

1 Samuel 14 Commentary

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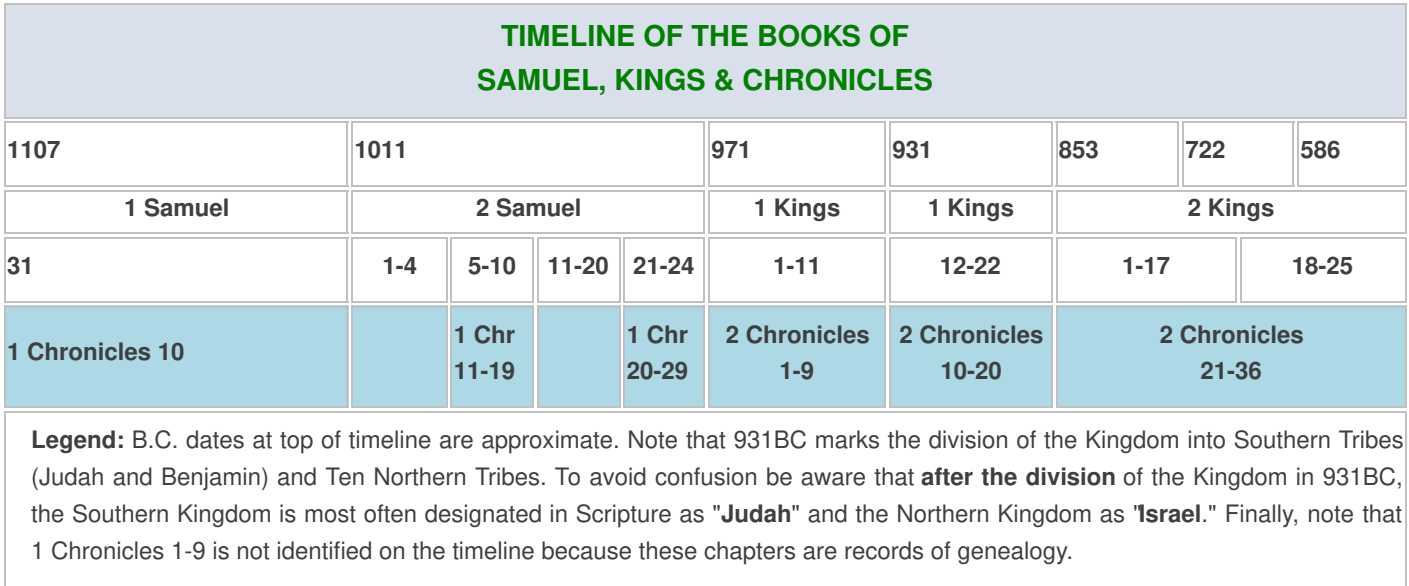
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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
[1 Samuel Chart](#), from Charles Swindoll



[The Ryrie Study Bible](#)

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1 Samuel 14:1 Now the day came that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "**Come** and let us cross over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side." But he did not tell his father.

- BGT 1 Samuel 14:1 κα γ νεται μ ρα κα ε πεν Ιωναθαν υ ς Σαουλ τ παιδαρ τ αρονπι τ σκε η ατο δε ρο κα διαβ μεν ε ς μεσσαβ τ ν λοφ λων τ ν ν τ π ραν κε ν κα τ πατρ ατο ο κ π γγειλεν
- LXE 1 Samuel 14:1 And when a certain day arrived, Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man that bore his armour, Come, and let us go over to Messab of the Philistines that is on the other side yonder; but he told not his father.
- KJV 1 Samuel 14:1 Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father.
- NET 1 Samuel 14:1 Then one day Jonathan son of Saul said to his armor bearer, "Come on, let's go over to the Philistine garrison that is opposite us." But he did not let his father know.
- CSB 1 Samuel 14:1 That same day Saul's son Jonathan said to the attendant who carried his weapons, "Come on, let's cross over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." However, he did not tell his father.
- ESV 1 Samuel 14:1 One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." But he did not tell his father.
- NIV 1 Samuel 14:1 One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing his armor, "Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side." But he did not tell his father.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:1 One day Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come on, let's go over to where the Philistines have their outpost." But Jonathan did not tell his father what he was doing.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:1 One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." But he did not tell his father.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:1 One day, Jonathan son of Saul said to his armour-bearer, 'Come on, let us go across to the Philistine outpost over on the other side.' But he did not inform his father.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:1 One day Jonathan, son of Saul, said to his armor-bearer, "Come let us go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side." But he did not inform his father.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:1 And the day cometh that Jonathan son of Saul saith unto the young man bearing his weapons, 'Come, and we pass over unto the station of the Philistines, which is on the other side of this;' and to his father he hath not declared it.

- **Jonathan:** 1Sa 14:39-45 13:2,22 18:1-4 2Sa 1:4,5,25,26
- **he did not tell his father:** 1Sa 25:19 Jdg 6:27 Jdg 14:6 Mic 7:5
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JONATHAN REDEEMS THE TIME THIS DAY!

Note how the writer contrasts the obedience of Jonathan in chapter 14 with the disobedience of his father Saul in chapters 13 and 15. It makes for a striking contrast in where their hearts were focused! One might summarize chapter 14 "Jonathan's Daring Raid, Saul's Foolish Order."

[Life Application Study Bible \(borrow\)](#) makes a good point that "In this chapter we read about the miserable job Saul did as leader: he had no communication with Jonathan (1Sa 14:1, 17); he made a foolish curse (1Sa 14:24); and he ignored the well-being of his own soldiers (1Sa 14:31). Saul's poor leadership was not a result of personality traits but of decaying spiritual character. What we do is often a direct result of our spiritual condition. We cannot ignore the importance of spiritual character in effective leadership.

Warren Wiersbe - God had called Saul to begin Israel's liberation from the Philistines, but most of the time he only followed up on what others started. In spite of all that the Lord had done for him and all that Samuel had taught him, Saul was not a man of faith who trusted the Lord and sought to glorify Him. Saul is a tragic example of the popular man of the world who tries to appear religious and do God's work, but who lacks a living faith in God and a heart to honor Him. Unfortunately, church history records the lives of too many gifted people who "used God" to achieve their own purposes, but in the end abandoned Him and ended life in disgrace.....As we study the life of Saul, we will see more and more evidence that he was what some people call a "control freak." He envied other people's success, he was suspicious of any strategy he didn't originate or at least approve, and he was ruthless when it came to removing people who challenged his leadership or exposed his folly. (Borrow [Be successful](#))

Rod Mattoon - Saul's first defeat came because he ran ahead of the Lord. His second defeat came because he hesitated and failed to act promptly when the Lord was ready to give a great victory. In chapter fourteen, we see Jonathan is the real hero, not Saul. In the end, Saul would have his own son executed. When a Christian is not following the Lord, he treats his friends like enemies and his enemies like friends. Saul did this to others. Saul was not part of the battle and the victory because he was out of fellowship with God. This chapter reveals several stages in this battle and what happens when our fellowship with the Lord is broken. The Christian life is not a playground, but a battleground as we will see in this section. ([1 Samuel Commentary](#) - Go to page for list of multiple illustrations on page 596)

Now the day came - KJV = "Now it came to pass upon a day" Things don't just happen by chance. In some mysterious way the power and providence of God superintends everything that otherwise appears to us on earth as if it "just happened to happen!" In other words, God is always behind the happenings that happen! Do you believe that is true? It is a mystery of how God sovereignly moves and yet gives His creature their free will, free choice!

David Thompson - There was a day that occurred when Jonathan was moved by God to do something about the Philistines. Things happen when someone says today will be different. Today I am going to obey God. Today I am going to stand for what is right.

That Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man who was carrying his armor - Recall only Saul and Jonathan had armor (1Sa 13:22+) Some suggest Jonathan acts because of his father's inactivity (sitting under a pomegranate tree!). However in context Jonathan was surely stirred by the Spirit (cf 1Sa 14:6).

Youngblood - "Armor-bearers in ancient times had to be unusually brave and loyal, since the lives of their masters often depended on them."

F B Meyer rightly said "God is **ever on the outlook for believing souls**, who will receive his power and grace on the one hand, and transmit them on the other. He chooses them, that by them he should make his mighty power known." The writer of Chronicles adds that "the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." (2Ch 16:9).

THOUGHT - The preceding truths beg the question - Is your heart completely His? If so, you are in the "line" of men like Jonathan and David, to be useful to him. As Paul writes we can make the choice to be useful to God for "if anyone cleanses himself (HERSELF) from these *things*, he (OR SHE) will be a vessel for honor, sanctified (SET APART), **useful to the Master**, prepared for every good (GOD) work. Now (PART OF BEING A VESSEL USEFUL FOR HIS WORK CALLS US TO) **flee** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) from youthful lusts and **pursue** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart" (2Ti 2:21-22+) Note the last clause calls us to seek an "accountability partner" who is also pursuing Jesus. Do you have one yet? If not you are more vulnerable to temptations of your enemies the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#). This is where David made his fatal mistake and left himself alone and vulnerable! (see 2Sa 11:1,2).

"Come and let us cross over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side." Picture the scene - vast numbers of Philistine warriors well equipped with iron weapons and chariots. And Jonathan makes this incredible statement, which sounds almost like a "death wish!" Notice he is taking only one man, not the 1000 that he had commanded in 1Sa 13:2+! This was like a suicide mission or a divinely inspired (and empowered) plan! Perhaps Jonathan recalled promises of God like Lev 26:8+ which said "five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword." It is notable that this was the second time Jonathan had taken the initiative against the Philistines (cf 1Sa 13:3+). In fact, it was Jonathan's foray that had stirred the anger in the Philistines. Jonathan is what we might call a "man of action!"

You don't need big numbers for victory; you need God.

-- David Thompson

But (term of contrast) **he did not tell his father** - Why not? We can only conjecture that Saul (we have already seen how his faith performed under fire) would have tried to dissuade his son, thinking such a plan was foolish and reckless. We have already seen Saul's unbelief and Jonathan's plan would have only fallen on unbelieving ears!

David Thompson - When we study the Bible, it becomes very evident that when it comes to God, victory has very little to do with numbers. For example, when Jesus Christ ascended back up into heaven, He had about 120 disciples and those disciples took on the whole world (Acts 1:15). God does not need big numbers to win wars. What He looks for are a few faithful people, who are willing to follow His word. That point is very clear from this text. This is an amazing text of Scripture. Two men take on the Philistine army and they win. They win a battle that ultimately leads to great victory. There is a powerful lesson to see here and that is this: REGARDLESS OF THE NUMBER SIZE OF ENEMIES, A SMALL NUMBER OF FAITHFUL PEOPLE WHO DEPEND ON THE LORD AND STAND AGAINST THE ENEMIES WILL EXPERIENCE GREAT VICTORY.....You don't need big numbers for victory; you need God. Take one or two people who are totally dependent on God and they can and will experience great victory. In order to experience the victory, we must be willing to step out by faith and fight, but all we do need for the victory is God on our side.

1 Samuel 14:1-15 UNLEASHING GOD'S POWER

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. --2 Chronicles 16:9

God saw the Israelite soldiers cowering in fear before the Philistine invaders. He must not have liked what He saw. But He didn't step in to help the Israelites -- until Jonathan and his armor bearer took daring action.

God also saw the people in a mountain area of Haiti, in the early 1940s, who were living in poverty and spiritual bondage and voodooism. He didn't like what He saw. But He didn't intervene until Wallace Turnbull started living and working among them. Wallace taught them to farm more efficiently and to read and write. He treated their diseases. And he told them about Jesus. As a result of his initial work, thousands of people in that area have become Christians. Over 40,000 children are being given a Christian education. These results came because God unleashed His power and blessed the efforts of Wallace and those who helped him.

God often unleashes His power through His people. The prophet said,

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those

whose heart is loyal to Him" (2 Chronicles 16:9).

Do you see a need that you can meet? Trust God and start doing something about it. You can be one of the people through whom God will "show Himself strong." -H V Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The power of God will be unleashed
To meet the world's needs,
If we will just step out in faith
And follow when He leads.
--Sper

If we attempt great things for God, we can expect great things from God.

Be An Armor-Bearer

Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you. — 1 Samuel 14:7

Today's Scripture: 1 Samuel 14:1-14

The Israelites and the Philistines were at war. While Saul relaxed under a pomegranate tree with his men, Jonathan and his armor-bearer left camp quietly to see if the Lord would work on their behalf, believing that "nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few" (1 Sam. 14:6).

Jonathan and his helper were about to cross a path between two high cliffs. Armed enemy soldiers were stationed above them on both sides. They were two men against who knows how many. When Jonathan suggested they climb up after them, the armor-bearer never flinched. "Do all that is in your heart," he told Jonathan. "I am with you, according to your heart" (v.7). So the two climbed the cliff, and with God's help they overcame the enemy (vv.8-14). We have to admire this courageous young armor-bearer. He lugged the armor up that cliff and stayed with Jonathan, following along behind and killing those Jonathan wounded.

The church needs strong leaders to face our spiritual foes, but they must not be left to face them alone. They need the help and support of everyone in the congregation—loyal "armor-bearers" like you and me who are willing to join them in battle against the "enemy of our souls." By: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We give the help that pastors need
For burdens they must bear
When we entrust them to the Lord
And hold them up in prayer.
—D. De Haan

Leaders are their best when people get behind them.

NOTHING CAN HINDER THE LORD SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 14:1–15 - E F Hallock

TEXT: "For nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few" (1 Sam. 14:6c).

INTRODUCTION: Jonathan was a man of faith and action inspired by faith in the Lord. David, likewise. Therefore "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David" (1 Sam. 18:1).

I. Jonathan's faith (1 Sam. 14:6).

- A. "The Lord will work for us."
- B. "Nothing can hinder the Lord."
- C. "Come, let us go."

II. Jonathan and his armor bearer.

- A. His armor bearer's faith (1 Sam. 14:7).
"Behold, I am with you, as is your mind, so is mine."
- B. Jonathan's test (1 Sam. 14:9–12).
"If they [the Philistines] say 'Wait ...' then we will stand still in our place and we will not go up to them."
"If they say, 'Come up ...' we will go up; for the Lord has given them into our hand."
"The Philistines said, '... Come up to us and we will show a thing.'"

“Jonathan said to his armor bearer, ‘Come up after me; for the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.’ ”

III. Faith is the victory.

- A. Jonathan and his man climbed up on their hands and feet.
- B. There were twenty Philistines. “They fell before Jonathan” and his armor bearer “finished them off.”
- C. The Philistine defeat in this fortified spot created panic throughout the whole Philistine army.

CONCLUSION: God wrought a great victory with two men of faith. He still does so today with men who put their faith into action.

1 Samuel 14:2 Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron. And the people who were with him were about six hundred men,

- **the outskirts of Gibeah** 1Sa 13:15,16 Isa 10:28,29
- a pomegranate: Jdg 20:45.
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Pomegranate with Fruit

SAUL SITTING IN THE SHADE!

Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate[\(rimmon\)](#) **tree** [\(pix\)](#) **which is in Migron** (near Gibeah) - Is there not a touch of [irony](#) here? Jonathan going forth to battle, while Saul sits under a shade tree! **Gibeah** was Saul's hometown and "home base" and about an hour away from the camp of the Philistines and about 3 miles SW of [Geba](#). Jonathan was apparently still camped at the Philistine garrison he had captured at [Geba](#) (1Sa 13:3, 16).

And the people who were with him were about six hundred men - Recall that in 1Sa 13:2 there were "3,000 men of Israel." Presumably the deserters had thinned his ranks!

Rod Mattoon - While Jonathan is fighting the battle, Saul was doing nothing. He was unaware of the battle that was taking place. What a picture of many Christians today! They are ignorant of the battles, the struggles that a church, the missionaries, and the people in the church are facing. For this reason it is important to be faithful to the services and know what is going on. Don't shut God out of your life with the activities of your life. In verse one, we find the first use of the word "armour" in the KJV Bible. If we are going to be victorious Christians, we must make full use of the armour that God has provided for us. {See the Special Study on "The Battles of Believers" for more insights about the armour of the Christian at the end of Chapter 21 on page 180 in the following link - Mattoon gives a summary of our battles and our weapons in warfare - you might want to take a moment and review this chapter} ([1 Samuel Commentary](#) - Go to page for list of multiple illustrations on page 596)

Brian Bell - Jonathan, not Saul, was the true leader in Israel. The contrast between the 2 is striking:1

1. Saul was sitting while Jonathan was attacking.
2. Saul trusted his growing army while Jonathan God & did not depend on #'s.
3. Saul watched things happen, but Jonathan made things happen.

Pomegranate [\(07416\)](#) rimmon Meaning "pomegranate," rimmôn first appears in the description of the priestly garments, which had pomegranates made of blue and purple colors of thread (Exo. 28:33f; 39:24ff). There were artificial pomegranates made of bronze on the capitals of the two columns, named Jachin and Boaz, in the Temple (1 Ki. 7:18, 20, 42; 2 Chr. 3:16; 4:13; Jer. 52:22f). The pomegranate fruit was among the items the spies brought as specimens of the abundance of the land of Canaan (Num. 13:23). Their juice was used to make wine and to flavor drinks (Song 8:2). In fact, "pomegranates" were among the foods the Israelites missed in the wilderness (Num. 20:5), but the Promised Land was a land of abundance and blessing (Deut. 8:8). The temples of the head are compared to the beauty of a slice of pomegranate fruit (S.S. 4:3; 6:7). Rimmôn also designated the pomegranate tree (1 Sam. 14:2; S.S. 4:13; Joel 1:12; Hag. 2:19)." ([Complete Biblical Library](#)) Note the **pomegranates** intermixed with the golden bells on the hem of the priest's garment in the [picture below](#).

Pomegranate ([See picture](#)) ([Wikipedia article](#)) A [shrub](#) or small tree growing 5 to 10 m (16 to 33 ft) high, the pomegranate has multiple spiny branches and is long-lived, with some specimens in France surviving for 200 years.^[4] and produced a fruit that abounded in the land of Canaan (1Sa 14:2), and was the fruit brought by the spies to show the fruitfulness of the land of Canaan

(Nu 13:23). Figures of this fruits were embroidered on the ephod (Ex. 28:33, 34; 39:24 and were carved on the pillars of the temple (1Ki 7:18, 20, 42; Jer. 52:22, 23). Wine was made of pomegranate (Song 8:2) The modern French term for pomegranate, *grenade*, has given its name to the military [grenade](#) ([note](#))

Rimmon - 25v - Exod. 28:33; Exod. 28:34; Exod. 39:24; Exod. 39:25; Exod. 39:26; Num. 13:23; Num. 20:5; Deut. 8:8; 1 Sam. 14:2; 1 Ki. 7:18; 1 Ki. 7:20; 1 Ki. 7:42; 2 Ki. 25:17; 2 Chr. 3:16; 2 Chr. 4:13; Cant. 4:3; Cant. 4:13; Cant. 6:7; Cant. 6:11; Cant. 7:12; Cant. 8:2; Jer. 52:22; Jer. 52:23; Joel 1:12; Hag. 2:19

1 Samuel 14:3 and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the LORD at Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:2 καὶ Σαουλ κἠθῆτο πρὸ τοῦ βουνοῦ πρὸ τῶν ἀντινυμᾶδων καὶ ὄντων μετὰ τοῖς ἑκατοσὶν ἄνδρες

LXE 1 Samuel 14:2 And Saul sat on the top of the hill under the pomegranate tree that is in Magdon, and there were with him about six hundred men.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:2 And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeath under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men;

NET 1 Samuel 14:2 Now Saul was sitting under a pomegranate tree in Migron, on the outskirts of Gibeath. The army that was with him numbered about six hundred men.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:2 Saul was staying under the pomegranate tree in Migron on the outskirts of Gibeath. The troops with him numbered about 600.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:2 Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeath in the pomegranate cave at Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men,

NIV 1 Samuel 14:2 Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeath under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men,

NLT 1 Samuel 14:2 Meanwhile, Saul and his 600 men were camped on the outskirts of Gibeath, around the pomegranate tree at Migron.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:2 Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeath under the pomegranate tree that is at Migron; the troops that were with him were about six hundred men,

NJB 1 Samuel 14:2 Saul was on the outskirts of Geba, sitting under the pomegranate tree that stands near the threshing-floor; the force with him numbered about six hundred men.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:2 (Saul's command post was under the pomegranate tree near the threshing floor on the outskirts of Geba; those with him numbered about six hundred men.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:2 And Saul is abiding at the extremity of Gibeath, under the pomegranate which is in Migron, and the people who are with him, about six hundred men,

- [Ahijah](#): 1Sa 22:9-12,20, called Ahimelech
- **Ichabod's**: 1Sa 4:21
- **wearing**: 1Sa 2:28 Ex 28:26-32
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

1 Samuel 2:28 'Did I not choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be My priests, to go up to My altar, to burn incense, **to carry an ephod before Me**; and did I not give to the house of your father all the fire offerings of the sons of Israel?

The High Priest's Golden Garments

Shemot/Exodus 28



Ephod on the High Priest

A PRIEST WITH AN EPHOD

and [Ahijah](#) ("brother of the LORD"), the son of Ahitub, [Ichabod's](#) brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the LORD at Shiloh, was wearing an [ephod](#) (epod) - Ahijah was in the line of the priest, specifically in the line of Eli who God had prophesied would not endure (see their fate except for one son named Abiathar - 1Sa 22:18-19). The ephod was a priestly garment and as shown above was secured in place by a belt around the waist. As the picture shows the apron-like ephod had upon it a breastplate of judgment (12 precious stones, each engraved with a tribe's name, colorfully and ornately displayed) with pouches used to carry certain items ([Urim](#) and [Thummim](#) or lots [\[Wikipedia\]](#) - see Ex 28:5-13+, cf (Lv 8:8; Nu 27:21; Dt 33:8; 1Sa 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Ne 7:65) that were used by the priest to determine the will of the LORD. Note that there is no statement that Saul actually asked the priest to use these items to determine the will of the LORD!

[Guzik](#) has an interesting comment on why mention the name [Ichabod](#)? - Probably, God wants us to associate the meaning of Ichabod's name with where Saul is at spiritually. Saul's royal glory is almost gone, and it is appropriate that he associates with a relative of the man named "The Glory Has Departed." (cf 1Sa 13:13,14+, 1Sa 15:26-29+)

And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone- Jonathan had kept his mission secret from all the Hebrews in the camp.

[Guzik](#) points out that the people not knowing about Jonathan's excursion "indicates that Jonathan did not go over to the Philistine garrison out of a desire for personal glory. If that were his motive he would have told at least a few people that he went.

