

1. Genesis 31:*- see especially * page 2*

1. Scripture itself:

1. Genesis 31:26: Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword?"
2. Genesis 31:27: "Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with tambourine and with lyre;
3. Genesis 31:28 and did not allow me to kiss my grandchildren and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly.
4. Genesis 31:29 "It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to speak either good or bad to Jacob.'
5. Genesis 31:30 "Now you have indeed gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house; but why did you steal my gods?"
6. Genesis 31:31 Then Jacob replied to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force.
7. Genesis 31:32 "The one with whom you find your gods shall not live; in the presence of our relatives point out what is yours among my belongings and take it for yourself." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.
8. Genesis 31:33 So Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tent of the two slave women, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent.
9. Genesis 31:34 Now Rachel had taken the household idols and put them in the camel's saddlebag, and she sat on them. So Laban searched through all the tent, but did not find them.
10. Genesis 31:35 And she said to her father, "May my lord not be angry that I cannot stand in your presence, because the way of women is upon me." So he searched but did not find the household idols.
11. Genesis 31:36 Then Jacob became angry and argued with Laban; and Jacob said to Laban, "What is my offense? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me?"
12. Genesis 31:37 "Though you have searched through all my property, what have you found of all your household property? **Set it here in front of my relatives and your relatives, so that they may decide between the two of us.**
13. Genesis 31:38 "For these twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten the rams of your flocks.
14. Genesis 31:39 "I did not even bring to you that which was torn by wild animals; I took the loss myself. You demanded it of my hand whether stolen by day or stolen by night.
15. Genesis 31:40 "This is how I was: by day the heat consumed me and the frost by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes.
16. Genesis 31:41 "For these twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you changed my wages ten times.
17. Genesis 31:42 "If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac, had not been for me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, so He rendered judgment last night."

1. NOTE from Rev. jfg: I infer it is righteous to predict future behavior based on past.

THIS IS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR MAKING JUDGMENTS.

2. Commentaries on:

unpublished

1. NOTE from Rev. jfg: Here Scripture records a rudimentary root of a trial by jury where peers between adversarial parties are to have those who know them and their lot and circumstance in life and have interest or connection with them to judge between them. **"Set it here in front of my relatives and your relatives, so that they may decide between the two of us."** Let relatives who know you and relatives who know me both combine to meet, let them see the evidence and let them "decide" between the two of us, who did wrong.

2. 1 Samuel 14:

1. Commentaries on:

1. Clark's Commentary:

NOTE: the people had God's law read to them; knowledge of God's law; to be able to judge human laws accurately one needs to know God's laws;

Know God's laws about abortion, interposition civil disobedience being at times required and when is not a jury of ones peers.

1. Verse 1 Samuel 14:42. And Jonathan was taken. — The object of the inquiry most evidently was, "Who has gone contrary to the king's adjuration today?" The answer to that must be JONATHAN. But was this a proof of the Divine displeasure against the man? By no means: the holy oracle told the truth, but neither that oracle nor the God who gave it fixed any blame upon Jonathan, and his own conscience acquits him. He seeks not pardon from God, because he is conscious he had not transgressed. But why did not God answer the priest that day? Because he did not think it proper to send the people by night in pursuit of the vanquished Philistines. Saul's motive was perfectly vindictive: Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them unto the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them; that is, Let us burn, waste, destroy, and slay all before us! Was it right to indulge a disposition of this kind, which would have led to the destruction of many innocent country people, and of many Israelites who resided among the Philistines? Besides, was there not a most manifest reason in the people why God could not be among them? Multitudes of them were defiled in a very solemn manner; they had eaten the flesh with the blood; and however sacrifices might be offered to atone for this transgression of the law, they must continue unclean till the evening. Here were reasons enough why God would not go on with the people for that night.
2. Verse 1 Samuel 14:44. And Saul answered - thou shalt surely die, Jonathan. — To save thy rash oath! So must John Baptist's head be taken off at the desire of an impure woman, because a Herod had sworn to give her whatever she might request! Unfeeling brute! However, the king was JUDGE. But what said the people, who were the JURY?
3. Verse 1 Samuel 14:45. And the people said — "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid! As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground." Here was a righteous and impartial jury, who brought in a verdict according to the evidence: No man should die but for a breach of the law of God; but Jonathan hath not broken any law of God; therefore Jonathan should not die. And because he should not, therefore he shall not. He hath wrought with God this day. — God has been commander-in-chief; Jonathan has acted under his directions. So the people rescued Jonathan — And God testified no displeasure; and perhaps he permitted all this that he might correct Saul's propensity to rashness and precipitancy.

