

=UNUSUAL BIBLE STORIES=

Lesson 6

Jonathan and the Honey

SCRIPTURE: I Samuel 14

INTRODUCTION: Here is another of the interesting stories in the Bible. Jonathan had won a battle. See I Samuel 13:1-3. Saul, his father, had connived to get the glory for himself. He wanted the people to praise him; he didn't want them to praise his son. He gathered the people around him as if he had won the victory. He also wanted an office that wasn't his; he entered into the priestly office and offered a sacrifice. Read I Samuel 13:8-10. Later, when Saul was told by God to defeat the Amalekites and destroy all that they owned, he spared the best of the sheep, oxen, etc. and did not completely obey God. This is found in I Samuel 15:3-9. Because of this, God lifted the mantle off of Saul and announced that He would choose another king to take his place.

A battle rose and the breath of God was off of Saul, though he knew it not. Jonathan entered the battle and won. On the day of the battle, Saul, the king, had issued a proclamation that none of the people could eat during the day. Jonathan did not know about this proclamation, and when the people entered a wooded area, he saw honey on the ground. He dipped his rod into the honey and ate of it. The people saw it, and realizing that the victory had been won in spite of the fact that Jonathan had disobeyed and eaten, they decided to eat also. They, however, ate flesh. Word came to Saul that flesh had been eaten. He wanted to know who it was who instigated such action. The people were gathered together, with Saul and Jonathan on one side and the people on the other. Lots were cast to see whose fault it was. Were the people to blame or was the leader to blame? The lot fell to Saul and Jonathan. Then Saul and Jonathan had lots cast between themselves to find which of them had done wrong. The lot fell to Jonathan. It was then that Jonathan told his father that he had eaten the honey, not knowing about the proclamation. Saul then pronounced that Jonathan must die.

The people intervened, however, and would not allow Jonathan to be killed. Consequently, Jonathan was vindicated. Saul later was taken from the throne, and David was given the kingdom.

POINT OF CONTACT: There are at least two ways the lesson can be started. One would be for the teacher to bring a stick or a rod and some honey to class. Another would be for the teacher to lead the class in casting lots. The way this was done is that stones or rocks were taken, and one was marked. Then the stones would be shaken up and one given to each person. They would ask God to allow the marked stone to be given to the guilty party. This was the way it was done in the case of Jonah in the storm. The class could cast lots and act like they are trying to find out who had eaten the honey or had caused the trouble. Now let us notice some things about the lesson.

- I. SAUL SOUGHT GLORY FOR HIMSELF. There is surely much danger in self-glory.
- II. SAUL STOLE GLORY THAT BELONGED TO SOMEONE ELSE. It is always a serious problem when one wants the praise of men. We should want only to do God's will and please Him rather than seeking the praise of men.
- III. SAUL COVETED ANOTHER'S OFFICE. He was not satisfied with just being the king; he wanted also to be the priest.
- IV. SAUL MADE A FOOLISH PROMISE. How ridiculous it was to insist the people not eat anything and then issue a proclamation that Jonathan should die because he ate honey with the end of a stick! (Teacher, ask the class if they can think of any other story we studied recently when a foolish vow was made.)
- V. SAUL DID NOT GIVE HIS ALL. He kept the best of the oxen and sheep. He gave a part, but not all. This is a dangerous thing for a Christian to do.

- VI. SAUL WAS BIG IN HIS OWN SIGHT, YET LITTLE IN GOD'S SIGHT. Read I Samuel 15:17. When we are big in our sight, we are little in God's sight; when we are little in our own sight, we are big in God's sight.
- VII. JONATHAN WAS A MAN OF GREAT COURAGE, CONVICTION AND LOYALTY. (Teacher, read the chapter on Jonathan and David in the Brother Hyles' book, Blue Denim and Lace. Here much is found on Jonathan that could be taught to the class.)

CONCLUSION: We have had many interesting stories thus far. Why not pantomime the stories and have the class tell which story is being pantomimed. Have a person limping to represent Mephibosheth. Throw an item left-handed to represent the 700 left-handed men. Have a person lying down asleep to represent Sisera or one hammering a nail to the floor to represent Jael. Have two class members carrying a stretcher to represent the Kohathites or the sons of Korah carrying the furniture of the tabernacle. Have someone eating honey with a stick to represent Jonathan. It is wise to keep these stories constantly before the class so they can differentiate one from the other.