Ephod (0646) [epod](#) (see also [EPHOD](#), [URIM AND THUMMIM](#)) is a masculine noun referring to the sacred vestment worn by the high priest. "A garment worn around the high priest's upper body that featured twelve semiprecious and precious stones on the front, each one bearing the name of one of the tribes of Israel (Ex. 28:4, 6, 12, 15, 25–28). The breastplate bearing the stones was on the front of the ephod itself. The ephod was made by a skilled workman and had two shoulder pieces which were fastened together to hold it securely. It also bore two stones, one on each of its shoulders that represented the tribes of Israel. Each stone had six of the tribes of Israel engraved on it." (Baker) The Hebrew word **ephod** also described a vestment worn by David (2Sa 6:14, 1Ch 15:27) and the boy Samuel (1Sa 2:18). Gideon made an ephod which was an idolatrous cultic object (Jdg 8:27) In Hos 3:4 it is one of the sacred items the sons of Israel will lose access to for a period of time (because of disobedience). **R K Harrison** - The term **ephod** was also used occasionally to describe an 'idol' (cf. Jdg. 8:27; 17:5) which was employed in family worship, but precisely why such an image was described by a name used for a well-attested object in Israelite tabernacle worship is unknown. (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries - Leviticus)

Epod - 39v - Exod. 25:7; Exod. 28:4; Exod. 28:6; Exod. 28:12; Exod. 28:15; Exod. 28:25; Exod. 28:26; Exod. 28:27; Exod. 28:28; Exod. 28:31; Exod. 29:5; Exod. 35:9; Exod. 35:27; Exod. 39:2; Exod. 39:7; Exod. 39:8; Exod. 39:18; Exod. 39:19; Exod. 39:20; Exod. 39:21; Exod. 39:22; Lev. 8:7; Jdg. 8:27; Jdg. 17:5; Jdg. 18:14; Jdg. 18:17; Jdg. 18:18; Jdg. 18:20; 1 Sam. 2:18; 1 Sam. 2:28; 1 Sam. 14:3; 1 Sam. 21:9; 1 Sam. 22:18; 1 Sam. 23:6; 1 Sam. 23:9; 1 Sam. 30:7; 2 Sam. 6:14; 1 Chr. 15:27; Hos. 3:4

1 Samuel 14:4 Between the passes by which Jonathan sought to cross over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp crag on the one side and a sharp crag on the other side, and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

- **the passes:** 1Sa 13:23
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

1 Samuel 13:23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

The Pass of Michmash

JONATHAN'S TASK CLIMB SLIPPERY ROCK AND THORNY CRAG!

Between the passes by which Jonathan sought to cross over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp crag([shen](#)) on the one side and a sharp ([shen](#)) crag ([sela'](#) - rock) on the other side, and the name of the one was [Bozez](#) (possible meanings - slippery, shining, surpassing white, glistening), and the name of the other [Seneh](#) ("thorny") - As noted in 1 Samuel 13:23 "the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash." Clearly the Philistines held the strategic high ground, another seeming disadvantage to Jonathan's daring endeavor (but one that would prove an advantage in another sense - see note by Davis below). Why would the writer give us the names of two sharp (tooth-like) crags? If Bozez does mean slippery and Seneh means thorny, it gives us a picture of another difficulty Jonathan would face in achieving his goal. Doing God's work is not always (usually) easy but often involves significant obstacles. Faith sees past those obstacles which is what Jonathan's faith did!

Dale Ralph Davis comments that "the writer insists that a little topography is good for the understanding. Hence he describes the location of Jonathan's venture...He adds that the one is on the north in front of Michmash, the other to the south in front of Geba (v. 5). Their names, roughly equivalent to Slippery (Bozez) and Thorny (Seneh), hardly invite hikers. And between these rock outcroppings the Wadi Suwenit cuts its deep trough toward the Jordan with steep banks on either side. One might infer from 1Sa 14:12, 13 that most sane folks considered the point impassable. (See [Driver's Diagram of Michmash below](#)) That fact could prove an advantage. So much for the setting. Our writer has been rather brisk: Here is the plan (which is secret); here are the leaders (who are rejected); here is the place (which is impossible) ([Looking on the Heart - Volume 1 - 1 Samuel 1-14](#) or listen to his entertaining Mp3 [A Swell and Lousy Day](#)).

Rod Mattoon - In order for Jonathan to spy on the Philistines, he would need to take a passage between two rocks.... Bozez and Seneh. These two cliffs remind us of the conflict we face everyday as Christians. **Bozez** means "shining" (ED: OR SLIPPERY) and **Seneh** means "thorn." We are either a shining light for the Lord or a thorn in the flesh to others. Which one are you? [1 Samuel Commentary](#) - Go to page for list of multiple illustrations on page 596)

David Thompson - In order for Jonathan to get to the Philistine side, he had to climb down a steep mountain into a valley and then climb back up a steep mountain on the other side. There were two main large sharp rocks or crags located on each side of this spot of crossing. The name of the rock on the north side was "Bozez" and the name on the south side was "Seneh." Bozez means shining and Seneh refers to a rock that stands above. Now the canyon that Jonathan must climb down into and out of runs east. So the sun shines on the north and lights up the one rock named Bozez, shining. Jonathan is coming down from the north and then back up to the south. Josephus himself visited this place in his research and said we got down Seneh, but we did not attempt to climb up Bozez. He said getting down and up this area would require tremendous effort. Getting something big done for God is never easy. There is much stress and strain and effort. Most of the time, the warfare that leads to victory is a very steep and tough climb. That is exactly what Jonathan discovered.

Sharp (crag)([08127](#))(**shen** from **shanan** = to whet, sharpen) means tooth (of humans - (Gen. 49:12; Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; of animals - Dt. 32:24; Job 41:14; Joel 1:6), ivory ((1Ki. 10:18; Ezek. 27:15) a fang, a sharp projecting rock. The famous [lēx talionis](#) law, [eye for eye](#), tooth for tooth in Ex 21:24+ limits the penalty in a case at law.

Gilbrant - Occurring over fifty-five times, shfin means "tooth," "prong," "ivory" or "crag." Once, with the definite article, shfin refers to a "place" (1 Sam. 7:12). Some consider shfin to be a primary noun, but many derive the noun from the verb shānan (HED #8532), "to whet," "to sharpen." This Hebrew verb is attested in both Aramaic and Syriac. In ordinary usage, shfin denotes teeth of both men and animals. It was employed by Jacob in his blessing of Judah (Gen. 49:12). Here and in Amos 4:6, shfin has the dual ending, indicating the double row of teeth. The invader would be formidable, having "the teeth of a lion" (Joel 1:6). Eliphaz maintained that the wicked ultimately get their due in the same way that the teeth of "strong [or young] lions" are of little effect as they become old (Job 4:10). On one occasion, shfin occurs with the number "three" and refers to a three-pronged fork (1 Sam. 2:13). Eli's sons selected only the preferred portions of meat from the pot. Coupled with the high priest's failure to discipline his sons, their behavior brought the entire family into disfavor with God. Ten times shfin is translated "ivory." The widespread trade in

elephant tusks (i.e., "teeth") led to its becoming synonymous with the product. Solomon's great throne was inlaid with ivory (1 Ki. 10:18; cf. 2 Chr. 9:17). Ivory was used in the construction of his palace (1 Ki. 22:39). Samaria's opulence was described in terms of its "houses of ivory" (Amos 3:15). Shfin is applied poetically also. At his wedding, the king emerged adorned out of "the ivory palaces" (Ps. 45:8). The Shulamite's neck was described as lovely as a "tower of ivory" (SS 7:4). Pointed rocks, resembling teeth, are also labeled. Answering out of the whirlwind, God directed questions to Job. How knowledgeable was Job about the particular eagle which nested upon the "crag of the rock" (Job 39:28)? Jonathan and his armor bearer surprised the Philistines, crossing over and attacking from a passage bounded by two "sharp crags" (1 Sam. 14:4). In metaphorical usage, the psalmist's adversaries were like lions "whose teeth are spears and arrows" (Ps. 57:4). In the proverbial expression, "The children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer. 31:29f; cf. Ezek. 18:2), those who will not take responsibility for their sins, but blame their ancestors, will themselves be made accountable. "I take my flesh in my teeth" (Job 13:14) indicates that Job's situation was precarious; he held his life in his teeth, able to easily lose it. Following Israel's victory over the Philistines, Samuel erected a memorial stone named Ebenezer, honoring the Lord for his help. It was located between Mizpah, a location in Benjamin and Shen (1 Sam. 7:12). With the definite article, the latter is a place-name probably characterized by its peculiar craggy rock formations (i.e., "the tooth").

Shen - 48v - crag(2), ivory(10), sharp(2), teeth(30), three-pronged*(1), tooth(9). Gen. 49:12; Exod. 21:24; Exod. 21:27; Lev. 24:20; Num. 11:33; Deut. 19:21; Deut. 32:24; 1 Sam. 2:13; 1 Sam. 14:4; 1 Sam. 14:5; 1 Ki. 10:18; 1 Ki. 22:39; 2 Chr. 9:17; Job 4:10; Job 13:14; Job 16:9; Job 19:20; Job 29:17; Job 39:28; Job 41:14; Ps. 3:7; Ps. 35:16; Ps. 37:12; Ps. 45:8; Ps. 57:4; Ps. 58:6; Ps. 112:10; Ps. 124:6; Prov. 10:26; Prov. 25:19; Prov. 30:14; Cant. 4:2; Cant. 5:14; Cant. 6:6; Cant. 7:4; Jer. 31:29; Jer. 31:30; Lam. 2:16; Lam. 3:16; Ezek. 18:2; Ezek. 27:6; Ezek. 27:15; Joel 1:6; Amos 3:15; Amos 4:6; Amos 6:4; Mic. 3:5; Zech. 9:7

1 Samuel 14:5 The one crag rose on the north opposite Michmash, and the other on the south opposite Geba.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:5 ὁ δὲ μὲν πρὸς τὸν ὄρειον Μαχμας καὶ ὁ δὲ ἄλλος πρὸς τὸν ὄρειον Γαβεε

LXE 1 Samuel 14:5 The one way was northward to one coming to Machmas, and the other way was southward to one coming to Gabae.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:5 The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah.

NET 1 Samuel 14:5 The cliff to the north was closer to Micmash, the one to the south closer to Geba.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:5 one stood to the north in front of Michmash and the other to the south in front of Geba.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:5 The one crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:5 One cliff stood to the north toward Micmash, the other to the south toward Geba.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:5 The cliff on the north was in front of Micmash, and the one on the south was in front of Geba.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:5 One crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:5 The first spur stands to the north facing Michmash, the other to the south facing Geba.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:5 One crag was to the north, toward Michmash, the other to the south, toward Geba.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:5 The one edge is fixed on the north over-against Michmash, and the one on the south over-against Gibeah.

RSV 1 Samuel 14:5 The one crag rose on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

NKJ 1 Samuel 14:5 The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

of) **Geba** - The Hebrew word for crag (sen) means tooth, fang and then a sharp projecting rock. So these two sharp rocks were a strategic place for Jonathan to cross over. The pass was presumably narrow and thus would not allow many enemy forces to attack them.

Wikipedia - **Michmash** - **Michmas** (/ˈmɪkmæʃ/; **Hebrew**: מִיכְמָשׁ or מִיכְמָשׁ, **romanized**: *Mīkmās*, **lit.** 'laid up (concealed) place') was an **Israelite** and **Jewish** town located in the highlands north of **Jerusalem**. According to the **Hebrew Bible**, it belonged to the **Tribe of Benjamin**.^[1] It was the setting of the biblical **Battle of Michmash**, recounted in **1 Samuel 14**. Michmas was inhabited during the **Second Temple period**, when, according to the **Mishnah**, its fine wheat was brought to the **Temple**.^[2] Michmas is identified with the **Palestinian** village of **Mukhmas** in the **West Bank**, which preserves its ancient name.^{[3][4]} The nearby Israeli settlement **Ma'ale Mikhmas**, founded in 1981, is also named after the biblical town.....(AND THIS NEXT STATEMENT IS ALSO IN WIKIPEDIA) **A divinely sent earthquake** (ED: GOD GETS THE CREDIT!!!), the effects of which were noted by Saul's watchmen, threw the Philistine camp into turmoil. By the time Saul and his men came on the scene, many of the Philistines had slaughtered one another in confusion and the rest had taken to flight.....During **World War I**, British forces under the command of **General Allenby** were to face the **Turks** at the same location.^[10] **Major Vivian Gilbert** of the **British army** relates the story of an unnamed brigade major who was reading his Bible while contemplating the situation against the Ottoman forces. The brigade major remembered a town by the name of Michmash mentioned somewhere in the Bible. He found the verses, and discovered that there was a secret path around the town. He woke the brigadier general, and they found that the path still existed and was very lightly guarded. The British forces used this path to outmaneuver the Ottomans, and so took the town.^[11]

1 Samuel 14:6 Then Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "Come and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; perhaps the LORD will work for us, for the LORD is not restrained to save by many or by few."

BGT 1 Samuel 14:6 κα ε πεν Ιωναθαν πρ ς τ παιδ ριον τ α ρον τ σκε η α το δε ρο διαβ μεν ε ς μεσσαβ τ ν περιτμ των το των ε τι ποι σαι μ ν κ ριος τι ο κ σπιν τ κυρ συνεχ μενον σ ζειν ν πολλο ς ν λ γοις

LXE 1 Samuel 14:6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bore his armour, Come, let us go over to Messab of these uncircumcised, if peradventure the Lord may do something for us; for the Lord is not straitened to save by many or by few.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.

NET 1 Samuel 14:6 Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Come on, let's go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised men. Perhaps the LORD will intervene for us. Nothing can prevent the LORD from delivering, whether by many or by a few."

CSB 1 Samuel 14:6 Jonathan said to the attendant who carried his weapons, "Come on, let's cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised men. Perhaps the LORD will help us. Nothing can keep the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few."

ESV 1 Samuel 14:6 Jonathan said to the young man who carried 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 can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few."

NIV 1 Samuel 14:6 Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few."

NLT 1 Samuel 14:6 "Let's go across to the outpost of those pagans," Jonathan said to his armor bearer. "Perhaps the LORD will help us, for nothing can hinder the LORD. He can win a battle whether he has many warriors or only a few!"

NRS 1 Samuel 14:6 Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will act for us; for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few."

NJB 1 Samuel 14:6 Jonathan said to his armour-bearer, 'Come on, let us go across to these uncircumcised

people's outpost; perhaps Yahweh will do something for us, for Yahweh is free to grant deliverance through a few men, just as much as through many.'

NAB 1 Samuel 14:6 Jonathan said to his armor-bearer: "Come let us go over to that outpost of the uncircumcised. Perhaps the LORD will help us, because it is no more difficult for the LORD to grant victory through a few than through many."

YLT 1 Samuel 14:6 And Jonathan saith unto the young man bearing his weapons, 'Come, and we pass over unto the station of these uncircumcised; it may be Jehovah doth work for us, for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few.'

RSV 1 Samuel 14:6 And 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 can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few."

NKJ 1 Samuel 14:6 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."

ASV 1 Samuel 14:6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that Jehovah will work for us; for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few.

DBY 1 Samuel 14:6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bore his armour, Come, and let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised: perhaps Jehovah will work for us; for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few.

GWN 1 Samuel 14:6 Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Let's go to the military post of these uncircumcised people. Maybe the LORD will act on our behalf. The LORD can win a victory with a few men as well as with many."

BBE 1 Samuel 14:6 And Jonathan said to his young servant who had his arms, Come, let us go over to the armies of these men who have no circumcision: it may be that the Lord will give us help, for there is no limit to his power; the Lord is able to give salvation by a great army or by a small band.

- **uncircumcised:** 1Sa 17:26,36 Ge 17:7-11 Jdg 15:18 2Sa 1:20 Jer 9:23,26 Eph 2:11,12 Php 3:3
- **perhaps:** 2Sa 16:12 2Ki 19:4 Am 5:15 Zep 2:3
- **not restrained:** Where there is a promise of defense and support, the weakest, in the face of the strongest enemy, may rely upon it with the utmost confidence. De 32:30 Jdg 7:4-7 2Ch 14:11 Ps 115:1-3 Zec 4:6 Mt 19:26 Ro 8:31
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 32:30 "How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the LORD had given them up?"

Judges 7:4-7+ Then the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there. Therefore it shall be that he of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go with you; but everyone of whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go." 5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "You shall separate everyone who laps the water with his tongue as a dog laps, as well as everyone who kneels to drink." 6 Now the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was 300 men; but all the rest of the people kneeled to drink water. 7 The LORD said to Gideon, "I will deliver you with the 300 men who lapped and will give the Midianites into your hands; so let all the other people go, each man to his home."

2 Chronicles 14:11 Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; let not man prevail against You."

**JONATHAN'S BOLDNESS
FOUNDED ON FAITH IN GOD**

Davis quips "Jonathan's statement in verse 6 deserves billboard status!"

Then Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor, "Come and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised - Jonathan issues another command (first "**come**" in 1Sa 14:1). **These uncircumcised** is a denigrating, derogatory designation for the uncircumcised Philistines), a similar designation used by David ("uncircumcised Philistine" - 1Sa 17:26, 36+). Little wonder that Jonathan and David's heart would later be knit together (1Sa 18:1+), for they were kindred souls both open to the work of the LORD in and through their lives.

Utley on **uncircumcised** - The Philistines being from the Aegean Islands (i.e., Greek culture) were the only people of the region not circumcised. Other ANE cultures did it at different times but all did it.

I agree with the comment by the **TSK** - This action of Jonathan's was totally contrary to the laws of war; no military operation should be undertaken without the knowledge and command of the general. But it is highly probable, that this gallant man was led to undertake the hazardous enterprise by an immediate divine impulse; and by the same influence was kept from informing the soldiers, and even from consulting his father, who might have opposed his design.

Perhaps the LORD will work for us, for the LORD is not restrained to save(yasha; Lxx = sozo) by many or by few - This statement would appear to be a key to unlock the mystery of why Jonathan would go on such a daring mission and tell no one but his armor bearer. If this was indeed an action initiated by the Spirit's work on Jonathan's heart (which I think it was), it is very likely that neither his father nor the people would have understood or approved.

THOUGHT- File this great principle away in your heart and mind! God's power is independent of human strength. "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Ro 8:31+) The crucial variable is not human strength, but God's presence and provision. What can restrain the hand of God is unbelief (see Mt 13:58+).

What a striking contrast this passage presents -- not at all like father, like son. The father, Saul, feared, was faithless and failed. The son, Jonathan, was bold, faithful and successful (as the story unfolds). Jonathan was living up to his name "Jehovah has given." As an aside, it is fascinating and can only be part of the "secret things that belong to the LORD" (Dt 29:29+) that godly Samuel had ungodly sons and ungodly Saul had a godly son! "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" (Ro 11:33+)

THOUGHT - This is a good reminder to all of us who have children. We can raise them in the nurture and admonition of the LORD (Eph 6:4KJV+) and train them up in the way they should go (Pr 22:6), and generally those "formulae" yield good fruit, but clearly not always. On the other hand, when we do see good fruit in our children, we should be quick to give the credit and the glory to the LORD God Almighty for His Spirit and His Word's work in their lives! Amen? Amen!

Dale Ralph Davis - We can hardly claim that Jonathan's faith was a product of his environment. A quick look back at 1Sa 13:5–7, 8, 17–18, 19–22 should convince us that there were no grounds for optimism there. The circumstances did not stimulate optimism. But this is not optimism. It is faith. Some people are naturally optimistic—they don't know any better. But faith can arise even when no reason for optimism exists. Reason for faith may exist. Jonathan clearly indicates the basis of his. Faith arises in such a situation because it looks not to circumstances but to God. Note again his words: Clear conviction about God ("for nothing can keep Yahweh from saving") produces great expectation of God ("perhaps Yahweh will act for us") and recognizes God's "normal" manner of working ("by many or by few," i.e., through his servants). Jonathan is not trusting his own daring scheme. He does not say, "Perhaps Yahweh will act for us, for we are rather clever." If anything, his daring is an expression of his trust in Yahweh, a trust rooted in truth about Yahweh.

Rod Mattoon - Jonathan's attitude was "There is nothing too hard for God and nothing can restrain Him." Jonathan truly believed that God could do anything to the point that he put his life on the line. Jonathan was resolved to be used of God to deliver his people. One man made the difference. One man can still make a difference in this day and age. Will you be that man or woman? ([1 Samuel Commentary](#) - Go to page for list of multiple illustrations on page 596)

Guzik - Jonathan had little faith in himself but great faith in God. It wasn't "I can win a great victory with God's help." It was "God can win a great victory through even me."

Brian Bell - How was it that Jonathan was so courageous? Key in vs.6 "The Lord will work for us." 1. See similar words by King Asa in 2 Chron.14:11.

David Thompson - As he was talking to his armor carrier, he said in verse 6, "**perhaps**" the Lord will give us victory. He doesn't even know for sure. This is a pure faith move. He does not know whether or not God will give victory but he goes for it. Jonathan is certainly not trusting in himself or in the numbers, but he is trusting totally and completely in God because Jonathan knew the

theological truth that God is not restrained by numbers (v. 6). A church does not have to be a mega church to reach the world and do big things for God. What a church must be is a place that totally and completely depends on God.

Save (deliver, help) (03467) **yasha'** (See also **yeshua** from which we get our word "Jesus") is an important Hebrew verb which means to help, to save, to deliver. The root in Arabic is "make wide" which underscores the main thought of yasha' as to bring to a place of safety or broad pasture in contrast to a narrow strait which symbolizes distress or danger. Thus yasha' connotes protection that produces freedom from a present danger (2Sa 22:3; Job 5:4), salvation or deliverance in a religious sense (Ps 51:12), a title of God (Savior - 2Sa 22:47; 1Chr 16:35; Ps 18:46; Ps 24:5; Ps 25:5; Ps 27:9; Ps 65:5; Ps 79:9; Ps 85:4; Isa 17:10; 62:11; Mic 7:7 Hab 3:18), victory as an act or a result of conquering (2Sa 22:36; Ps 18:35) It is notable that almost 20% of the uses of yasha' are found during the dark days of Judges (dominated by the heart attitude of Jdg 21:25), which surely speaks of the undeserved lovingkindness of God!

Today in the Word - Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving. - 1 Samuel 14:6

A **diptych** is a traditional Christian art form in which two scenes are portrayed on separate wood panels, connected by a hinge in the middle. Sometimes these two scenes depict contrasting scenarios, one positive and one negative. Each can be instructive, one as an encouragement and the other as a warning.

Saul and Jonathan work like such a diptych in today's reading: two contrasting portraits of faith—one positive, one negative. First, Saul is a portrait of empty faith. After God used Jonathan to unsettle the Philistines, Saul prepared for battle, calling a priest to inquire of God. But halfway through the conversation, things got rowdy and Saul cut it short. The divine inquiry was only a show. Saul proceeded on his own course (vv. 16-23).

Then when victory seemed imminent, Saul made a vow, not of faithful sacrifice and praise to God, but a foolish one that jeopardized his son and distressed his army (vv. 24-30). Finally, because of Saul's vow, the starving army began unlawfully eating meat with blood in it (cf. [Lev. 17:10-13](#)). Saul seemed piously horrified that they have "broken faith" (v. 33), but a short time later, he was prepared to shed the innocent blood of his own son for the sake of his rash vow. He had a clear appearance of faith, but not much substance.

Jonathan, on the other hand, offers a positive portrait of faith. He knew what God can do and acted in faith upon that knowledge: "Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving" (v. 6). He did not dictate to God what should be done (note his use of "perhaps"), but neither did he sit back in cowardice. He took on a daring and risky venture, trusting that God can save. He allowed his faith to broaden his view to see beyond the visible. While things might have looked impossible, Jonathan knew that with God all things are possible. Without fanfare or presumption Jonathan quietly and confidently acted upon a faith rooted in a sure knowledge of God's power.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY Reminding ourselves (sometimes visibly) what true faith looks like, especially in contrast to its opposite, is an important lesson from today's text. Try creating your own artistic "diptych of faith" using paint, colored pencils, pens, or even images from the Internet. Perhaps scenes from the Bible, or even certain people you know, inspire you with a portrait of true faith. Depict those scenes in a visible way and display them in a place you can return to in order to remind yourself of the kind of faith God calls us to.

1 Samuel 14:7 His armor bearer said to him, 'Do all that is in your heart; turn yourself, and here I am with you according to your desire.'

BGT 1 Samuel 14:7 κα ε πεν α τ α ρων τ σκε η α το πο ει π ν ν καρδ α σου κκλ ν δο γ μετ σο ς
καρδ α σο καρδ α μο

LXE 1 Samuel 14:7 And his armour-bearer said to him, Do all that thine heart inclines toward: behold, I am with thee, my heart is as thy heart.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:7 And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart.

NET 1 Samuel 14:7 His armor bearer said to him, "Do everything that is on your mind. Do as you're inclined. I'm with you all the way!"