c.f. Isaiah 8:20; Acts 4:19 + 5:29

2. The Pulpit Commentary: from <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/tpc/1-samuel-14.html>

1. "1 Samuel 14:44 God do so, etc. Again Saul takes an oath to put Jonathan to death, supposing himself bound by his former words. But he must have been pained beyond measure at the miserable consequences of his rashness, and have bitterly

reproached himself for thus twice marring the happiness of the day by unhallowed oaths. Jonathan's trespass, committed unwittingly, required nothing more than a trespass offering for its expiation, nor did the silence of the Urim and Thummim imply any fault in him. The fault lay in Saul having imposed an oath upon the army; that oath had been broken, and a formal expiation must be made. But Saul was by nature a despot, and could endure nothing that seemed even for the moment to stand in his way.

2. 1 Samuel 14:45 **The people said. They had hitherto shown their disapproval of Saul's conduct by their silence; now they decide that Jonathan shall not die, and their decision was right and godly. Saul might feel bound by his rash oath, but the consciences of the people told them that an oath to commit a crime is an oath to be repented of as a sin, and not to be performed as a duty.** They do not say, however, God forbid, but "Far be it." The name of the Deity is constantly taken in vain in the A.V. without adding either beauty or energy to the word of God. But even if it did, what right have translators to add energy to the word of God? **He hath wrought with God this day. The argument of the people is wise and good. Jonathan's whole conduct on that day proved an especial presence of God with him. It would be morally wrong and an offence against religion to condemn that which God approved, and the people therefore set their oath against the king's oath, and prevail."**

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3. Coffman's Commentary: <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/eng/bcc/1-samuel-14.html>

1. SAUL'S PAGAN OATH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES "And the men of Israel were distressed that day; for Saul laid an oath on the people, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. And all the people came into the forest; and there was honey on the ground. And when the people entered the forest, behold, the honey was dropping, but no man put his hand to his mouth; for the people feared the oath. But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; so he put forth the tip of the staff that was in his hand, and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes became bright. Then one of the people said, "Your father charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man who eats food this day.'" And the people were faint. Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land; see how my eyes have become bright because I tasted of a little of this honey. How much better if 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."
2. "Cursed be the man who eats food until it is evening and I am avenged on mine enemies" The will of God and God's honor were of no concern of Saul in this pagan oath, Note the egotism: "and I am avenged on my enemies." In this abbreviated account, not all of the oath was repeated. One finds the rest of it in 1 Samuel 14:44, "God do so to me and more also, you shall surely die." One finds the exact words of this oath on the lips of the pagan Jezebel (1 Kings 19:2); and Jezebel herself couldn't have said it any better than Saul did....
3. The direct results of Saul's stupid pagan oath was that his men became fatigued, and from hunger were unable to exploit the opportunity to destroy the Philistines. The great majority of them escaped (1 Samuel 14:30). Also, when the evening finally came, and the curse was lifted, the people were so hungry that they slaughtered animals for meat but did not take time to bleed it perfectly as God's law commanded, consequently bringing the whole army into sin against God. No

greater disaster for Israel could be imagined. Then, in addition to all that, Saul found himself compelled to condemn Jonathan to death.

