

1 Samuel (Sh'mu'el Alef)

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Chapter 14

1 Now it came to pass upon a day that Jonathan (Y'honatan), the son of Saul, said unto the young man¹ that bore his armour,² Come and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side.³ But he did not tell his father.⁴

2 And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah (Giv'ah)⁵ under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron,⁶ and the people that were with him were about six hundred men;

¹ Jonathan was young, and his armour bearer was young. A lot of times in the Church, it is the teens who are the most fervent for the Lord and willing to go out on a limb for Him. The older people should recognize this and honour them for it, as well as look to the Lord to renew their youth, so that they, too, will be bold and enterprising for Him.

² An armour bearer would not only have to be a skilled warrior, in order to watch the back of the officer he serves, but also be very devoted to that officer, in order to allay any resentment that could arise from the extra work put upon him. The officer loaded his armour onto the assistant, so that his hands could be free when he was not actually fighting, and that assistant had to lug it all over the place. It's not fun to have to pack stuff around, but if devotion was not enough to gain a loyal armour bearer, then the possibility of promotion would be a motivation. Jonathan's armour bearer seems to be highly devoted to him and to the Lord. His name is not recorded in the Bible, but he was a very important person in this venture.

³ Jonathan was feeling restless about his father just watching the Philistines and doing nothing about them. If people sit and watch what the enemy is doing for too long, it paralyses them with fear.

⁴ Jonathan was tuned in to God and knew what to do, but he also knew better than to tell his Dad what he was planning to do. He wasn't just going to do reconnaissance; he was prepared to make whatever move God directed him to do after that.

Saul would have put the kibosh on any kind of bold leadership move that he was not willing to do himself. The fact that we are told that Jonathan did not tell Saul what he was going to do indicates that Saul was in a state of fear, while keeping up a pretence of being in control of the situation.

H1390

גִּבְעָה

gib' a ^ h
ghib-aw'

The same as H1389; Gibah; the name of three places in Palestine: - Gibeah, **the hill**.

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⁶ This encampment was probably the safest part of Gibeah, at the edge of a precipice on the north where there was a good view. The pomegranate tree provided shade over Saul's tent, as well as reinforced his position as the leader, because it was the best spot. Setting up in the best spot isn't leadership, though. Leadership requires action.

3 and Ahiah (Achiyah), the son of Ahitub (Achituv), Ichabod's (I-Khavod) brother, the son of Phinehas (Pinchas), the son of Eli, the LORD's priest (*cohen*) in Shiloh, was wearing the ephod.⁷ And the people did not know that Jonathan was gone.⁸

4 And between the passages⁹ by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' 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 (Botzetz)¹⁰ and the name of the other Seneh.¹¹

5 The forefront of the one was situated northward over against Michmash¹² and the other towards the Negev¹³ over against Gibeah.

⁷ Samuel seems to have left the city. He possibly became impatient with Saul's posturing, so Saul has availed himself of one of Eli's grandsons to represent the religious aspect of the nation.

⁸ Jonathan slipped away quietly, so that nobody could stop him by carrying word to his father that he was leaving the camp. That goes to show that, though there is safety in the multitude of counsellors, as the Bible says in Proverbs, it's not a hard and fast rule that always has to be followed. Sometimes, God makes exceptions, as in this case. It depends on the circumstances and what God has told a person to do. If the leadership are a bunch of wet blankets, then it's probably best to not consult them lest they negate faith with their unbelief or fear.

⁹ The ravine that runs down to Jericho. Bozez was on the north, facing the Negev, and Seneh was on the south, facing Michmash.

¹⁰ BOZEZ - bo'-zez (botsets; Bazes, probably from an obsolete root batsats, corresponding to the Arabic batstsa, "to shine" or "to ooze"): The name of the northern of the two cliffs that stand one on each side of the gorge of Michmash (1 Sam 14:4). It catches the sun during most of the day, while the southern cliff is in the shade. To this circumstance it may owe its name, "shining." "The contrast is surprising and picturesque between the dark coal color of the south side, and the ruddy or tawny tints of the northern cliff, crowned with the gleaming white of the upper chalky strata. The picture is unchanged since the day when Jonathan looked over to the white camping ground of the Philistines, and Bozez must have then shone as brightly as it does now, in the full light of an eastern sun." (Conder, Tent Work, 256). W. Ewing

<http://classic.net.bible.org/dictionary.php?word=Bozez>

According to the Targum, Bozez was very slippery. This is the cliff that Jonathan and his armour bearer climbed to get to the Philistine lookout.