CSB 1 Samuel 14:7 His armor-bearer responded, "Do what is in your heart. You choose. I'm right here with you whatever you decide."

ESV 1 Samuel 14:7 And his armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul."

NIV 1 Samuel 14:7 "Do all that you have in mind," his armor-bearer said. "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul."

NLT 1 Samuel 14:7 "Do what you think is best," the armor bearer replied. "I'm with you completely, whatever you decide."

NRS 1 Samuel 14:7 His armor-bearer said to him, "Do all that your mind inclines to. I am with you; as your mind is, so is mine."

NJB 1 Samuel 14:7 His armour-bearer replied, 'Do exactly as you think. I am with you; our hearts are as one.'

NAB 1 Samuel 14:7 His armor-bearer replied, "Do whatever you are inclined to do; I will match your resolve."

YLT 1 Samuel 14:7 And the bearer of his weapons saith to him, 'Do all that is in thy heart; turn for thee; lo, I am with thee, as thine own heart.'

- **Do all:** 1Sa 10:7 2Sa 7:3 Ps 46:7 Zec 8:23
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ARMOR BEARER ON BOARD FOR "MISSION IMPOSSIBLE!"

His armor bearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart; turn yourself, and here I am with you according to your desire - The **armor bearer** was "on board" for "mission impossible" which surely encouraged Jonathan. Clearly he trusted his leader's leading. Did Jonathan tell him he had received a divine impulse? We cannot say but clearly the armor bearer was loyal enough to undertake a mission with high risk (in men's eyes) of not returning alive.

[Guzik](#) on the armor bearer's encouraging reply - When we step out in faith, encouragement can make all the difference for good and discouragement can make all the difference for evil.

1 Samuel 14:8 Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men and reveal ourselves to them.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:8 κα ε πεν Ιωναθαν δο με ς διαβα νομεν πρ ς το ς νδρας κα κατακυλισθησ μεθα πρ ς α το ς

LXE 1 Samuel 14:8 And Jonathan said, Behold, we will go over to the men, and will come down suddenly upon them.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them.

NET 1 Samuel 14:8 Jonathan replied, "All right! We'll go over to these men and fight them.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:8 "All right," Jonathan replied, "we'll cross over to the men and then let them see us.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:8 Then Jonathan said, "Behold, we will cross over to the men, and we will show ourselves to them.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:8 Jonathan said, "Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:8 "All right then," Jonathan told him. "We will cross over and let them see us.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:8 Then Jonathan said, "Now we will cross over to those men and will show ourselves to them.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:8 Jonathan then said, 'Look, we will go across to these people and let ourselves be seen.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:8 Jonathan continued: "We shall go over to those men and show ourselves to them.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:8 And Jonathan saith, 'Lo, we are passing over unto the men, and are revealed unto them;

- **we will cross:** Jdg 7:9-14

- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JONATHAN'S STRANGE PLAN UNFOLDS

Then Jonathan said, "**Behold**, ([hinneh](#) = attention getter!) **we will cross over to the men and reveal ([galah](#)) ourselves to them** - The armor bearer was surely loyal, for had he not been, he surely would have reacted (even fled) on hearing what at first glance sounds like a foolish maneuver.

Reveal (uncover) ([01540](#)) [galah](#) means to reveal or make (previously unknown) known to others, to expose, to uncover (sadly the first use = Noah uncovering himself after becoming drunk! - Ge 9:21, cp Lev 18:6 prohibiting "uncover nakedness" ~ sexual relations), to reveal (God revealed Himself to Jacob at Bethel, and thus the name El-Bethel - Ge 35:7. 2Sa 2:27), expose (Ex 20:26), open (God opened the eyes of Balaam to see the Angel of the LORD - Nu 22:31), reveal (Dt 29:29). [Galah](#) is used of not yet revealing the Word of the LORD to Samuel (1Sa 3:7) and of revealing Himself to Samuel (1Sa 3:21).

1 Samuel 14:9 "If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you'; then we will stand in our place and not go up to them.

- **they:** Ge 24:13,14 Jdg 6:36-40
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JONATHAN'S CONDITIONAL CONDITION

If they say to us, 'Wait until we come to you'; then we will stand in our place and not go up(ascend; Lxx - [anabaino](#) - literally upward movement) **to them** - Jonathan gives the first of two scenarios, here to stand fast if they say we are coming to meet you.

[Guzik](#) - This was not the same as Gideon's setting of a fleece (Judges 6:36-40). Gideon had a confirmed word of God to guide him, and he doubted God's word. Jonathan did not doubt a word from God; he doubted his own heart and mind. Jonathan was prompted by faith. Significantly, he did not demand to know the whole battle plan from God in advance. He was willing to take it one step at a time, and let God plan it out. Faith is willing to let God know the whole plan, and to know our part one step at a time.

1 Samuel 14:10 "But if they say, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the LORD has given them into our hands; and this shall be the sign to us."

- **this shall be a sign:** 1Sa 10:7 Ge 24:14 Jdg 7:11 Isa 7:11-14
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A SIGN FROM JEHOVAH

But - Term of contrast marking a change of direction in their actions depending on the response of the Philistines.

if they say, 'Come up (ascend) **to us,' then we will go up** - So if the Philistines "invite" them **to come up** (presumably they are on elevated ground and the v9 supports this as it says "go up to them") which would theoretically give them a strategic advantage in any subsequent combat.

For - Here is the key term of explanation from Jonathan to his armor bearer.

The LORD has given them into our hands; and this shall be the sign to us- This removes any advantage the Philistines might have being on higher ground, for Jonathan and the armor bearer are in a sense on "holy ground," their actions being grounded by God's trustworthy holy word. This statement of assurance clearly indicates that the Spirit had moved in Jonathan in the camp to make such an otherwise audacious, even foolish maneuver into the enemy's camp. In some way we are not told, the LORD had communicated to Jonathan the plan and the promise. Once again we see the juxtaposition of God's sovereign control and man's responsibility to follow the LORD's leading.

And this shall be the sign to us - It is interesting that Jonathan clearly discerned the Lord's voice (however He communicated) in giving them this sign, but Saul was less sensitive to the supernatural signs. Recall 1Sa 10:7-8 "It shall be **when these** (at least 3) **signs come to you**, do for yourself what the occasion requires, for God is with you. And you shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and sacrifice peace offerings. You shall wait seven days until I come to you and show you what you should do." Saul saw the signs but failed to wait on the timing of the Lord's prophet, in effect demonstrating his unbelief. He failed to believe Samuel's words in verse 7 "do for yourself what the occasion requires, for God is with you!" What the occasion required was obedience, which is the evidence of genuine belief. Saul failed the test. Jonathan as we shall see acts in faith upon the single sign and passes the test!

David Thompson - Now Jonathan and his armor bearer stepped out by faith and took on the Philistines. They had one sword, but they also had God. I want to point out something that Jonathan did. He came up with a plan that he would climb up and hide in a cave and then shout out to the Philistines. If they said, "**Come up to us**," then he would know the Lord had given them victory for that would be a sign (14:10). Now what is the difference between this "**sign**" and **Gideon's fleece**? **Gideon was given a direct order from God** to go and deliver Israel and he kept putting out fleeces **after** God had told him to do it (Judges 6:14+). Jonathan has not been given a direct order from God and he doesn't know for sure what the outcome is going to be. He simply laid out what they would look for to determine **the will of God**. WHEN A BELIEVER IS SURROUNDED BY IMPOSSIBLE ODDS AND INSURMOUNTABLE NUMBERS, IF HE REMAINS FAITHFUL IN THE WARFARE HE WILL SEE GOD GIVE GREAT VICTORY. God does not need impressive numbers to win and give great victory. What God looks for are a few faithful people who are willing to believe Him and trust in Him. When God sees His faithful people outnumbered and outgunned in warfare, that is the kind of setting in which He works. He loves to give great victory to His people in contexts that are just like that.

1 Samuel 14:11 When both of them revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines, the Philistines said, '**Behold**, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves.'

- **out of the holes:** 1Sa 14:22 1Sa 13:6 Jdg 6:2
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

HEBREWS ARE COMING OUT OF HIDING IN THEIR HOLES

When both of them revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines, the Philistines said, 'Behold, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves - The Philistines offer this mocking, denigrating statement for they were aware of the terror their presence had produced in the Hebrews, as recorded in 1Sa 13:6+ "When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves **in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits.**"

1 Samuel 14:12 So the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, '**Come up** to us and we will tell you something.' And Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "**Come up** after me, for the LORD has given them into the hands of Israel."

- **Come up** 1Sa 14:10 17:43,44 2Sa 2:14-17 2Ki 14:8
- **Come up after me:** Ge 24:26,27,42,48 Jdg 4:14 7:15 2Sa 5:24
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE SIGN OF GOD'S FAVOR FOR ISRAEL

So the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, 'Come up to us and we will tell you something - The arrogant, confident Philistines said in essence "We'll teach you a lesson!" This is an arrogant confidence that occurs just before destruction. This affirmation by the Philistines was the sign God had given to Jonathan.

Faith is not a feeling.

Faith is acting on God's promises.

And Jonathan said to his armor bearer, 'Come up after me, for the LORD has given them into the hands of Israel- Jonathan

acted on faith in God's promise, fully confident that Yahweh had given the seemingly invincible enemy **into the hands of Israel**. Into the hands of Israel was an idiom for victory and it is notable that while Jonathan was clearly the "catalyst," he does not say into my (or our) hands, but into **the hands of the nation of Israel**. What Jonathan is saying is that God had clearly told him this affirmative **sign** was not just assurance for him, but was assurance of victory for the entire nation!

1 Samuel 14:13 Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer behind him; and they fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer put some to death after him.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:13 καὶ νῆλ Ἰωνᾶθαν πρὸς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ καὶ πρὸς πόδας αὐτοῦ καὶ ἄρων τσέκε ἑαυτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ πῶλεψαν κατὰ πρὸσωπον Ἰωνᾶθαν καὶ πῶξεν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἄρων τσέκε ἑαυτοῦ περὶ τοῦ πρὸσω αὐτοῦ

LXE 1 Samuel 14:13 And Jonathan went up on his hands and feet, and his armour-bearer with him; and they looked on the face of Jonathan, and he smote them, and his armour-bearer did smite them after him.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:13 And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him.

NET 1 Samuel 14:13 Jonathan crawled up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer following behind him. Jonathan struck down the Philistines, while his armor bearer came along behind him and killed them.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:13 Jonathan climbed up using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer behind him. Jonathan cut them down, and his armor-bearer followed and finished them off.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:13 Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him. And they fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer killed them after him.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:13 Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:13 So they climbed up using both hands and feet, and the Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer killed those who came behind them.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:13 Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer following after him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer, coming after him, killed them.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:13 Jonathan clambered up on hands and feet, with his armour-bearer behind him; the Philistines fell at Jonathan's onslaught, and his armour-bearer, coming behind, finished them off.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:13 Jonathan clambered up with his armor-bearer behind him; as the Philistines turned to flee him, he cut them down, and his armor-bearer followed him and finished them off.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:13 And Jonathan goeth up on his hands, and on his feet, and the bearer of his weapons after him; and they fall before Jonathan, and the bearer of his weapons is putting to death after him.

- **climbed up:** Ps 18:29 Heb 11:34
- **fell:** Lev 26:7-8 De 28:7 Dt 32:30 Jos 23:10 Ro 8:31
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Leviticus 26:7-8 'But you (**OBEDIENT ISRAEL, ACTING IN FAITH**) will chase your enemies and **they will fall before you by the sword**; 8 five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword.

Deuteronomy 28:7 "The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways.

Joshua 23:10 "One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for the LORD your God is He who fights for you, just as He promised you.

Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

JONATHAN ASCENDS AND KILLS THE ENEMY

Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer behind him; and they fell before Jonathan and his armor bearer put some to death after him. - Note that Jonathan's hands were occupied with climbing upward to meet the enemy who had iron spears they could have easily hurdled down at him! God specializes in aiding his saints in impossible situations, for then only He can receive the glory! And so we read that it was not Jonathan, but the Philistines, who were slain, fulfilling prophetic promises like Leviticus 26:7-8 which said Israel's enemies "will fall before you by the sword; five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword."

Wiersbe feels Jonathan had God's promises in mind (such as Lev 26:7) adding that "Action without promises is presumption, not faith, but when you have God's promises, you can go forward with confidence." (Borrow [Be successful](#))

Leon Wood once said, "When man has faith to move ahead, though the odds seem impossible, God is ready to step in and finish the task."

David Thompson - God does not need big numbers to accomplish big things. He looks for people who will trust Him and obey Him. What God is looking for is a couple of faithful people who are willing to tackle things for Him. If they will step out in faith and move forward for God, God will bless them and give them victory

1 Samuel 14:14 That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about twenty men within about half a furrow in an acre of land.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:14 καὶ γενθὶ πληγὴ πρὶ τῆς νηπταξεν ἰωναθαν καὶ ἁρῶν τσέκῃ αὐτοῦ ἐκοσι νῦνδες
ν βολὰς καὶ ν πετροβόλους καὶ ν κλάξιν τοῦ πεδίου

LXE 1 Samuel 14:14 And the first slaughter which Jonathan and his armour-bearer effected was twenty men, with darts and slings, and pebbles of the field.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:14 And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.

NET 1 Samuel 14:14 In this initial skirmish Jonathan and his armor bearer struck down about twenty men in an area that measured half an acre.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:14 In that first assault Jonathan and his armor-bearer struck down about 20 men in a half-acre field.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:14 And that first strike, which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:14 In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:14 They killed some twenty men in all, and their bodies were scattered over about half an acre.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:14 In that first slaughter Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed about twenty men within an area about half a furrow long in an acre of land.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:14 This first killing made by Jonathan and his armour-bearer accounted for about twenty men . . .

NAB 1 Samuel 14:14 In this first exploit Jonathan and his armor-bearer slew about twenty men within half a furlong.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:14 And the first smiting which Jonathan and the bearer of his weapons have smitten is of about twenty men, in about half a furrow of a yoke of a field,

- **an acre of land** 1Sa 14:14
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

TWO HEBREWS SLAUGHTER TWENTY PHILISTINES

That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about twenty men within about half a furrow in an acre of land - This was a supernatural" slaughter, for as Moses had asked "How could one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had given them up?" (Dt 32:30+) Indeed, in this case Jonathan's Rock, [Jehovah Jireh](#), had sold the Philistines into their hands! To God be the glory!

Half a furrow in an acre of land - Literal = "half a furrow of a yoke of a field," the amount of land that could be plowed by a pair of yoked oxen in a day.

1 Samuel 14:15 And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. Even the garrison and the raiders trembled, and the earth quaked so that it became a great trembling.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:15 κα γενθη κατασις ν τ παρεμβολ κα ν γρ κα πς λας ο ν μεσσαβ κα ο διαφθεροντες ξστησαν κα ατο οκ θελον ποιεν κα θμβησεν γ κα γενθη κατασις παρ κυρ ου

LXE 1 Samuel 14:15 And there was dismay in the camp, and in the field; and all the people in Messab, and the spoilers were amazed; and they would not act, and the land was terror-struck, and there was dismay from the Lord.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:15 And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.

NET 1 Samuel 14:15 Then fear overwhelmed those who were in the camp, those who were in the field, all the army in the garrison, and the raiding bands. They trembled and the ground shook. This fear was caused by God.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:15 Terror spread through the Philistine camp and the open fields to all the troops. Even the garrison and the raiding parties were terrified. The earth shook, and terror spread from God.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:15 And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and even the raiders trembled, the earth quaked, and it became a very great panic.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:15 Then panic struck the whole army--those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties--and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:15 Suddenly, panic broke out in the Philistine army, both in the camp and in the field, including even the outposts and raiding parties. And just then an earthquake struck, and everyone was terrified.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:15 There was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison and even the raiders trembled; the earth quaked; and it became a very great panic.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:15 There was panic in the camp, in the field and throughout the army; outpost and raiding company too were panic-stricken; the earth quaked: it was a panic from Yahweh.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:15 Then panic spread to the army and to the countryside, and all the soldiers, including the outpost and the raiding parties, were terror-stricken. The earth also shook, so that the panic was beyond human endurance.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:15 and there is a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people, the station and the destroyers have trembled -- even they, and the earth shaketh, and it becometh a trembling of God.

- **there was a trembling:** Jos 2:9 Jdg 7:21 2Ki 7:6,7 Job 18:11 Ps 14:5
- **the raiders:** 1Sa 13:17,23
- **the earth quaked:** Ex 19:18 Mt 24:6 27:50,51
- **it became a great trembling:** Heb. trembling of God, Ge 35:5 Lev 26:36,37 2Sa 5:24 Da 5:6
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Joshua 2:9+ (**JOSHUA**) said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you."

Judges 7:20-21+ When the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers, they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing, and cried, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" 21 Each stood in his place around the camp; and all the (**ENEMY**) army ran, crying out as they fled.

WHOLE LOT OF SHAKING GOING ON!

And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people- The people refers to the Philistines thus CSB renders it (with a slight paraphrase) "Terror spread through the Philistine camp and the open fields to all the troops."

THOUGHT - Why was there trembling, earth quaking and fear from God? Because one man named Jonathan had been given a promise from God and had believed that promise and had acted upon that promise. This is always the pathway for victory over our enemies. Are the enemies seemingly invincible? Victory is still in within your reach in Christ your Rock. Trust and obey, for there is no other way, to be be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey! Amen? Amen!

Even the garrison and the raiders trembled, and the earth quaked so that it became a great trembling- The key word is **trembling**. The earth shook and the Philistines shook! Deuteronomy 7:23+ says "the LORD your God will deliver them before you, and will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed." An earthquake would result in confusion! So that it became a great trembling is literally a "trembling of God" (1Sa 14:15YLT) or a "terror of God." (See NET NOTE below).

MacArthur remarks that "God would have intervened on Saul's behalf in such a manner had he chosen to be faithfully patient (cf. 1Sa 13:9). (Borrow [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

NET NOTE on **NET** rendering "**This fear was caused by God.**" Hebrew reads "and it was by the fear of God." The translation understands this to mean that God was the Source or Cause of the fear experienced by the Philistines. This seems to be the most straightforward reading of the sentence. It is possible, however, that the word "God" functions here simply to intensify the accompanying word "fear," in which one might translate "a very great fear" (cf. NAB, NRSV). It is clear that on some occasions that the divine Name carries such a superlative nuance.

David Thompson - This is amazing. The Philistines are petrified because of two men who trust God. You don't need big numbers to win, you need (A BIG) God to win. **PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:** 1. When we trust God and step out by faith, we don't initially know if we will succeed or fail. 2. When we trust God and step out by faith, numbers will probably be small. 3. When we trust God and step out by faith, we will see some major victories we would have never seen.

Rod Mattoon - Jonathan and his friend smite twenty men and scare the others half to death causing a panic among the enemy. It is amazing what one or two can do if they trust in the Lord. One or two Christians sold out to God can ignite an entire church. Godly Christians cause the demons of Hell to tremble. ([1 Samuel Commentary](#) - Go to page for list of multiple illustrations on page 596)

How the Bible Influenced a WW1 Victory - [from Patterns of Evidence](#)

The Bible has greatly influenced our world, sometimes in surprising ways, such as a WWI victory gained. On November 11th, 2018, many countries around the world celebrated the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, which ended the long and brutal fighting between the Allies and Germany in World War. In America, it is has grown into Veterans Day, which honors the nation's veterans from all its wars. It is a time to remember history and reflect on its lessons; including the special circumstances surrounding Major Vivian Gilbert and the British forces under [General Allenby](#). A specific passage in the Bible would help lead his men to victory, sparing them from the daunting task of storming the enemy directly into their line of fire.

During WWI, a group of British troops arriving in Palestine (today, the nation of Israel) purchased Bibles; not necessarily for purposes of prayer. Instead, they were used to study the geography. The soldiers saw them as great geographical resources to maneuver about the land. This would prove to be very beneficial to success in battle and a WWI victory using the Bible.

Generations have applied the wisdom from many accounts in the Bible to their own lives. However, many have questioned whether the settings and history found in biblical accounts can be trusted evidence and are grounded in the real world. What follows is a brief review of the passage and an example of how relying on the trustworthiness of this account enabled the British forces to conquer the area that was a stronghold for the Ottoman Turks by mimicking a battle plan as told in the Book of 1 Samuel.

Biblical Battle plans: WWI Victory Gained Using Bible

The Philistines were camped in the deep valley west of Jericho, around the town of Michmash. When Israel's King Saul with his army saw their great numbers, they knew they were in trouble. Impatient for the prophet Samuel to arrive to make an offering and pray, many Israelites scatter and hide in caves.

In desperation, Saul takes it upon himself to offer what was for him an unauthorized sacrifice. When Samuel does finally arrive, he predicts that the kingdom will be torn in half and given to another man. After Samuel departs, Saul sees that only six hundred people remained with him. The Philistines, however, had assembled thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen and troops (1 Samuel 13:5).

History Repeats Itself

Fast forward to General Allenby's troops in 1918, towards the end of the First World War – The British planned an attack in an area known as Michmash. The Turks were entrenched in the same valley that the Philistines had been 3,000 years earlier.

One of the British majors, Vivian Gilbert, thought the name Michmash sounded familiar. Searching passages in one of the recently purchased Bibles, he found it and reported to his commanding officer.

An excerpt from the historical account in [The Romance of the Last Crusade \(READ THE ENTIRE ACCOUNT\)](#) tells us:

"And the major read on how Jonathan went through the pass, or passage of Michmash, between Bozez and Seneh, and climbed the hill dragging his armour-bearer with him until they came to a place high up, about "a half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow"; and the Philistines who were sleeping awoke, thought they were surrounded by the armies of Saul and fled in disorder, and "the multitudes melted away." Saul then attacked with his whole army. It was a great victory for him; his first against the Philistines, and "so the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle passed over into Beth Aven."

The brigade major thought to himself: "This pass, these rocky headlands and flat piece of ground are probably still here; very little has changed in Palestine throughout the centuries," and he awoke the brigadier. Together they read the story over again. The general sent out scouts, who came back and reported finding the pass, thinly held by the Turks, with rocky crags on either side—obviously Bozez and Seneh; whilst in the distance, high up in Michmash the moonlight was shining on a flat piece of ground just big enough for a team to plough.

The general decided then and there to change the plan of attack, and instead of the whole brigade, one infantry company alone advanced at dead of night along the pass of Michmash. A few Turks met were silently dealt with. We passed between Bozez and Seneh, climbed the hillside and, just before dawn, found ourselves on the flat piece of ground. The Turks who were sleeping awoke, thought they were surrounded by the armies of Allenby and fled in disorder. We killed or captured every Turk that night in Mickmash; so that, after thousands of years, the tactics of Saul and Jonathan were repeated with success by a British force.

British WWI Victory over Turks

If Major Gilbert had not recalled the biblical text, the battle may have ended quite differently. There is a common saying that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. It usually refers to avoiding bad decisions that are a result of ignoring the past. However, the same can be said for repeating successes. Learn from the wisdom of history, so that good outcomes are replicated. The British army was able to study the terrain and the description in the Bible to know that this Michmash they were about to descend on was the same as the one described in 1 Samuel. The accounts in the Bible are rooted in reality. What is so notable is that these soldiers put so much trust in the details of a 3,000-year-old narrative. It appears their trust was well placed.

1 Samuel 14:16 Now Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude melted away; and they went here and there.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:16 κα εδον ο σκοπο το Σαουλ ν Γαβεε Βενιαμιν κα δο παρεμβολ τεταραγμ νη νθεν κα νθεν

LXE 1 Samuel 14:16 And the watchmen of Saul beheld in Gabaa of Benjamin, and, behold, the army was thrown into confusion on every side.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another.

