A Biographical Study of Jonathan

Harold Willmington

Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ot_biographies

Part of the Biblical Studies Commons, Christianity Commons, and the Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ot_biographies/45

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the A Biographical Study of Individuals of the Bible at Scholars Crossing. It has been accepted for inclusion in Old Testament Biographies by an authorized administrator of Scholars Crossing. For more information, please contact scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu.
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.
      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)