

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

Seeing What God Sees

I Samuel 14:1-15

Intro: By anyone's estimation, the outlook was bleak 4 Israel. 4 some time now, Israel proper had been under the oppressive domination of the Philistines. They moved across the Promised Land at will, setting up garrisons in some strategic locations 2 exert their influence & quell any resistance. They had deported all the blacksmiths from Israel which required the Jews 2 go 2 them for all their necessary metal work & severely limited their ability 2 secure any formidable military equipment. In the midst of these tight circumstances, Jonathan (Saul's son) decides 2 walk into the Philistine garrison at Geba & start busting heads. All we're told is that he succeeds in alarming the Philistines! They show up w/ an army full of chariots, cavalry & an infantry that numbered **as the sand which is on the seashore**. In the face of this foreign invasion, Saul's brand new professional army showed just how unprofessional they really were as the army began 2 evaporate into thin air. It went from a measly 3K men down 2 only 600 fighting men left. From all appearances, Israel is finished! Well, not totally, but that only b/c the Philistines haven't delivered the final knockout blow. The end of ch13 highlights Israel's utter helplessness in the face of their enemies. But, if you are an alert student of the Bible, you won't be completely hopeless over Israel's complete helplessness. We've seen it many times b/4: **the total helplessness of God's people proves 2/b nothing more than the backdrop 4 God's deliverance**. We've seen God create deliverance out of nothing too many times b/4 2 give ourselves over 2 total despair. **13:23**

1- 1 day- There was nothing 2 indicate that this day was going 2/b a remarkable day, but it was! It didn't look any different from any other day but it would be! **Why? II Chron 16:9 (Meyer)** "God is ever on the lookout 4 believing souls, who will receive His power & grace on the 1 hand & transmit them on the other, that by them He should make His mighty power known." On this day, **YHWH** would win a great victory 4 Israel thru the bold trust of 1 man of faith.

Jonathan- quite the man of faith! The land is flooded w/ angry Philistines but that doesn't seem 2 faze him at all. He's the kind of person who can look at their circumstances in light of God instead of looking at God in light of their circumstances, as many people do. They're overwhelmed or things happen that seem unfair, hard 2 understand, harsh & seems like the odds are stacked against them & they **judge God** relative 2 the circumstances around them. It'd be difficult 4 any of us not 2 fall into that trap but not Jonathan. He views his circumstances in light of who God is. In fact, Jonathan's not intimidated by the presence of so many Philistines in his country, on the contrary, he seems 2/b offended by it. He looked at that vast multitude of formidable enemies that would have been awe-inspiring 2 any of us, then turned 2 his armor-bearer & said, "Well, looks like its up 2 me & you. Let's head over 2 the garrison at Michmash & pick a fight & just see what happens." This is no death-wish. He's got a legitimate bone 2 pick w/ them.

Author adds 1 teasing bit of info: **he did not tell his father**. Why not? Was it an oversight or was it deliberate? It could be that he feared his father would say, "No!" That's the reason they're in this predicament (his attack on Geba). Boldness wasn't really part of Saul's character as of late. Maybe Saul would waffle until the cows came home. Regardless of the reasons: **Jonathan is scheming** against the enemy & **Saul is completely ignorant** of the plan.

2-3- sitting- another contrast: Jonathan was **moving** towards the enemy – Saul was **sitting** under a tree relaxing. No wonder Jonathan kept his plan a secret, Saul wouldn't have understood the plan b/c he's not a man of faith. He sits there w/ 600 men, completely immobile b/c he doesn't like the odds. So what does he do? He waits & calls a friend.

Ahijah- why does the author include his family tree? Why resurrect **Ichabod** (no glory), **Phinehas** (meat-loving, woman-chasing priest) & **Eli** (lineage judged & excluded)? b/c he's revealing 2 us the sad state of Israel's leadership. Here are your leaders: sitting there is Saul, whose dynasty has been **rejected**. Assisting him is Ahijah, whose priestly line has been **rejected**. Since Samuel is gone, Saul has no authorized prophetic direction. All he has is a rejected priestly line. What help can such a king & such a priest give? They sit back while Jonathan bravely trusts **YHWH**.

did not know- this shows that Jonathan is not acting out of a desire 4 recognition or personal glory. Strangely, he doesn't set up a facebook page or a website so everybody can track his progress. He doesn't establish "**Jonathan's Victorious Faith Ministries**" as a non-profit so others could contribute 2 this much needed effort. No, he's content 2 act behind the scenes in secret w/ no 1 else in his confidence except his armor-bearer & his covenant God!

