

=LITTLE-KNOWN BIBLE CHARACTERS=

Lesson 6

Jonathan, a Friend

SCRIPTURES: I Samuel 14:1-45; 31:1-13; II Samuel 1:12-27

AIM: to teach my pupils the basic facts about Jonathan's life.

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask the pupils to name someone who is a real friend.

- I. THE WORD "JONATHAN" MEANS "JEHOVAH HAS GIVEN." Perhaps the greatest gift, humanly speaking, a person can have is a true friend. Jonathan was this. Hence, he was truly a gift from Jehovah.
- II. JONATHAN WAS COURAGEOUS. See I Samuel 14:12-16. He showed his courage by climbing the steep side of the gorge of Michmash, an outpost of the Philistines, and falling bodily on 20 men. These men were killed, and the tumult started a panic in the camp of the enemy. When Saul came to attack, he found the Philistines fighting against each other. The battle was won because of the courage of Jonathan.
- III. JONATHAN WAS STRONG AND FAST. Read II Samuel 1:23. This is one of the most beautiful passages in all the Bible. It shows the beautiful relationship existing at death between Jonathan and Saul, and also shows the fact that Jonathan was strong and fast.
- IV. JONATHAN WAS A FRIEND. The outstanding thing about Jonathan was his friendship. On the day of David's return from victory over Goliath, Jonathan was his friend. He risked his life for David. At one time Saul threw a javelin at him, as he had at David because of Jonathan's friendship with David. It was Jonathan who saved David's life when his father, Saul, became jealous of David. The outstanding thing about Jonathan certainly would be his friendship with David and his loyalty to him until his death.
- V. JONATHAN WAS UNSELFISH. Even when Saul suggested to Jonathan that David become the king in his death, he continued to be a friend. Jonathan was the eldest son of King Saul. No doubt he had had aspirations to be king. Even so, he was so unselfish that he was ready for David to be king in his stead.
- VI. JONATHAN WAS LOVED BY THE PEOPLE. After the battle with the Philistines, Jonathan was found eating honey. Saul had placed a curse upon anyone eating any food until evening. Jonathan did not know of the curse; hence, he was facing death. This is found in I Samuel 14:28. The people rescued Jonathan because of their love for him. Read I Samuel 14:45.
- VII. JONATHAN WAS KILLED ALONG WITH HIS FATHER IN THE BATTLE OF GILBOA. The bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened to the wall of Beth-shan. Later they were given an honorable burial.

CONCLUSION: David deeply lamented the death of Jonathan. Notice II Samuel 1:17-27. He had lost life's most precious possession apart from eternal things—he had lost a friend. He wanted to do something in honor of Jonathan, so after Jonathan's death, David called for Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, to live in the palace as one of the king's sons. Mephibosheth was a crippled lad; he came at the request of David to be his own son, and it was all because of Jonathan. The tragic thing is that so many go through life without ever experiencing the joy of a close human relationship such as David had with Jonathan. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every Christian could enjoy one such relationship and discover the meaning of real friendship!