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## A Biographical Study of Jonathan

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# *Jonathan*

## CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. Jonathan and his foes—the Philistines
  - A. He bravely attacked a Philistine outpost at Geba, thus triggering an all-out Israelite and Philistine war (1 Sam. 13:3-5)
  - B. He attacked another Philistine outpost and, aided only by his armor bearer, killed 20 enemy troops. God then sent a panic among the Philistines which routed their entire army (1 Sam. 14:1-15).
- II. Jonathan and his father—Saul
  - A. In pursuing the enemy, Saul issued a stupid order forbidding his troops to eat any food until final victory had been won. Unaware of this command, Jonathan ate some honey (1 Sam. 14:24-27).
  - B. Upon discovery of this, Saul ordered the death of Jonathan. However, the Israelite soldiers stepped in and refused to allow this national hero to die (1 Sam. 14:43-45)
- III. Jonathan and his friend—David
  - A. He honored his friend.
    1. Jonathan loved David (1 Sam. 18:1-4; 20:16-17).
    2. He warned and defended David.
      - a. He told David about the threat of Saul to kill him (1 Sam. 19:1-3).
      - b. He attempted to change his father’s mind concerning David and succeeded, but only for a brief time (1 Sam. 19:4-9).
      - c. In spite of the evidence at hand, Jonathan still found it difficult to believe Saul would actually murder David (1 Sam. 20:1-2).
      - d. Finally, upon being convinced of Saul’s evil intentions, Jonathan warned David by a previously agreed upon signal (1 Sam. 20:10-40).
      - e. At this time, the beloved friends said goodbye (1 Sam. 20:41-42).
      - f. Saul cursed Jonathan for befriending David and actually attempted to kill his own son (1 Sam. 20:30-33).
    3. He encouraged David—Jonathan and David met for a final time at Horesh, during which time he encouraged David in the Lord and reassured him that he (David) would someday indeed rule over all of Israel (1 Sam. 23:16-18).
  - B. He was honored by his friend.
    1. The death of Jonathan
      - a. Jonathan, along with his two brothers and father, was killed in a battle with the Philistines (1 Sam. 31:2-6).

- b. Upon hearing of this, a broken-hearted David lamented the death of his dear friend, especially referring to his courage, saying he was swifter than an eagle and stronger than a lion (2 Sam. 1:17, 22-26).
  - c. David later secured the bones of Jonathan and buried them near Jerusalem (2 Sam. 21:11-14).
2. The descendant of Jonathan
- a. Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth who was crippled as a result of an accident when he was only five years old (2 Sam. 4:4).
  - b. David tracked down Mephibosheth and showed great kindness to him for Jonathan's sake (2 Sam. 9:1-13).
  - c. David later protected Mephibosheth from the Gibeonites, who demanded the blood of all Saul's descendants for past injustices on the part of the wicked king. Remembering his covenant with Jonathan, David refused to allow Mephibosheth to be harmed (2 Sam. 21:7).

## STATISTICS

*Father:* Saul (1 Sam. 14:1)

*Mother:* Ahinoam (1 Sam. 14:49-50)

*Son:* Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 4:4)

*Brothers:* Ishui, Melchi-shua, and Abinadab (1 Sam. 14:49; 1 Chron. 8:33)

*First mention:* 1 Samuel 13:2

*Final mention:* 1 Chronicles 10:2

*Meaning of his name:* "God has given"

*Frequency of his name:* Referred to 91 times

*Biblical books mentioning him:* Three books (1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles)

*Place of death:* On a battlefield at Mt. Gilboa (1 Sam. 31:1-2)

*Circumstances of death:* He was killed by Philistine soldiers (1 Sam. 31:2)

*Important fact about his life:* He was Saul's son and David's closest friend (1 Sam. 14:1; 18:1-4)