4. Verses 36-42 THE VIOLATOR OF SAUL'S FOOLISH CURSE WAS EXPOSED
"Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and despoil them until the morning light; let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." But the priest said, "Let us draw near hither to God." And Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Wilt thou give them into the hand of Israel"? But he did not answer him that day. **And Saul said, "Come hither all you leaders of the people; and know and see how this sin has arisen today, for as the Lord lives who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die."** But there was not a man among all the people that answered him. 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." Therefore Saul said, "O Lord God of Israel, why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord, God of Israel, give Urim; but if this guilt is in thy people Israel, give Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. Then Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan." And Jonathan was taken."
5. **This would have been an excellent place for Saul to have confessed his foolish sin in the invocation of that pagan oath and have asked the forgiveness of all the people; but instead, he decided to pursue the matter to its bloody end.**
6. Verses 43-46 SAUL CONDEMNNS HIS SON JONATHAN TO DEATH Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the tip of the staff that was in my hand; here I am, I will die." And Saul said, "God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan." **Then the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has wrought this great victory in Israel? Far from it! As the Lord lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he has wrought with God this day." So the people ransomed Jonathan, that he did not die. Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines; and the Philistines went to their own place."**
7. "Here I am, I will die" Josephus wrote that Jonathan also said:
8. "I do not desire you, father, to spare me. Death will be to me very acceptable, when it proceeds from thy piety, and after a glorious victory; for it is the greatest consolation to me that I leave the Hebrews victorious over the Philistines."(F23)
9. "God do so to me and more also" We have already noted the pagan nature of this godless oath which so effectively marred and nullified what would have been the greatest victory in Israel's history. To us it appears that there is no possible justification for Saul's disastrous oath. These words perfectly fit the pagan mouth of Jezebel, but had no place whatever in the mouth of "The Lord's Anointed"!
10. "Saul's oath did not proceeds from a proper attitude toward the Lord but was an act of false zeal in which Saul had more regard to himself than to the cause of the kingdom of God... Saul issued that prohibition (in the oath) without divine authority... And when the people pronounced Jonathan innocent and ransomed him, declaring that "Jonathan had wrought with God," it was a divine verdict. Saul could not have failed to recognize then, that it was not Jonathan but he himself who had sinned, and through his arbitrary and despotic command had brought guilt upon Israel, on account of which God had given him no reply."(F24)

After Affliction
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11. "Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines; and the Philistines went to their own place" It appears from this that Saul at last recognized himself as the chief sinner in that episode, and he therefore gave up the pursuit of the Philistines. In the words of Jonathan, My father (Saul) has troubled the land (1 Samuel 14:29).
4. <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/eng/dcc/1-samuel-14.html>
 1. Saul's blindness to his guilt 14:36-46 Evidently Saul would not have inquired of God if Ahijah (cf. 1 Samuel 14:18) had not suggested that he do so (1 Samuel 14:36). Probably God did not answer his prayer immediately because Saul wanted this information to vindicate himself rather than God (1 Samuel 14:37). Saul thought God did not answer him because someone had violated his rule (1 Samuel 14:24), which he confused with God's Law, calling violation of it sin (1 Samuel 14:38; cf. Joshua 7:14). Really, God did not answer him because Saul was disloyal to Yahweh. The king boldly vowed that anyone who had sinned, which was only breaking his rule, even Jonathan, would die (1 Samuel 14:39). God identified Jonathan rather than Saul as the guilty party. Jonathan had violated the king's command though he had not violated God's command. Actually, Jonathan was executing God's will. *so Chester Gallagher & other defendants*
 2. Jonathan would have had to die if he had broken Yahweh's command, as Achan did. However, Saul's oath was not on that high a level of authority, though Saul thought it was, as is clear from his insistence that Jonathan die. The soldiers who had gone along with Saul's requests thus far (1 Samuel 14:36; 1 Samuel 14:40) refused to follow his orders when he called for Jonathan's execution (1 Samuel 14:45). They recognized that Saul's rule about abstaining from eating (1 Samuel 14:24) was not divine law. They correctly saw that even though Jonathan had violated Saul's rule, he had obeyed God's order to drive Israel's enemies out of the land. Saul's failure to see his role under God and the difference between the Word of God and his own commands resulted in confusion and disunity. Saul's preoccupation with Jonathan's eating against his wishes cost him a great victory over the Philistines.
 3. The writer pointed out the reason for Saul's ultimate failure as Israel's king and the reason for his own personal destruction in this section (1 Samuel 13:1 to 1 Samuel 14:46). Essentially Saul refused to put the will of God above his own personal desires. Careful attention to the text shows that Saul showed great concern about the observance of religious rituals, but he failed to appreciate the indispensable importance of submitting his will to Yahweh. He sought to use God rather than allowing God to use him. He thought he was above the Mosaic Law rather than under it. He put himself in the position that God alone rightfully occupied.
 4. To illustrate the seriousness of Saul's sin, suppose two parents have two children. The first child has a real heart for what pleases his parents. On rare occasions when this child disobeys his parents, his conscience bothers him, he confesses his offense to his parents, and he tries to be obedient from then on. This was how David responded to God. Even though David sinned greatly by committing adultery and murder, these sins broke his heart, he confessed them to God, and he returned to following God faithfully. His heart was one with God's. He wanted to please God and honor God even though he failed miserably occasionally.
 5. The second child in the family in this illustration really wants to run his own life. He submits to parental authority when it seems to him to be to his advantage to do so, but his heart is really not with his parents. He wants to control his own life and

