

~MICHMASH (387)

(Mich'mas[h]) [Laid Up, that is, a concealed Place]

.. Jonathan Initiates Rout Of Philistines

- A site identified with modern **Mukhmas** on a hill about 600 meters (2,000 feet) above sea level and some 11 kilometers (7 miles) North-Northeast of Jerusalem. It lies North of the **Wadi Suweinit**, **Nahal Mikhmas**, considered to be the ravine pass of **Michmash**.
- Now an outpost of the Philistines would sally forth to the ravine pass of Michmash. (**1 Samuel 13:23**)
- Joined by other wadis from the Southwest and Northwest, Wadi Suweinit extends from the mountainous region of Ephraim to the Jordan Valley.
- Doubtless preparing to free Israel from Philistine control, King Saul selected a force of 3,000 men. Of these, 2,000 encamped with him at Michmash and in the mountainous region of Bethel, and the others took their position with his son Jonathan at Gibeah.
- Later, at nearby Geba, Gibeah, **Vg**, Jonathan struck down the Philistine garrison. In retaliation the Philistines rallied a great army, including chariots and horsemen, and apparently forced Saul to retreat from **Michmash** to Gilgal.
- Hard pressed by the Philistines, many Israelites hid themselves in caves and hollows, others sought refuge East of the Jordan. This dispersal of the Israelite warriors in the face of the Philistine threat was later presented by Saul as his reason for failing to wait obediently for Samuel to offer sacrifice.
- Reproved by Samuel for his presumptuous act, Saul, with a reduced force of about 600 men, thereafter came to Jonathan at Geba.
- Saul was ? years old when he began to reign, and for two years he reigned over Israel. (**1 Samuel 13:1**)
- And Saul proceeded to choose for himself three thousand men out of Israel, and two thousand came to be with Saul at Michmash and in the mountainous region of Bethel, and a thousand proved to be with Jonathan at Gibeah of Benjamin, and

the rest of the people he sent away, each one to his tent. (1 Samuel 13:2)

- **Then Jonathan struck down the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines got to hear of it. As for Saul, he had the horn blown throughout all the land, saying; Let the Hebrews hear! (1 Samuel 13:3)**
- **And all Israel itself heard tell; Saul has struck down a garrison of the Philistines, and now Israel has become foul-smelling among the Philistines. So the people were called together to follow Saul to Gilgal. (1 Samuel 13:4)**
- **And the Philistines, for their part, collected themselves together to fight against Israel, thirty thousand war chariots and six thousand horsemen and people like the grains of sand that are upon the seashore for multitude, and they went their way up and began camping in Michmash to the east of Beth-aven. (1 Samuel 13:5)**
- **And the men of Israel themselves saw that they were in sore straits, because the people were hard pressed, and the people went hiding themselves in the caves and the hollows and the crags and the vaults and the waterpits. (1 Samuel 13:6)**
- **Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. But Saul himself was yet in Gilgal, and all the people trembled while following him. (1 Samuel 13:7)**
- **And he continued waiting for seven days to the appointed time that Samuel had said, and Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. (1 Samuel 13:8)**
- **Finally Saul said; Bring near to me the burnt sacrifice and the communion sacrifices. With that he went offering up the burnt sacrifice. (1 Samuel 13:9)**
- **And it came about that as soon as he had finished offering up the burnt sacrifice, why, there was Samuel coming in. So Saul went out to meet him and bless him. (1 Samuel 13:10)**
- **Then Samuel said; What is it you have done? To this Saul said; I saw that the people had been dispersed from me, and you, you did not come within the appointed days, and the Philistines were**

being collected together at **Michmash**. (1 Samuel 13:11)

- So I said to myself; Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and the face of Yehowah I have not softened. So I compelled myself and went offering up the burnt sacrifice. (1 Samuel 13:12)
- At this Samuel said to Saul; You have acted foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of Yehowah your God that he commanded you, because, if you had, Yehowah would have made your kingdom firm over Israel to time indefinite. (1 Samuel 13:13)
- And now your kingdom will not last. Yehowah will certainly find for himself a man agreeable to his heart, and Yehowah will commission him as a leader over his people, because you did not keep what Yehowah commanded you. (1 Samuel 13:14)
- Then Samuel rose and went his way up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin, and Saul proceeded to take the count of the people, those yet found with him, about six hundred men. (1 Samuel 13:15)
- And Saul and Jonathan his son and the people yet found with them were dwelling in Geba of Benjamin. As for the Philistines, they had encamped in **Michmash**. (1 Samuel 13:16)
- According to;
- And Saul was dwelling at the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree that is in Migron, and the people that were with him were about six hundred men. (1 Samuel 14:2)
- Saul evidently transferred his camp to Migron near Gibeah.