¹¹ SENEH - se'-ne (ceneh; Senna): This was the name attaching to the southern of the two great cliffs between which ran the gorge of Michmash (1 Sam 14:4). The name means "acacia," and may have been given to it from the thorn bushes growing upon it. Josephus (BJ, V, ii, 1) mentions the "plain of thorns" near Gabathsaul. We may hear an echo of the old name in that of Wady Suweinit, "valley of the little thorn tree," the name by which the gorge is known today. The cliff must have stood on the right side of the wady; see BOZEZ. Conder gives an excellent description of the place in Tent Work in Palestine, II, 112-14. W. Ewing

<http://classic.net.bible.org/dictionary.php?word=Seneh>

¹² Seneh faced north towards Michmash

¹³ Bozez faced south towards the Negev

6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bore his armour, Come and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised;¹⁴ peradventure the LORD will work for us, for it is not difficult for the LORD to save by many or by few.¹⁵

7 And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thy heart; go. Behold, I am with thee according to thy will.¹⁶

8 Then Jonathan said, Behold, we will go over unto these men, and we will show ourselves unto them.

9 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you, then we will stand still in our place and will not go up unto them.

10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us, then we will go up, for the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this shall be a sign unto us.¹⁷

11 And both of them showed themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines;¹⁸ and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes¹⁹ where they had hid themselves.²⁰

¹⁴ Jonathan has been meditating on his covenant with God. If God be for him, who can stand against him? Not anyone who doesn't have a covenant with God. In his mind's eye, he can see himself triumphing over the Philistines, no matter how many of them there are, if God should call upon him to move against them.

¹⁵ Jonathan seems to be recalling how God used only 300 men to defeat the Midianites in Gideon's day. That story was probably on his mind a lot, as he stewed around in the camp, thinking about how so many had left until they had only 600 men with them, and would have had even less, if his father hadn't gotten antsy and offered up a sacrifice at Gilgal apart from God's order. If it was God's will for them to have less than 600 men, then He could work with only two who were willing to do what He wanted them to do.

¹⁶ Unity was key to what Jonathan and his assistant were able to do, besides having faith and courage.

¹⁷ Jonathan did not choose an easy route. He really put his faith out there. He was trusting that, in spite of the effort it would cost them to climb the cliff, with some of their energy gone by the time they got to the top, God would take over and give them His strength to defeat the Philistines. Also, he trusted that God would protect them, so that they wouldn't get killed by thrown rocks or arrows shot at them, etc., on the way up.

¹⁸ I love the picture this puts in my mind of two young, brave Israelite men rising up to stand on the cliff in full view of their enemies. It breathes of confidence in the Lord.

¹⁹ The Philistines probably supposed that the two Israelites were scouts, though they may have wondered why they showed themselves, instead of remaining hidden. They would have been astounded, if they knew that one of the men who later was climbing up the cliff towards them was the Crown Prince of Israel.

I think that they assumed that it was bravado that the two stood and showed themselves, so they wanted to mock them for it. Saying that they had crawled out of their holes implied that they were worms and cowards, and it was because of this that they were keeping their distance.

Satan uses the ploy of cutting people down, to make them feel that they are failures because, if he can get them to believe it, to see themselves as defeated, then he can take them captive. He uses people to speak his words of death and defeat, and the words echo in the mind, even when the person who said them is not around, but we don't have to listen to that. We can declare what the Bible says about us when we have been redeemed.

Jonathan did not bother to make a response to the Philistines' jeering; he just listened for his cue.

²⁰ Their jeering is an indication of the Philistines' attitude and behaviour when Jonathan and his armour bearer climbed the cliff. It is not at all far-fetched to assume that they continued to mock them.

12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing.²¹ Then Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel.²²

13 And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet and his armourbearer after him;²³ and they fell before Jonathan, and his armourbearer slew after him.²⁴

14 And that first slaughter which Jonathan and his armourbearer made was about twenty men within as it were a half acre of land,²⁵ which a yoke of oxen might plow.²⁶

²¹ The Philistines answered with the Lord's sign that the Israelites would have victory. The Philistines had no inkling that they were saying something that God told them to say. They had a totally arrogant attitude of mockery and they did not expect the Israelites to take their invitation seriously.