*not only
in trials by
jury but
always we
must judge
every human
authority's
commands
by God's
word*

believes he can do a better job of it on his own than by following his parents' instructions. **He thinks, "What's right for me is right." This was Saul's attitude. Saul never submitted to divine authority unless he felt it was to his advantage to do so. He always wanted to maintain control over his own life.**

6. Which of these two children has the more serious problem of disobedience? The second child does. Saul's sin was worse than David's. Even though David committed a few great sins, God did not cut off his dynasty or his rule prematurely since he really wanted to glorify God. However, David suffered severe consequences for his sins even though God forgave him. God did cut off Saul's dynasty and his rule prematurely because Saul would not yield to Yahweh's control, which was crucial for Israel's king. Failure to yield control to God is extremely important, even more important than individual acts of disobedience (cf. Romans 6:12-13; Romans 12:1-2).
7. Saul's pride led him to make foolish decisions that limited his effectiveness. Many believers experience unnecessary confusion and complications in their lives because they will not relinquish control to God.
5. Matthew Henry: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/mhm/1-samuel-14.html>
 1. Saul's Rash Oath. B. C. 1067.
 2. 24 And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food. 25 And all they of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground. 26 And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath. 27 But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. 28 Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day. And the people were faint. 29 Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. 30 How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines? 31 And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint. 32 And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood. 33 Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me this day. 34 And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew them there. 35 And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.
 3. We have here an account of the distress of the children of Israel, even in the day of their triumphs. Such alloys are all present joys subject to. And such obstructions does many a good cause meet with, even when it seems most prosperous, through the mismanagement of instruments.
 4. I. Saul forbade the people, under the penalty of a curse, to taste any food that day, 1 Samuel 14:24; 1 Samuel 14:24. Here we will suppose, 1. That as king he had power

to put his soldiers under this interdict, and to bind it on with a curse; and therefore they submitted to it, and God so far owned it as to discover, by the lot, that Jonathan was the delinquent that had meddled with the accursed thing (though ignorantly), on which account God would not be at that time enquired of by them. 2. That he did it with a good intention, lest the people, who perhaps had been kept for some time at short allowance, when they found plenty of victuals in the deserted camp of the Philistines, should fall greedily upon that, and so lose time in pursuing the enemy, and some of them, it may be, glut themselves to such a degree as not to be fit for any more service that day. To prevent this, he forbade them to taste any food, and laid himself, it is likely, under the same restraint. And yet his making this severe order was, (1.) Impolitic and very unwise; for, if it gained time, it lost strength, for the pursuit. (2.) It was imperious, and disobliging to the people, and worse than muzzling the mouth of the ox when he treads out the corn. To forbid them to feast would have been commendable, but to forbid them so much as to taste, though ever so hungry, was barbarous. (3.) It was impious to enforce the prohibition with a curse and an oath. Had he no penalty less than an anathema wherewith to support his military discipline? Death for such a crime would have been too much, but especially death with a curse. Though superiors may chide and correct, they may not curse their inferiors; our rule is, Bless, and curse not. When David speaks of an enemy he had that loved cursing perhaps he meant Saul, Psalms 109:17; Psalms 109:18.

