapters until we really, until we get to the end of the book, Saul is still king.

[14:00] Even though God has rejected him, he's still king. And so he is, we could say, in a sense, a lame duck king.

A lame duck king. His replacement has already been selected, even though no one knows who it is yet. Saul is on his way out, though he doesn't really know that yet, or he hasn't accepted that yet.

He should know it because God has already pronounced that judgment upon Saul. And everything, and this is the interesting thing, everything Saul does just goes wrong.

It just goes wrong. And all of his decisions are bad decisions. And why is that? Well, because God is not with Saul. He's not with Saul.

And Saul is not with God, though he wants God to think that he is with God. And that's really what we see in the whole point of this portion of the chapter.

[15:06] And so as Samuel has said in chapter 13, Saul is a foolish man, and he shows himself to be a foolish man in this passage that we're studying here tonight, and he's going to show it over and over again after this point.

Because Saul is, everything he decides to do, and every decision he makes is wrong. God has departed from him, and he's letting Saul just simply go the way that he would naturally go according to the heart that is in him.

All right, so that's what we see in this text. So that gets us to the outline. point number one, if you take notes, and that is Saul's stupid blunder.

His stupid blunder. I'm going to have to call my mom and dad and apologize for using that word, stupid, because they listen to my sermons online.

I don't understand that, but that's what they do. My mom and dad taught me never to use that word stupid. That is when I was a little kid. Did your mom and dad ever say that? Stupid was a bad word. [16:18] But I decided to go ahead and use it. If you are really very sensitive to that word, then just say Saul's silly blunder. Kind of conveys the same idea.

And so, again, remember, back in chapter 13, verse 13, what did Samuel say was the reason God was taking Saul's kingdom away from him. He said, you have done foolishly.

And so, foolishness will pretty much mark his reign until he dies. Foolishness. And what he does here in this chapter is absolutely foolish or stupid.

Really stupid. Verse 24, remember, is a continuation of the story that is being told, being narrated here in chapter 14.

Because if you go back one verse to verse 23, the Bible says, so the Lord saved Israel that day and the battle shifted to Beth Avon.

[17:25] All right, that's how verse 23 is. That's not the end of the story. That's really a transition to the next portion of the story. really, it kind of transitions us from that battlefield there, Gibeah and Michmash, to a new battlefield.

It's kind of a moving battlefield actually. Because it means here that the Philistines, remember, have suffered a great loss, tremendous loss, at the hand of God. And now, they have been driven out of the land of Israel.

And they are going back to their homeland. Beth Avon is in Philistia. And so, but now Israel is pursuing. They're pursuing them every step of the way.

And all of this is the Lord's battle. Jonathan got the battle started. Saul, his father, King Saul, joined in the battle. And so the enemy is routed.

And they are on the run. There are still a number of skirmishes. We can just, it's implied that there are skirmishes all along the way. They're doing battle and Israel is pursuing the enemy back to their homeland.

[18:34] And they are routed, they're on the run, and then Saul makes this oath. Foolish, foolish oath. Verse 24, he placed the people under oath, saying, Cursed is the man who eats any food until this day is over, until evening.

or really, technically, till I have taken vengeance on my enemies. That's what verse 24 says. So he's speaking to his army here.

People of Israel, some of them, you know, trained soldiers, and the rest of them citizen soldiers, and they're the ones that have routed the enemy, and they are pursuing them, and then Saul comes up with this bright idea.

let's all fast. Let's fast all this day until I, I, whose battle was it?

The Lord's. Until I have taken vengeance on my enemies. How foolish. How foolish.

[19:46] The one thing these men needed was food. Okay. Right? And they're pursuing the enemy, and they're pursuing the enemy over miles of rough terrain, and they needed strength.

They needed to eat. They needed food. In fact, the normal thing would be, as they are pursuing the enemy, that at each place where they conquer the enemy, they plunder their camp that they've abandoned, and they plunder it and eat the food that is left behind.

This is how they sustained their army as they marched forward, and this was the normal way.

Napoleon is famous for saying an army marches on its stomach, and it's true.

