**Lesson 15**

**1 Sam 14:24-51**

[14:24-48](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A24-48). Prior to this **Saul had** commanded all his men to fast until they had defeated the Philistines. As hungry as they were in the battle, they refused to eat anything, even some **honey** in the forest, for **they feared** the curse that attended their vow to fast. **Jonathan had not** known of the vow, **so** when **he** came across the honey he ate it and was immediately refreshed (**his eyes brightened**; cf. [v. 29](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A29)). The rest of Saul's army was so famished that after the victory they took the Philistine animals, slaughtered them, and ate them without proper draining of **the blood** ([vv. 32-33](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A32-33); cf. [Lev. 17:10-14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lev+17%3A10-14)). This so alarmed **Saul** that he hastily built **an altar** on which to offer a propitiatory (atoning) sacrifice to the Lord ([1 Sam. 14:35](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A35)).

24b “Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies”

**Saul** then determined to pursue and **plunder** the **Philistines** further but could not get an **answer** from the Lord ([v. 37](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A37)). This meant to **Saul** that someone had violated the fast, and by means of the **lot** (i.e., the Urim and Thummin, [vv. 41-42](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A41-42); cf. [v. 19](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A19)) he discovered it was his own **son Jonathan.** Only the interposition of Saul's **men** prevented Jonathan's execution ([v. 45](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A45)).

The major campaigns of **Saul** are listed in [verses 47-48](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A47-48) and include victories over **Moab,** Ammon, **Edom... Zobah** (the Arameans), **the Philistines,** and even **the Amalekites,** though his success over the latter was tempered by his lack of complete obedience to God (cf. [15:20-23](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+15%3A20-23)).

24  Now the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day, for Saul had put the people under oath, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food.
25  All *the people of* the land entered the forest, and there was honey on the ground.
26  When the people entered the forest, behold, *there was* a flow of honey; but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.
27  But Jonathan had not heard when his father put the people under oath; therefore, he put out the end of the staff that *was* in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.
28  Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly put the people under oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man who eats food today.'" And the people were weary.
29  Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.
30  "How much more, if only the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now the slaughter among the Philistines has not been great."
31  They struck among the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon (A-ha-lon). And the people were very weary.
32  The people rushed greedily upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew *them* on the ground; and the people ate *them* with the blood.
33  Then they told Saul, saying, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have acted treacherously; roll a great stone to me today."
34  Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Each one of you bring me his ox or his sheep, and slaughter *it* here and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.'" So all the people that night brought each one his ox with him and slaughtered *it* there.
35  And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.
36  Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and take spoil among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." So the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."
37  Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You give them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him on that day.
38  Saul said, "Draw near here, all you chiefs of the people, and investigate and see how this sin has happened today.
39  "For as the LORD lives, who delivers Israel, though it is in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not one of all the people answered him.
40  Then he said to all Israel, "You shall be on one side and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."
41  Therefore, Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Give a perfect *lot.*" And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped.
42  Saul said, "Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.
43  Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." So Jonathan told him and said, "I indeed tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am, I must die!"
44  Saul said, "May God do this *to me* and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan."
45  But the people said to Saul, "Must Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Far from it! 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.
46  Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.
47  Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment.

[14:49-52](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A49-52). The royal family consisted of Saul; his wife **Ahinoam** **(***A-he-no-im***)**; his three **sons... Jonathan, Ishvi** (*Ish-ve*)(not the same as Ish-Bosheth (*Ish-ba-sheth*) or Esh-Baal; cf. [1 Chron. 10:2](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Ch+10%3A2) where Ishvi is the same person as Abinadab), **and Malki-Shua** ;(*Mal-chi-shoe a*); his daughters **Merab** and **Michal** *(Me-Hal)* (David's first wife; cf. [1 Sam. 18:27](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+18%3A27)); and **Abner,** who served as Saul's **commander** of the **army.**

Ishvi is probably not the same as Ish-bosheth because Ish-bosheth was apparently Saul's youngest son born after Saul began to reign. For that reason he is not listed in [1 Samuel 14:49](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A49) but is listed in the total list of Saul's sons in [1 Chronicles 8:33](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Ch+8%3A33) (cf. [comments](http://www.crossbooks.com/book.asp?pub=0&book=137&sec=00010266#links788) on [2 Sam. 2:8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Sa+2%3A8)).

According to [1 Chronicles 8:33](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Ch+8%3A33) and [9:39](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Ch+9%3A39) **Ner** was Saul's grandfather (Ner's son was **Kish** and Kish's **son** was **Saul**), but in [1 Samuel 14:50](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A50) Ner appears to be Saul's uncle and Abner his cousin. In 1 Chronicles Abner, though not mentioned, would be Saul's *uncle,* for Abner was Ner's son ([1 Sam. 14:50](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A50)). This seeming contradiction is eliminated by the Hebrew of [1 Samuel 14:50b](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A50), which says literally, "Abner son of Ner, uncle of Saul," with the understanding that the ambiguous "uncle of Saul" refers not to Ner but to Abner. Charted, this relationship was as follows:



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48  He acted valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.
49  Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan and Ishvi (*Ish-ve*) and Malchi-shua;(*Mal-chi-shoe a*) and the names of his two daughters *were these:* the name of the firstborn Merab and the name of the younger Michal. *(Me-Hal)* 50  The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam **(***A-he-no-im***)** the daughter of Ahimaaz *(A-he-maz)*. And the name of the captain of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.
51  Kish *was* the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of Abiel.
52  Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff.

**Open it**

1. To what extent do you think penalties should be more lenient for people who break a law unintentionally?
 **Punished but not harshly, ignorance of the law is no excuse**

**Explore it**

2. What decision of Saul was causing distress for his troops? ([14:24](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A24))
 **No food until Saul was avenged**

3. What action did Jonathan take that the others wanted to but were afraid to do? ([14:27](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A27))
 **He attacked**

4. Why did Jonathan eat some of the honey he found on the ground? ([14:27](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A27))
 **He was hungry and was unaware of the no eating vow**

5. What piece of information did Jonathan learn after he had already eaten the honey? ([14:28](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A28))
 **That he had broken the vow and would be cursed, even though he did not know of it at the time.**

6. What remedy did Saul offer when he saw the sin of the troops? ([14:33-34](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A33-34))
 **To have each man offer a sin offering to God**

7. How did Saul know that a sin had been committed by someone in Israel? ([14:37-38](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A37-38))
 **God was not answering his prayer**

8. What new oath did Saul swear, assuming that he and his family were innocent? ([14:39](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A39))
 **Whoever had broken the vow, even his son, would be put to death**

9. What was Jonathan’s response when confronted with his guilt? ([14:43](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A43))
 **He admitted his guilt and was ready to die**

10. Who intervened on behalf of Jonathan? ([14:45](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=1Sa+14%3A45))
 **The people, calling him a hero who had worked with God to rout their enemy**

**Get it**

11. Why is a vow not something to be taken lightly?
 **It is a solemn promise made before God and the people**

12. Why was the priest unable to get a word of direction from the Lord?
 **His vow had been broken**

**Apply it**

13. What difficult decisions facing your church or governmental leaders can you commit to prayer this week?
 **Watching the prophecies of God being played out right before our eyes, LET US SEE THEM AND KNOW WHAT THE REPRESENT!**