

How the Tactics of Jonathan again won the village of Mickmash in WW1 – Jill Curry

Australian Curriculum, Year 9 – ACDSEH095

A British Officer in World War 1, by the name of Major Vivian Gilbert wrote a book about his adventures in the 180th Brigade (Machine Gun Company) of the 60th division of the British army through the Sinai, Palestine and Syria.

Major Gilbert describes how the first things the troops wanted to buy after the capture of Jerusalem were Bibles and matches (for the cigarettes they had been given).

We used the Bibles as guide books to Palestine, and remarkably fine ones they turned out to be! It was wonderfully interesting to read the history of the all the places we were visiting daily, and men in the ranks were as keen as the officers. (P 180)

On February 13th (1918), before an attack could be launched for the city of Jericho scheduled for the following day, it was necessary to take a small village known as Mukhmas or Mickmash. The plan was to make a frontal attack down the valley before dawn using infantry supported by artillery and machine guns – a major offensive.

Gilbert continues:

By the light of a candle, the brigade major was reading his Bible...He found what he was searching for (Mikmash) in Samuel 1, chapters 13 and 14. (P 183-184)

It was the story of Jonathan and his armour-bearer who went off secretly together to attack the Philistine camp at Mikmash. The Bible describes the terrain:

On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff; one was called Bozez and the other Seneh. One cliff stood to the north toward Mikmash, the other to the south toward Geba. (I Samuel 14:4-5 NIV).

Jonathan asked for a sign from God as to whether he should go up and fight and received a confirmation. The story continues:

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. ¹⁴ In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre. 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. ¹⁶ Saul's lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions...²⁰ Then [King] Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords. (I Samuel 14:13-16, 20 NIV)

Encouraged by this story and confident that the geography of the area would not have changed much, the brigade major shared this passage with the brigadier.

Then the general sent out scouts who came back and reported finding the pass thinly held by Turks, with rocky crags on either side, obviously Bozez and Seneh. (P 185)

In the moonlight they could also see the flat land high above.

The general decided to change his plan of attack, and used one infantry company instead of the whole brigade. These few soldiers climbed up the pass just as Jonathan and his armour-bearer had done nearly 3,000 years before and reached the small piece of flat ground at the top just before dawn. Like the Philistines before them, the Turks thought they were surrounded and fled in disarray.

After thousands of years, guided by the Bible, the British repeated Jonathan's success against a far greater army.

The Bible is not a book of myths and fables. It is a reliable historical document written over thousands of years by a variety of people but has a remarkably unified message that echoes through the millennia. It tells the story of real people, real events, in real places in real time. This story demonstrates how the same strategy used by King Saul's son Jonathan was used in the 20th century to great effect, because the Bible was accurate. The same God brought the same victory.

Christians follow a God who speaks and guides them in a personal relationship with their heavenly Father. One brave man, Jonathan and his faithful armour-bearer, trusted God, asked for guidance, received his answer then boldly went into the enemy's camp. God confused the enemy and gave him the victory. He will still do the same for anyone today who will come into a relationship with Him.

Read the full story in I Samuel 13 and 14.

Source:

Gilbert, Major Vivian., *The Romance of the Last Crusade with Allenby to Jerusalem*, Appleton and Company.



The cliffs of Bozez and Senah

<https://israeltours.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/view-on-nahal-mikhmas.jpg>

Powerpoint:

1. <https://holylandphotos.wordpress.com/2015/03/11/jonathan-and-his-armor-bearer-1-samuel-14/>
2. <https://thebiblemuseum.com.au/about/anzac-bibles.html>
New Zealand WW1 recruitment poster - web Google Kia Ora Cooe Comrades. "The New Zealand Electronic Text Collection" <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-corpuskiaOraCooee>. Australian War Memorial ART94747.
3. Gilbert, Major Vivian, *The Romance of the Last Crusade with Allenby to Jerusalem*, Appleton and Company, Page 180.
4. <https://israeltours.files.wordpress.com/2012/02/view-on-nahal-mikhmas.jpg>
5. http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/David_and_Jonathan
6. Gilbert, Major Vivian., *The Romance of the Last Crusade with Allenby to Jerusalem*, Appleton and Company, Page 185-186.
7. Jonathan and his armor-bearer - <https://treasureboxmy.blogspot.com.au/2013/09/battle-at-michmash.html#.WHi0yYVOLIU>