4-5- passes- author includes some topography 2 enhance out understanding even more. This is the location the Philistines moved up to in **13:23**. The "pass" Jonathan had 2 go thru 2 get 2 the garrison was between these 2 prominent rock outcroppings. 1 was named "glistening / slippery" & the other was "thorny / sharp" not very inviting 2 the weekend hiker. The point being: **most sane people would consider the point impassable**. But Jonathan was not deterred by the difficult, craggy, uphill terrain. Many of God's people are. They somehow feel that after they grace the Lord w/ their humble submission of service that everything should be roses & clover after that. It's like they completely miss the point about it being a **service**. God doesn't call us 2 a cake walk, it's an uphill battle all the way & we need 2/b aware of this from the get-go. The difficulty is part of the growth process. If we fail 2 learn how 2 deal w/ the minor inconveniences of ministry, how will we ever handle the major difficulties that surely must come? Jonathan didn't balk at the difficult climb ahead. On the contrary, he saw it as an advantage that the Lord could use.

So, we have the plan (which is secret), the leaders (who are rejected) & the place (which is impossible). What could go wrong? Everything! What make Jonathan decide 2 move forward against such incredible odds. He devises the secret 2 his madness in vs6, one of the most profound statements of faith in God found in all of Scripture.

6- *It may be*- Wow! Where 2 begin? Jonathan is facing a garrison of an army that numbers as the sand of the sea & he says, “**Let’s go over 2...these uncircumcised**” (outside the covenant). “Who do they think they are? I’m going 2 go over there & give them a piece of my mind. I don’t care how many there are, they’re outside the covenant & we’re inside the covenant w/ YHWH!” There’s a jealousy burning in his heart 4 the Lord & he’s willing 2 step up & do the thing that’s well outside his comfort zone, something the Lord has put directly in front of him & in his heart.

Where does Jonathan’s great faith come from? Not from his environment – didn’t learn it from his father, didn’t get it from his circumstances. They certainly didn’t stimulate any optimism but this is **not optimism**, its **faith**. Some people are naturally optimistic (they don’t know any better) but faith can arise when **no** reason 4 optimism exists. All you need are reasons 4 **faith** 2 exist. The reasons 4 faith 2 exist are only **found in God!**

Jonathan’s own words reveal the basis of his faith: a **clear conviction about God** (“**nothing restrains the Lord from saving**”) **produces a great expectation of God** (“**may be the Lord will work 4 us**”) **while recognizing God’s normal manner of working** (“**by many or by few**”= His servants). Note: Jonathan is not trusting in the strength of his faith (“My faith is strong so YHWH must help me.”) nor is he trusting in his own clever scheme, “Maybe YHWH will use us b/c we’re such clever guys.” In fact, he’s only daring b/c he trusts in God, a **trust** that’s **rooted** in the **truth** about God!

It might seem like Jonathan has a death wish but he doesn’t. He has biblical grounds 4 taking such bold actions - **Lev 26:7-8; Deut 28:7** – he knew these verses & the antics of heroes from ages b/4: Shamgar killed 600 Philistines w/ a sharp stick. YHWH used Gideon & 300 men 2 destroy a Midianite army of a similar size. Jonathan’s faith wasn’t haphazard or misguided; it was grounded in the truth about YHWH, truth revealed 2 Jonathan thru God’s Word.

The beauty of Jonathan’s faith is in its **balance** (**it may be = perhaps**). “God **can** do great things w/ small resources & God **may** be please 2 do it in this case, but **how will we know** unless we place ourselves at His disposal?” Who knows **what** He will do but there’s no limit 2 **how** He can save! He certainly doesn’t need those 600 Quakers w/ Saul.

