

## 1 Samuel 14:1-46 **Defeat of the Philistines – Saul's foolish Oath**

### Jonathan Defeats the Philistines

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

<sup>6</sup> 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."

<sup>7</sup> So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

<sup>8</sup> Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to these men, and we will show ourselves to them. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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."

<sup>11</sup> 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." <sup>12</sup> 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." <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and there was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there. <sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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). <sup>19</sup> 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."  
20 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.

21 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. 22 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. 23 So the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Beth Aven.

### Saul's Rash Oath

24 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.

25 Now all the people of the land came to a forest; and there was honey on the ground. 26 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. 27 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.

28 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. 29 But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. 30 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?"

31 Now they had driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. So the people were very faint. 32 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.

33 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." 34 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. 35 Then Saul built an altar to the Lord. This was the first altar that he built to the Lord.

36 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."

37 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. 38 And Saul said, "Come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today. 39 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.

40 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."

41 Therefore Saul said to the Lord God of Israel, "Give a perfect lot." So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped. 42 And Saul said, "Cast lots between my son Jonathan and me." So Jonathan was taken. 43 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!"

44 Saul answered, "God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan."

45 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.

46 Then Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.  
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#### Facts Revealed:

- ✧ Saul started this campaign with an army of 3,000 hand picked soldiers. [1 Samuel 13:1-2]
- ✧ The Philistines came out in an innumerable army and camped at Michmash. [1 Samuel 13:5]
- ✧ After his foolish sacrifice, Saul's terrified army has dwindled to 600 men. [1 Samuel 13:15]
- ✧ The rest of Saul's army was hiding from the Philistines in caves and holes or wherever they could find a hiding place, some even having crossed the Jordan to Gilead. [1 Samuel 13:6-7]
- ✧ Saul and Jonathan are together with their army of 600 at Gibeah of Benjamin. [1 Samuel 13:16, 14:2]

#### Jonathan Defeats the Philistines [1 Samuel 14:1-23]

- ✧ Jonathan is a man of faith, and takes only his armor bearer to attack the Philistine garrison trusting God to give the victory.
- ✧ The plan was simple faith: "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.**" [1 Samuel 14:8-10]
- ✧ The Philistines called for them to come up, and the Lord delivered the Philistines into the hand of Jonathan and his armor bearer, who killed twenty Philistines in the space of half an acre, accompanied by earthquake and confusion causing the Philistines to flee in every direction killing their own army in the process.
- ✧ Saul was as confused as the Philistines, and called the role finding Jonathan and his armorbearer missing. Saul then called for the ark of God, but while talking to the priest, Saul realized that the Philistines were fleeing, so he took the 600 men with him and joined in the battle.
- ✧ The Hebrews who were with the Philistines joined in the battle against the Philistines.
- ✧ The soldiers in hiding from the Philistines came out of hiding and joined the battle.
- ✧ So the Lord saved Israel that day and the Philistines were driven back to Beth Aven.

#### Saul's Foolish Oath brought the battle to an end [1 Samuel 14:24-46]

- ✧ 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.

- ✧ The Israeli army was growing faint from exertion and lack of food because of Saul's oath, so they did not eat any of the honey they found on the ground.
- ✧ Jonathan did not know of the oath, so he ate some of the honey which strengthened him until he learned about the oath, to which he replied, "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?" [1 Samuel 14:29-30]
- ✧ The Philistines were driven back to Ajalon. [1 Samuel 14:31]
- ✧ Being famished, the men of Israel fell on the spoils and began eating the flesh with the blood. [1 Samuel 14:31-35]
  - ✧ Blood has been forbidden as food for the whole human race from the time flesh was first allowed to be eaten, and is repeated in the Laws of God for Israel. [Genesis 9:1-4, Leviticus 3:17, 7:26-27, 17:10-14, 19:26, Deuteronomy 12:15-16, 23, 15:23]
- ✧ Saul called for the people to butcher the animals properly and not eat the blood, and he built his first altar there. [1 Samuel 14:34-35]

#### Saul's Rash Oath [1 Samuel 14:36-46]

- ✧ Saul expressed his desire to attack the Philistines by night and plunder them, but the Priest advised they first seek counsel of God. [1 Samuel 14:36]
- ✧ Saul asked counsel of God but God did not answer him. [1 Samuel 14:37]
- ✧ Saul perceived that there was an unresolved problem and sought to determine the source, only to discover it lay in Jonathan regarding Saul's oath of refraining from food. [1 Samuel 14:24, 38-43]
  - ✧ God is witness to all our errors as well as our victories, and holds our oaths sacred.
- ✧ Saul sentenced his son Jonathan to death. [1 Samuel 14:44]
- ✧ The People rescued Jonathan for having worked so effectively with God in their recent deliverance from the Philistines. [1 Samuel 14:45]
- ✧ Saul returned home from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place. [1 Samuel 14:46]