NET 1 Samuel 14:16 Saul's watchmen at Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin looked on as the crowd of

soldiers seemed to melt away first in one direction and then in another.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:16 When Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, they saw the panicking troops scattering in every direction.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude was dispersing here and there.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:16 Saul's lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:16 Saul's lookouts in Gibeah of Benjamin saw a strange sight-- the vast army of Philistines began to melt away in every direction.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:16 Saul's lookouts in Gibeah of Benjamin were watching as the multitude was surging back and forth.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:16 Saul's look-out men in Geba of Benjamin could see the camp scattering in all directions.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:16 The lookouts of Saul in Geba of Benjamin saw that the enemy camp had scattered and were running about in all directions.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin see, and lo, the multitude hath melted away, and it goeth on, and is beaten down.

- **the multitude melted away:** Ps 58:7 Ps 68:2
- **and they went here and there:** 1Sa 14:20 Jdg 7:22 2Ch 20:22-25 Isa 19:2
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 20:22-25 (**WHEN JEHOVAH GIVES THE VICTORY**) (When they began singing and praising, the LORD set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed. 23 For the sons of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying them completely; and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. 24 When Judah came to the lookout of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude, and **behold**, they were corpses lying on the ground, and no one had escaped. 25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found much among them, including goods, garments and valuable things which they took for themselves, more than they could carry. And they were three days taking the spoil because there was so much.

THE MASSIVE PHILISTINE ARMY MELTS AWAY

The scene switches from Jonathan on the front lines, to Saul who is across the valley sitting under a tree (1Sa 14:2). Recall that Saul's army was much smaller than the army of the Philistines—30,000 chariots; 6,000 horsemen and an innumerable number of foot soldiers (1Sa 13:5). When Saul originally began to reign, he had about 2,000 men with him (1Sa 13:2), but the threat of the Philistines caused the numbers to dwindle to 600 men (1Sa 13:15).

Rod Mattoon - Saul is a spectator of the battle, watching it take place. Saul knows something is going on. Someone is fighting the battle and winning....At this stage Saul illustrates Christians who come to church, but watch the battle. In other words, they do not get involved in the ministry of the church. They don't sing, help in Sunday School or in the nursery, they don't visit, invite or pick up people, help with the cleaning, etc. They don't do anything!

Now Saul's watchmen ([tsaphah](#); Lxx = [skopos](#) - one that watches) **in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude melted away; and they went here and there** - **NLT** = "the vast army of Philistines began to melt away in every direction." **NAB** = "were running about in all directions." **The watchmen** would have been the lookouts who were to keep Israel from being surprised by the enemy and their eyes must have been quite puzzled at what they were witnessing! The idea of "melting" is that these Philistines had been turned into water and were running every which way! The quaking of the earth (v15) startled the Philistines who began shaking and moving resulting in mass confusion. What is missing from this description? God had promised to do this in Dt 7:23+ "but the LORD your God will deliver them before you, and will throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed." God brought about a whole lot of shaking of earth and men! At this point there is no mention of Israel sending their forces against the Philistines! The only specific mention of forces was two men, Jonathan and his armor bearer! This recalls Jonathan's prophetic

words in 1Sa 14:6 "perhaps the LORD will work for us, for **the LORD is not restrained to save by many or by few**." In this case Jehovah did work for them and He saved by few (two)!

Watchmen (06822) *tsaphah* conveys idea of being fully aware of a situation in order to gain some advantage or keep from being surprised by an enemy. The root carries with it the meaning of "being alert" and "active in watching" rather than simply gazing at something in the distance. It speaks literally of keeping watch for some event (a Watchman). **Tsaphah** conveys the idea of being fully aware of a situation in order to gain some advantage or keep from being surprised (as by an enemy). Most of the uses of **tsaphah** that are translated as "watchman" are in turn translated in the Lxx by the noun *skopos* = a distant mark looked at, a goal and then the one watching this mark ((Used in Php 3:14).

QUESTION - [What are watchmen in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Watchmen in the Bible were guards responsible for protecting towns and military installations from surprise enemy attacks and other potential dangers. Ancient Israelite cities often stationed watchmen on high walls or in watchtowers. Their job was to keep watch and warn the townspeople of impending threats.

The Hebrew word translated "watchman" means "one who looks out," "one who spies," or "one who watches." Sometimes watchmen were scouts who looked out for approaching friends as well as enemies.

There are many references to watchmen who kept an eye out for physical threats in the Bible: "Now the watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the company of Jehu as he came and said, 'I see a company.' And Joram said, 'Take a horseman and send to meet them, and let him say, 'Is it peace?''" (2 Kings 9:17ESV).

Watchmen safeguarded fields and vineyards during harvest time (Isaiah 5:1–2; Matthew 21:33; Mark 12:1) and acted as sentinels who announced the start of a new day (Psalm 130:6; Isaiah 21:11–12).

The Bible also refers to watchmen in a spiritual sense. God appointed prophets as spiritual watchmen over the souls of His people: "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me" (Ezekiel 33:7; also Hosea 9:8).

The prophets' job as watchmen was to urge God's people to live faithfully and warn them of the perils involved in falling away from the Lord and doing evil. As watchmen, the prophets were also called to warn wicked people of the judgment and destruction that would come their way unless they turned from their evil ways.

Israel's spiritual watchmen bore a heavy responsibility before the Lord. If a prophet failed to warn others as God had appointed him to do, his own life was in danger, and he would be held accountable for the people's sin: "Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head. Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes someone's life, that person's life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their blood'" (Ezekiel 33:2–6).

A watchman who was blind or disobedient to the Lord's Word left the people he was called to protect open to danger and suffering (Isaiah 56:10). Obedience is the only course of action for a true watchman: "But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved" (Ezekiel 33:9).

The role of spiritual watchman continues in the New Testament in the form of church leaders: "Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit" (Hebrews 13:17NLT).

In another sense, God calls not just leaders, but all Christians to be watchmen. Jesus told His disciples to "watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38). We should all be ready and waiting for the Lord's return: "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not

expect him" (Luke 12:35–40). GotQuestions.org

Related Resource:

- [Watchman - Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)

1 Samuel 14:17 Saul said to the people who were with him, "Number now and see who has gone from us." And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:17 κα ε πεν Σαουλ τ λα τ μετ α το πισκ ψασθε δ κα δετε τ ς πεπ ρευται ξ μ ν κα πεσκ ψαντο κα δο ο χ ε ρ σκετο Ιωναθαν κα α ρων τ σκε η α το

LXE 1 Samuel 14:17 And Saul said to the people with him, Number yourselves now, and see who has gone out from you: and they numbered themselves, and behold, Jonathan and his armour-bearer were not found.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:17 Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armour bearer were not there.

NET 1 Samuel 14:17 So Saul said to the army that was with him, "Muster the troops and see who is no longer with us." When they mustered the troops, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:17 So Saul said to the troops with him, "Call the roll and determine who has left us." They called the roll and saw that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were gone.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:17 Then Saul said to the people who were with him, "Count and see who has gone from us." And when they had counted, behold, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:17 Then Saul said to the men who were with him, "Muster the forces and see who has left us." When they did, it was Jonathan and his armor-bearer who were not there.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:17 "Call the roll and find out who's missing," Saul ordered. And when they checked, they found that Jonathan and his armor bearer were gone.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:17 Then Saul said to the troops that were with him, "Call the roll and see who has gone from us." When they had called the roll, Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:17 Saul then said to the force that was with him, 'Call the roll and see who has left us.' So they called the roll, and Jonathan and his armour-bearer were missing.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:17 Saul said to those around him, "Count the troops and find out if any of us are missing." When they had investigated, they found Jonathan and his armor-bearer missing.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:17 And Saul saith to the people who are with him, 'Inspect, I pray you, and see; who hath gone from us?' and they inspect, and lo, Jonathan and the bearer of his weapons are not.

- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SAUL CALLS FOR A ROLL CALL

Why do a roll call now while the enemy is melting away? This seems to be an absurd action by Saul. [Guzik](#) suggests "This was useless at the moment. Saul should go and fight the Philistines at this strategic moment. Instead, he was probably worried about who was leading the battle and who would get the credit."

Saul said to the people who were with him, "Number now and see who has gone from us." And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there - NRS = "Call the roll and see who has gone from us." Everyone was present except for his own son and his armor bearer!

1 Samuel 14:18 Then Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For the ark of God was at that time with the sons of Israel.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:18 καὶ ἐπεὶ Σαουλ τὸ Ἀχιά προσέγαγε τὸ εφουδ τὸ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ἡμέρῳ ἐν ᾧ ἦν Ἰσραὴλ

LXE 1 Samuel 14:18 And Saul said to Achia, Bring the **ephod**; for he wore the ephod in that day before Israel.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:18 And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel.

NET 1 Samuel 14:18 So Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring near the **ephod**," for he was at that time wearing the ephod.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:18 Saul told Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God," for it was with the Israelites at that time.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:18 So Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For the ark of God went at that time with the people of Israel.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:18 Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God." (At that time it was with the Israelites.)

NLT 1 Samuel 14:18 Then Saul shouted to Ahijah, "Bring the **ephod** here!" For at that time Ahijah was wearing the ephod in front of the Israelites.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:18 Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For at that time the ark of God went with the Israelites.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:18 Saul then said to Ahijah, 'Bring the **ephod**,' since he was the man who carried the ephod in Israel.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:18 Saul then said to Ahijah, "Bring the **ephod** here." (Ahijah was wearing the ephod in front of the Israelites at that time.)

YLT 1 Samuel 14:18 And Saul saith to Ahiah, 'Bring nigh the ark of God;' for the ark of God hath been on that day with the sons of Israel.

- **Bring the ark of God here:** 1Sa 4:3-5 30:8 Nu 27:21 Jdg 20:18,23,27,28 2Sa 11:11 15:24-26
- **For the ark:** 1Sa 5:2 1Sa 7:1
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SAUL CALLS PRIEST TO BRING ARK

Then - Then marks progression in a narrative. Saul took two actions when the watchmen reported the Philistine confusion - numbered his troops and called for the ark (or ephod - see below).

Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." - Notice the **Septuagint** has "**Bring** the ephod; for he wore the ephod in that day before Israel." The NET, NLT, NJB, and NAB all render this "Bring the ephod," which makes more sense because the Ark was not used to determine the will of the LORD, but the ephod was. In 1Sa 14:3 we see that the priest Ahijah **was wearing an ephod**, which had pockets for the [Urim](#) and [Thummim](#), which were used to consult God in order to know His will (see Ex 28:30; Nu 27:21; 1Sa 23:9–12).

If the true reading is Ark rather than ephod, one consideration is that Saul was thinking about pulling the foolish fiasco of his predecessors by taking the Ark to lead into battle and we see how well that plan worked! (See 1Sa 4:3, 11+).

Whether it was the Ark or the Ephod, it appears Saul is seeking a word from God as to whether they should attack the Philistines. Remember he knows that he only has about 600 men, so the odds are against him.

[Guzik](#) thinks that "Saul is probably trying to look spiritual here, but there was nothing to seek God about. There is a time to go aside and pray, and there is a time to get your sword out and fight. Saul didn't know what time this was."

THOUGHT - Have you ever been in a situation where you were uncertain of your next move, and yet circumstances were clearly pointing to one direction? And instead of moving out in that clear direction, you said "We need to pray about it." There is a time to pray and a time to take action. It was time for Saul to take action. There is a saying (or idiom) that says "He who hesitates is lost." The sense is that those who fail to take quick, decisive action will suffer for it and/or miss a good opportunity. We will actually see this consequence unfold in the case of Saul, who missed his opportunity to annihilate the Philistines, a mistake that haunted him the rest of his days as king (1Sa 14:52+).

For the ark of God was at that time with the sons of Israel.- From previous studies we know that the Ark was at Kiriath-jearim (1Sa 7:1-2) and there is never a mention of the Ark being moved until it was brought to Jerusalem by David.

NET NOTE Heb “the ark of God.” It seems unlikely that Saul would call for the ark, which was several miles away in Kiriath-jearim (see 1 Sam 7:2). The LXX and an Old Latin ms have “ephod” here, a reading which harmonizes better with v. 3 and fits better with the verb “bring near” (see 1 Sam 23:9; 30:7) and with the expression “withdraw your hand” in v. 19. This reading is followed in the present translation (cf. NAB, TEV, NLT). 20 to Heb “for the ark of God was in that day, and the sons of Israel.” The translation follows the text of some Greek manuscripts. See the previous note.

1 Samuel 14:19 While Saul talked to the priest, the commotion in the camp of the Philistines continued and increased; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

- **Withdraw:** 1Sa 14:24 13:11 Jos 9:14 Ps 106:13 Isa 28:16
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

TUMULT INCREASING IN PHILISTINES' CAMP

While Saul talked to the priest, the commotion in the camp of the Philistines continued and increased- The sound coming from the Philistine's camp was becoming greater and greater. What is this passage demonstrating to us and to Saul? Clearly Saul did not need an Ark or an Ephod, because the commotion of the Philistines clearly signaled they were "[dazed and confused](#)!"

So (term of conclusion) - Even Saul could come to the correct conclusion based on the continuing commotion!

Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." - **NLT** has "Never mind, let's get going!" I think that is "pushing" the paraphrase somewhat, because he does not actually say "let's move out." In fact, as the scene unfolds, he hesitates to move out and loses his "[golden opportunity](#)!" (excellent opportunity that is not likely to be repeated)" **CSB** = "Stop what you're doing." Saul's command **withdraw** is given in light of the increasing tumult from the Philistines' camp. In view of Saul's action in 1Sa 14:20, he apparently tells the priest to cease inquiring on the LORD. One writer says "In other words, you don't need to worry about bringing the ark, God is giving you victory." Actually, and sadly, Saul does not actually declare that the LORD had given them victory. One wishes they had heard him cry "O sing to the LORD a new song, For He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him." (Ps 98:1, cf 1Co 15:57+) But as we have seen and will continue to see, Saul lacked any depth of spiritual insight.

As [Thompson](#) points out "Notice, Saul is basically doing nothing here to get this victory. God is just giving victory because of the faithfulness of his son. Sometimes for victory, you just need someone to get into the war. Sometimes you need to stop planning and praying and get fighting."

1 Samuel 14:20 Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and came to the battle; and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:20 κα νεβ ησεν Σαουλ κα π ς λα ς μετ α το κα ρχονται ως το πολ μου κα δο γ νετο ομφα α νδρ ς π τ ν πλησ ον α το σ γχυσις μεγ λη σφ δρ α

LXE 1 Samuel 14:20 And Saul went up and all the people that were with him, and they come to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his neighbour, a very great confusion.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:20 And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture.

NET 1 Samuel 14:20 Saul and all the army that was with him assembled and marched into battle, where they found the Philistines in total panic killing one another with their swords.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:20 Saul and all the troops with him assembled and marched to the battle, and there, the Philistines were fighting against each other in great confusion!

ESV 1 Samuel 14:20 Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle. And behold, every Philistine's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:20 Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:20 Then Saul and all his men rushed out to the battle and found the Philistines killing each other. There was terrible confusion everywhere.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:20 Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and went into the battle; and every sword was against the other, so that there was very great confusion.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:20 Saul and the whole force with him then formed up and advanced to where the fighting was going on: and there they all were, drawing their swords on one another in wild confusion.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:20 And Saul and all his men shouted and rushed into the fight, where the Philistines, wholly confused, were thrusting swords at one another.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:20 And Saul is called, and all the people who are with him, and they come in unto the battle, and, lo, the sword of each hath been against his neighbour -- a very great destruction.

- **every man's sword was against his fellow** 1Sa 14:16 Jdg 7:22 2Ch 20:23 Isa 9:19-21 19:2
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PHILISTINES KILLING ONE ANOTHER!

Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and came to the battle - Saul finally led, but he stalled long until he led (1Sa 8:20). Saul and his soldiers advanced the short distance to the place of the embattled, confused Philistines.

and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion - NET - "they found the Philistines in total panic killing one another with their swords." Clearly God was fighting for Israel by making the Philistines kill each other, for in the confusion and panic it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe. "When God is judging someone, He will cause people to destroy themselves." (Thompson)

Undoubtedly, the previously "swordless" Israelites now had iron swords and weapons (spears, shields, etc) they collected from the slain Philistines. So God not only gave Israel the victory but also equipped the army for future battles! The reminds me of Ephesians 3:20+ "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,"

1 Samuel 14:21 Now the Hebrews who were with the Philistines previously, who went up with them all around in the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:21 καὶ οἱ δοῦλοι οὗτοι καὶ τὴν μὲν μετὰ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ μετὰ τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ Σαουλ καὶ μετὰ τὸν Ἰωνάθαν

LXE 1 Samuel 14:21 And the servants who had been before with the Philistines, who had gone up to the army, turned themselves also to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:21 Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.

NET 1 Samuel 14:21 The Hebrews who had earlier gone over to the Philistine side joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:21 There were Hebrews from the area who had gone earlier into the camp to join the Philistines, but even they joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:21 Now the Hebrews who had been with the Philistines before that time and who had gone up with them into the camp, even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:21 Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:21 Even the Hebrews who had previously gone over to the Philistine army revolted and joined in with Saul, Jonathan, and the rest of the Israelites.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:21 Now the Hebrews who previously had been with the Philistines and had gone up with them into the camp turned and joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:21 Those Hebrews who had earlier taken service with the Philistines and had accompanied them into camp, now defected to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:21 In addition, the Hebrews who had previously sided with the Philistines and had gone up with them to the camp, turned to join the Israelites under Saul and Jonathan.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:21 And the Hebrews who have been for the Philistines as heretofore, who had gone up with them into the camp, have turned round, even they, to be with Israel who are with Saul and Jonathan,

- the Hebrews: Probably such as they held in bondage, or who were their servants. Instead of {haivrim,} "the Hebrews," the LXX. evidently read {haavdim,} for they have [Loi douloi,] "the slaves;" but this reading is not countenanced by any other version, nor by any MS. 1Sa 29:4 Jdg 7:23
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

HEBREW DEFECTORS "RE-DETECT"

Now the Hebrews (ibri/ivri) who were with the Philistines previously, who went up with them all around in the camp- The **Hebrews** here refers apparently to those who had either become mercenaries or become deserters to fight with the enemy. The other alternative is that these were Hebrews who had been taken captive by the Philistines. The former interpretation is to be preferred.

Even they also turned to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan - Now even these Hebrew defectors took up arms against the Philistines.

1 Samuel 14:22 When all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines had fled, even they also pursued them closely in the battle.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:22 κα π ς Ισραηλ ο κρυπτ μενοι ν τ ρει Εφραιμ κα κουσαν τι πεφε γασιν ο λλ φυλοι κα συν ππουσιν κα α το π σω α τ ν ε ς π λεμον

LXE 1 Samuel 14:22 And all the Israelites who were hidden in mount Ephraim heard also that the Philistines fled; and they also gather themselves after them to battle: **and the Lord saved Israel in that day**; and the war passed through Bamoth; and all the people with Saul were about ten thousand men.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:22 Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle.

NET 1 Samuel 14:22 When all the Israelites who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines had fled, they too pursued them in battle.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:22 When all the Israelite men who had been hiding in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they also joined Saul and Jonathan in the battle.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:22 Likewise, when all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed hard after them in the battle.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:22 When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:22 Likewise, the men of Israel who were hiding in the hill country of Ephraim joined the chase when they saw the Philistines running away.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:22 Likewise, when all the Israelites who had gone into hiding in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they too followed closely after them in the battle.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:22 Similarly, all those Israelites who had been hiding in the highlands of Ephraim, hearing

that the Philistines were on the run, chased after them and joined in the fight.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:22 Likewise, all the Israelites who were hiding in the hill country of Ephraim, on hearing that the Philistines were fleeing, pursued them in the rout.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:22 and all the men of Israel, who are hiding themselves in the hill-country of Ephraim, have heard that the Philistines have fled, and they pursue -- even they -- after them in battle.

- **hidden themselves:** 1Sa 13:6 31:7
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Samuel 13:6+ When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits.

Note Men of Ephraim from the North

THE FEARFUL NOW JOIN THE PURSUIT OF FLEEING PHILISTINES

When all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of [Ephraim](#) (directly north of the battle) **heard that the Philistines had fled, even they also pursued them closely in the battle** - The formerly fearful (1Sa 13:6+) now joined the fray. Notice the map above depicting the men from [Ephraim](#) attacking the Philistines from the north to join Saul and Jonathan coming from the south, creating a "pincher" effect on the Philistines!

NET NOTE The LXX includes the following words: "And all the people were with Saul, about ten thousand men. And the battle extended to the entire city on mount Ephraim."

1 Samuel 14:23 So the LORD delivered Israel that day, and the battle spread beyond Beth-aven.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:23 κα σωσεν κ ριος ν τ μ ρ κε ν τ ν Ισραηλ κα π λεμος δι λθεν τ ν Βαιθων κα π ς
λα ς ν μετ Σαουλ ς δ κα χιλι δε ς ν δ ρ ν κα ν π λεμος διεσπαρμ νος ε ς λην τ ν π λιν ν τ ρει Εφραιμ

LXE 1 Samuel 14:23 And the battle extended itself to every city in the mount Ephraim.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:23 So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Bethaven.

NET 1 Samuel 14:23 So the LORD delivered Israel that day, and the battle shifted over to Beth Aven.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:23 So the LORD saved Israel that day. The battle extended beyond Beth-aven,

ESV 1 Samuel 14:23 So the LORD saved Israel that day. And the battle passed beyond Beth-aven.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:23 So the LORD rescued Israel that day, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:23 So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle continued to rage even beyond Beth-aven.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:23 So the LORD gave Israel the victory that day. The battle passed beyond Beth-aven, and the troops with Saul numbered altogether about ten thousand men. The battle spread out over the hill country of Ephraim.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:23 That day Yahweh gave Israel the victory. The fighting reached the other side of Beth-Horon.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:23 Thus the LORD saved Israel that day. The battle continued past Beth-horon;

YLT 1 Samuel 14:23 And Jehovah saveth Israel on that day, and the battle hath passed over to Beth-Aven.

- **the LORD delivered Israel** Ex 14:30 Jdg 2:18 2Ki 14:27 Ps 44:6-8 Ho 1:7
- **Bethaven:** 1Sa 13:5
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE DAY JEHOVAH SAVED ISRAEL

So - Term of conclusion. The writer draws the final conclusion of why and how Israel had won such a great victory against such overwhelming odds. To God be the glory, a good pattern for all of us to follow when we experience victory over our enemies the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#).

The LORD delivered ([yasha](#); Lxx = [sozo](#)) **Israel that day, and the battle spread beyond Beth-aven** ([map](#)) - Recall that the Philistine enemy was massive and well equipped, while Israel was small, and poorly equipped. The Philistine raiding parties had them enclosed on three sides (north, west, east). The Israeli forces were fleeing from fear and even those remaining were trembling. Overall, this is a recipe for disaster which the chances for a victory by Israel being overwhelmingly small to non-existent. So the **LORD** is the key to victory. But the **LORD** used 2 faithful men, Jonathan and his armor bearer, to begin the veritable "chain reaction," that brought defeat to the Philistines. I have often heard the saying "God plus one is a majority." That is certainly true but in this case "God plus two was a majority! So just as Yahweh had done at the exodus from Egypt "the LORD saved Israel that day." (Ex 14:30+). Had the Philistines attacked full forces with no intervention by Yahweh, there surely would have been few if any Hebrews remaining alive!

So yes the **LORD delivered** or saved Israel that day, but ultimately He did it because of His Great Name and because of His sure covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Recall Samuel's prophecy in 1Sa 12:22 "the LORD will not abandon His people **on account of His great name**, (SPEAKS OF HIS CHARACTER, HIS REPUTATION, HIS FAITHFULNESS TO HIS COVENANT) because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself." In Ezekiel Yahweh says "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but **for My holy name**, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.'" (Ezek 36:22, 23+, cf Ezek 39:7)

BETH-AVEN: (house of nothingness) A place on the northern boundary of the territory of Benjamin (Joshua 18:12) East of Bethel, near Ai (Joshua 7:2), West of Michmash (1 Samuel 13:5; 1 Samuel 14:23). Beth-aven, "house of vanity," i.e. "idolatry," may possibly represent an original beth-'on, "house of wealth."