You take away the food, you have no army, and therefore no victory, but for some foolish reason, Saul thinks his army should fast in this moment. And the result, of course, verse 24, says very simply, the men of Israel were distressed that day.

You bet they were. Now, it doesn't mean they were distressed and that they didn't like this oath that they had to take. It means literally that they were faint, weak.

[21:03] Of course they were. They needed food. Now, why? This is the question that needs to be answered.

Why make such a foolish oath? You say, well, it must have been required in God's law somewhere. Maybe God is the one who has mandated this, and maybe there's something in the law that Saul has been reading, and maybe in his devotion with God, God gives him instruction.

Well, none of that is true. In the first place, there's no law that requires this at all of God's arms. So, it's not that Saul is following God's instructions in his word.

You know, and we'll get to this, you know, later, several chapters later, but prior to battle, on one occasion, King David required his soldiers to, well, to fast in a sense, but it was not from food. He required his soldiers to follow the holiness regulations in the Torah, and this is in 1 Samuel 21, verse 5, and in particular, that they would regard or follow the sexual abstinence laws that were given there, and he required this in preparation for battle.

[22 : 26] That's something totally different. Saul's prohibition of food is just simply foolish, and it had no basis in the law of God.

So, why make such a foolish oath? Well, in Saul's twisted way of thinking, and really it's not so twisted, it's a very common way of thinking among people, even today, even among us sometimes, he believes somehow that this is some very spiritual thing to do, that this is a very religiously, and that somehow this will gain for him God's blessings, God's favor.

Look at what I'm doing. I'm requiring that my entire army fast. Now, you put that next to what we know has already happened, and God has already rejected.

So, what is Saul doing? He's kind of, rather than, really responding in the right way, to repent, and to be broken over his sin.

He's just redoubling his religious efforts. God has rejected him, and he's departed from God because of his foolishness, because of his disobedience, and rather than returning to the Lord in repentance, he just gets more religious.

[23 : 54] You ever know anybody like that? You know, they're way out left field with God, and so, rather than, you know, responding in the biblical way, and dealing with their sin in the biblical way, they just try to become more religious, thinking that maybe God will bless them, maybe God will change his mind about them, see what I'm doing for you.

You understand? This is Saul, and it's interesting to notice, I think, that ever since Samuel informed Saul that God had taken the kingdom away from him, we find Saul becoming more and more religious.

It just kind of, you know, kind of inserted into the story things that don't really have any explanation, don't really, when you think about it, make any sense. When John, for example, initiated this attack upon the Philistine garrison, you remember, now Saul, then, he responds, and what does he do? He calls for the Ark of the Covenant to be brought into the battle. And the Bible doesn't explain anything about that, doesn't give any rationale for that, and really just pointing to Saul who's thinking in his mind, I know Samuel said that God has rejected me, but I'm going to prove to God that I'm a very spiritual man, very religious oriented, and so I'm going to go to battle, but I'm going to bring the Ark, just kind of put the Bible in there to justify things and to make myself feel better. And maybe, you know, God will change his mind about it. A little bit later in our story here, and I read it a moment ago, when Saul perceives that things are not quite right, you know, what does he do?

[25 : 39] He calls for this big stone to be set up, and an altar is set up, and animal sacrifices are being made, and there's no explanation for it, no justification for it.

In fact, it kind of puts a little blurb in there, this is the first time Saul's ever made an altar. In fact, there may even be some indication here that the altar is not really something prescribed by God's law, in fact, it's something that God has already abolished.

So, what is he doing? He's trying to look very religious, and make decisions that appear to be so spiritual minded, so that he can somehow gain favor with God.

That's his thinking. Still, a little bit later in the story, when Saul can't hear from God. That's a real big clue right there, that there's major problems with Saul.

He's asking God for guidance before he goes into battle, and God doesn't even give him an answer. Nothing. Silence. Silent treatment. And so, rather than Saul understanding that there's some problem inside of his heart, what does he do?

[26 : 45] He perceives that there's some sin in the camp. So, he gets out the Urim and the Thummim. I know that's not in the text, but possibly what they use.

