I) V16-18 INTRO: Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked and there
AS WE HAVE SEEN

II) Saul's son Jonathan is a warrior and has been battling the Philistines
He had attacked a garrison of Philistine's, and had stirred up a hornet's nest

III) After he attacked them, the Philistines gathered chariots, horsemen, and infantry
They arranged themselves, preparing for battle against the Israelites

IV) Jonathan was aware of this and decided to once again engage them in battle
He spoke to his armorbearer and together they made contact with the enemy

V) As a man of courage and faith, Jonathan was desirous of overcoming the enemy
He and his armorbearer fought against this 2nd garrison, and the result was fear

VI) V15 tells us that panic struck the entire army
Those in the camp, those in the field, the garrison and raiding parties feared
The earth quaked when they were defeated, and it was seen *as a sign*
FACT

VII) Early in Jewish history, God had made a promise to the nation
Ex 23:27 I *will* send *My fear* before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you.

VIII) This had taken place: the people knew that some divine power opposed them

IX) V16-18 The watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked and there was the
Saul's spies see the chaos of the Philistines in retreat, and come to inform him

X) V17 Saul said to the people who were with him Now call the roll and see
Some of his army must have attacked them and he wonders who it was
He discovers Jonathan and his armorbearer are not present

XI) V18 Saul said to Ahijah Bring the ark of God here
Bringing the Ark could be a way of keeping it from the Philistines

XII) He is uncertain what this means, and wants to inquire of God what happened

XIII) V19-20 It happened while Saul talked to the priest that the noise which was i
He hears the sound and is distracted by the noise of the retreating Philistines

I) Instead of continuing with his inquiry, he simply tells the priest "Never mind!"

KEY

II) This ease of distraction reveals something of his shallow lack of faith

III) If he valued God's direction he would have prayed with more concern
Jas 5:16 The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much
Ps 145:19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them.

IV) V21-22 The Hebrews who were with the Philistines before that time who went up
The Philistines ruled areas of Israel, and had enslaved some of the inhabitants
These Hebrews were forced to serve the Philistines, but now they fight them

V) The others who had initially fled now gain courage, and join the battle
All it took was for them to see that ***victory was possible*** and God moved!

REMEMBER JONATHAN'S WORDS

VI) 1 Sa 14:6 Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. ***For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few."***
Ro 8:31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? ***If God is for us***, who can be against us?

VII) V23 So ***the Lord saved Israel*** that day and the battle shifted to Beth Aven
The Hebrews pursued the Philistines to the east

APPLICATION

VIII) We are not Israel, but we certainly serve the same Lord
Saul acted as if he was seeking after God, but in fact was not

IX) When it comes to dependence on God, we as a nation are not seeking God
Our nation reminds me of what we saw when Israel desired Saul
1 Sa 8:5-7 (The elders said to Samuel) look, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now ***make us a king*** to judge us ***like all the nations***. But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us. So Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you: for they have not rejected you, but ***they have rejected Me,*** that I should not reign over them

X) This is the core sin of humanity: rejecting God's rule over us

I) I mentioned that in the Book of Judges, Israel had established a pattern
They would ***sin,*** become ***oppressed***, ***repent,*** and then be ***delivered***
After the judge would die, they would once again sin and restart the cycle

II) Our nation does the same kind of thing
We sin, endure difficult times, repent, are blessed but once again return to sin

III) In the case of Israel, they desired a king that would ***make them like the world***
In the case of our nation, we desire a leader that will satisfy ***our carnality***

IV) We saw this in our last midterm cycle, and we will now reap the whirlwind
We didn't learn our lesson before, so I do pray we awaken this time

V) V24-27 The men of Israel were distressed that day for Saul had placed the people
Once again, we see the incompetence and rashness of Saul

VI) He had given orders no one was to eat until ***he*** had been satisfied by victory
He was more concerned with his own glory then he was for their well being

VII) The soldiers had entered a wooded area, and on the ground was a honeycomb
They were tired and hungry, but no one ate, except for Jonathan

VIII) He had not heard of the oath, so he took some and was immediately strengthened
Pr 24:13 My son, eat honey because it is good, and the honeycomb which is sweet to your taste

IX) V28 One of the people said Your father strictly charged the people with an oath
He may have encouraged them to eat some of the honey
Too late to stop him, he is told that he violated the oath Saul made them swear

X) V29-30 Jonathan said my father has troubled the land Look now how my
His command was foolish: you fought and won, and should be refreshed
ONCE AGAIN

XI) In making this oath, Saul has reveals himself to be impetuous and unwise
He made them take a rash vow
Eccl 5:2 Do not be rash with your mouth and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.