They probably felt too lazy to go after the two Israelites, and they did not want to expose themselves to danger. The tribe of Benjamin were archers and slingers, Jonathan was very skilled with bow and arrow. Besides having a sword, the Philistines would have seen that he had a bow and quiver, and the armour bearer probably had a bow or a sling. So, not wanting to risk injury or death just then, they just made a joke of telling the Israelites to come to them.

²² Here is a positive confession of faith. It is important to declare victory beforehand.

²³ The Philistines certainly did not think that they would be taken up on their dare, so they probably thought that Jonathan and his armour bearer were crazy. The climb was difficult, as the cliff was slippery, so they assumed that the Israelites would be tired when they reached the top.

Besides that, both Jonathan and his armour bearer were very young, so they did not think of them as seasoned warriors who would present a challenge; they thought that they were just a couple of foolhardy kids. Little did they know that one of them had led the attack on Geba and killed their governor, the very thing that had stirred all the Philistines up and sent them on a rampage against Israel.

The Philistines likely engaged in all sorts of mockery and nuisance, throwing clods of dirt, rank garbage, rocks, urinating on the two Israelites as they climbed, hurling verbal insults and making jokes with each other at their expense. They were having themselves a good ol' time, a real break from the monotony of guard duty, but it added to the young Israelite's determination to destroy them.

The Philistines could not believe it that two enemies would deliver themselves into their hands like this. It seems that they did not even consider if these two were being sacrificed to them as a distraction while some other action was being implemented against them.

²⁴ The Philistines let the young Israelites stand in front of them for a few minutes, and they were able to catch their breath. Jonathan pulled out his sword, while the Philistines laughed at them. The Philistines felt secure; they thought that they could just shove them off the cliff, but they probably intended to torture them and then take them near the Israelite encampment to display, while applying further painful treatments to their hostages to psychologically intimidate Saul and his men. Regardless of their intentions, as soon as Jonathan killed one of the Philistines, there was a sword available for his bodyguard, and the Philistines knew, too late, that they should have taken these guys seriously.

Jonathan incapacitated the attackers, and his armourbearer, coming behind him, finished them off.

²⁵ The ground that the attack covered could indicate that, when the Philistines who were in the area saw what happened to the first ones who ran to attack Jonathan and his armour bearer, and saw how fiercely they fought, they ran and had to be chased down. They got all twenty of them, to make sure that they did not run off and give the alarm to the rest of the army. They may have used their slings and arrows to cover the distance.

15 And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people of the garrison; and those who had gone out to destroy the land, they also trembled, and the earth quaked,²⁷ and there was fear of God.²⁸

16 ¶ And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked,²⁹ and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another.³⁰

17 Then Saul said unto the people that were with him, Number now and see who is gone from us.³¹ And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armourbearer were not there.

18 And Saul said unto Ahiah,³² Bring the ark of God.³³ For the ark of God was at that time with the sons of Israel.

²⁶ A picture of unity, two oxen being yoked. The action that Jonathan and his armour bearer took planted seeds of victory against many more Philistines. It triggered something in the heavenlies that released the earthquake and rained down fear and confusion on their enemies.

Jonathan and his buddy probably thought that they were just going to take down the sentinels and then spy on what the army was doing, but they saw that God had something bigger planned. They were on hand to observe what was happening and direct the reinforcements when they showed up.

²⁷ Nowadays, this earthquake would have been reported by the world as a calamity, but God used it to put things into their proper place and work victory for His people. When judgment comes, it works deliverance for God's people, because judgment is for the world, not the saints. The saints, however, have to be ready to take advantage of the turnaround. If they are unprepared through living carelessly, they will suffer similar to the world because they are carnally minded.

²⁸ The Philistines had forgotten the lesson of the Ark of the Covenant when they captured it, and how they were plagued afterwards, but when the earth trembled, they remembered that the Israelites had a mighty God who fought for them.

²⁹ The Philistine camp was only two miles away, with the ravine between them. They could see the pandemonium from their lookout point when the Philistines scattered in every direction.

³⁰ The Philistines are so terrified that they want to run away, and they kill anyone who slows their escape by getting in their path, regardless that it's their own brethren and allies whom they are killing.