•• Jonathan Initiates Rout Of Philistines

- Because three bands of Philistine pillagers would go out from their camp at **Michmash** and an outpost of the Philistines would sally forth to the ravine pass of **Michmash**, Jonathan decided to end this menace.
- And Saul and Jonathan his son and the people yet found with them were dwelling in Geba of Benjamin. As for the Philistines,

they had encamped in Michmash. (1 Samuel 13:16)

- And the force of pillagers would sally forth from the camp of the Philistines in three bands. The one band would turn to the road to Ophrah, to the land of Shual. (1 Samuel 13:17)
- And the other band would turn to the road of Beth-horon, and the third band would turn to the road to the boundary that looks toward the valley of Zeboim, toward the wilderness. (1 Samuel 13:18)
- Now there was not a smith to be found in all the land of Israel, because the Philistines had said; That the Hebrews may not make a sword or a spear. (1 Samuel 13:19)
- And all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to get each one his plowshare or his mattock or his ax or his sickle sharpened. (1 Samuel 13:20)
- And the price for sharpening proved to be a pim for the plowshares and for the mattocks and for the three-toothed instruments and for the axes and for fixing fast the oxgoad. (1 Samuel 13:21)
- And it happened on the day of battle that not a sword or a spear was found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan, but there could be found one belonging to Saul and to Jonathan his son. (1 Samuel 13:22)
- Now an outpost of the Philistines would sally forth to the ravine pass of Michmash. (1 Samuel 13:23)
- To do this, he crossed the ravine pass, which, if Wadi Suweinit, forms a deep gorge with nearly vertical cliffs to the East of Geba or Jaba`.
- Two prominent hills with steep rocky sides rise at a point where the Wadi Suweinit makes a sharp bend. These may be the toothlike crags, Bozez and Seneh, their toothlike edges having perhaps been rounded by the erosive forces of some 30 centuries.
- And it came about one day that Jonathan the son of Saul proceeded to say to the attendant carrying his weapons; Do come and let us cross over to the outpost of the Philistines who

are across over there. But to his father he did not tell it. (**1 Samuel 14:1**)

- And Saul was dwelling at the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree that is in Migron, and the people that were with him were about six hundred men. (**1 Samuel 14:2**)
- And Ahijah the son of Ahitub, the brother of Ichabod, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of Yehowah in Shiloh, was carrying the ephod. And the people themselves did not know that Jonathan had gone. (**1 Samuel 14:3**)
- Now between the passages that Jonathan looked for to cross over against the outpost of the Philistines there was a toothlike crag here on this side and a toothlike crag there on that side, and the name of the one was Bozez and the name of the other was Seneh. (**1 Samuel 14:4**)
- The one tooth was a pillar on the north facing Michmash, and the other was on the south facing Geba. (**1 Samuel 14:5**)
- So Jonathan said to the attendant, his armor-bearer; Do come and let us cross over to the outpost of these uncircumcised men. Perhaps Yehowah will work for us, for there is no hindrance to Yehowah to save by many or by few. (**1 Samuel 14:6**)
- At this his armor-bearer said to him; Do whatever is in your heart. Turn where you wish to. Here I am with you in accord with your heart. (**1 Samuel 14:7**)
- For a stranger to have made his way through the maze of mounds, knolls, and sharp rocks in the wadi would have been next to impossible.
- But Jonathan, reared in Benjamite territory, apparently knew it well. While his father's camp was at **Michmash** and his own at Geba, Jonathan doubtless had repeated opportunities for getting better acquainted with the terrain.
- Jonathan and his armor-bearer made their way toward Michmash and then exposed themselves to the view of the Philistine outpost. Catching sight of them, the Philistines called out; Come on up to us, and we will let you know a thing!

- **Thereafter, on his hands and feet, Jonathan, followed by his armor-bearer, ascended the steep passage to the Philistine outpost. As a team they struck down some 20 Philistines within a distance of about half the measure of land that a span of bulls can plow in a day.**
- **Then Jonathan said; Here we are crossing over to the men, and let us expose ourselves to them. (1 Samuel 14:8)**
- **With that the two of them exposed themselves to the outpost of the Philistines. And the Philistines proceeded to say; Here are the Hebrews coming out from the holes where they have hidden themselves. (1 Samuel 14:11)**
- **So the men of the outpost answered Jonathan and his armor-bearer and said; Come on up to us, and we will let you know a thing! At once Jonathan said to his armor-bearer; Come up after me, because Yehowah will certainly give them into the hand of Israel. (1 Samuel 14:12)**
- **And Jonathan kept going up on his hands and his feet, and his armor-bearer after him, and they began to fall before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer was putting them to death behind him. (1 Samuel 14:13)**
- **And the first slaughter with which Jonathan and his armor-bearer struck them down amounted to about twenty men within about half the plowing line in an acre of field. (1 Samuel 14:14)**
Footnote
- **A divinely sent earthquake, 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.**
- **Saul's army, probably now equipped with Philistine weapons found at the site, pursued the fleeing enemy forces. Joined by Israelites who had gone into hiding and those who had sided with the Philistines, they kept striking down the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon.**
- **Then a trembling occurred in the camp in the field and among all the people of the outpost, and the force of pillagers trembled, even they, and the earth began quaking, and it developed into a trembling from God. (1 Samuel 14:15)**