I) V31-34 They had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon So
The battle covered a lot of territory: Aijalon was around 15 miles from Michmash
The people were weary and hungry and when it was evening, began to eat

II) By doing this they violated the law of Moses in two basic ways
First: They slaughtered both the mother and the calf on the same day
Lev 22:28 Whether it is a cow or ewe, do not kill both her and her young on the same day.

III) ***Second:*** They slaughtered them on the ground, not properly draining the blood
Gen 9:4 You must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it
Lev 17:12 No one shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood

IMPORTANT

IV) Man is permitted to eat the meat, but the blood is not to be eaten
Why? The body is only ***the vessel*** holding blood, but blood represents ***life itself***
Lev 17:11 ***The life of the flesh is in the blood***, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul
The blood is reserved for God, representing life, and belongs only to Hlm

V) V33-34 Then they told Saul, saying Look, the people are sinning against the Lord
Saul was notified of what was happening and immediately orders them to stop

VI) He has a stone rolled to him, ordering them to hang the carcasses on the stone
This way they are drained properly, stopping them from violating the Law

VII) V35 Saul built an altar to the Lord This was ***the first altar*** that he built to the Lord
This was the first open acknowledgement of God for His mercies
This is the only altar he ever built, but it did not impress the Lord whatsoever

FACT

VIII) In building this altar he was joining a long line of those who built altars to God
Gen 8:20 ***Noah*** built an altar to the LORD
Gen 12:7 Tells us ***Abram*** built an altar to the Lord (4 altars: Gen 12:8, 13:18, 22:9)
Gen 26:25 (***Isaac)*** built an altar and called on the name of the Lord (also Gen 35:7)
Ex 17:15 ***Moses*** built an altar and called its name, The-LORD-Is-My-Banner
Joshua 8:30 ***Joshua*** built an altar to the LORD God of Israel in Mount Ebal
Jud 6:24 ***Gideon*** built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The Lord is Peace
I Sa 7:17 ***Samuel*** built an altar to the Lord in his hometown of Ramah

I) It was not necessarily for sacrifice but instead, as a memorial
Saul's altar is simply an outward show of religion with no substance

II) V36 Saul said Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them
Saul was aware his rash oath had kept them from destroying the Philistine army
Now, he intends to go and finish the job and the people are behind him

III) V36 The priest Ahijah counsels Saul to first ask if this is God's will

IV) V37-39 So Saul asked counsel of God: Shall I go down after the Philistines
God does not respond, so Saul concludes that some sin has been committed
Ps 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me
Pr 28:9 One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.

V) V38-39 Aware that someone had sinned, Saul once again makes a rash oath
It does not matter who sinned, even if it is my own son, that person shall die

VI) ***THOUGHT***: Whoever is in the way of my getting what I want will be eliminated
No one tells him that the one who is in the wrong ***was his own son***

VII) V40-43 He said to all Israel You be on one side and my son Jonathan and I will be
He asked God to give ***the perfect lot,*** meaning reveal who is innocent, or guilty
CASTING LOTS

VIII) Casting lots refers to a practice used to discern a decision by what appears to be chance. These ***lots*** could take various physical forms-small stones, sticks, or pieces of pottery-tossed or drawn to determine an outcome. Although the exact technique could vary, Scripture consistently portrays the outcome as governed by divine providence rather than random luck.
Pr 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

IX) Ultimately, Jonathan is revealed and confesses that he had tasted honey

X) V44-46 Saul answered God do so and more also for you shall surely die Jonathan
Saul had promised death to the one who broke the oath

XI) He is about to have Jonathan executed, but the people intervened and prevent it
They saw that God's hand had been upon Jonathan, in the victory they gained

I) V47-52 So Saul ***established his sovereignty*** over Israel and fought against all his
Still, the Philistines were a constant thorn in his flesh throughout his reign

II) The Philistines can be a type of the flesh
Because they were not subdued, they continue plaguing him
He constantly was trying to get man to help him, because God would not