³¹ Saul supposed that some of his men had gone on the attack, and he didn't know what to make of it. Was it a good thing that he should take advantage of, or had his men landed him in some kind of trouble? It was unauthorized and he wanted to know who had gone off without his permission. His pride was ruffled because he was the one who was supposed to be giving orders for attack, but he also needed to know the identity of the mavericks to ascertain if they were likely to know what they were doing.

³² Ahiah was Eli's grandson, the son of Phinehas' oldest son. Ahiah is the High Priest, having inherited the position from his father. Samuel seems to be absent after Saul returned to Gibeah, so Saul found some other priest to back him up.

³³ Saul thinks that he had better wait on God first, like he should have when Samuel told him to wait at Gilgal. Perhaps God would see this and change His mind about discarding him as king.

Actually, it was not the Ark that was with the priest, but the breastplate with Urim and Thummim, according to the Septuagint. The Ark was still at Kirhath-jearim, where it remained when it was transferred from Jabesh-gilead until David fetched it to take it to Jerusalem.

19 And it came to pass while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased. Then Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thy hand.³⁴

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

21 Moreover, the Hebrews³⁵ that had been with the Philistines before that time, who had gone up with them into the camp from the country round about,³⁶ even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan.³⁷

22 Likewise all the men of Israel who had hid themselves in Mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, they also followed hard after them in the battle.³⁸

23 So the LORD saved Israel that day; and the battle passed over unto Bethaven.³⁹

24 ¶ But the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eats any food until evening that I may be avenged on my enemies.⁴⁰ So none of the people tasted any food.

Or, as Gill's commentary suggests, Saul may have brought the Ark to Gibeah to give him a sense of security, since Samuel was not with him. The priests did not get answers from the Ark, though. They used the ephod with the Urim and Thummim.

³⁴ Saul, regardless of his intentions, still cannot wait on God. He orders his men after the Philistines, supposing that if he doesn't, they will lose their advantage. If he had waited on God first, he probably would have gotten direction that would have prevented him from giving the order that nobody eat until all the Philistines were killed. They would have had a complete victory, if they had refreshed their strength with food, perhaps eating it on the run as they chased the Philistines. A handful of raisins or some figs would have raised the blood sugar.

Saul has not learned from the lesson of the Gibeonites who conned Israel into making a covenant with them, to always ask counsel of God first. His answer to that mistake was to break the treaty and kill the Gibeonites, and his answer to this mistake about how to conduct the battle would have been to kill his own son. He thought this would appease God, which goes to show that he didn't know God very well.

³⁵ They were referred to as Hebrews, rather than Israelites, because they were traitors. As they had turned their backs on their own people in adversity, they were despised and not accounted as Israelites.

³⁶ The Hebrew mercenaries got another chance to be on the right side, with their own people, though they were probably still distrusted afterwards for having gone over to Israel's enemies in the first place. Still, if they overcame their fear or greed or whatever motivated them in the first place to defect, they could prove their loyalty to Israel and God over the long term. It takes time to win trust, but consistent righteousness can do it.

³⁷ God was merciful in not putting confusion upon these collaborators, as on the rest of the Philistine host. He gave them a chance to turn back to Him, and, wisely, they took it.

³⁸ Reinforcements were welcome, even if they had been too afraid, at first, to join forces with Saul. Josephus said that Saul's army was now increased to 10,000. Brave leadership (Jonathan's) inspires others to acts of courage.

³⁹ The Philistines ran westward from Michmash when Saul's men joined the fray.

⁴⁰ Saul lays a heavy trip on his warriors, just like many employers do with their employees, and ministry leaders put upon their helpers. He does not think of their needs, just as some employers try to make their workers feel guilty, particularly those in the most responsible positions, if they do not lay their whole life on the altar of making the business succeed.

25 And the army of all the land came to a wood, and there was honey upon the ground.⁴¹

26 And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped, but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath.

27 But Jonathan had not heard when his father charged the people with the oath, therefore, he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes were enlightened.⁴²

28 Then one of the people spoke and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eats any food this day. And the people were faint.

29 Then Jonathan said, My father has troubled the land.⁴³ See, I pray you, how my eyes have been enlightened because I tasted a little of this honey.