This deliverance was also a fulfillment of His prophetic promise given to Samuel in 1 Samuel 9:16 when He declared "About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over My people Israel; and **he will deliver** ([yasha](#); Lxx = [sozo](#)) **My people from the hand of the Philistines**. For I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to Me." Actually it was Saul's son who was humanly responsible for this deliverance.

Would it have been the case that this chapter would have ended with this glorious victory! But such was not to be the case, for once again we see the foolishness and lack of wisdom Saul manifested!

[David Thompson](#) sums up this section: Victory in any situation belongs to the sovereignty of God and we need to believe that. We need to understand this and believe this. We need to believe God's word.

- Genesis 18:14 - "Is anything too hard for the LORD"
- Job 42:2 - "I know that you can do all things."
- Jeremiah 32:17 - "Nothing is too hard for you."
- Luke 1:37 - "Nothing will be impossible with God."
- Matthew 19:26 - "With God all things are possible."
- Mark 14:36 - "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you."

It is one thing to know these verses; it is another to believe them. Victory does not occur by osmosis. God's people need to know His word, believe it and obey it.

1 Samuel 14:24 Now the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day, for Saul had put the people under oath, saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:24 καὶ Σαουλ γινῆσεν γνοίαν μεγάλην ἐν τῷ μὲν καὶ ῥαταὶ τὰ λαλῶν πικατῶτος
νῦν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὡς σπῆρας καὶ κδικῶν τὸν χθρὸν μου καὶ ὁ κῆρ σῶται τὸν λαόν σου

LXE 1 Samuel 14:24 And Saul committed a great trespass of ignorance in that day, and he lays a curse on

the people, saying, Cursed is the man who shall eat bread before the evening; so I will avenge myself on my enemy: and none of the people tasted bread, though all the land was dining.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:24 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.

NET 1 Samuel 14:24 Now the men of Israel were hard pressed that day, for Saul had made the army agree to this oath: "Cursed be the man who eats food before evening! I will get my vengeance on my enemies!" So no one in the army ate anything.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:24 and the men of Israel were worn out that day, for Saul had placed the troops under an oath: "The man who eats food before evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies is cursed." So none of the troops tasted any food.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:24 And the men of Israel had been hard pressed that day, so Saul had 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 had tasted food.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:24 Now the men of Israel were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, "Cursed be any man who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!" So none of the troops tasted food.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:24 Now the men of Israel were pressed to exhaustion that day, because Saul had placed them under an oath, saying, "Let a curse fall on anyone who eats before evening-- before I have full revenge on my enemies." So no one ate anything all day,

NRS 1 Samuel 14:24 Now Saul committed a very rash act on that day. He had laid an oath on the troops, saying, "Cursed be anyone who eats food before it is evening and I have been avenged on my enemies." So none of the troops tasted food.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:24 As the men of Israel were hard pressed that day, Saul pronounced this imprecation over the people, 'A curse on anyone who eats food before evening, before I have taken revenge on my enemies!' So none of the people so much as tasted food.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:24 the whole people, about ten thousand combatants, were with Saul, and there was scattered fighting in every town in the hill country of Ephraim. And Saul swore a very rash oath that day, putting the people under this ban: "Cursed be the man who takes food before evening, before I am able to avenge myself on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:24 And the men of Israel have been distressed on that day, and Saul adjureth the people, saying, 'Cursed is the man who eateth food till the evening, and I have been avenged of mine enemies;' and none of the people hath tasted food.

- **Cursed:** 1Sa 14:27-30 Lev 27:29 Nu 21:2 De 27:15-26 Jos 6:17-19,26 Jdg 11:30-31 21:1-5 Pr 11:9 Ro 10:2 1Co 16:22
- I may be: Jdg 5:2 1:28 Ps 18:47
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SAUL'S RIDICULOUS FOOLHARDY DECREE

Now the men of Israel were hard-pressed ([nagas](#)) on that day - NLT = "pressed to exhaustion." NRSV = "Now Saul committed a very rash act on that day." Keep in mind the context, that the Philistines had "turned tail" and were running for their lives and then Saul puts a major impediment in the way of his troops who could have to a large extent annihilated the Philistines. I used to run marathons (actually one) and it is routine practice to have nourishment stations all along the course to replenish lost fluids and nutrients during the 3+ hour gruelling race. Saul's men were chasing the Philistines 15+ miles from Michmash to Aijalon and they would have been in great need of "nourishment stations!" But such was not to be the case because of their foolish leader's ridiculous decree!

THOUGHT - "There are many churches who are doing basically the same thing today. They have their people running to this and running to that but they are not feeding them solid spiritual food. Their philosophy is more activity and less feeding. Those churches are as foolish as Saul." ([David Thompson](#))

Guzik - This shows that the result among the army of Israel was wrong. No matter what Saul's motive was, this was foolish. When

the morale and the physical energy of Israel should have been the strongest, the army was weak and discouraged.

For - Term of explanation.

Saul had put the people under oath - NIV = "Saul had bound the people under an oath" What a foolish leader Saul was proving to be! It is too bad Solomon had not written his warning "Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few." (Ecclesiastes 5:2)

Saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies."- There is nothing in the Torah that would support this foolish curse. This strikes me as a very egotistical statement "**until I have avenged myself on my enemies**" not the **enemies** of Jehovah! He is in it for his glory! Saul, unlike Jonathan, did not view the battle as the LORD's (1Sa 14:12)!

Guzik on **until I have avenged myself on my enemies** - This shows that Saul's focus was wrong. Saul put the army of Israel under an oath so he could take vengeance on his enemies. If he regarded it as his battle, he should simply fast himself. Saul showed that even in doing something spiritual like fasting his focus is on himself, not the Lord. i. Through this curse, Saul put the focus back on himself. That day, no one would be thinking much about Jonathan because their hunger would always remind them of Saul's curse.

Rod Mattoon - Saul now becomes an obstacle, a hindrance in this battle. This crazy command was motivated by vengeance and pride, not God's glory. Saul's rash command distresses and hinders the army from total victory (**ED: AND SEE THE PRICE HE PAID FOR ALL THE REST OF HIS REIGN** - 1Sa 14:52!). They became too weak to fight. Saul was so concerned about avenging himself that he neglected the needs of his men. Our selfishness hurts and hinders others.

David Thompson - Rash decisions often cause great trouble and usually they are not of God. In fact, God's word teaches that it is not wise to do anything rash (Acts 19:36). The town clerk of Ephesus told the emotional crowd, "You ought to keep calm and do nothing rash." Saul never did learn this lesson. We are called to war and there will be times when we must take a stand and wise are those believers who have been well-fed the books of the Bible and doctrine, for they will be the best soldiers.

So none of the people tasted food - The soldiers obeyed Saul's foolish decree. The result was undoubtedly a much lesser victory and routing of the Philistines than it could have been had Saul been wise. He was not a wise king!

Baldwin - "The mopping-up operations after a rout were all-important if the maximum benefit from the victory was to be reaped, but pursuit of the enemy involved an exhausting, unrelenting journey over steep hills for hours on end." (Borrow [1 and 2 Samuel](#))

Wiersbe - The spiritual conditions of our hearts are revealed not only by the actions we perform but also by the words we speak. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt. 12:34). When you read King Saul's words recorded in Scripture, they often reveal a heart controlled by pride, foolishness, and deceit. He would say foolish things just to impress people with his "spirituality," when in reality he was walking far from the Lord. A foolish vow (1 Sam. 14:24-35). Saul's heart was not right with God and he foolishly forced his army to agree to a vow of fasting until evening (v. 24)....If the Lord commands it, then He would give the strength needed, but God gave Saul no such commission.(Borrow [Be successful](#))

Hard-pressed (taskmaster, drive hard)([05065](#)) **nagas** "connotes the exertion of demanding oppressive pressure for payment or labor" (TWOT). Thus it means to press hard, distress, exert demanding (oppressive) pressure (for payment or labor). **Nagas** describes the Egyptian taskmasters who afflicted Israel, even ceasing to give straw to make bricks (Ex 3:7, 5:6, 10, 13, 14). In the seventh year law directed creditors not to demand payment during that year (Dt 15:2-3). Isaiah used **nagas** in Isa 3:5 to describe the people of Judah who will be **oppressed** because of their sin against God (cf Isa 3:12). Isaiah sees God breaking the yoke of Israel's oppressors in the future when they will even "rule over their **oppressors**." In Zechariah 10:4 **nagas** is actually applied to the "Cornerstone" Messiah Who will have authority over all **rulers** (**nagas**).

David Thompson - On June 24, 1876, [Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer](#) led some 600 trail-worn troops of the 7 th U.S. Cavalry toward the Sioux-Cheyenne camp located along the Little Bighorn River in the Montana territory. Custer's command from General Alfred Terry was to simply locate the Indians and wait for his arrival. Custer decided to disobey the order and decided to split his regiment into three battalions to fight the Indians in a three-pronged assault. The Indians were ready and willing to fight and they quickly trapped Custer and his 267 men. On that fateful morning of June 25, 1876, General Custer and 200 of his men were killed and 60 were wounded, most of whom later died. All of this happened because of Custer's disobedience, pride and stupidity. When you read the historical accounts of [Custer's Last Stand at the Little Bighorn](#), you think of a tragedy that could have been avoided if it had not been for the pride and foolishness of Custer. If he would have only waited and not been so concerned about making a name for himself, he could have won that battle that took his life and the life of many of his men. There is a leader in Israel's history that did dumber things than Custer ever thought about doing. His name was King Saul. King Saul had been

sovereignly permitted by God to become the first King of Israel. It wasn't too long after he became King that he started doing a series of foolish things that will eventually cost him his reign and his life. GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER POLITICAL LEADERS WHO SAY AND DO FOOLISH THINGS AND AT TIMES HE WILL SOVEREIGNLY INTERVENE TO OVERRULE THEIR STUPIDITY.

1 Samuel 14:25 All the people of the land entered the forest, and there was honey on the ground.

- **all:** De 9:28 Mt 3:5
- **honey:** Ex 3:8 Nu 13:27 Mt 3:4
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

HONEY ABOUNDED BUT ISRAEL BOUND

All the people of the land entered the forest, and there was honey on the ground- This was wild honey, which to this day abounds in Judea; and bursting from the comb, runs down the hollow trees, rocks, etc. Honey was found to abound, but Israel was bound by Saul's foolish oath. Who provided the honey for the tired, hungry Hebrew soldiers? That's rhetorical. Clearly it was a provision from Yahweh.

1 Samuel 14:26 When the people entered the forest, behold, there was a flow of honey; but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

- **the people:** Ec 9:2
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



HONEY, HONEY EVERYWHERE BUT NOT A DROP DID THEY EAT

When the people entered the forest, behold, there was a flow of honey - The writer emphasizes the abundance of honey, a great energy source in the time of battle. This picture recalls the prophetic words of Moses that Israel would come to a "land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3:8+). The honey was Yahweh's provision for His people, but Saul "short-circuited" God's provision!

but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath- Fear of man, in this case Saul, prevented all from reviving themselves with God's abundant provision.

Rod Mattoon - Honey was found in the woods, but no one would touch it. Honey would have done wonders for these soldiers. It contains 35% protein, B, C, D and E vitamins. It promotes energy and healing. It also combats depression and is used as an antiseptic and salve for burns and injuries. It is very good for a person.

Related Resources:

- [Honey - dictionary articles](#)
- [Honey - Wikipedia](#)
- [Why was Israel called the land of milk and honey? | GotQuestions.org](#)

1 Samuel 14:27 But Jonathan had not heard when his father put the people under oath; therefore, he put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.

- **his eyes:** 1Sa 14:29 30:12 Pr 25:26
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JONATHAN SAMPLES HONEY AND IS REVIVED

But Jonathan had not heard when his father put the people under oath; therefore, he put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened - As "fate" would have it, everyone but Jonathan had heard the foolish decree of his father. How he did not know is not stated. Recall that when the forces were numbered Jonathan was not found and it is very possible that is when Saul issued the binding order of "no honey."

Spurgeon - No honey was sweeter than that which dropped from the end of Jonathan's rod. But that is nothing to the sweetness of the consolation which comes through Jehovah's rod. Our brightest joys are the birth of our bitterest griefs. When the woman has her travail pangs, joy comes to the house because the child is born; and sorrow is to us also often the moment of the birth of our graces.

F B Meyer - 1 Samuel 14:27 His eyes were enlightened.

The Philistines were in full flight. The Israelites followed hard at their heels through the wood. It was there that the honey dropped in rich abundance on the ground, and there Jonathan tasted a little, dipping the end of his rod into it. It made all the difference to him, warding off the excessive exhaustion which paralyzed the rest of the army.

The Word of God is sweeter than the honeycomb.— Luscious to the sanctified taste; enlightening to the dimming eyes; strength-giving to the weary. It drops in abundance to the ground, as though inviting the hand of the Christian warrior or wayfarer to take it freely. If there is no taste for the written Word, it may be assumed that the living Word has not been enthroned in the heart; for where He reigns supreme, there is a longing for the food which alone can fit us for the Christian life.

Where we cannot take much, let us take some.— There was not time for Jonathan to sit down and take his fill. He could only catch up some as he hastily passed through the forest-glade; but that little made all the difference to him. So, in the early morning, or at midday, if we cannot fill our hearts with Scripture, we may catch up a morsel, which will minister untold refreshment, and clear our spiritual vision.

We specially need to do this when flushed with success.— Too often, when we have had success in the battles of the Lord—a good time in preaching or teaching— we are apt to congratulate ourselves, and suppose that we can live on the emotions excited. But, probably, there is no time when we need more absolutely to turn to the Word of God. In victory, as in defeat, we must be fed and nourished.

1 Samuel 14:28 Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly put the people under oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man who eats food today.' " And the people were weary.

- **Cursed:** 1Sa 14:24,43
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JONATHAN MADE AWARE OF SAUL'S CURSE

Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly put the people under oath, saying, 'Cursed be the man who eats food today.' " - How did this person know Jonathan had sampled honey? Presumably his eyes were bright, so the reasoning would be he must have taken nourishment.

And the people were weary - Of course they were for Saul had essentially starved them.

1 Samuel 14:29 Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:29 κα γνω Ιωναθαν κα επεν πλλαχεν πατρ μου τ ν γ ν δ δ τι εδον ο φθαλμο μου τι γευσ μην βραχ το μ λιπος το του

LXE 1 Samuel 14:29 and Jonathan knew it, and said, My father has destroyed the land: see how my eyes have received sight now that I have tasted a little of this honey.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:29 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.

NET 1 Samuel 14:29 Then Jonathan said, "My father has caused trouble for the land. See how my eyes gleamed when I tasted just a little of this honey.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:29 Jonathan replied, "My father has brought trouble to the land. Just look at how I have renewed energy because I tasted a little honey.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:29 Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. See how my eyes have become bright because I tasted a little of this honey.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:29 Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:29 "My father has made trouble for us all!" Jonathan exclaimed. "A command like that only hurts us. See how refreshed I am now that I have eaten this little bit of honey.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:29 Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land; see how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:29 'My father has brought trouble on the country,' Jonathan replied. 'See how much brighter my eyes are for having eaten this mouthful of honey.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:29 Jonathan replied: "My father brings trouble to the land. Look how bright my eyes are from this small taste of honey I have had.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:29 And Jonathan saith, 'My father hath troubled the land; see, I pray you, that mine eyes have become bright because I tasted a little of this honey.

RSV 1 Samuel 14:29 Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land; see how my eyes have become bright, because I tasted a little of this honey.

NKJ 1 Samuel 14:29 But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey.

ASV 1 Samuel 14:29 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.

DBY 1 Samuel 14:29 And Jonathan said, My father has troubled the land: see, I pray you, that mine eyes are bright, because I tasted a little of this honey.

GWN 1 Samuel 14:29 Jonathan answered, "My father has brought trouble to the country. See how my eyes lit up when I tasted a little of this honey?

- **My father:** 1Ki 18:18
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JONATHAN'S VERDICT ON HIS FATHER'S FOOLISH DECREE

Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled ([akar](#)) the land - NLT = ""My father has made trouble for us all!" Sadly, the son had far more wisdom than the king.

Saul's harsh oath might be compared to an "Achan Effect" - The same verb for **troubled ([akar](#))** was used by Joshua when he addressed Achan who cause Israel's humiliating defeat at Ai - "Joshua said, "Why have you **troubled ([akar](#))** us? The LORD will

trouble ([akar](#)) you this day." And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones." (Joshua 7:25)

[David Thompson](#) adds "Saul was a troubled man and he was troubling to people. The word Samuel uses in Hebrew for "trouble" ([akar](#)) is one that means to stir up trouble in a cruel and bad way that brings evil upon people (William Gesenius, Hebrew Lexicon, p. 626). Jonathan says my father is stirring up trouble in a cruel away upon his own people, Israel.

See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey - NLT= "A command like that only hurts us. See how refreshed I am now that I have eaten this little bit of honey. Jonathan implies that this would have been the effect on the entire army and would energize them for a complete victory over the Philistines as he says in 1Sa 14:30! It is well known, that hunger and fatigue produce faintness and dim the sight; and on taking a little food, this affection is immediately removed. How much more complete would have been the destruction of the massive Philistine army had Saul not made this one very foolish oath!

Troubled (troubler, troubled) ([05916](#)) [akar](#) is a verb meaning to cause trouble, stir up resentment, cause hatred. It usually describes the trouble brought upon one from another person. The first use is by Jacob addressing his sons Simeon and Levi declaring "You have brought **trouble** (Lxx = [miseo](#) = to be hated) on me." (By killing Hamor and his son Shechem who had defiled their sister Dinah - [Ge 34:26-27](#)). (Ge 34:30) In Pr 11:17 "the cruel man does himself **harm** (Lxx = [exollumi](#) - to destroy utterly in the present tense = continually destroys himself!)" In Pr 11:29 Solomon warns that "He who **troubles** his own house will inherit wind," which "refers to actions which make life difficult for one's family." His reward is "empty air," nothing that can be grasped, nothing he can put his hands on. In 1Sa 14:29 Jonathan (son of Saul) declared that Saul had "**troubled** the land" by telling the soldiers none could eat food (1Sa 14:28) Ahab called Elijah a "**troubler** of Israel." (1Ki 18:17, 18).

1 Samuel 14:30 "How much more, if only 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."

BGT 1 Samuel 14:30 ἄλ τι ε φαγεν σθων λα ς σμερον τ ν σκ λων τ ν χθρ ν α τ ν ν ε ρεν τι ν ν ν με ζων ν πληγ ν το ς λλοφ λοις

LXE 1 Samuel 14:30 Surely if the people had this day eaten freely of the spoils of their enemies which they found, the slaughter among the Philistines would have been greater.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:30 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?

NET 1 Samuel 14:30 Certainly if the army had eaten some of the enemies' provisions that they came across today, would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"

CSB 1 Samuel 14:30 How much better if the troops had eaten freely today from the plunder they took from their enemies! Then the slaughter of the Philistines would have been much greater."

ESV 1 Samuel 14:30 How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies that they found. For now the defeat among the Philistines has not been great."

NIV 1 Samuel 14:30 How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"

NLT 1 Samuel 14:30 If the men had been allowed to eat freely from the food they found among our enemies, think how many more Philistines we could have killed!"

NRS 1 Samuel 14:30 How much better if today the troops had eaten freely of the spoil taken from their enemies; for now the slaughter among the Philistines has not been great."

NJB 1 Samuel 14:30 By the same token, if the people had been allowed to eat some of the booty which they had captured from the enemy today, would not the defeat of the Philistines have been all the greater?"

NAB 1 Samuel 14:30 What is more, if the people had eaten freely today of their enemy's booty when they came across it, would not the slaughter of the Philistines by now have been the greater for it?"

YLT 1 Samuel 14:30 How much more if the people had well eaten to-day of the spoil of its enemies which it hath found, for now, the smiting hath not been great among the Philistines.'

RSV 1 Samuel 14:30 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."

- Ec 9:18
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JONATHAN'S LOGIC: MORE HONEY, MORE DEAD PHILISTINES!

"How much more, if only 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." - NIV = "How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"

Wiersbe - One of the marks of a true leader is knowing when to act, and Saul had wasted time watching the battle from a distance and failing to seek the mind of the Lord. (Borrow [Be successful](#))

1 Samuel 14:31 They struck among the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very weary.

- **Aijalon:** Jos 10:12 19:42
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Michmash to Aijalon
Courtesy ESV Global Study Bible

They struck among the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon- Note in the map **Michmash** on the east about 15 miles from **Aijalon** on the east. So the victory was great but could have been greater had Saul allowed the men to eat honey!

And the people were very weary - This is an understatement and repeats (but adds "**very**") the statement from 1Sa 14:28 that the people were **weary**. And in 1Sa 14:24 they were described as "**hard-pressed** ([nagas](#))." This repetition of the men's condition would seem to be the writer's way of emphasizing how foolish Saul's decision had been to withhold food from his forces.

1 Samuel 14:32 The people rushed greedily upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood.

- **rushed greedily:** 1Sa 15:19
- **the people:** The people having abstained from food the whole of the day, and being now faint through hunger and fatigue, they flew upon the cattle, and not taking time to bleed them properly, they eagerly devoured the flesh with the blood, directly contrary to the law--another bad effect of Saul's rash adjuration.
- **eat:** Ge 9:4 Lev 3:17 Lev 7:26-27 Lev 17:10-14 Lev 19:26 De 12:16,23,24 Eze 33:25 Ac 15:20,29
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Leviticus 3:17 'It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall not eat any fat or any blood.'

Leviticus 7:26-27 (**EATING BLOOD > CUT OFF!**) 'You are not to eat any blood, either of bird or animal, in any of your dwellings. 27 'Any person who eats any blood, even that person shall be cut off from his people.'

Leviticus 17:10-14 'And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, **I will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people.** 11 'For (EXPLAINS WHY THEY WERE NOT TO EAT THE BLOOD-IT HAD A DEEP SPIRITUAL MEANING) the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood (REPRESENTING LIFE) by reason of the life that makes atonement.' 12 "Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, '**No person among you may eat blood**, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.' 13 "So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. 14 "For as for the life of all flesh, its **blood is identified with its life**. Therefore I said to the sons of

Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.'

Deuteronomy 12:23-25 "Only be sure not to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and you shall not eat the life with the flesh. 24 "You shall not eat it; you shall pour it out on the ground like water. 25 "You shall not eat it, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you, for you will be doing what is right in the sight of the LORD.

ANOTHER CONSEQUENCE OF SAUL'S FOOLISH DECREE

The people rushed greedily upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood - The Hebrews are so starved (a point repeatedly made earlier) that they disobeyed the Mosaic instructions to eat no meat with blood! The reason why they are breaking God's law and doing this evil was because of Saul's law. As [described in the passages above](#), to eat blood was punishable by being cut off from the people! Can you see the irony -- obedience to Saul's foolish command led the men to disobey God's perfect command! Saul in attempting to look "spiritual" actually led the people to sin against God!

You might be asking, how could the people now eat and not break Saul's vow? The answer is in the timing of the vow for Saul had stated "**Cursed be the man who eats food before evening**," Clearly it was now evening and the absolutely famished men could now gorge themselves! But they were so hungry, they lost all control.

