

Day 279 - FRIDAY: November 3rd

1 Samuel 14 & 1 Chronicles 9:35-39

1 Samuel 14:1-52 NKJV

Now it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side." But he did not tell his father. And Saul was sitting in the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men. Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side. And the name of one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah. Then 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." So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart." Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them. If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this will be a sign to us." So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of

the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden." Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel." And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them. That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land. And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling. Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and there was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there. Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Now call the roll and see who has gone from us." And when they had called the roll, surprisingly, Jonathan and his armorbearer were not there. And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here" (for at that time the ark of God was with the children of Israel). Now it happened, while Saul talked to the priest, that the noise which was in the camp of the Philistines continued to increase; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." Then Saul and all the people who were with him assembled, and they went to the battle; and indeed every man's sword was against his neighbor, and there was very great confusion. Moreover the Hebrews who were with the Philistines before that time, who went up with them into the camp from the surrounding country, they also joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel who had hidden in the mountains of

Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, they also followed hard after them in the battle. So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Beth Aven. And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. Now all the people of the land came to a forest; and there was honey on the ground. And when the people had come into the woods, there was the honey, dripping; but no one 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; therefore he stretched out 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 countenance brightened. Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats food this day.'" And the people were faint. But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted 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 would there not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?" Now they had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. So the people were very faint. And the people rushed on the spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood. Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood!" So he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone to me this day." Then Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and say to them, 'Bring me here every man's

ox and every man's sheep, slaughter them here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.' " So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night, and slaughtered it there. Then Saul built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD. Now Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and plunder them until the morning light; and let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." Then the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here." So Saul asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him that day. And Saul said, "Come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today. For as the LORD lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not a man among all the people answered him. Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will be on the other side." And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you." Therefore Saul said to the LORD God of Israel, "Give a perfect lot." So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped. And Saul said, "Cast lots between my son Jonathan and me." So Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, and said, "I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand. So now I must die!" Saul answered, "God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan." But the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die. Then Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to

their own place. So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he harassed them. And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them. The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Jishui, and Malchishua. And the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal. The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel. Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.

1 Chronicles 9:35-39 NKJV

Jeiel the father of Gibeon, whose wife's name was Maacah, dwelt at Gibeon. His firstborn son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth. And Mikloth begot Shimeam. They also dwelt alongside their relatives in Jerusalem, with their brethren. Ner begot Kish, Kish begot Saul, and Saul begot Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-Baal.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Saul's son Jonathan recruits his armor-bearer for a courageous attack on a group of Philistines. He has faith that God can back them up, and asks God to reveal through specifically requested circumstances whether He will, in fact, do so. The two men kill 20 Philistines,

sending panic throughout the Philistine ranks, which is aggravated by an earthquake. The rest of Saul's army discovers that Jonathan is missing, and that the Philistines are in disarray and retreat, and begins to pursue them. They are joined by Hebrews who were already in the Philistine camp, probably as mercenaries or volunteers trying to get in good with the occupational forces (not unlike what David pretended to do in 1 Samuel 27), and by others who were hiding in the caves and rocks nearby (verses 21-22; 13:6).

Eli's great-grandson Ahijah is mentioned here wearing the priestly ephod (verse 3). It is not clear from this passage whether Ahijah himself was a priest in *Shiloh* at the time, indicating the city was still functioning in some religious capacity, or whether, as seems more likely, this is just referring back to Eli as having been the priest in Shiloh. Ahijah was probably serving as priest elsewhere. In verse 18, Saul tells Ahijah to bring to him the ark of God, which is still in the house of Abinadab in Kirjath Jearim. However, the account here does not state that it was actually brought at this time. In fact, Saul's request is interrupted and the fighting soon ends with Israel victorious, the request for the ark now apparently moot. (This appears to be another example of Saul's impatience—not waiting to receive the instructions he sought from God before heading off to battle, verse 19.) Furthermore, when David later has the ark brought to Jerusalem, it is brought from Abinadab's house—there being no mention anywhere in Scripture that it had ever been moved from there.