30 How much more if haply the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found?⁴⁴ Would there not have been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?⁴⁵

31 And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon, but the people were very faint.

32 Therefore, the people flew upon the spoil and took sheep and oxen and calves and slew them on the ground, and the people ate them with the blood.⁴⁶

Likewise, narcissistic ministry leaders try to make their helpers feel guilty, if they do not place “the Kingdom of God” above their obligations to their wives and children, and to take care of their health, when really it is their own kingdom that they want built. They may not even give their underlings adequate time to wait on the Lord in prayer and Bible study, if it would interfere with implementing their programs.

Saul postures that he is holy in his zeal, but it is for his own pride that he wants the entire enemy slain, not for the sake of the Israelites whom they would oppress, if they rise again. He betrays this in calling them “his” enemies. These Israelites probably had family members and friends who were raped, tortured, and killed, and that would have been fuel enough for them to hunt their enemies down until they were all killed, even if they had to take some breaks to eat or sleep. Saul did not need to imperiously impose a fast on them. As it turned out, his foolish order resulted in a halt being called to the pursuit of their enemies.

⁴¹ Bees had possibly made a hive in a hollow tree and the combs got so heavy that they started to break and drip their honey. Benson’s commentary says that the bees even make their hives on the ground, so it may have been the case. They would set up their hive in a hole. The honey is probably symbolic of how God makes provision for us to be strengthened in the midst of our trials.

⁴² Jonathan got a blood sugar boost that would have carried him over until he could get a good meal. He was so weary that he was moving forward like a robot, his eyes bleary with fatigue, but he could focus better and feel more motivated about moving forward after he ate that honey.

When we get weary in our fight against evil, but an encouraging word can put vigour in our bones and bring our vision of victory back into focus.

⁴³ Jonathan is not afraid to be critical of his father’s wrong actions, regardless that he is the king. People need to hear someone say something is wrong when it is wrong. Truth is higher than a position.

⁴⁴ Jonathan demonstrates a more practical turn of mind and compassionate heart than his father.

⁴⁵ It must have been frustrating to Jonathan, who excelled his father as a warrior, to see how Saul had hindered their victory from being complete. Saul had great successes as a general throughout his subsequent career, but it was men like Jonathan who helped make him so successful as a general, and Saul needed to take advice more often than he did, most particularly by inquiring of the Lord.

⁴⁶ It sounds like they not only weren’t draining the blood, but they were eating the meat raw or barely cooking it.

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;⁴⁷ roll a great stone unto me this day.⁴⁸

34 And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people and tell each one to bring his ox and his sheep here unto me and slay them here and eat and do not sin against the LORD in eating with the blood.⁴⁹ And of all the people, each one brought his ox with him that night and slew them there.

35 And Saul built an altar unto the LORD; the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.⁵⁰

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.⁵¹ And they said, Do whatever seems good unto thee. Then the priest said, Let us draw near unto God here.⁵²

37 And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he did not answer him that day.⁵³

38 Then Saul said, Bring here all the chief of the people and know and see by whom this sin has been this day.

39 For, as the LORD lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan, my son, he shall surely die.⁵⁴ But there was not a man among all the people that answered him.

40 Then he said 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 seems good unto thee.

⁴⁷ Saul is probably more motivated by the necessity of catering to the cultural habits and religious beliefs of his men, than of personal conviction. If he had a true horror of eating blood, he would not have put his men in the position of being tempted to do this. He postures himself of taking the high moral road by rebuking them for their transgression. Who dares to point out his transgressions to him? Nobody but Jonathan, though Ahiah did step up to the plate that night and get Saul to hold off on chasing the Philistines, until after they made inquiry of the Lord.

⁴⁸ Saul issues another blockheaded order. Instead of asking famished men to roll a stone to him, or even if they weren't weak from hunger, why didn't he save everyone the trouble and walk over to the great stone where the animals could be slain? Lack of consideration for subordinates is characteristic of egotistical leaders.

⁵⁰ This seems to be mentioned as the first altar to the Lord that Saul built, or began to build, not because he was in the habit of honouring the Lord, but to highlight that it took him two years into his reign, and 42 years into his life, before he thought of it.

⁵¹ Saul has made the people go without food, and now he proposes to make them go without sleep. As before, the people are willing to obey their king, regardless of the personal hardship he would put them to, if it means victory over their enemies.

⁵² Ahiah may have wanted to see the Lord honoured, but then again, it could be that he was just protecting his position as High Priest by reminding Saul of his presence and of his function. People are not supposed to go tearing off to battle without first inquiring of the Lord for direction.