- **And the watchmen belonging to Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin got to see it, and, look! The turmoil swayed this way and that. (1 Samuel 14:16)**
- **And Saul proceeded to say to the people that were with him; Take the count, please, and see who has gone out from us. When they took the count, why, look! Jonathan and his armor-bearer were not there. (1 Samuel 14:17)**
- **Saul now said to Ahijah; Do bring the ark of the true God near! For the ark of the true God proved to be on that day with the sons of Israel. (1 Samuel 14:18)**
- **And it came about that while Saul was speaking to the priest, the turmoil that was in the camp of the Philistines continued to go on, getting greater and greater. Then Saul said to the priest; Withdraw your hand. (1 Samuel 14:19)**
- **Thus Saul and all the people that were with him were called out. So they came as far as the battle, and there the sword of each one had come to be against his fellowman, the rout was very great. (1 Samuel 14:20)**
- **And the Hebrews that had come to belong to the Philistines as formerly and that had gone up with them into the camp round about, even they too were for proving themselves to be with Israel who was with Saul and Jonathan. (1 Samuel 14:21)**
- **All the men of Israel also that were hidden in the mountainous region of Ephraim heard that the Philistines had taken to flight, and they too went pursuing closely after them into the battle. (1 Samuel 14:22)**
- **And Yehowah proceeded on that day to save Israel, and the battle itself passed over to Beth-aven. (1 Samuel 14:23)**
- **And on that day they kept striking down the Philistines from Michmash to Aijalon, and the people got to be very tired. (1 Samuel 14:31)**
- **According to;**
- **And the Philistines, for their part, collected themselves together to fight against Israel, thirty thousand war chariots and six**

thousand horsemen and people like the grains of sand that are upon the seashore for multitude, and they went their way up and began camping in Michmash to the east of Beth-aven. (1 Samuel 13:5)

- The Philistine forces at **Michmash** included 30,000 war chariots. This number is far greater than that involved in several other military expeditions.
- At once Sisera called together all his war chariots, the nine hundred war chariots with iron scythes, and all the people that were with him, out of Harosheth of the nations to the torrent valley of Kishon. (Judges 4:13)
- And it came about in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak the king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, for they had behaved unfaithfully toward Yehowah. (2 Chronicles 12:2)
- With twelve hundred chariots and with sixty thousand horsemen, and there was no number to the people that came with him out of Egypt, Libyans, Sukkiim and Ethiopians. (2 Chronicles 12:3)
- Later Zerah the Ethiopian went out against them with a military force of a million men and three hundred chariots, and came as far as Mareshah. (2 Chronicles 14:9)
- And it is hard to imagine how so many war chariots could have been used in mountainous terrain. For this reason 30,000 is generally viewed as a scribal error.
- The Syriac Peshitta and the Lagardian edition of the Greek Septuagint read 3,000, and numerous Bible translations follow this rendering. AT, JB, Mo However, even lower figures have been suggested.
- Centuries later, the prophecy of Isaiah mentions **Michmash** as the place where the conquering Assyrian would deposit his articles.
- Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord, Yehowah of armies, has said; Do not be afraid, O my people who are dwelling in Zion, because of the Assyrian, who with the rod used to strike you and who used to lift up his own staff against you in the way that Egypt did. (Isaiah 10:24)
- He has come upon Aiath, he has passed along through Migron, at

Michmash he deposits his articles. (**Isaiah 10:28**)

- After the Israelite return from Babylonian exile in **537 B.C.E**, **Michmash**, was apparently reoccupied by Benjamites.
- And these were the sons of the jurisdictional district that went up out of the captivity of the exiled people whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had taken into exile at Babylon and who later returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each one to his own city. (**Ezra 2:1**)
- Those who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel. (**Ezra 2:2**)
- The men of **Michmas**, a hundred and twenty-two. (**Ezra 2:27**)
- The men of **Michmas**, a hundred and twenty-two. (**Nehemiah 7:31**)
- And the sons of Benjamin were from Geba, **Michmash** and Aija and Bethel and its dependent towns. (**Nehemiah 11:31**)