5. II. The people observed his order, but it had many inconveniences attending it. 1. The soldiers were tantalized; for, in their pursuit of the enemy, it happened that they went through a wood so full of wild honey that it dropped from the trees upon the ground, the Philistines having perhaps, in their flight, broken in upon the honeycombs, for their own refreshment, and left them running. Canaan flowed with honey, and here is an instance of it. They sucked honey out of the rock, the flinty rock (Deuteronomy 32:13); yet, for fear of the curse, they did not so much as taste the honey, 1 Samuel 14:25; 1 Samuel 14:26. Those are worthy of the name of Israelites that can deny themselves and their own appetites even when they are most craving, and the delights of sense most tempting, for fear of guilt and a curse, and the table becoming a snare. Let us never feed ourselves, much less feast ourselves, without fear. 2. Jonathan fell under the curse through ignorance. He heard not of the charge his father had given; for, having bravely forced the lines, he was then following the chase, and therefore might justly be looked upon as exempted from the charge and intended in it. But it seems it was taken for granted, and he himself did not object against it afterwards, that it extended to him, though absent upon so good an occasion. He, not knowing any peril in it, took up a piece of a honey-comb, upon the end of his staff, and sucked it (1 Samuel 14:27; 1 Samuel 14:27), and was sensibly refreshed by it: His eyes were enlightened, which began to grow dim through hunger and faintness; it made his countenance look pleasant and cheerful, for it was such as a stander-by might discern (1 Samuel 14:29; 1 Samuel 14:29): See how my eyes have been enlightened. He thought no harm, nor feared any, till one of the people acquainted him with the order, and then he found himself in a snare. Many a good son has been thus entangled and distressed, in more ways than one, by the rashness of an inconsiderate father. Jonathan, for his part, lost the crown he was heir to by his father's folly, which, it may be, this was an ill omen of. 3. The soldiers were faint, and grew feeble, in the pursuit of the Philistines. Jonathan foresaw this would be the effect of it; their spirits would flag, and their strength would fail, for



want of sustenance. Such is the nature of our bodies that they soon grow unfit for service if they be not supplied with fresh recruits. Daily work cannot be done without daily bread, which our Father in heaven graciously gives us. It is bread that strengthens man's heart; therefore Jonathan reasoned very well, If the people had eaten freely, there would have been a much greater slaughter (1 Samuel 14:30; 1 Samuel 14:30); but, as it was, they were very faint, too much fatigued (so the Chaldee), and began to think more of their meat than of their work. 4. The worst effect of all was that at evening, when the restraint was taken off and they returned to their food again, they were so greedy and eager upon it that they ate the flesh with the blood, expressly contrary to the law of God, 1 Samuel 14:32; 1 Samuel 14:32. Two hungry meals, we say, make the third a glutton; it was so here. They would not stay to have their meat either duly killed (for they slew the cattle upon the ground, and did not hang them up, as they used to do, that the blood might all run out of them) or duly dressed, but fell greedily upon it before it was half boiled or half roasted, 1 Samuel 14:32; 1 Samuel 14:32. Saul, being informed of it, reproved them for the sin (1 Samuel 14:33; 1 Samuel 14:33): You have transgressed; but did not, as he should have done, reflect upon himself as having been accessory to it, and having made the Lord's people to transgress. To put a stop to this irregularity, Saul ordered them to set up a great stone before him, and let all that had cattle to kill, for their present use, bring them thither, and kill them under his eye upon that stone (1 Samuel 14:33; 1 Samuel 14:33), and the people did so (1 Samuel 14:34; 1 Samuel 14:34), so easily were they restrained and reformed when their prince took care to do his part. If magistrates would but use their power as they might, people would be made better than they are with more ease than is imagined.