⁵³ It doesn't sound like Urim and Thummim had anything to do with casting lots, as casting lots would have given an answer. It has been conjectured that the answers of Urim and Thummim involved the shining of light, perhaps from the Urim, and the Thummim was a kind of plate that light shone upon. It is also conjectured that the High Priest had to interpret what the pattern of light meant.

⁵⁴ This was a crazy, excessive punishment to lay upon someone for having taken food because they were faint with hunger, and they didn't even know about the oath. Esau, who sold his birthright for a bowl of pottage, was not condemned to death for his foolishness, and though he knew that it was prohibited.

41 Therefore, Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Show who is without blemish. And Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people went out free.⁵⁵

42 And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.⁵⁶

43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand; must I die for this.⁵⁷

44 And Saul answered, God do so and more also, for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.⁵⁸

45 Then the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who has wrought this great saving health in Israel? No, in no wise: as the LORD lives, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan that he did not die.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Interestingly, God does not hold the people to blame for having eaten meat with the blood. He recognizes that Saul put them under extreme hardship by making them work so hard fighting their enemies, without allowing them to eat to strengthen themselves.

⁵⁶ God indicates Jonathan is involved in the issue. Though it is important to not make an oath lightly, and it is important to keep vows, God's purpose in showing Jonathan as having broken the oath is to teach Saul to not be rash in making oaths, as it cost him from making a complete end of the Philistines, and nearly cost him the life of his son. God did not require Jonathan's life of him, as he was ignorant of the oath, rather than deliberately disobedient to the king's command. Kings must be obeyed in all that does not conflict with God's requirements of the people, but they have a responsibility to not give foolish or unreasonable commands.

⁵⁷ Jonathan rebukes his father for attaching such a harsh penalty to the breaking of an oath that was foolishly made. He is willing to die, however, if it is required of him. This is a man who knows God and that his soul is safe with Him. For the sake of honouring the Lord's will, he was willing to forgo earthly accolades that would have come to him for having the boldness to take the first strike against the Philistines.

If Saul was a better man, he would have admitted that he had made a mistake and submitted himself to the Lord to bear the penalty for having made it, instead of letting any of his people suffer for it. However, in spite of his initial show of reluctance about being the king, he has the bit in his teeth, now, and he likes being king with all the pomp, prestige, potential for increasing wealth, and opportunity to lord it over others.

⁵⁸ Saul is trying to make it up to God for his earlier failure to wait for Samuel, and perhaps he thinks that God has denied him a dynasty because Jonathan is not fit to be king, supposedly for mistakes he would make in the future. If he can get Jonathan out of the way, and make a show of having devotion like the Levites who slew even their own family members when the people sinned in Moses' day, God maybe will reconsider and let his next son in line be the king.

But it was not Jonathan's fault that God denied Saul a dynasty; it was Saul's, and Saul demonstrates further unfitness to rule by his willingness to kill his own child who has just led Israel into a great victory due to his devotion to God. I think that jealousy over Jonathan taking the lead and succeeding probably also played into this horrible decree. Saul's mistakes set him up as a bad role model for future kings of his lineage.

⁵⁹ The people did what God wanted them to do, but they had to forfeit pursuing their enemies at that time. Mercy, however, rejoices over justice, so God was well able to make the ceasing of pursuit work out for good to those who loved Him, and use the surviving Philistines to discipline those who disobeyed Him.

Ironically, because Saul did not inquire of the Lord about the battle beforehand, and made a foolish oath, the Philistines who survived were around to offer refuge to his rival, David, for a time, and in the end, the Philistines killed Saul and three of his sons, including the godly Jonathan. Not waiting on the Lord for direction turned out to be a very expensive mistake in regards to preserving his life and that of his sons.

46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

47 So Saul took the kingdom over Israel and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab (Mo'av) and against the sons of Ammon (Amon) and against Edom and against the kings of Zobah (Tzovah)⁶⁰ and against the Philistines (P'lishtim); and wherever he turned himself, he troubled them.⁶¹

48 And he gathered a host and smote Amalek ('Amalek)⁶² and delivered Israel out of the hands of those that spoiled them.

⁶⁰ Zobah was situated between Damascus and the Euphrates. The Israelites had to fight enemies on every border.

⁶¹ Saul's ability to repel their invading enemies helped make the people willing to submit to his government.