We don't even know what it is, but this casting of lots, you know, I don't know if they were holy dice, as some people have suggested, or whatever they were, some stones, and they'd throw them down, and they would somehow understand God's direction for certain decisions, and so forth.

And so, you know, he's convinced there's some sin in the camp. That's why he can't hear from God. Somebody's really messed up, and so we're going to have to find out who this guy is, and he gets out the Urim and the Thummim, supposedly, to have God identify some guilty party in the camp. So he's trying to approach this in a very spiritual way. In fact, he even prays, remember, before they cast the lots. God, you have a perfect lot, and all the time the problem is not with anyone in the camp, it's with Saul.

It's with Saul. And so he makes this stupid blunder, this foolish oath. He's trying to perform for God. [27 : 55] He's not relying upon the grace of God, he's relying upon his works of righteousness, he's turning to religious activity, and things to gain God's favor, and so in his twisted way of thinking, he believes somehow that God will honor this mandatory feast.

feast. But what happens as a result of this foolish oath? Well, verse 25 and following tells us about that.

Let me just have us turn there again, let me remind you of what happens. So Saul has forced this oath on the people, no eating all this day, till I take vengeance on my enemies.

And so verse 25 says, now all the people of the land came to a forest, there was honey on the ground. Now you're hungry, boy, I don't know if all of you like honey, but if you're really hungry, that'd be good, just kind of scoop out a handful of that and eat that honey, just a little bit, it just kind of tied me over, until tonight when maybe we get the feast.

And so they're hungry, they're going through the woods, but Jonathan, he didn't know about this. this, so if he hadn't heard, and honestly, he didn't know about it, and so he sees the honey and eats some.

[29 : 20] Going to cause big troubles later. And why? Some problem with Jonathan? No. It's because of Saul's foolish oath.

So here's Jonathan, he scoops some out, and then one of the people said there in verse 28, your father strictly charged the people with an oath saying, cursed is the man who eats food this day. The people were faint, they were all hungry. What's the result of this? Well, Jonathan eats some of the honey.

So we go on with the story, and Jonathan said, my father has troubled the land. Let me skip that, we'll come back to that. And now, they had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Agilon, so they're just moving them back, back to their own homeland, so the people were very faint, they're hungry, 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.

Now, this was a violation of God's law, eat with the blood. Now, you know, what they're supposed to do is hang them up, and drain the blood, and do it according to the law, and the instructions that were given in the Levitical law.

[30 : 46] But they do that, why did they not do that? They were hungry, starving to death. You know, I suppose, though, really don't get the idea that they ate all this food raw, and it was probably cooked.

They just didn't drain the blood out as they were supposed to. So, this was a violation of the law, and they were just in a hurry. They were famished. They were hungry. They were about to keel over. Now, who put them in that place?

That place where they would even be tempted to bypass the law because they're so hungry, they're famished? Who's to blame for that? Obviously, there's no excuse for disobeying God's law, but would place, the blame where?

At Saul's. For the oath that he required of them. And so, the people are doing all this stuff, and then Saul, you know, then they told Saul about it.

Look, the people are sinning against the Lord by eating with the blood. Now, by the way, was Saul not there when this was happening? No, he was there. did it occur to him that they were breaking the law?

[32 : 02] Apparently not. Somebody had to tell him. I don't think Saul even knew that what they were doing was unlawful. But anyway, you can decide for yourself there.

And so, look, look, see what the people are doing. They're eating the food with the blood in it. And so, you know, and so Saul said, disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, bring me here every man's ox and every man's sheep.

And so, he sets up this altar. And this is his spiritual thinking here that, you know, well, we'll just make things right with God. I could get mad at the people.

I could execute some judgment according to the law. But I'll do something very spiritual here and God will be pleased with that. And so, he sets up this altar. They bring the animals and their sacrifice to the Lord.

And so, then in verse 36, now Saul says, 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.

[33 : 03] And they said, do whatever seems good. Then the priest said, let us draw near to God. So, I want you to get kind of the scheme of this, the flow of this.

Saul makes this foolish oath. Not just because he's stupid, you know, and just, well, he just, you know, just probably shouldn't have done it, but, you know, it's innocent enough.