A truly spiritual vow brings out the best in people,
but Saul's carnal vow brought out the worst.
-- Warren Wiersbe

Wiersbe adds that "When the sun set and ushered in a new day, the vow was no longer in force, and the men acted like animals as they fell on the spoils, killing the sheep and oxen and eating the meat with the blood." (Borrow [Be successful](#))

1 Samuel 14:33 Then they told Saul, saying, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have acted treacherously; roll a great stone to me today."

BGT 1 Samuel 14:33 καὶ πηγγύη τὸ Σαουλ λήγοντες μῖσηκεν λαὸς τὸ κυρ φαγὼν τὰ ματὶ καὶ πεν Σαουλ ὃ γεθθεμ κυλίσσονται λθόντα ἑαυτὸν γὰρ

LXE 1 Samuel 14:33 And it was reported to Saul, saying, The people have sinned against the Lord, eating with the blood: and Saul said, Out of Getthaim roll a great stone to me hither.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:33 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.

NET 1 Samuel 14:33 Now it was reported to Saul, "Look, the army is sinning against the LORD by eating even the blood." He said, "All of you have broken the covenant! Roll a large stone over here to me."

CSB 1 Samuel 14:33 Some reported to Saul: "Look, the troops are sinning against the LORD by eating meat with the blood still in it." Saul said, "You have been unfaithful. Roll a large stone over here at once."

ESV 1 Samuel 14:33 Then they told Saul, "Behold, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a great stone to me here."

NIV 1 Samuel 14:33 Then someone said to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that has blood in it." "You have broken faith," he said. "Roll a large stone over here at once."

NLT 1 Samuel 14:33 Someone reported to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that still has blood in it." "That is very wrong," Saul said. "Find a large stone and roll it over here."

NRS 1 Samuel 14:33 Then it was reported to Saul, "Look, the troops are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." And he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone before me here."

NJB 1 Samuel 14:33 Saul was informed, 'The people are sinning against Yahweh by eating with the blood!' He said, 'You have not kept faith! Roll me a large stone here!'

NAB 1 Samuel 14:33 Informed that the people were sinning against the LORD by eating the flesh with blood, Saul said: "You have broken faith. Roll a large stone here for me."

YLT 1 Samuel 14:33 And they declare to Saul, saying, 'Lo, the people are sinning against Jehovah, to eat with the blood.' And he saith, 'Ye have dealt treacherously, roll unto me to-day a great stone.'

- **You have acted treacherously**, Mt 7:5 Ro 2:1
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SAUL REFUSES TO TAKE BLAME FOR THE SIN

Then they told Saul, saying, "**Behold**, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood." While their statement was correct, the reason for their sin was the fact that they had been starved by Saul. So yes, they overreacted and sinned, but they would most likely not have done so (or would have been much less likely to have done so) had they not been restricted from food by Saul.

And he said, "**You have acted treacherously** ([bagad](#)) - NET = ""All of you have broken the covenant!" **NJB** = "You have not kept faith!" **CSB** = ""You have been unfaithful." Saul was one to talk about being unfaithful given his failure to trust Samuel's directions and instead committing a sin by offering sacrifices to God! We are beginning to see the unraveling of the heart of this man as a leader of Israel.

NET NOTE Heb "You have acted deceptively." In this context the verb refers to violating an agreement, in this case the dietary and sacrificial regulations of the Mosaic law. The verb form is second masculine plural; apparently Saul here addresses those who are eating the animals.

roll a great stone to me today - The purpose is not stated but in verse 35 Saul builds an altar and it is possible this stone is used.

Treacherously ([0898](#)) [bagad](#) apparently from an Arabic root meaning to deceive) means to act deceitfully, unfaithfully, to commit faithlessness.. This word describes a traitor, one who violates his allegiance and betrays something or someone (e.g., God). **Bagad** means to 'break faith' which speaks of one who does not honour the terms of an existing agreement. The root idea of **bagad** is to cover or cloak things over, and so to act covertly or falsely, perfidiously (acting untrue to what should command one's fidelity or allegiance and adds to faithless the implication of an incapacity for fidelity or reliability!). "The verb connotes unfaithfulness in relationships like marriage (Ex. 21:8; Jer. 3:20; Mal. 2:14); Israel's covenant with the Lord (Ps. 78:57; 119:158); friendships (Job 6:15; Jer. 3:20; Mal. 2:10); leadership (Jdg. 9:23)." (Baker)

1 Samuel 14:34 Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Each one of you bring me his ox or his sheep, and slaughter it here and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.' " So all the people that night brought each one his ox with him and slaughtered it there.

- with him: Heb. in his hand, 1Sa 14:34
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

COVER UP YOUR SINS WITH ANOTHER MEAL

Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, 'Each one of you bring me his ox or his sheep, and slaughter it here and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.' " So all the people that night brought each one his ox with him and slaughtered it there - Saul says nothing to the people about confessing and repenting of their sins. God wanted contrite hearts, not cutting of their cattle! In telling them to eat keep in mind that surely they had eaten and were no longer famished. But Saul makes another foolish decree which would result in needless killing of some of their valuable livestock. Saul is demonstrating he clearly lacks godly wisdom to lead the nation!

One is reminded of the words of David "For **You do not delight in sacrifice**, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. (Ps 51:16-17)

1 Samuel 14:35 And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:35 καὶ κοδοῖ μῆσεν ἐκεῖ Σαουλ θυσιαστήριον τῷ κυρίῳ· τὸ τὸ πρῶτον Σαουλ ὁ κοδοῖ μῆσαι θυσιαστήριον τῷ κυρίῳ

LXE 1 Samuel 14:35 And Saul built an altar there to the Lord: this was the first altar that Saul built to the Lord.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:35 And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

NET 1 Samuel 14:35 Then Saul built an altar for the LORD; it was the first time he had built an altar for the LORD.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:35 Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had built an altar to the LORD.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:35 And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:35 Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had done this.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:35 Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first of the altars he built to the LORD.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:35 And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:35 Saul built an altar to Yahweh; it was the first altar he had built to Yahweh.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:35 and Saul built an altar to the LORD-- this was the first time he built an altar to the LORD.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:35 And Saul buildeth an altar to Jehovah; with it he hath begun to build altars to Jehovah.

- **built:** It is probable that Saul converted the great stone, on which the cattle had been slaughtered, into an altar, on which sacrifices were offered, before the people attempted to proceed any further. This we are told was the first he had built. Samuel, as a prophet and priest, had hitherto erected the altars, but Saul seems to have thought he had sufficient authority to erect one himself, without the prophet, as he had once offered sacrifice without him. 1Sa 7:9,17 Jdg 21:4 Ho 8:14 2Ti 3:5
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SAUL'S FIRST AND ONLY ALTAR

And Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first (and only) altar that he built to the LORD- There is no mention of the involvement of the man of God Samuel in this endeavor. Previously the prophet Samuel had built altars (1Sa 7:12,17).

One might question whether this was a truly God honoring action for in Dt 12:13-14 we read "Be careful that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every cultic place you see, **but in the place which the LORD chooses** in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you." Some postulate that perhaps the altar was only to commemorate the LORD's victory.

1 Samuel 14:36 Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and take spoil among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them." And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." So the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."

BGT 1 Samuel 14:36 καὶ ἐπεὶ Σαουλ καταβῆναι πρὸς τὴν νύκτα καὶ λαβεῖν τὴν κλοπὴν ἐκ τῶν Φιλισταίων καὶ διαρπάζειν αὐτοὺς ὥς διαφασίμῃ καὶ μὴ πολλῶν αὐτοὺς νύκτα καὶ ἐπὶ πύλαις τῶν φρουρῶν ἐπιβῆναι πρὸς λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς πρὸς τὴν ἡμέραν

LXE 1 Samuel 14:36 And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines this night, and let us plunder among them till the day break, and let us not leave a man among them. And they said, Do all that is good in thy sight: and the priest said, let us draw nigh hither to God.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:36 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.

NET 1 Samuel 14:36 Saul said, "Let's go down after the Philistines at night; we will rout them until the break of day. We won't leave any of them alive!" They replied, "Do whatever seems best to you." But the priest said, "Let's approach God here."

CSB 1 Samuel 14:36 Saul said, "Let's go down after the Philistines tonight and plunder them until morning. Don't let even one remain!" "Do whatever you want," the troops replied. But the priest said, "We must consult God here."

ESV 1 Samuel 14:36 Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder 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 to God here."

NIV 1 Samuel 14:36 Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive." "Do whatever seems best to you," they replied. But the priest said, "Let us inquire of God here."

NLT 1 Samuel 14:36 Then Saul said, "Let's chase the Philistines all night and plunder them until sunrise. Let's destroy every last one of them." His men replied, "We'll do whatever you think is best." But the priest said, "Let's ask God first."

NRS 1 Samuel 14:36 Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and despoil them until the morning light; let us not leave one of them." They said, "Do whatever seems good to you." But the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."

NJB 1 Samuel 14:36 Saul said, 'Let us go down under cover of dark and plunder the Philistines until dawn; we shall not leave one of them alive.' 'Do whatever you think right,' they replied. But the priest said, 'Let us approach God here.'

NAB 1 Samuel 14:36 Then Saul said, "Let us go down in pursuit of the Philistines by night, to plunder among them until daybreak and to kill them all off." They replied, "Do what you think best." But the priest said, "Let us consult God."

YLT 1 Samuel 14:36 And Saul saith, 'Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and we prey upon them till the light of the morning, and leave not a man of them.' And they say, 'All that is good in thine eyes do.' And the priest saith, 'Let us draw near hither unto God.'

RSV 1 Samuel 14:36 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."

- **Let us go:** Jos 10:9-14,19 Jer 6:5
- **let us not leave:** 1Sa 11:11 Jos 11:14
- Then said the priest: It is evident that Ahiah, who had before been interrupted by Saul's impatience, doubted of the propriety of pursuing the Philistines that night, and properly counselled them to enquire of the Lord. Nu 27:21 Ps 73:28 Isa 48:1,2 58:2 Mal 2:7 Jas 4:8
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SAUL'S SUGGESTION STUNTED BY PRIEST

Then Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night and take spoil among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them." - Go down would be a drop of about 2000 feet. Saul seems driven by impulse not wisdom. The Lord has already delivered them. They have already had spoils. Saul's logic makes no sense.

And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you." - The people (army) supports Saul's call for a nighttime pursuit to take spoil and annihilate the Philistines.

Wiersbe "Surely Saul realized that his delay at Gibeah and the imposing of the foolish vow had already cost the Israelites a great victory, so he tried to make amends. He decided to move the army that very night and be ready to surprise the Philistines early the next morning. The army gave no resistance, but Ahijah the priest wisely suggested that they pause long enough to seek the will of the Lord." (Borrow [Be successful](#))

So the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here." - The priest intervenes and calls for Saul to call upon the LORD, whether this

should be done.

1 Samuel 14:37 Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You give them into the hand of Israel?" But He did not answer him on that day.

- **Shall I go:** 1Sa 23:4,9-12 30:7,8 Jdg 1:1 20:18,28 2Sa 5:19,23 1Ki 22:5,15
- **he answered:** 1Sa 28:6 Eze 14:3-5 20:3
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

1 Samuel 28:6+ When Saul inquired of the LORD, **the LORD did not answer him**, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets.

SAUL SEEKS GOD BUT GOD REMAINS SILENT

Saul inquired of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You give them into the hand of Israel?"- Why did Saul inquire of God? "But the priest said, "We must consult God here." (1Sa 14:36CSB) The priest intervened! At least Saul listened to him!

But He did not answer him on that day - Where is the man of God? Where is Samuel? Would not he be a good man to inquire of God? Saul seems to be bent on doing his will independent of any sage spiritual counsel. God's silence speaks volumes on His disapproval of Saul's erratic behavior and willful decisions.

MacArthur - Because of the sin that Saul had caused in his army, God did not answer his inquiry. This would not be the last time that the Lord would refuse to respond to sinful Saul (cf. 1Sa 28:6). (Borrow [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

I am reminded of Yahweh's words in Isaiah 29:13 (cf Isaiah 1:11-15)...

Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,

1 Samuel 14:38 Saul said, "Draw near here, all you chiefs of the people, and investigate and see how this sin has happened today.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:38 κα ε πεν Σαουλ προσαγ γετε ντα θα π σας τ ς γων ας το Ισραηλ κα γν τε κα δετε ν τ νι γ γονεν μαρτ α α τη σ μερον

LXE 1 Samuel 14:38 And Saul said, Bring hither all the chiefs of Israel, and know and see by whom this sin has been committed this day.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:38 And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day.

NET 1 Samuel 14:38 Then Saul said, "All you leaders of the army come here. Find out how this sin occurred today.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:38 Saul said, "All you leaders of the troops, come here. Let us investigate how this sin has occurred today.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:38 And Saul said, "Come here, all you leaders of the people, and know and see how this sin has arisen today.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:38 Saul therefore said, "Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and let us find out what sin has been committed today.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:38 Then Saul said to the leaders, "Something's wrong! I want all my army commanders to come here. We must find out what sin was committed today.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:38 Saul said, "Come here, all you leaders of the people; and let us find out how this sin has arisen today.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:38 Saul then said, 'Come forward, all you leaders of the people; consider carefully where today's sin may lie;

NAB 1 Samuel 14:38 Saul then said, "Come here, all officers of the army. We must investigate and find out how this sin was committed today.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:38 And Saul saith, 'Draw ye nigh hither all, the chiefs of the people, and know and see in what this sin hath been to-day;

- **Draw near:** 1Sa 10:19,20 Jos 7:14-26
- **chiefs** Nu 24:17 Jdg 20:2 2Sa 18:3 Ps 47:9 Zec 10:4 Mt 21:42 Eph 2:20
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SAUL SEEKS TO SOLVE WHY GOD IS SILENT

Saul said, "**Draw near here, all you chiefs of the people, and investigate and see how this sin has happened today**" - The NLT paraphrase is almost comical if it were not so tragically true = "Something's wrong! I want all my army commanders to come here. We must find out what sin was committed today." There is no hint whatsoever that Saul thought he was the problem! The sin Saul alludes to is that there was some sin in the camp so to speak and this is why God had refused to answer (cf Ps 66:18). Saul should have taken the "mirror test" and had he done so in true contrition, he would have recognized that he was the cause of the sin of his own people!

THOUGHT - Saul's action here illustrates the deceptive nature of sin. Hebrews 3:13+ says "encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Saul had been hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. But before we judge him too harshly, we ALL need to frequently look in the mirror and see if the problem in a given adverse circumstance might be "the man (woman) in the mirror!"

1 Samuel 14:39 "For as the LORD lives, who delivers Israel, though it is in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not one of all the people answered him.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:39 τι ζ κριος σ σας τ ν Ισραηλ τι ν ποκριθ κατ Ιωναθαν το υ ο μου θαν τ ποθανε ται κα ο κ ν ποκριν μενος κ παντ ς το λαο

LXE 1 Samuel 14:39 For as the Lord lives who has saved Israel, if answer should be against my son Jonathan, he shall surely die. And there was no one that answered out of all the people.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:39 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.

NET 1 Samuel 14:39 For as surely as the LORD, the deliverer of Israel, lives, even if it turns out to be my own son Jonathan, he will certainly die!" But no one from the army said anything.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:39 As surely as the LORD lives who saves Israel, even if it is because of my son Jonathan, he must die!" Not one of the troops answered him.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:39 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 who answered him.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:39 As surely as the LORD who rescues Israel lives, even if it lies with my son Jonathan, he must die." But not one of the men said a word.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:39 I vow by the name of the LORD who rescued Israel that the sinner will surely die, even if it is my own son Jonathan!" But no one would tell him what the trouble was.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:39 For as the LORD lives who saves Israel, even if it is in my son Jonathan, he shall surely die!" But there was no one among all the people who answered him.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:39 for as Yahweh lives who gives victory to Israel, even if the sin lies with Jonathan my son,

he shall be put to death.' But not one out of all the people answered.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:39 As the LORD lives who has given victory to Israel, even if my son Jonathan has committed it, he shall surely die!" But none of the people answered him.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:39 for, Jehovah liveth, who is saving Israel: surely if it be in Jonathan my son, surely he doth certainly die;' and none is answering him out of all the people.

- 1Sa 14:24,44 19:6 20:31 22:16 28:10 2Sa 12:5 Ec 9:2
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SAUL MAKES ANOTHER FOOLISH OATH!

For as the LORD lives, who delivers Israel, though it is in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." Saul compounds his foolish and unwise behavior, with a second foolish, unwise oath. The thought that he would even be willing to kill his own son says much about his lack of wisdom and character.

Saul's rash oath reminds us of the foolish vow of [Jephthah](#) which probably cost the life of his daughter!

Judges 11:30-31+ Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, "If You will indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, 31 then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the LORD'S, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

Wiersbe - Saul made another oath (v. 39), and because his heart wasn't right nor his motive holy, he was taking the Lord's name in vain (Ex. 20:7). (Borrow [Be successful](#))

But not one of all the people answered him - NLT = "But no one would tell him what the trouble was." Some knew that Jonathan had tasted honey (1Sa 14:26) and they must have surely been stunned by Saul's rash oath. It is sad that no one told Saul of his son's action before this oath. The implication is that the people were afraid to call forth Saul's anger and so they remained mute! And once he had made the oath, it was too late to object!

1 Samuel 14:40 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."

BGT 1 Samuel 14:40 κα ε πεν παντ Ισραηλ με ς σεσθε ε ς δουλε αν κα γ κα Ιωναθαν υ ς μου σ μεθα ε ς δουλε αν κα ε πεν λα ς πρ ς Σαουλ τ γαθ ν ν πι ν σου πο ει

LXE 1 Samuel 14:40 And he said to all the men of Israel, Ye shall be under subjection, and I and Jonathan my son will be under subjection: and the people said to Saul, Do that which is good in thy sight.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:40 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.

NET 1 Samuel 14:40 Then he said to all Israel, "You will be on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will be on the other side." The army replied to Saul, "Do whatever you think is best."

CSB 1 Samuel 14:40 So he said to all Israel, "You will be on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will be on the other side." And the troops replied, "Do whatever you want."

ESV 1 Samuel 14:40 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."

NIV 1 Samuel 14:40 Saul then said to all the Israelites, "You stand over there; I and Jonathan my son will stand over here." "Do what seems best to you," the men replied.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:40 Then Saul said, "Jonathan and I will stand over here, and all of you stand over there." And the people responded to Saul, "Whatever you think is best."

NRS 1 Samuel 14:40 He said to all Israel, "You shall be on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will be on the other side." The people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."

NJB 1 Samuel 14:40 He then said to all Israel, 'Stand on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will stand on

the other.' And the people replied to Saul, 'Do as you think right.'

NAB 1 Samuel 14:40 So he said to all Israel, "Stand on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will stand on the other." The people responded, "Do what you think best."

YLT 1 Samuel 14:40 And he saith unto all Israel, 'Ye -- ye are on one side, and I and Jonathan my son are on another side;' and the people say unto Saul, 'That which is good in thine eyes do.'

- Do what seemeth: 1Sa 14:7,36 2Sa 15:15
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SAUL COMMENCES A SECOND FOOLISH OATH

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." - I like the CSB paraphrase = "Do whatever you want." NLT = "Whatever you think is best." The people seem to realize what Saul wants, Saul takes (cf repetition of the verb "take" in 1Sa 8:11-17).

1 Samuel 14:41 Therefore, Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Give a perfect lot." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:41 κα ε πεν Σαουλ κ ριε θε ς Ισραηλ τ πι ο κ πεκρ θης τ δο λ σου σ μερον ε ν μο ν Ιωναθαν τ υ μου δικ α κ ριε θε ς Ισραηλ δ ς δ λους κα ν τ δε ε π ς ν τ λα σου Ισραηλ δ ς δ σι τητα κα κληρο ται Ιωναθαν κα Σαουλ κα λα ς ξ λθεν

LXE 1 Samuel 14:41 And Saul said, O Lord God of Israel, why hast thou not answered thy servant this day? is the iniquity in me, or in Jonathan my son? Lord God of Israel, give clear manifestations; and if the lot should declare this, give, I pray thee, to thy people of Israel, give, I pray, holiness. And Jonathan and Saul are taken, and the people escaped.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:41 Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped.

NET 1 Samuel 14:41 Then Saul said, "O LORD God of Israel! If this sin has been committed by me or by my son Jonathan, then, O LORD God of Israel, respond with Urim. But if this sin has been committed by your people Israel, respond with Thummim." Then Jonathan and Saul were indicated by lot, while the army was exonerated.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:41 So Saul said to the LORD, "God of Israel, give us the right decision." Jonathan and Saul were selected, and the troops were cleared of the charge.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:41 Therefore Saul said, "O LORD God of Israel, why have you not answered your 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 your people Israel, give Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:41 Then Saul prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Give me the right answer." And Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:41 Then Saul prayed, "O LORD, God of Israel, please show us who is guilty and who is innocent. " Then they cast sacred lots, and Jonathan and Saul were chosen as the guilty ones, and the people were declared innocent.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:41 Then Saul said, "O LORD God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant today? If this guilt is in me or in my son Jonathan, O LORD God of Israel, give Urim; but if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were indicated by the lot, but the people were cleared.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:41 Saul then said, 'Yahweh, God of Israel, why did you not answer your servant today? Yahweh, God of Israel, if the fault lies with me or with my son Jonathan, give urim: if the fault lies with your people Israel, give thummim.' Jonathan and Saul were indicated and the people went free.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:41 And Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel: "Why did you not answer your servant this time? If the blame for this resides in me or my son Jonathan, LORD, God of Israel, respond with Urim; but if this guilt is in your people Israel, respond with Thummim." Jonathan and Saul were designated, and the people went free.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:41 And Saul saith unto Jehovah, God of Israel, 'Give perfection;' and Jonathan and Saul are captured, and the people went out.

- Therefore: Both the Septuagint and Vulgate add much to this verse: [Kai eipe Saoul, Kyrie Lo Theos Israel, ti Loti ouk apekrithes to doulo sou semeron? ei en emoi e en Ionathan to Luio mou he adikia, Kyrie ho Theos Israel dos delous kai ean tade eipe, dos de to lao sou Israel, dos de osioteta, k.t.l.] {Et dixit Saul ad Dominum Deum Israel; Domine Deus Israel da indicium: quid est quod non responderis servo tuo hodie? Si in me, aut in Jonatha filio meo est iniquitas hec, da ostensionem: aut si hec iniquitas est in populo tuo, da sanctitatem, etc.} "And Saul said [to the Lord God of Israel, Vulg.] Lord God of Israel [give a sign, Vulg.] Why is it that thou has not answered thy servant to-day? If the iniquity be in me, or in my son Jonathan, [O Lord God of Israel, LXX.] make it manifest; and if thou say thus, give to thy people Israel, give mercy," etc., [but Vulg. Or, if this iniquity be in thy people, give sanctification," etc.]
- Give a perfect lot: or, Shew the innocent, Pr 16:33 Ac 1:24
- And Saul: 1Sa 10:20,21 Jos 7:16-18 Jon 1:7
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SAUL'S PRAYER TO THE LORD

Therefore, Saul said to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Give a perfect lot." - NIV =Then Saul prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Give me the right answer."

Note that some of the translations have more explanation. For example NJB = Saul then said, 'Yahweh, God of Israel, why did you not answer your servant today? Yahweh, God of Israel, if the fault lies with me or with my son Jonathan, give urim: if the fault lies with your people Israel, give thummim.' Jonathan and Saul were indicated and the people went free."

And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped - The people were cleared, which is notable, for they were the ones who had eaten of the blood.