⁶² The Amalekite kingdom was like the Roman Empire in its day. Numbers 24:7 names Agag as the highest of earthly kings. Agag was the title of the Amalekite kings, like Pharaoh for the Egyptians and Caesar for the Romans. Saul broke their hold off of Egypt, which they took over for 430 years after the Exodus.

History remembers them as the Hyksos, the Shepherd Kings. Their method of conquest was to drive all their animals before them to devour the produce of the land they were invading, to deprive the people of food, and then they would torture, maim, and slaughter whoever fell into their hands. The Egyptians were grateful to Saul for leading them into battle, but because of politics, they did not record his name. They did not immortalize foreigners; such things were reserved for only their own kings. Saul was referred to in their inscriptions about the expulsion of the Hyksos as the "one" who led the conquest. Immanuel Velikovsky wrote about this in *Ages in Chaos*.

"The Carnarvon tablet records the participation of pharaoh Kamose, son of Seknenre, in action against the Hyksos. He was assisted by some foreign troops. An Egyptian monument has also preserved a description of the final act: the story of the expulsion of the Hyksos is engraved on the wall of the tomb of an officer of Ahmose, a vassal pharaoh of one of the Nomes and probably a brother of Kamose; the name of the officer was also Ahmose. The story is in the form of a narrative about the sieges and battles in which the officer took part.

In the Ahmose inscription, which is the best available Egyptian source on the war of deliverance, an enigma is inserted concerning the most important circumstance. Obviously, not rebellious Egyptian princes but some warriors coming from abroad were the real deliverers of Egypt. The inscription reads:

"I followed the king on foot when he rode abroad in his chariot. One besieged the city of Avaris. I showed valor on foot before his Majesty. One fought on the water in the canal of Avaris. Then there was again fighting in this place; I again fought. One fought in this Egypt, south of this city; then I brought away a living captive. One captured Avaris, one besieged Sharuhem for six years and his majesty took it."

Immanuel Velikovsky noted that the indefinite pronoun would not have been used, if the Egyptian king had been at the head of the invading army, but Egyptian inscriptions did not memorialize foreign kings. *Ages in Chaos*, page 97, published by Abacus, Sphere Books Ltd.

Immanuel Velikovsky's books are out of print, but I recommend that, if you come across them in a thrift shop, snap them up, or buy copies online. His conclusions make more sense, from a Biblical point of view, than conventional history. When historians and archaeologists criticize Velikovsky's works, it is more than likely that they do so to cater to the scientific establishment for fear of being discredited. Velikovsky was subjected to a lot of persecution because his findings negated the works of scientists who collected royalties from their books, and their standing at their universities would have been threatened, if Velikovsky's conclusions were accepted.

<http://paravel.net/aic.htm>

<http://www.hope-of-israel.org/amalekit.htm>

49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan (Y'honatan) and Ishui (Yishvi)⁶³ and Melchishua (Malishua). And the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn Merab (Merav) and the name of the younger Michal (Mikhal).

<http://www.varchive.org/ce/theses.htm>

⁶³ Most commentators seem to think that Ishui was an alternate name for Abinadab and they give various reasons for Ishbosheth being not being included in the list, but I think that their reasons are lame. They say he was not included because he did not die in battle, and they think that Merab and Michal were included because of their association with David, supposing that they had been born after the time of the 1 Samuel 14 battle, to make them closer to David's age.

They are probably right that the daughters were born after this time; otherwise, Michal was somewhere around 30 when she married David, and Merab was older. Girls usually were married off in their early teens, but kings might have deferred their daughters' marriages, as there was no financial necessity to marry them off. They could pass them out as incentives for valour or to forge political connections. Even so, late twenties or early thirties seems too long for Saul to keep his daughters single.

Ishui may have died before his brothers, possibly from disease, so his death was not noted, as it was not due to having died in battle. It would seem that Abinadab and Ishbosheth were born after this list of Saul's progeny was compiled, if it was meant to consist of only the children who were born at this time, but that would make Merab and Michal getting on in years before they married.

The other commentators might be right that Ishui was Abinadab. Abinadab means "father of generosity," and it could be that Ishui became known for giving to the poor and was given this other name to honour him for it. After all, Sarah is listed in the Bible as both Iscah and Sarai, without any explanation that Iscah was Sarai. Flavius Josephus identified Sarah as Iscah in *The Antiquities of the Jews*.