No, it's not that. It's because Saul thinks that he can get in right with God through religious activities. It's not according to grace, according to personal works of righteousness.

and this is his mentality. And so, when he does that, then we have Jonathan, he's not heard about it, he eats. Then we have the people going crazy because they're starved, they've done what they thought they were supposed to do, now it's okay to eat, and they start eating the food, but they don't drain the blood out properly, and so, all of this has caused them to sin, or led them in a way of sin, and Saul is responsible for that.

And so, Saul then, you know, he's very religious minded, and he sets up this altar, and all this stuff is going on, all because of this foolish oath that he laid upon the people.

[34 : 30] And so, now Saul says, let's go down and destroy the Philistines, and let's plunder them, and the voice of reason comes here, when it says, that the priest said, let's step aside and seek the Lord.

So, now we move to a second phase in the story. First, we have Saul's stupid blunder. Now, we're about to see Saul's second mistake, his shifted blame.

He's going to shift the blame. So, he's ready to go down and plunder the Philistines' goods and destroy these Philistines, and then the priest, this is Ahijah, by the way, Ahijah, and he basically says, let's draw near to God here.

And what does he say? He's saying, before you go off half-cocked, he couldn't say that to the king, he'd get his head cut off probably, but he's saying, before you go off half-cocked, let's find out what God wants.

Or, in our vernacular, we would say, let's pray about this first, before you go down there. That's a good idea. And, of course, again, Saul's new religious approach in life, because of that, he thinks this is a good idea too.

[35 : 58] And so, they're going to pray about it. So, what happens in verse 37? So, Saul asks counsel of God, shall I go down after the Philistine? He's asking God.

Will you deliver them into the hand of Israel? I don't know, by the way, if Ahijah, the priest, is using Buram and Thummim to answer these questions.

I don't know how Saul, or what way Saul is expecting an answer, but one thing is clear, he got no answer. He did not answer him that day.

God did not answer him. He said nothing to him. And so, Saul said, come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today.

Actually, he's saying there's some sinner in the camp. For as the Lord lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan, my son, he shall surely die.

[37 : 03] He should have said, even if it's me. He didn't say that, did he? But not a man among all the people answered him. You see what he's doing? Who made this foolish blunder, this foolish oath?

Saul did. Based upon his desire to appease God, to gain favor from God through his righteousness, self-righteousness.

And so now God is not speaking to him. Who's to blame for that? Well, it's got to be someone else. He's shifting the blame.

There's sin in the camp. That's what he's saying the problem is here. Now, here's the problem. He said, now know and see what this sin was today.

There's a sinner. That is, the reason why God is silent is because there is sin in the camp. And by the way, literally, in the language, there is an Achan in the camp.

[38 : 13] That's what he means. Achan. Remember Achan? Joshua chapter 7? In Jericho, remember Achan saw the silver and the wedge of gold and the beautiful garment, Babylonian garment.

He saw, took, coveted it for himself, and hid it. Remember that story? And it was the use, by the way, of the Urim and Thummim, this casting of lots, that separated out a tribe and then separated out a clan, a family, extended family, then ultimately Achan.

He was taken and killed along with his family. Now, after Saul says that, there must be some sin, some Achan in the camp. You know, our first thought might be, well, it must be Jonathan who's the blood.

I mean, it must be him. He's the Achan. But no, Jonathan's not the Achan. Jonathan's not the one. It's not Jonathan. It's Saul.

It is Saul. But Saul is shifting the blame to someone else, and he doesn't know who it is yet. Well, he should know it himself. And so he makes this foolish oath that he thinks will put him in solid with God, works of righteousness, and when things don't go right, the way they should go, he shifts the blame to someone else, again, though he does not know, at this point, who that someone else is.

[39 : 57] Saul's stupid blunder, Saul's shifted blame, and then one more, Saul's stubborn blindness, and really, I guess we could say sinful blindness.

Stubborn, sinful, blindness. Saul just won't see the truth. Look at verse 40 again. Then he said to all Israel, you be on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will be on the other side.

So they're about to cast lots again. Use the Urim and Thun probably. So we'll put everybody on one side, Jonathan and me will be on the other side.