CASTING LOTS - Nave's Topic

Lev. 16:8; Num. 34:13; 36:2; Josh. 17:14; 18:6, 8, 10; 21:8; 1 Chr. 6:65; 24:31; 25:8; 26:13, 14; Neh. 10:34; 11:1; Esth. 3:7; 9:24; Psalms. 22:18; Prov. 1:14; 16:33; Isa. 34:17; Ezek. 24:6; Joel 3:3; Obad. 11; Jonah 1:7; Mic. 2:5; Nah. 3:10; Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:24; Acts 1:17, 26; 1 Pet. 5:3

[Albert Bean - Lot](#) - Objects of unknown shape and material used to determine the divine will. Often in the Ancient Near East people, especially priests, made difficult and significant decisions by casting lots on the ground or drawing them from a receptacle. Several times Scripture mentions the practice. We do not know exactly what the lots looked like. Nor do we know how they were interpreted. We do know that people of the Old and New Testaments believed God (or gods in the case of non-Israelites or non-Christians) influenced the fall or outcome of the lots (Proverbs 16:33). Thus, casting lots was a way of determining God's will.

One of the best examples of this use of lots is in Acts. [Matthias](#) was chosen to be Judas' successor by lot (Acts 1:26). The apostles' prayer immediately before shows the belief that God would express His will through this method. In the Old Testament Saul was chosen as Israel's first king through the use of lots (1 Samuel 10:20-24).

In a similar fashion God communicated knowledge unknown to human beings through lots. Saul called for the casting of lots to determine who sinned during his day-long battle with the Philistines. Specifically, he called for the use of the [Urim and Thummim](#) (1 Samuel 14:41-42; See Joshua 7:10-15).

Lots helped God's people make a fair decision in complicated situations. God commanded that the Promised Land be divided by lot (Numbers 26:52-56). Later, lots established the Temple priests' order of service (1 Chronicles 24:5-19). This practice continued into Jesus' day. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, was burning incense in the holy place when the angel spoke to him. Zechariah was there because the lot fell to him (Luke 1:9). The awful picture of soldiers casting lots for Jesus' garments was this kind of "fair play" use of lots (Matthew 27:35). Proverbs teaches that the use of lots is one way to put an end to a dispute when decisions are difficult (Proverbs 18:18).

Lots are memorialized in the [Jewish Feast of Purim](#). Purim, the Akkadian word for lots, celebrates the frustration of Haman's plan to destroy the Jews in Persia. Haman had used lots to find the best day for the destruction (Esther 3:7).

Finally, the word lot came to refer to one's portion or circumstance of life. The righteous could confess that God was their lot (Psalm 16:5). The lot of those who violated the people of God was terror and annihilation (Isaiah 17:14). See [Oracles](#); [Urim and Thummim](#) .

1 Samuel 14:42 Saul said, "Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.

- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

JONATHAN TAKEN BY LOTS

Saul said, "Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken - God is in control of lots, and he took the guilty party Jonathan, even though Jonathan had acted innocently (1Sa 14:27).

NET NOTE The LXX includes the following words: "Whomever the Lord will indicate by the lot, let him die! And the people said to Saul, 'It is not this word.' But Saul prevailed over the people, and they cast lots between him and between Jonathan his son."

1 Samuel 14:43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." So Jonathan told him and said, "I indeed tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am, I must die!"

- **Tell me:** Jos 7:19 Jon 1:7-10
- **I indeed tasted a little hone** 1Sa 14:27
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JONATHAN CONFESSES AND ACCEPTS DEATH

Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." So Jonathan told him and said, "I indeed tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am, I must die - This confession and willingness to die for a taste of honey speaks volumes about the character of Jonathan. There is little doubt we will meet him in heaven some day.

NET NOTE Heb "Look, I, I will die." Apparently Jonathan is acquiescing to his anticipated fate of death. However, the words may be taken as sarcastic ("Here I am about to die!") or as a question, "Must I now die?" (cf. NAB, NIV, NCV, NLT).

1 Samuel 14:44 Saul said, "May God do this to me and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan."

BGT 1 Samuel 14:44 κα ε πεν α τ Σαουλ τ δε ποι σαι μοι θε ς κα τ δε προσθε η τι θαν τ ποθαν σ μερον

LXE 1 Samuel 14:44 And Saul said to him, God do so to me, and more also, thou shalt surely die to-day.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:44 And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.

NET 1 Samuel 14:44 Saul said, "God will punish me severely if Jonathan doesn't die!"

CSB 1 Samuel 14:44 Saul declared to him, "May God punish me and do so severely if you do not die, Jonathan!"

ESV 1 Samuel 14:44 And Saul said, "God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan."

NIV 1 Samuel 14:44 Saul said, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan."

NLT 1 Samuel 14:44 "Yes, Jonathan," Saul said, "you must die! May God strike me and even kill me if you do not die for this."

NRS 1 Samuel 14:44 Saul said, "God do so to me and more also; you shall surely die, Jonathan!"

NJB 1 Samuel 14:44 Saul said, 'May God bring unnameable ills on me, and worse ones too, if you do not die, Jonathan!'

NAB 1 Samuel 14:44 Saul said, "May God do thus and so to me if you do not indeed die, Jonathan!"

YLT 1 Samuel 14:44 And Saul saith, 'Thus doth God do, and thus doth He add, for thou dost certainly die, Jonathan.'

- **May God do this to me:** 1Sa 25:22 Ru 1:17 2Sa 3:9 19:13
- **for you shall surely die:** 1Sa 14:39 Ge 38:24 2Sa 12:5,31 Pr 25:16
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Saul said, "May God do this to me and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan."- Saul again compounds his previous unwise oaths with another foolish oath! In other words Saul is saying , "Jonathan, I must certainly put you to death. If I don't, may God punish me greatly." Again, Saul shows his lack of wisdom. Note he seems to make an oath or vow, and in the subsequent description of his life it certainly appears that God is in fact punishing him greatly. Saul shows his pride for his honor and authority by being willing to go through with the vow to kill his own son.

[Guzik](#) correctly assesses Saul's character at this point - Saul was willing to kill his son rather than to humbly admit that he was really at fault. Saul started out as a humble man (1 Samuel 10:21), but his once impressive humility was overtaken by pride.

Matthew Poole - "Strange perverseness! He who was so indulgent as to spare wicked [Agag](#), chapter 15, is now so severe as to destroy his own worthy son."

1 Samuel 14:45 But the people said to Saul, "Must Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Far from it! 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.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:45 κα ε πεν λα ς πρ ς Σαουλ ε σ μερον θανατωθ σεται ποι σας τ ν σωτηρ αν τ ν μεγ λην τα την ν Ισραηλ ζ κ ριος ε πεσε ται τ ς τριχ ς τ ς κεφαλ ς α το π τ ν γ ν τι λα ς το θεο πο ησεν τ ν μ ραν τα την κα προση ξατο λα ς περ Ιωναθαν ν τ μ ρ κε ν κα ο κ π θανεν

LXE 1 Samuel 14:45 And the people said to Saul, Shall he that has wrought this great salvation in Israel be put to death this day? As the Lord lives, there shall not fall to the ground one of the hairs of his head; for the people of God have wrought successfully this day. And the people prayed for Jonathan in that day, and he died not.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:45 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.

NET 1 Samuel 14:45 But the army said to Saul, "Should Jonathan, who won this great victory in Israel, die? May it never be! As surely as the LORD lives, not a single hair of his head will fall to the ground! For it is with the help of God that he has acted today." So the army rescued Jonathan from death.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:45 But the people said to Saul, "Must Jonathan die, who accomplished such a great deliverance for Israel? No, as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he worked with God's help today." So the people redeemed Jonathan, and he did not die.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:45 Then the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." So the people ransomed Jonathan, so that he did not die.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:45 But the men said to Saul, "Should Jonathan die--he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God's help." So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:45 But the people broke in and said to Saul, "Jonathan has won this great victory for Israel. Should he die? Far from it! As surely as the LORD lives, not one hair on his head will be touched, for God helped him do a great deed today." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:45 Then the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great victory in Israel? Far from it! As the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground; for he has worked with God today." So the people ransomed Jonathan, and he did not die.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:45 But the people said to Saul, 'Must Jonathan die after winning this great victory for Israel? We will never allow that! As Yahweh lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for his deeds today have been done with the help of God.' And so the people ransomed Jonathan and he was not put to death.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:45 But the army said to Saul: "Is Jonathan to die, though it was he who brought Israel this great victory? This must not be! As the LORD lives, not a single hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for God was with him in what he did today!" Thus the soldiers were able to rescue Jonathan from death.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:45 And the people say unto Saul, 'Doth Jonathan die who wrought this great salvation in Israel? -- a profanation! Jehovah liveth, if there falleth from the hair of his head to the earth, for with God he hath wrought this day;' and the people rescue Jonathan, and he hath not died.

- **who has brought about this great deliverance:** 1Sa 14:23 19:5 Ne 9:27
- **not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground:** 2Sa 14:11 1Ki 1:52 Mt 10:30 Lu 21:18 Ac 27:34
- **he has worked with God this day** 2Ch 19:11 Isa 13:3 Ac 14:27 15:12 21:19 Ro 15:18 1Co 3:9 2Co 6:1 Php 2:12,13 Rev 17:14 19:14
- **So the people rescued Jonathan:** Isa 29:20,21
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PEOPLE'S COURT CONVENES AND ISSUES SAYS "NOT GUILTY"

But - Praise God for the "buts" in Scripture as this one changes the direction from a death sentence for Jonathan to a reprieve and life. I like the NLT rendering "But the people broke in"

The people said to Saul, "Must Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel?" They are like a defense attorney asking this question. They praise Jonathan, not Saul, as the one who was responsible for their great victory.

Far from it! - The people give a firm answer to their question.

As the LORD lives - This essentially introduces an oath by the people.

Not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day." - The people as "jury" are unanimous in their decision and their explanation is "airtight" as Jonathan did "work with God" in bringing about this miraculous deliverance against overwhelming odds.

So the people rescued ([padah](#) - "ransomed" = ESV, NRSV; "redeemed" = CSB) **Jonathan and he did not die.** The people judged rightly, that the guilt was contracted by Saul, and not by Jonathan; and therefore they rescued him from the hands of his rash and severe father.

Rescued (redeemed) ([06299](#)) [padah](#) means to redeem, ransom, buy and so to cause the freedom or release of a person from bondage or ownership, often implying a delivering or rescue of a person in distress. **Padah** is not used in Ruth. The basic meaning of the Hebrew root is to achieve the transfer of ownership from one to another through payment of a price or an equivalent substitute. **Padah** is used to depict God's act of redeeming; He **redeemed** His people with a mighty hand from Pharaoh and the slavery they were under in Egypt (Dt. 7:8; Mic. 6:4). Egypt was literally the house of slavery and became the symbol of slavery and oppression from which Israel was delivered (Dt. 9:26; 24:18).

Padah - 42v - any means redeem(1), ransom(4), ransomed(7), redeem(24), redeemed(18), redeems(1), redemption price(1), rescued(1), surely redeem(1), way been redeemed(1). Exod. 13:13; Exod. 13:15; Exod. 21:8; Exod. 34:20; Lev. 19:20; Lev. 27:27; Lev. 27:29; Num. 3:46; Num. 3:49; Num. 3:51; Num. 18:15; Num. 18:16; Num. 18:17; Deut. 7:8; Deut. 9:26; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 15:15; Deut. 21:8; Deut. 24:18; 1 Sam. 14:45; 2 Sam. 4:9; 2 Sam. 7:23; 1 Ki. 1:29; 1 Chr. 17:21; Neh. 1:10; Job 5:20; Job 6:23; Job 33:28; Ps. 25:22; Ps. 26:11; Ps. 31:5; Ps. 34:22; Ps. 44:26; Ps. 49:7; Ps. 49:15; Ps. 55:18; Ps. 69:18; Ps. 71:23; Ps. 78:42; Ps.

THE CONTRASTS BETWEEN SAUL AND JONATHAN	
SAUL	JONATHAN
Empty words—broken promises	A man of action
He appears religious, making vows	He shows great faith in his life
He hesitates and waits	He is bold and courageous
He did foolish things	He is wise.
He brought out the worst in the army.	He brought out the best in the army.

G Campbell Morgan - The people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.—1 Sam. 14.45.

In this act the true Theocracy, that is, the people God-governed, and so the true democracy, asserted their will against that of the king, and setting aside his ruling, prevented a great wrong. Saul 's oath was one of rashness, and was wholly wrong. As Dr.- Kirkpatrick has pointed out, it led to three evil results, viz.: It hindered rather than helped the pursuit of the enemy; it involved Jonathan in involuntary trespass; it indirectly occasioned the sin of the people. When the result threatened was the death of Jonathan, all the deepest things in national life found expression, and the king was gloriously disobeyed. It is an arresting and assuring fact that this has often happened in human history. Deep down in the human heart there is that which understands the right; and over and over again, under stress of circumstances, that understanding becomes active. When it does, it is invincible. Nothing can stand before it. Kings, rulers, parliaments, are swept aside, and the right is done. Those who desire to lead men in right ways may always appeal to this deepest fact in human consciousness. That is not to say that the appeal will, always be obeyed. There are times when the voice of the people is by no means the voice of God. In such cases however we may know that the voice of the people is contradicting the deepest knowledge of the people. God has never left Himself without witness in the human soul, and whenever we appeal for righteousness and truth, we may know that there is an answering appeal within, the human conscience. (Borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#))

1 Samuel 14:46 Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:46 καὶ ἦν βῆ Σαουλ πῦρ πρὸς τὴν ἀλλοφύλων καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι φύλοι πῦρ ἐς τὴν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ

LXE 1 Samuel 14:46 And Saul went up from following the Philistines; and the Philistines departed to their place.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines: and the Philistines went to their own place.

NET 1 Samuel 14:46 Then Saul stopped chasing the Philistines, and the Philistines went back home.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:46 Then Saul gave up the pursuit of the Philistines, and the Philistines returned to their own territory.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:46 Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:46 Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they withdrew to their own land.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:46 Then Saul called back the army from chasing the Philistines, and the Philistines returned home.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:46 Then Saul withdrew from pursuing the Philistines; and the Philistines went to their own place.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:46 Saul decided not to pursue the Philistines, and the Philistines retired to their own territory.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:46 After that Saul gave up the pursuit of the Philistines, who returned to their own territory.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:46 And Saul goeth up from after the Philistines, and the Philistines have gone to their place;

- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CHASING THE PHILISTINES CALLED OFF

Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place -Saul gave up chasing the Philistines who made it safely to their own land, minus those that had been slaughtered. How would the passage in 1Sa 14:52 have read if Saul had not delayed (all because of his own foolish vows) and charged forth immediately to route the Philistine army? Just wondering!

THOUGHT - What are the "Philistines" in your life? Have you (for whatever reason) delayed in routing the "Philistines" to the point of annihilating them? As a result are you continually experiencing intense spiritual struggle with the "Philistines?" God wants us to kill that sin ("Philistine") before it kills us! Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones once preached 4 messages on Romans 8:13+ ([click for sermons](#)) because it was his contention that this was the most important passage in a disciple's arsenal for killing sin! It is the last clause which is most significant for Paul writes "if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." If I could be so bold as to suggest - you can kill the "Philistine" in our life Jonathan's way or you can try to kill it Saul's way. The only victory we will have over that sin is the victory the Spirit of the Lord enables. Yes, we must still make the choice to daily kill that sin, but we can only do so effectively by relying on the supernatural strength of the Spirit (the "Jonathan" way), the Spirit giving us both the desire and the power to kill that sin (Php 2:13NLT+). Can I show you some grace? Don't become frustrated or discouraged if every now and then the "Philistines" have a "revival" because this spiritual war is not about "perfection" but about "direction!" Keep on pressing on, trusting in and relying on the supernatural power of the Spirit to kill that "Philistine" in your life

Guzik on the Philistines went to their own place - The implication in this phrase is that the victory might have been greater if not for Saul's foolish oath.

David Thompson - A believer can be one who has experienced many great blessings of God and still be a spiritual dud. One could have received many blessings for 25 years and never have a right relationship with God. That is the story of King Saul. He appeared to be a great winner but he was a loser.....It is possible to have a few victories in life actually given to us by God and still not be a real dedicated servant of God. One commentator observed you could have a string of victories at church and still not have a life that pleases God. Saul had a heart problem and he never got it resolved. A pastor friend of mine said he had a guy in his church who had given up alcohol and tobacco and still never went anywhere for God. That is Saul. You may be a believer and you may be able to point to moments of victory. In fact, you may have enjoyed prosperity for 25 years and still be a spiritual dud and loser. That is the story of Saul....(he adds) We must be very careful about emotional decisions we make and emotional things we say because what we say may come back to haunt us. That which starts in rashness will end in grief. Just ask Custer, just ask Saul.

1 Samuel 14:47 Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:47 καὶ Σαουλ κατακληρονομήσας τὸν θρόνον ἐπὶ τῷ Μωάβ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἀμμων καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἐδωμ καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ Βαιθεωρ καὶ ἐπὶ βασιλεὺς Σουβὰ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐν ὅπου ἐστράφη σέξεται

LXE 1 Samuel 14:47 And Saul received the kingdom, by lot he inherits the office of ruling over Israel: and he fought against all his enemies round about, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against the children of Edom, and against Baethaeor, and against the king of Suba, and against the Philistines: whithersoever he turned, he was victorious.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:47 So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side,

against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them.

NET 1 Samuel 14:47 After Saul had secured his royal position over Israel, he fought against all their enemies on all sides-- the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. In every direction that he turned he was victorious.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:47 When Saul assumed the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies in every direction: against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he caused havoc.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:47 When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned he routed them.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:47 After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought against their enemies on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment on them.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:47 Now when Saul had secured his grasp on Israel's throne, he fought against his enemies in every direction-- against Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. And wherever he turned, he was victorious.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:47 When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side-- against Moab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines; wherever he turned he routed them.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:47 Saul consolidated his rule over Israel and made war on all his enemies on all fronts: on Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the king of Zobah and the Philistines; whichever way he turned, he was victorious.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:47 After taking over the kingship of Israel, Saul waged war on all their surrounding enemies-- Moab, the Ammonites, Aram, Beth-rehob, the king of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he was successful

YLT 1 Samuel 14:47 and Saul captured the kingdom over Israel, and he fighteth round about against all his enemies, against Moab, and against the Bene-Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines, and whithersoever he turneth he doth vex them.

- Saul: 1Sa 13:1
- fought: 2Ki 14:27
- Ammon: 1Sa 11:11 12:2
- Zobah: 2Sa 10:6 1Ki 11:23
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

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SUMMARY OF SAUL'S VICTORIES

Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel - NLT = "Now when Saul had secured his grasp on Israel's throne"

he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment - Given the verdict of Samuel that his kingdom would not endure, it is surprising he exerted such power over his enemies on every side. So Saul expanded Israel's borders in all direction as you can see in the map above - to the South - Edom, to the East - Ammon and Moab, N (Zobah - a portion of Syria which formed a separate kingdom i located northeast of Damascus), and West - Philistia. Note Amalek described in the next verse and in chapter 15 was located toward the Southwest.

[David Thompson](#) - There is an old saying: "If you succeed without suffering, it is because someone else suffered before you. If you suffer without succeeding, it is because someone will succeed after you." Saul had walked into a dream job and he was succeeding

and for him there was not much suffering. He was not looking to become king, but God had made him king and He had blessed him and was blessing him.

1 Samuel 14:48 He acted valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:48 καὶ ποῦσεν ὁ ναμὶν καὶ πταξεν τὴν Ἀμαλὴκ καὶ ἔξλατο τὴν Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ χειρὸς τῶν καταπᾶτο ντῶν αὐτῶν

LXE 1 Samuel 14:48 And he wrought valiantly, and smote Amalec, and rescued Israel out of the hand of them that trampled on him.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:48 And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.

NET 1 Samuel 14:48 He fought bravely, striking down the Amalekites and delivering Israel from the hand of its enemies.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:48 He fought bravely, defeated the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hand of those who plundered them.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:48 And he did valiantly and struck the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:48 He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:48 He performed great deeds and conquered the Amalekites, saving Israel from all those who had plundered them.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:48 He did valiantly, and struck down the Amalekites, and rescued Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:48 He did great deeds of valour; he defeated the Amalekites and delivered Israel from those who used to pillage him.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:48 and fought bravely. He defeated Amalek and delivered Israel from the hands of those who were plundering them.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:48 And he maketh a force, and smiteth Amalek, and delivereth Israel out of the hand of its spoiler.

RSV 1 Samuel 14:48 And he did valiantly, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them.

- defeated: 1Sa 15:3-7 Ex 17:14 De 25:19
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

He acted valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them- This is one of the more positive statements about Saul, but this victory had a major problem as described in 1 Samuel 15.

1 Samuel 14:49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan and Ishvi and Malchi-shua; and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn Merab and the name of the younger Michal.

- **Jonathan:** 1Sa 31:2 1Ch 8:33 9:39
- **name of the firstborn:** 1Sa 18:7-21 25:44 2Sa 3:13-16 6:20-23
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan and [Ishvi](#) and [Malchi-shua](#); and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn [Merab](#) and the name of the younger [Michal](#) - Saul's oldest son Jonathan and youngest daughter Michal will play

significant roles in the next king's life.

Wiersbe - The facts about the royal family are summarized in vv. 49–51, but when they are compared with other texts (1 Sam. 9:2; 2 Sam. 21:8; 1 Chron. 8:29–33; 9:39), they reveal some problems. Saul's grandfather was Abiel and his father Kish (1 Sam. 9:1–2). Ner was his uncle and Abner ("son of Ner") was captain of the army (14:51). Only three sons are mentioned (Jonathan, Ishvi, and Mal-chishua), while later texts speak also of [Abinadab](#) and [Esh-Baal](#) (ED: ANOTHER NAME FOR [Ishbosheth](#)) (1 Chron. 8:33; 9:39). He had two daughters, Merab and Michel, and all of these children were by his wife Ahinoam. His concubine Rizpah bore him Armoni and Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 21:8). (Borrow [Be successful](#))

NET NOTE The list differs from others. In 1 Sam 31:2 (= 1 Chr 10:2), Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki-Shua are listed as Saul's sons, while 1 Chr 8:33 and 1Ch 9:39 list Jonathan, Malki-Shua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal.

1 Samuel 14:50 The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the captain of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

- the name of the captain: 1Sa 17:55 2Sa 2:8 3:27
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The name of Saul's wife was [Ahinoam](#) the daughter of [Ahimaaz](#).

And the name of the captain of his army was [Abner](#) the son of [Ner](#), Saul's uncle

NET NOTE The word "uncle" can modify either Abner or Ner.

Abner - **ABNER** - ab'-ner ('abhner; in 1Sa 14:50 the Hebrew has the fuller form, 'abhiner, Abiner; compare Abiram by the side of Abram; meaning, "my father is a lamp"): Captain of the host under Saul and Ishbosheth (Eshbaal). He was Saul's cousin; Ner the father of Abner and Kish the father of Saul being brothers, the sons of Abiel (1Sa 14:50 f). In 1 Ch 8:33; 9:39 the text appears to be faulty; read: And Ner begat Abner, and Kish begat Saul. According to 1 Ch 27:21 Abner had a son by the name of Jaasiel.

Abner was to Saul what [Joab](#) was to David. Despite the many wars waged by Saul, we hear little of Abner during Saul's lifetime. Not even in the account of the battle of Gilboa is mention made of him. Yet both his high office and his kinship to the king must have brought the two men in close contact. On festive occasions it was the custom of Abner to sit at table by the king's side (1Sa 20:25). It was Abner who introduced the young David fresh from his triumph over Goliath to the king's court (so according to the account in 1Sa 17:57). We find Abner accompanying the king in his pursuit of David (1Sa 26:5 ff). Abner is rebuked by David for his negligence in keeping watch over his master (ibid., 15).