Saul's children from Rizpah possibly were not included because their mother was only a concubine, but Abraham's children from his concubines were listed. Then again, David probably had sons from his concubines, but there are no records of their names. Only the sons of his queens were listed.

I surmise that Saul took Rizpah for his concubine after having a falling out with his wife, based on what he called Jonathan when Jonathan stood up for David. He called him the son of the rebellious woman. In other words, he took after his mother.

Ahinoam was probably a righteous woman who tried to set Saul straight when he went wrong, but Saul became lifted up in pride, after he became king, and would not listen to her. Jonathan's mother was very likely a good influence on him and a large part of the reason why he was such a righteous man.

Saul calling for Jonathan's death really ticked her off, when she learned of it, and put a gulf between them. How would she ever be able to trust Saul again, knowing that he was willing to kill her beloved son, and his own flesh and blood, though Jonathan had done no wrong, except in what was placed before him as a temptation due to Saul's foolishness in putting the army under an inconsiderate oath? Saul had let his position as king go to his head and was now hard to reprove.

Jonathan is listed as Saul's oldest son. Ishbosheth was 40 years old when David was 30? Saul reigned for 40 years [Acts 13:21], so David was born ten years after Saul was crowned. If Ishbosheth was 40 when David was 30, he was

50 And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam (Achino'am), the daughter of Ahimaaz (Achima'atz).⁶⁴ And the name of the captain of his host was Abner,⁶⁵ the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

51 For Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner, the father of Abner (Avner), was the son of Abiel (Avi'el).⁶⁶

52 And there was intense 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.

born the same year that Saul was crowned, but two years later, he is not listed in 1 Samuel 14 as being a son of Saul. It could be that the 40 years is an error and that he was younger than 40, if the list was meant to consist only of the children who were born at the time that Saul and Jonathan won this battle.

Or it could be that Saul actually reigned for 42 years, but Saul rounded the figure down to 40. This would be consistent with the list of Saul's children comprising only of those who were already born at that time, and Saul's daughters kept from marriage until they were in their thirties. After all, regardless of how old they were, men would regard it an honour to be allowed to marry the king's daughters.

Saul may have been very reluctant to let any of his children marry, due to not wanting to give other families the advantage of being attached to his own. Though they were all getting on in years, with the youngest son being forty when Saul died, only one son had a child, and that was Jonathan, whose son was only five years old when Jonathan died.

If David was born ten years after the events of this chapter occurred, and Jonathan was old enough to be a warrior. If Jonathan was only 20, then that would make him at least 30 years older than David, but it seems that he was an experienced warrior at this time, having been placed in charge of 1000 men. At a guess, let's say that Jonathan is 22, which would be very young for a high-ranking officer, never mind a general, but would have given him some time to prove himself competent to lead men. It would also make Saul 20 years old when Jonathan was born, if Saul was forty years old when he was crowned. This would mean that Jonathan was, at least, 32 years older than David. Jonathan was around 62 to 64 years old when he died, if Saul of Tarsus was rounding numbers when he mentioned the length of King Saul's reign. Saul was 80 to 82 years old when he died.

H378

אִישׁ־בֹּשֶׁת

'iysh-bo' sheth

eesh-bo'-sheth

From H376 and H1322; **man of shame**; IshBosheth, a son of King Saul: - Ish-bosheth.

Ishbosheth was not with his brothers who went with Saul to his last battle, though he was neither too young nor too old to fight. David described him as a righteous man, probably because he never did anyone any drastic harm, but he, apparently, was not cut out to be a warrior. He is called Ish-baal, but possibly was renamed Ishbosheth because he ran from a battle and proved himself to be a coward.

⁶⁴ He was probably an Israelite of some standing, as there is no record of his daughter being deposed as queen, though Saul became displeased with her. Some commentators suggest that Ahimaaz was of the priestly family of Eli, due to the use of the same prefix that was commonly used in their names. Families tended to stay with the same names, as we see in the case of Zachariah having to affirm that his son's name was to be John, though nobody else in his family had that name.

⁶⁵ Abner, Saul's cousin, was brave, skilled as a warrior, and clever. When Ishbosheth succeeded to the throne, he was acceptable to the other tribes because he had a general who could competently handle the defence of Israel.

⁶⁶ Saul's grandfather.