

# JONATHAN

Making the Bible Come Alive

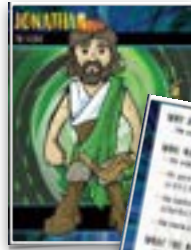
## The friend

### WHO WAS THIS PERSON?

- Jonathan was the eldest son of King Saul, the first king of Israel, and Ahinoam, his mother (1 Samuel 14:50).
- Jonathan was the first prince in Israel.
- Jonathan means "Jehovah has given".
- Jonathan had at least four brothers, Abinadab, Malchi-Shua, Ishva and Ish-Bosheth (1 Samuel 14:49; 31:2; 2 Samuel 2:8) and two sisters, Merab and Michal (1 Samuel 14:49).
- Jonathan was David's best friend (1 Samuel 18:1).
- Jonathan was known for the deep friendship and loyalty he had with David and for his faith in God.
- Jonathan was a war hero (1 Samuel 20:20, 2 Samuel 1:22) and the leader of the people (1 Samuel 13:2; 14).
- Jonathan was killed in a battle at Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 13:2).
- Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9:3).
- Since David was married to Jonathan's sister Michal, he was also David's brother-in-law (1 Samuel 18:27).
- Jonathan's family was from the territory of Benjamin, north and east of the Dead Sea in Israel (1 Samuel 9:1).

### WHAT IS THIS PERSON KNOWN FOR?

- Despite Saul's hatred of David, Jonathan and David were very good friends (1 Samuel 18:1-3) and Jonathan protected David by helping him escape from Saul (1 Samuel 19:1-2).
- During his life, Jonathan had to choose between his father, King Saul, and David, his best friend.
- A valiant warrior, he led the Israelites to a great victory over the Philistines at Geba, and then, with no help other than his armour bearer, he routed the enemy again at Michmash, spreading panic in the Philistine camp (1 Samuel 14).
- Because he knew that God had chosen David to be the next king, he made a covenant with the house of David and thus recognized David's family, rather than his own, as the chosen lineage for kingship (1 Samuel 20:16). Jonathan's five-year-old son Mephibosheth became infirm the day his family learned of Jonathan's death (2





Samuel 4:4). Later, King David honoured Mephibosheth and treated him as his own son for the sake of his friend Jonathan (2 Samuel 9).

- Jonathan and his brothers, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, were killed in a battle against the Philistines at Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 31:2). The Philistines stripped and exposed the bodies, but they were rescued by men from Jabesh-Gilead and buried in Jabesh. After several years, David reburied the bodies in the tomb at Kish in the land of Benjamin. David lamented the deaths of Saul and Jonathan in moving praise (2 Samuel 1:17-27).

### WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **We must consult God.** When we are faced with a difficult choice, as Jonathan was, we can know what to do by consulting the Bible, God's source of truth. God's will always trumps our human instincts.
- **We must submit to God's will (1 Samuel 20:31, 42, 1 Sam 23:17).** Jonathan humbly submitted to God's will, even if it meant giving up his future kingdom. He did not pursue his own interests or seek to go his own way. When he realized that God wanted to establish David and not himself, he humbly withdrew from the scene and submitted to God's hand. We, too, must submit to God's will even if it means we won't get the top spot. Seeing our friend be more successful than us should be a joy in our lives, not a source of jealousy.
- **God wants us to be loyal to our leaders.** Jonathan was extremely loyal. He saved David's life on more than one occasion and was a loyal friend. However, he was also a loyal son and did not reject his own father. "They were together in life and in death." (2 Samuel 1:23). Jonathan even said that Saul did nothing without discussing it with him (1 Samuel 20:2). In the same way, we must be loyal to the leaders God sets over us. Even if they are not perfect, we must respect them. We must seek peace and harmony despite our differences.
- **God wants us to be true friends.** One thing we can learn from Jonathan is how to be a true friend (1 Samuel 23:16). Jonathan loved David as himself. He was willing to give David everything that was his. He encouraged David in the Lord. He protected David. It was not a friendship for the sake of getting something, as so many friendships in the world are. Often people say, "I will be your friend if you do

these things for me." Jonathan was selfless and that is how we should behave with our friends.

- **God wants us to be active.** While all the other soldiers were hiding, Jonathan had a different attitude. Jonathan was active where others were passive. God does not always choose the most educated or talented people. He looks for people who are willing. Jonathan was willing to go. We, too, must take courage and follow what the Holy Spirit puts in our hearts and go in Jesus' name. It is not easy, but we have God with us. Jesus said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

### LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

**Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.**

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?
- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.

### MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Challenge yourself to find five minutes each day for a week, to quiet your spirit, finding a spot where you are not distracted, and practice just listening to God and being in tune with Him. Take your Bible to that quiet place. Use some of that time to pray, and some time to just meditate on His Word. Keep your ears and your heart open to what God is wanting to say to you. It's not a matter if IF He wants to talk to you. He does want to speak. But, He also wants you to be ready and positioned for listening, so you can actually hear in your heart what He is saying. Then, respond in obedience with a heart that is open to what God would have you to do. God called Samuel three times. How many times is He calling you? The more you spend time in His presence, the less He will have to try calling you over and over again. Maybe you will hear His voice the very first time He calls!