6. III. On this occasion Saul built an altar (1 Samuel 14:35; 1 Samuel 14:35), that he might offer sacrifice, either by way of acknowledgment of the victory they had obtained or by the way of atonement for the sin they had been guilty of. The same was the first altar that he built, and perhaps the rolling of the great stone to kill the beasts on reminded him of converting it into an altar, else he would not have thought of it. Saul was turning aside from God, and yet now he began to build altars, being most zealous (as many are) for the form of godliness when he was denying the power of it. See Hosea 8:14, Israel has forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples. Some read it, He began to build that altar; he laid the first stone, but was so hasty to pursue his victory that he could not stay to finish it.
7. Verses 36-46 **Jonathan Condemned to Die; Jonathan Rescued.** B. C. 1067. 36 And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God. 37 And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day. 38 And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day. 39 For, as the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him. 40 Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee. 41 Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped. 42 And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken. 43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him,

and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die. 44 **And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.** 45 **And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.** 46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

8. Here is, I. Saul's boasting against the Philistines. He proposed, as soon as his soldiers had got their suppers, to pursue them all night, and not leave a man of them, 1 Samuel 14:36; 1 Samuel 14:36. Here he showed much zeal, but little discretion; for his army, thus fatigued, could as ill spare a night's sleep as a meal's meat. But it is common for rash and foolish men to consider nobody but themselves, and, so that they might but have their humour, not to care what hardships they put upon those that are under them. However, the people were so obsequious to their king that they would by no means oppose the motion, but resolved to make the best of it, and, if he will go on, they will follow him: Do whatsoever seemeth good to thee. Only the priest thought it convenient to go on with the devotions that were broken off abruptly (1 Samuel 14:19; 1 Samuel 14:19), and to consult the oracle: Let us draw near hither unto God. Princes and great men have need of such about them as will thus be their remembrancers, wherever they go, to take God along with them. And, when the priest proposed it, Saul could not for shame reject the proposal, but asked counsel of God (1 Samuel 14:37; 1 Samuel 14:37): "Shall I go down after the Philistines? And shall I speed?"
9. II. His falling foul on his son Jonathan: and the rest of this paragraph is wholly concerning him: for, while he is prosecuted, the Philistines make their escape. We know not what mischief may ensue upon on rash resolve.
10. 1. God, by giving an intimation of his displeasure, put Saul upon searching for an accursed thing. When, by the priest, he consulted the oracle, God answered him not, 1 Samuel 14:37; 1 Samuel 14:37. Note, When God denies our prayers it concerns us to enquire what the sin is that has provoked him to do so. Let us see where the sin is, 1 Samuel 14:38; 1 Samuel 14:38. For God's ear is not heavy that it cannot hear, but it is sin that separates between us and him. If God turns away our prayer, we have reason to suspect it is for some iniquity regarding our hearts, which we are concerned to find out, that we may put it away, may mortify it, and put it to death. Saul swears by his Maker that whoever was the Achan that troubled the camp, by eating the forbidden fruit, should certainly die, though it were Jonathan himself, that is, though ever so dear to himself and the people, little thinking that Jonathan was the man (1 Samuel 14:39; 1 Samuel 14:39): He shall surely die, the curse shall be executed upon him. But none of the people answered him, that is, none of those who knew Jonathan had broken the order would inform against him.
11. 2. Jonathan was discovered by lot to be the offender. Saul would have lots cast between himself and Jonathan on the one side, and the people on the other, perhaps because he was as confident of Jonathan's innocency in this matter as of his own, 1 Samuel 14:40; 1 Samuel 14:40. The people, seeing him in a heat, durst not gainsay any thing he proposed, but acquiesced: Do as seemeth good unto thee. Before he cast lots, he prayed that God would give a perfect lot (1 Samuel 14:41; 1 Samuel 14:41), that is, make a full discovery of this matter, or, as it is in the margin, that he would show the innocent. This was with an air of impartial justice. Judges should desire

judges, prosecuting attorneys,
titular President Biden +
vice President Harris

that truth may come out, whoever may suffer by it. Lots should be cast with prayer, because they are a solemn appeal to Providence, and by them we beg of God to direct and determine us (Acts 1:24), for which reason some have condemned games that depend purely upon lot or chance as making too bold with a sacred thing. Jonathan at length was taken (1 Samuel 14:42; 1 Samuel 14:42), Providence designing hereby to countenance and support a lawful authority, and to put an honour upon the administration of public justice in general, reserving another way to bring off one that had done nothing worthy of death.