Before leaving this account, it will no doubt come as news to many that Jonathan's strategy was actually employed within the last century. Werner Keller writes in *The Bible As History*: "One example, unique in its way, shows how accurate the Bible can be

even in the smallest details and how reliable its dates and information. We owe to Major Vivian Gilbert, a British army officer, this description of a truly remarkable occurrence. Writing in his reminiscences he says, 'In the First World War a brigade major in Allenby's army in Palestine was on one occasion searching his Bible with the light of a candle, looking for a certain name. His brigade had received orders to take a village that stood on a rocky prominence on the other side of a deep valley. It was called Michmash and the name seemed somehow familiar.

"Eventually he found it in I Sam. 13 and read there: 'Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.' It then went on to tell how Jonathan and his armour-bearer crossed over during the night 'to the Philistines' garrison' on the other side, and how they passed two sharp rocks: 'there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez and the name of the other Seneh' (I Sam. 144). They clambered up the cliff and overpowered the garrison, 'within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plough.' The main body of the enemy awakened by the mêlée thought they were surrounded by Saul's troops and 'melted away and they went on beating down one another' (I Sam. 14:14-16). Thereupon Saul attacked with his whole force and beat the enemy. 'So the Lord saved Israel that day.'

"The brigade major reflected that there must still be this narrow passage through the rocks, between the two spurs, and at the end of it the 'half acre of land.' He woke the commander and they read the passage through together once more. Patrols were sent out. They found the pass, which was thinly held by the Turks, and

which led past two jagged rocks—obviously Bozez and Seneh. Up on top, beside Michmash, they could see by the light of the moon a small flat field. The brigadier altered his plan of attack. Instead of deploying the whole brigade he sent one company through the pass under cover of darkness. The few Turks whom they met were overpowered without a sound, the cliffs were scaled, and shortly before daybreak the company had taken up a position on 'the half acre of land.' The Turks woke up and took to their heels in disorder since they thought that they were being surrounded by Allenby's army. They were all killed or taken prisoner.

"'And so,' concludes Major Gilbert, 'after thousands of years British troops successfully copied the tactics of Saul and Jonathan'" (1981, pp. 182-183). What a surprising confirmation of Scripture! In the face of this and other proofs of the Bible, let us not doubt the reliability of God's Word."

Verse 6 – What faith of Jonathan to understand that God can do anything He wants.

Verse 13 – Adam Clarke's commentary states: "Jonathan knocked them down, and the armor-bearer despatched them. This seems to be the meaning."

Verse 24 – Here again the UCG reading plan states: "Once again Saul's rash behavior becomes an issue. He has made his troops swear that they will not eat anything until the battle is over. This weakens the troops, Jonathan inadvertently breaks the oath, and eventually, in their hunger, the troops ravenously devour the spoil without properly bleeding the animals. When Saul finally attempts to seek God's counsel again, at Ahijah's suggestion (verse 36), God does not answer. Saul concludes that somebody must have sinned in the previous battle (as at Jericho/Ai) and asks God to

reveal the culprit by lot. He is surprised to learn it was his own son—whom he then immediately condemns to death.

We can see here the "new Saul," an arrogant, defiant, heartless and self-willed man—quite a long way from the man who hid rather than be proclaimed king. Saul's actions illustrate how bizarre and corrupt his thinking had become. He himself had disobeyed God and yet when his own son disobeys one of his own foolish commands, he decides that his son should die. Saul is prohibited from carrying out his intent because the people insist that this is going too far, and they refuse to let Jonathan be killed. After all, Jonathan had not even heard Saul's oath.

Saul continues to expand the kingdom against the nations around them. The accompanying passage from Chronicles highlights some of the additional wars being fought, during this time of Israelite strength and expansion, by the tribes east of the Jordan.”
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Verse 32 – This was against God’s law (compare Genesis 9:4 and Leviticus 19:26).

Verse 49 – His son Jishui was also known as “Abinadab” (Compare 1 Chronicles 8:33). Saul would also have another son named Ishbosheth (also sometimes called Eshbaal) (compare 1 Chronicles 8:33 & 2 Samuel 2:8).

The daughter Merab would be given to Adriel (see 1 Samuel 18:19) and Michal would marry David (see 1 Samuel 18:27).