Upon the death of Saul, Abner took up the cause of the young heir to the throne, [Ishbosheth](#), whom he forthwith removed from the neighborhood of David to [Mahanaim](#) in the East-Jordanic country. There he proclaimed him king over all Israel. By the pool of Gibeon he and his men met Joab and the servants of David. Twelve men on each side engaged in combat which ended disastrously for Abner who fled. He was pursued by [Asahel](#), Joab's brother, whom Abner slew. Though [Joab](#) and his brother [Abishai](#) sought to avenge their brother's death on the spot, a truce was effected; Abner was permitted to go his way after three hundred and threescore of his men had fallen. Joab naturally watched his opportunity. Abner and his master soon had a quarrel over Saul's concubine, [Rizpah](#), with whom Abner was intimate. It was certainly an act of treason which [Ishbosheth](#) was bound to resent. The disgruntled general made overtures to David; he won over the tribe of Benjamin. With twenty men of them he came to [Hebron](#) and arranged with the king of Judah that he would bring over to his side all Israel. He was scarcely gone when [Joab](#) learned of the affair; without the knowledge of David he recalled him to Hebron where he slew him, "for the blood of [Asahel](#) his brother." David mourned sincerely the death of Abner. "Know ye not," he addressed his servants, "that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" He followed the bier in person. Of the royal lament over Abner a fragment is quoted:

"Should Abner die as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall."

(See 2Sa 3:6-38.) The death of Abner, while it thus cannot in any wise be laid at the door of David, nevertheless served his purposes well. The backbone of the opposition to David was broken, and he was soon proclaimed as king by all Israel. Max L. Margolis

1 Samuel 14:51 Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

- **Kish:** 1Sa 9:1,21
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Kish was the father of **Saul**, and **Ner** the father of **Abner** was the son of **Abiel**

NET NOTE 1 Chr 9:35–36 indicates that Jeiel (= Abiel?) had two sons (among others) named Ner and Kish (see also 1 Sam 9:1 and 1 Chr 8:30, where some Greek manuscripts include the name Ner, though it is absent in the Hebrew text). If this Kish was the father of Saul and Ner was the father of Abner, then Saul and Abner were cousins. However, according to 1 Chr 8:33 and 9:39, Ner, not Abiel, was the father of Kish. In this case, Kish and Abner were brothers and Abner was Saul's uncle. The simplest solution to the problem is to see two men named Kish in the genealogy: Abiel (Jeiel) was the father of Ner and Kish I. Ner was the father of Abner and Kish II. Kish II was the father of Saul. The Kish mentioned in 1 Sam 9:1 was the father of Saul (v. 2) and must be identified as Kish II. In this case the genealogy is "gapped," with Ner being omitted. Abiel was the grandfather of Kish II.

1 Samuel 14:52 Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff.

BGT 1 Samuel 14:52 καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἡ μάχη ἦν ἐναντίον τοῦ λαοῦ τῶν Φιλισταίων πρὸς τὸν Σαουλ καὶ ὁ Σαουλ πᾶσι τοῖς ἡμέτεροις καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ἀνδράσι τοῖς ἀνδρείοις καὶ συνέλαβεν αὐτοὺς ἑαυτῷ

LXE 1 Samuel 14:52 And the war was vehement against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man, and any valiant man, then he took them to himself.

KJV 1 Samuel 14:52 And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

NET 1 Samuel 14:52 There was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. So whenever Saul saw anyone who was a warrior or a brave individual, he would conscript him.

CSB 1 Samuel 14:52 The conflict with the Philistines was fierce all of Saul's days, so whenever Saul noticed any strong or brave man, he enlisted him.

ESV 1 Samuel 14:52 There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself.

NIV 1 Samuel 14:52 All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines, and whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him into his service.

NLT 1 Samuel 14:52 The Israelites fought constantly with the Philistines throughout Saul's lifetime. So whenever Saul observed a young man who was brave and strong, he drafted him into his army.

NRS 1 Samuel 14:52 There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any strong or valiant warrior, he took him into his service.

NJB 1 Samuel 14:52 There was fierce warfare with the Philistines throughout Saul's life. Any strong or valiant man who caught Saul's eye, he recruited into his service.

NAB 1 Samuel 14:52 An unrelenting war was waged against the Philistines during Saul's lifetime. When Saul saw any strong or brave man, he took him into his service.

YLT 1 Samuel 14:52 And the war is severe against the Philistines all the days of Saul; when Saul hath seen any mighty man, and any son of valour, then he doth gather him unto himself.

- **when Saul:** 1Sa 8:1,11
- [1 Samuel 14 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Philistia's Location Facilitated Frequent Attacks

SAUL'S CONTINUAL WAR WITH THE PHILISTINES

Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul- NLT - "The Israelites fought constantly with the Philistines throughout Saul's lifetime" One would bring forth a giant Philistine named Goliath who would be slain by David, launching him into the limelight as the future great king of Israel. **All the days of Saul** included the very last day of Saul's life! (1Sa 31:1-3+).

What a dramatic contrast with the summary of the life of Samuel, the man of God "So **the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.**" 1Sa 7

and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff - This was just as Samuel had predicted in 1Sa 8:11 "He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots."

MacArthur - Saul looked for the good warriors and attached them to his personal force. David was one such man, who would also continue this practice under his rule (2Sa 23:8-39). (Borrow [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Honey and Blood

I Samuel 14

John Kitto

About seven miles north by east from Jerusalem is a steep, precipitous valley extending east and west. North of this valley, which is called in I Samuel 13:23, "the passage of Michmash" (now Wady es-Suweinit), lay the Philistine host, which had established a garrison, or advanced post, upon the high promontory or angle formed by the intersection of another valley extending north and south. Upon the heights about a mile on the southern side of the same passage of Michmash, stood Geba, from which Jonathan had lately expelled the Philistine garrison, and which Saul and Jonathan now occupied with not more than six hundred men. Michmash (now Mukhmas), which gave name to the passage, and where the Philistine outpost was stationed, and Geba (now Jeba), therefore, were separated by this valley, and were then, as now, in sight of each other. In this "passage," near by the point where the other valley intersects it, are two hills of a conical, or rather spherical shape, having steep rocky sides, with small wadies running up behind each, so as almost to isolate them. One is on the side towards Jeba, and the other on the side towards Mukhmas. These are apparently the two mentioned in connection with the circumstances to which our attention is now directed, and which these particulars will better enable the reader to understand.

We may be sure that the movements of the Philistine force, stationed on the height at Michmash, were watched with much attention and solicitude from Saul's head-quarters at Geba. This attention may have been reciprocal. One morning an extraordinary

commotion was discovered among the Philistines. Its nature could not well be discovered in the gray of the morning, and in the want of telescopes. It is clear there is a conflict of some kind going on; and see, the host gradually melts away, as if the men were beating down one another. What could it be? The Philistines had no enemies but the Israelites. Was it some broil among themselves, or had some of the garrison undertaken, without orders, a wild and desperate enterprise? When the latter thought crossed the mind of Saul, he hastened to muster his small army, or rather troop, to see if any were absent, and then he found that all were there except Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and knowing the chivalrous and daring character of his son, he had no doubt but that his hand was in this affair. It was so, indeed. That heroic young prince, strong in the true old Gideonic faith—that, as he said, “There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few,” had privately prevailed upon his armor-bearer to settle the rock and penetrate to the Philistine garrison. Now, it is stated, in conformity with the above description, that “between the passages by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistine garrison, 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 Senez. The forefront of the one was situate northward, over against Michmash, and the other southward, over against Geba.” It seems to us that Jonathan chose to make the attempt here, by the hill Bozez, not only because of some facility afforded, but because the projection of the hill would conceal his advance till a good part of the ascent had been made.

When at length the two men were discovered by the sentinels scrambling up the rock, it was supposed that they were of those who had hid themselves in caverns, and who had no doubt come as deserters to the Philistines. This seems to us the obvious inference from the words,—“Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.” This was a reasonable conjecture; for, in fact, a little way further down the valley there are caverns in the cliffs, particularly one great cavern called Jaiyah; and it was not to be imagined that two men could be coming with hostile intentions. This explains also why no attempt was made to hinder their ascent after they were discovered, but they were rather invited to come up. Had their hostile purpose been suspected, nothing could have been easier than to destroy them, by casting down stones or other missiles upon them. As soon as Jonathan and his armor-bearer had gained a footing upon the top of the cliff, their intentions were at once evinced. The scouts or sentinels were speedily struck down, and on the two heroes marched, destroying all who opposed them. By the time they had slain twenty men, the alarm spread to the garrison, and created a general panic and confusion. Those who had seen how the assailants got up were dead. It was not known how they had got there, nor that there were only two of them; and those who did see but two, would scarcely conceive that there were no more, but must have supposed that these two belonged to a larger number, perhaps to Saul’s entire force, which had gained possession of the post: for where but two had ascended, it was clear that more could come. In their blind fury and fear they ran against each other, and slew all they met; while those who fled, hastened to the main army, carrying their own terrors to it. Their tale no doubt conveyed that the strong post at Michmash, believed to be inaccessible, had been seized by a large force of the Hebrews, who were in close pursuit, and might soon be expected. And, in fact, the crests of the Hebrews soon appeared in sight; for Saul no sooner discovered the fact from Geba, than he put his force in motion to take advantage of the panic that appeared to have been raised among the Philistines, his troop being at every step, augmented by the fugitive Israelites, who, now the tide had turned, flocked—such of them as were near enough—to his standard, as eager to join in the pursuit of an enemy already defeated by his fears, as they had sunk appalled from the aspect of his strength. There is a curious statement, that “moreover, the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.” This shows that there were some Israelites with the Philistines, being, as we conceive, deserters, who had betaken themselves for safety and subsistence to them as the stronger party. This fact strengthens the probability we have ventured to suggest, that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were taken for deserters by the sentries who saw them scaling the cliffs.

The pursuit was hot and bloody, as it was likely to be under the circumstances; for the Hebrews had many ancient and recent wrongs to avenge, and they would not fail to exact retribution for their late fears.

Saul was so apprehensive lest any part of this great opportunity of effectually humbling the Philistines should be lost, that, in the hearing of the troops, though not in that of Jonathan, who was not near at the moment, he laid an anathema upon any one who should taste food until the evening. The people, in consequence, were greatly distressed, being prevented from taking even such refreshments as offered in the way, although greatly needed. Jonathan, with one of the pursuing parties, was passing through a wood, which so abounded with honey, that it dropped upon the ground. But no man ventured to touch it except Jonathan, who, being ignorant of his father’s ban, put the end of his staff into a honey-comb, and raised it to his mouth. This fact is of some interest, as a perfectly incidental illustration of the phrase, so frequent with Moses, describing Canaan, as “a land flowing with milk and honey.” To ourselves, the fact of wild bees thus fixing their combs in the woods upon the trees, to the extent here intimated, seems somewhat strange, although the tendency of these insects to do this is shown by the frequency with which the swarms of our hive-bees alight upon trees. Although we never kept bees, nor did our immediate neighbors in the country, we have had swarms repeatedly alight upon the trees of our garden, where they would probably have established themselves in some way, if not captured for the hive. We should like to have the experiment tried of letting them alone, to see how they would manage their own affairs. We very much doubt if bees were kept by the ancient Hebrews in hives. The woods, we apprehend, so abounded in the settlements of wild bees, that honey was too abundant and cheap to be worth private attention. It was the property of whoever collected it; and as all who wanted

it could not do that, doubtless many poor persons earned a subsistence by collecting it in the woods, and selling it in the towns at such a price as would just pay them for this trouble. "Bees in the East," says Mr. Roberts, "are not, as in England, kept in hives; they are all in a wild state. The forests literally flow with honey; large combs may be seen hanging in the trees as you pass along, full of honey. Hence this article is cheap and plentiful." It is true, that this writer has a tropical country (India) in view; but the statement is applicable to many other countries in which bees and the materials for their wax and honey abound, as was the case in the land of Canaan. Probably, as population increased, and the soil became more densely occupied by men, the product of honey decreased, and then the bees were reared in hives. Hence, in the time of Christ, we read of "wild honey," implying that there was some not wild; but this distinction is not to be found in the Old Testament.

Another remarkable consequence flowed from this unwise restriction which Saul imposed. No sooner had the sun gone down, than the famishing people flew upon the spoil of cattle, and in the rage of their hunger hastily slew them, and began to eat, if not the raw flesh, as we apprehend, yet at least flesh so imperfectly exsanguinated, from improper slaughtering and imperfect dressing, that the law against the eating of meat with any blood remaining in it was visibly transgressed. The importance attached to this law by the Hebrews has always been most remarkable, and continues even to the present day, when a Jew will not touch meat that has been killed by a Christian, chiefly from the belief that the blood has not properly been discharged; and during a journey he will abstain from animal food altogether, except when he comes to places where he can obtain that which has been killed by Jews—or has himself been so well instructed in the proper usages as to have obtained a license to slay for himself—in which case he can kill a fowl occasionally for his own use. These customs are well illustrated in the Orphans of Lissau, in which we find it stated, that the Jews of Ramsgate formerly got all their meat from Canterbury, having among themselves no one qualified to kill in the proper manner.

When Jonathan's transgression in regard to the honey became known to Saul, he was for putting his son to death, according to the tenor of his vow. But this the more enlightened consciences of the people forbade. With generous enthusiasm they cried,—“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.” These remarkable words should be meditated upon in connection with those addressed by Jonathan himself that morning to his armor-bearer,—“It may be the Lord will work for us.” The Lord did work for him; and truly he wrought with God. It was a great day for Israel, and from the beginning to the end, Jonathan was the hero of that day.

“Two Putting Ten Thousand to Flight”

(1 SAMUEL 14)

F B Meyer

Oh! I have seen the day,
When with a single word,—
God helping me to say
‘My trust is in the Lord!’
My soul hath quelled a thousand foes,
Fearless of all that could oppose.
—COWPER.

JUST two young men, with the glow of patriotism in their hearts, and trust in God as their guiding-star—what may they not effect?

Jonathan was a true knight of God, who anticipated some of the noblest traits of Christian chivalry. We may almost say of him that he was the Hebrew Bayard, a soldier without fear and without reproach. He lived pure, spoke true, righted wrong, was faithful to the high claims of human love, and followed the Christ, though as yet he knew Him not. His character serves as a bright background on which that of his father is but a sorry contrast.

From the Jordan bank a noble valley, twelve miles in length, leads up into the hill country of Central Palestine, and so to the seaboard of the Mediterranean. Two miles from the head of this defile, and about eight miles due north of Jerusalem, the cliffs on either side become very precipitous, and approach each other almost to touching.

Conceive of a very narrow pass protected on either side by steep walls of chalky formation on which only the wild goats could find a footing, and almost unscalable by man. The ridge on the north, which rises above an almost perpendicular crag into three knolls, was called Bozez, or “shining,” because it reflects all day the full light of the Eastern sun, whilst that on the south, a few yards distant, was known as Seneh, “the acacia,” being as constantly in the shade. Michmash crowned the former, and there the Philistines were encamped, whilst the little village of Geba lay above the latter, and thither Saul had removed his army, such as it

was, withdrawing from the plains of the Jordan to watch the movements of the hostile force.

How long the armies watched each other we have no means of knowing, nor can we guess what the result might have been had it not been for the heroic episode which we are to recount; but it is certain that Israel was absolutely spiritless. At the most the men of war who gathered around the pomegranate tree where Saul had pitched his tent numbered only 600, and these had only such rude weapons as clubs and goads.

Jonathan chafed at the inaction and the disgrace which the whole situation attached to his countrymen. He was animated also by a profound faith in God, and was prompted by the Divine Spirit to an act which issued in a glorious victory and deliverance.

I. JONATHAN ENTERED INTO THE DIVINE PURPOSE.—It seemed to him impossible to suppose that God had forsaken the people of his choice or withdrawn from his ancient covenant. Had He promised, and could He not perform? Were not the people of Israel his chosen heritage? Had He not chosen them out of all the world, that they might be the custodians and purveyors of Divine truth to the nations? Was not the land of Canaan made over to them by an irrevocable deed of gift? Did not all the miraculous leadings and interpositions of the past confirm such an interpretation of the Divine purpose? Surely, then, the present state of things could not be according to the Divine will! Surely the purpose of the Almighty was in conflict with the invasion of the land by these Philistine hordes, and only waited for some believing soul to enter into full communion with its mighty current, and deliverance would be secured!

Saul, on the other hand, had no perception of these things. The great past failed to speak to him. Discouraged by what met his eye and ear from morning to night, he had no power to rouse himself to lay hold on the Divine promise of deliverance. The sentence of deposition, which Samuel had so recently pronounced, like a stone on the mouth of a tomb, seemed to shut him up to despair.

It is of the utmost importance in this mortal life, when heart and flesh fail before the giant wrongs that assert themselves against the well-being of mankind—such as the drink-traffic, the mania for betting and gambling, impurity, and the insensate absorption in pleasure, which are the Philistines of our time—to look away to the Divine purpose, as disclosed in the redemption achieved on the Cross by the blood of the world's Redeemer. Surely that cannot have been shed in vain. The power and potency of the Divine might are pledged to realise and accomplish that full deliverance of which the Cross was prophecy. The Son of Man has been manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil; and He will not fail nor be discouraged until that purpose has been realised. Happy are they who, like Jonathan, raise themselves above the depression of the moment in living fellowship with these eternal facts, and ally their weakness and helplessness with the march of God, as He is ever going forth to establish righteousness and judgment in the earth, which has been redeemed by precious blood.

II. HE YIELDED HIMSELF AS AN INSTRUMENT.—God always works through human means. He calls us into fellowship with Himself, so that the Divine tides shall flow through human channels. He will multiply the bread, but He requires human hands to distribute it. He raises the dead, but man must roll away the stone and unwrap the cerements of the grave. He arrests Saul of Tarsus, but the words and patience of suffering saints must be the goad, which surely urge the pricks of the recreant soul to repent. God is ever on the outlook for believing souls, who will receive his power and grace on the one hand, and transmit them on the other. He chooses them, that by them He should make his mighty power known. Happy are they who are not insensible to the Divine impulse, nor disobedient to the heavenly vision.

Jonathan was one of those blessed souls who are as sensitive to God as the retina of the eye to light, or the healthy muscle to the nerve; and "it fell upon a day that he said unto the young man that bore his armour, Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side." With a beautiful modesty "he told not his father"; and in all probability the two slipped away silently in the gray dawn, whilst their comrades were still wrapped in slumber. The intimation of a Divine purpose thrilled the ardent spirit of the young prince, to which he gave some clue in the words, "It may be that the Lord will work for us, for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."

Notice where Jonathan laid the emphasis. He had the smallest possible faith in himself, and the greatest faith in God. His soul waited for the Lord; in Him was centred all his hope, and from his gracious help he expected great things. All that he aspired to was to be the humble vehicle through which the delivering grace of God might work. This is what God wants—not our strength, but our weakness, which in absolute despair turns to Him; not our armies, but two or three elect souls, who expect great things and dare them. It is false to say that the Almighty is on the side of great battalions. All history goes to show that the movements which have transformed the face of the world have been achieved by the going forth of God through individuals, who have not been specially distinguished by outstanding talents, but have been led to surrender themselves absolutely to the Divine impulse. What shall I more say?—for time would fail to tell of Carey, and Wilberforce, and Livingstone, and George Müller, and hundreds more.

Yield yourselves to God—and I especially appeal to the young men who may read these words. There are wrongs that God wants to right, tyrannies He is about to break, foes of human peace and happiness that He wants to quell; but He must have agents and instruments, clean and pure, true and faithful, delivered from the domination of the flesh, and absolutely resigned to his disposal. It

matters not if they be high-born as Jonathan, or obscure as his armor-bearer; through them He will achieve a great deliverance.

Saul, the chosen king, had no such vision, and no such faith. He was not sensible to the Divine voice speaking in his soul, but had to depend on the interposition of the priest (ver. 19 and 36); he spoke and acted as though the victory depended wholly on the efforts that he and his men might put forth, and in forbidding the use of such simple refreshment as the wild honey of the woods might yield, he forfeited the full results of God's interposition. Could it be supposed that God's deliverance of his people would fall short because they put forth the ends of the rods that might be in their hands to convey the wild honey to their lips? Throughout the whole day, and especially in this senseless adjuration, which was meant to save time, but really hindered the full result, Saul showed himself oblivious of the one thought that animated the heart of his noble son—that God was working through human instruments to inflict his own judgment on the invading hosts.

III. JONATHAN RECKONED ON GOD, AND GOD DID NOT FAIL HIM.—Faith is the indomitable power by which we call unto our help a whole range of laws and forces which are outside the lives of ordinary men. As we have said, they have two keyboards to their organ, we have three. They employ the physical and intellectual, whilst we, in addition, may call in the aid of the spiritual and eternal. Thus we are able to accomplish the same results, and better, by the assistance of energies which are as much greater than those ordinarily employed as electricity is greater than horse-power, or steam than hand. This was the secret of Jonathan's success.

As they ascended the steep cliff-side, the young men agreed on the sign which should indicate that they were indeed in the line of the Divine will, and that God would not fail them. The heart of man, in its first venture on the way of faith, eagerly longs for some sign that it is not following a will-o'-the-wisp, or being misled by wreckers' lights. This was graciously granted in the mocking voices of the advanced outposts, which ridiculed the idea that the Hebrews were to be feared (14:11) even though they should succeed in scaling the crags. "Behold," they said, "the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they have hid themselves; and the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing [or, we should like to make your acquaintance]."

This was the heaven-given sign, and conveyed the assurance that the Lord had already delivered them into the hand of Israel (10). By faith the soul appropriates the Divine answer. "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him." But it is only as we fulfil the one all-important condition of successful prayer, which is so often overlooked, "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

The soul that reckons on God cannot be ashamed. When they reached the top, the two young Benjamites used their slings with such precision that twenty men measured their length on the ground, and a trembling from God, a heaven-sent panic, spread from them back on the main army behind, and to the bands of spoilers returning from their night raids. The Philistines could not know that the two who faced them were absolutely alone. It seemed as though they were precursors of a host of resolute and desperate men, and, suddenly, in the panic, each man suspected his neighbour of being in league against him. The foreign mercenaries and strangers, of whom there was a large admixture, became the objects of special terror; "and every man's sword was against his fellow, so that there was a very great discomfiture." Meanwhile the Hebrews that had been allied to the Philistines, or silently acquiescent in their rule, even they also turned against them; and all who had hid themselves in the hill country of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in battle.

From his outlook at Gibeah, Saul beheld the wild confusion, and how the multitude swayed to and fro, and melted away. Without delay, he hurled himself with his soldiers on the flying foe, who fled, in headlong precipitancy, down the long valley, past Bethaven, past the Upper and then the Lower Beth-horon, in order to gain the Philistine frontier by the valley of Aijalon. Every town through which the fugitives passed rose in their rear, and joined the pursuit, so that the flying host was greatly reduced, and thousands of warriors dyed the highways of the land which they had so grievously oppressed, with their heart's blood. Thus did God work on behalf of his chosen people in answer to Jonathan's faith.

The unwise prohibition of the king against food had a terrible sequel, first, in the exhaustion of the troops, and, secondly, in the famished eating of the spoils of the day, without the proper separation of the blood. Still worse, when the day closed in, and Saul asked counsel of God, the Divine Oracle was dumb. Some sin had silenced it, and the monarch, already touched with the dark suspicions and fears in which his soul became afterward so densely enveloped, realised that some sin was crying for discovery and expiation. He did not look for that sin, where he would have assuredly found it, in his own heart, but in the people that stood around him. Finally, he and Jonathan stood before the people as the objects of the Divine displeasure, and Saul was prepared even to sacrifice his son in his moody wrath.

But the people saved him. They cried indignantly, "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." Ah! the cause of discomfiture most surely lay between those two men; but it was not due to aught in Jonathan. Saul was alone to blame. He had not only missed the greatest opportunity of his life, but he was already enwrapping himself in the unbelief, the jealousy, and moroseness of temper in which his son was to be enshrouded while it was yet day.