12. 3. **Jonathan ingenuously confesses the fact, and Saul, with an angry curse, passes sentence upon him. Jonathan denies not the truth, nor goes about to conceal it,** only he thinks it hard that he must die for it, 1 Samuel 14:43; 1 Samuel 14:43. He might very fairly have pleaded his invincible ignorance of the law, or have insisted upon his merit, but he submitted to the necessity with a great and generous mind: "God's and my father's will be done:" thus he showed as much valour in receiving the messengers of death himself as in sending them among the Philistines. It is as brave to yield in some cases as it is in other cases to fight. Saul is not mollified by his filial submission nor the hardness of his case; but as one that affected to be thought firm to his word, and much more to his oath; even when it bound him hardest, with another imprecation he gives judgment upon Jonathan (1 Samuel 14:44; 1 Samuel 14:44): "God do so and more also to me if I do not execute the law upon thee, for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan." (1.) He passed this sentence too hastily, without consulting the oracle. Jonathan had a very good plea in arrest of the judgment. What he had done was not malum in se--bad in itself; and, as for the prohibition of it, he was ignorant of that, so that he could not be charged with rebellion or disobedience. (2.) He did it in fury. Had Jonathan been worthy to die, yet it would have become a judge, much more a father, to pass sentence with tenderness and compassion, and not with such an air of triumph, like a man perfectly divested of all humanity and natural affection. Justice is debased when it is administered with wrath and bitterness. (3.) **He backed it with a curse upon himself if he did not see the sentence executed; and this curse did return upon his own head. Jonathan escaped, but God did so to Saul, and more also; for he was rejected of God and made anathema. Let none upon any occasion dare to use such imprecations as these, lest God say Amen to them, and make their own tongues to fall upon them, Psalms 64:8.** This stone will return upon him that rolleth it. Yet we have reason to think that Saul's bowels yearned toward Jonathan, so that he really punished himself, and very justly, when he seemed so severe upon Jonathan. God made him feel the smart of his own rash edict, which might make him fear being again guilty of the like. By all these vexatious accidents God did likewise correct him for his presumption in offering sacrifice without Samuel. An expedition so ill begun could not end without some rebukes.

13. 4. **The people rescued Jonathan out of his father's hands, 1 Samuel 14:45; 1 Samuel 14:45. Hitherto they had expressed themselves very observant of Saul. What seemed good to him they acquiesced in, 1 Samuel 14:36; 1 Samuel 14:40. But, when Jonathan is in danger, Saul's word is no longer a law to them, but with the utmost zeal they oppose the execution of his sentence: "Shall Jonathan die--that blessing, that darling, of his country? Shall that life be sacrificed to a punctilio of law and honour which was so bravely exposed for the public service, and to which we owe our lives and triumphs? No, we will never stand by and see him thus treated whom God delights to honour."** It is good to see

cf Chester Gallagher + co: Isaiah 59
"no one" and Phineas (Numbers/

Isaiah
106)

Israelites zealous for the protection of those whom God has made instruments of public good. Saul had sworn that Jonathan should die, but they oppose their oath to his, and swear he shall not die: "As the Lord liveth there shall not only not his head, but not a hair of his head fall to the ground;" they did not rescue him by violence, but by reason and resolution; and Josephus says they made their prayer to God that he might be loosed from the curse. They pleaded for him that he has wrought with God this day; that is, "he has owned God's cause, and God has owned his endeavours, and therefore his life is too precious to be thrown away upon a nicety." We may suppose Saul had not so perfectly forgotten the relation of a father but that he was willing enough to have Jonathan rescued, and well pleased to have that done which yet he would not do himself: and he that knows the heart of a father knows not how to blame him.

14. 5. The design against the Philistines is quashed by this incident (1 Samuel 14:46; 1 Samuel 14:46): Saul went up from following them, and so an opportunity was lost of completing the victory. When Israel's shields are clashing with one another the public safety and service suffer by it.

15.