All the people said to Saul, do what seems good to you. They were pretty appeasing to their king. therefore Saul said to the Lord God of Israel, so he offers up a prayer, give a perfect lot.

By the way, can you think of any reason why God should answer his prayer? Give a perfect lot. You know, he's already shifted the blame to someone else.

[41 : 04] He's not, he's totally blind to his own sin. And so, why should God answer a prayer? God, show us what the problem is. God has no eyes to see.

So he said, give us a good lot. So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped. And Saul said, cast lots between my son, Jonathan, and me.

So Jonathan was taken. Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, tell me what you have done. Jonathan told him, said, I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand, so now I must die.

Saul answered, God, do so more and more also, for you shall surely die. John. Now get this whole scene. Don't misunderstand understand what's going on here.

All the people are on one side, Saul and Jonathan on the other side. And the lot is cast the first time. And however they're able to tell, we don't really know.

[42 : 17] Nobody says they do, they're lying. We don't really know how this works. And so they cast the first lot and Saul and Jonathan were taken.

Saul, I'm sure, wanted so badly to have the Achan come from the people. Just like it happened with Achan back in Joshua.

Just so wanting it to be from that group. But when it did not come from the people, when it fell upon himself and his son Jonathan, it should have at that moment dawned on him, right then that he was the problem.

No, his stubborn blindness, his persistent denial of guilt. So, the lot is cast a second. Jonathan is dead.

You know what I think? I think the dice were loaded. I think they were loaded. I think this whole thing's fixed. now, you say, Pastor, how could you make that judgment?

[43 : 32] It seems pretty straightforward. I think it's obvious from how the people react. This is kind of a, you know, it's a setup.

And it's almost as if Saul's going to make sure that the outcome is favorable to him. because what do the people do? In verse 43, of course, Saul said to Jonathan, tell me what you've done.

Jonathan told him the whole truth. And I must die. Jonathan's willing to die. That's a lot about his character. And Saul answered, God to do so and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan.

That says a lot about Saul's character too, doesn't it? But the people said, Saul, shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel?

Certainly not. Can the people do that? Actually, yes, they can. It's kind of interesting. And they say, as the Lord lives, they're invoking God here in this whole thing.

[44 : 44] The living God says this shall not be, this shall not happen, nor 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.

God allowed that. Why? It was never Jonathan. It was Saul. Saul is the Achan.

And I end with this, it's interesting. really something that happened a little earlier in the text that should clue us in. Saul starts talking in terms of Achan.

What should have already clued us in that Saul is the Achan. And that is something that Jonathan said. Verse 29, that Jonathan said, my father has troubled the land.

I think that's a pretty tough thing for a son to say about his father. And when you know exactly what he's saying, then yes, it is a tough thing.

[45 : 53] Very severe thing. My father has troubled. Notice the word troubled or really has troubled or made trouble in some translations.

That's one word in Hebrew. And it's no accident that those words that has troubled comes from the same Hebrew word a car is the word.

That was used in Joshua chapter 7 verse 25 to describe the results of Achan's sin. His troubles. Made trouble for Israel.

That's what Jonathan's saying about his father. Now, I really don't think Jonathan was thinking in terms of Achan that he's actually calling his father an Achan and therefore deserves to have the same judgment that fell upon Achan.

I think this is God speaking through Jonathan. Jonathan saying more than he knew he had said. But it's to clue us in to who the real Achan is in the story.

[46 : 56] In fact, the word is used again, the very same word, the word that Jonathan used, the word is used again in the very next verse in Joshua chapter 7, Joshua 7 verse 26, when it says that Achan died under God's judgment for making trouble in Israel.

You know, in English, making trouble sounds so innocent. It doesn't sound very severe at all, but it's a very severe word in the Hebrew. Very severe.

Achan's sin made trouble in Israel to the point that he must be judged. condemned, put to death, because, again, he had made trouble in Israel.

Which, when you think about it, what an ominous, ominous shadow that is cast, not just on what happens through the rest of the chapter, but an ominous shadow is now cast on Saul's destiny. He can sin He can sin. Incredible.