Many today would condemn Jonathan’s “perhaps” claiming that kind of **doubt** will render his faith useless. They believe that faith must always be certain, dogmatic & absolutely positive. We must not confuse **faith** w/ **arrogance!** Jonathan’s “perhaps” was part of his faith. W/ it he both **confesses the power of God** & **retains the freedom of God**. Faith never dictates 2 God, it recognizes its own ignorance, not having access 2 the divine script 4 every situation. This adds 2 the excitement: **who knows what this omnipotent God may be delighted 2 do against these Philistines!**

7-10- if- he’s not putting out a fleece here. Gideon had the confirmed word of God & he doubted it. Jonathan doesn’t have a confirmed word from God, just a bold hope & impression of heart. He’s humble enough 2 know his heart may be wrong so he asks YHWH 2 guide him. Jonathan is showing real wisdom here, not unbelief.

11-14- holes- Philistines begin 2 deride Jonathan & Co. Picked a wrong day 2 make fun of a couple of men of faith.

come up- this was the “GO” sign! No paralysis of analysis here. He presents 2 scenarios, got a positive hit & now he’s going 4 it! No need 2 lay out another fleece, “Lord, are you really, really sure this is what you want me 2 do?” We have the capacity 2 analyze a situation 2 death & never get anything done 4 the Lord. If the Lord gives you direction & then confirmation: what else is there 2 wait 4? Jonathan didn’t require any further prompting. He & his armor bearer scratched & clawed their way up old Slippery & hit the Philistines so hard, they didn’t even have a chance 2 call on Dagon 2 come 2 their rescue. There’s 20 Philistines that’ll never teach another Hebrew a lesson!

½ acre- This act was precious 2 God. Not only does He record the body count, but the size of the battle field. I’ll bet the Lord would love 2 see all of us standing on that ½ acre plot of land, trusting Him 2 give the victory! Most spiritual battles consist of just holding your ground. The smallest nut can become the greatest oak if it will just hold its ground!

15- trembling- as those 20 Philistines hit the dirt, the whole land starts rocking & rolling. There was a whole lot of shaking going on & every 1 of the enemy felt it: in the camp, in the field, in the ranks; whether behind garrison walls or out raiding the countryside – the Philistines all knew that the tables had turned, the tide was against them now.

How was it that Jonathan could take such bold steps in the face of impossible odds & negative circumstances? I believe it was b/c he was partially able 2 see what God saw. But how is that possible? Has anyone ever seen Saturn? Not an artist’s rendering but in real time w/ your very own eyes? I have, thru a telescope & even tho it was still very small, I knew it was Saturn b/c I could see the rings & I even saw the shadow of the rings on its surface.

Faith is a telescope that enables us 2 see what God sees – not perfectly, not every detail, but enough 2 recognize what it is & how we are 2 respond. Where does faith come from? It comes by **hearing the word of God** (Rom 10:17). The spiritual principle: **b/4 we can ever be able see what God sees, we must 1st be willing 2 hear what God says!** True, effective faith can only be rooted in the truth of God, truth revealed in His Word, His promises 2 us like **Mt 16:18** “**on this rock I will build My church & the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**” **Mt 28:20** “**I am w/ you**

always..." **Heb 13:5** "I will never leave you nor forsake you" **John 14:12** "he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; & greater works than these he will do" etc. The Lord is constantly looking 4 a man or woman, boy or girl whose heart is loyal to Him, that He might show Himself strong on their behalf. Someone who is willing 2 step out in faith & trust God 2 use them 4 His glory. "**The joy of the Lord is our strength**" **Neh 8:10**, that doesn't mean that if we jump around like a goofball & sing songs that we'll be strong. No, it means that the Lord delights, takes joy in seeing us step out in the strength of our faith in Him. Our confident trust in Him is what brings Him joy! No wonder His eyes run 2 & fro thru-out the whole earth; He's just looking 4 someone in whom He will find His joy!

If you've never read the Bible or given your life 2 the Lord, there are some sure promises in God's Word 4 you too.

Deut 4:29 "you will seek the Lord...& you will find Him if you seek Him w/ all your heart & w/ all your soul."

Prov 8:17 "I love those who love me & those who seek me diligently will find me."

James 4:8 "Draw near to God & He will draw near 2 you." & the greatest promise of all 4 those who don't know Jesus

Rom 10:9-10 "if you confess w/ your mouth the Lord Jesus & believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 4 w/ the heart 1 believes unto righteousness & w/ the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

