

AGAINST ALL ODDS! 1 SAM. 14:1-23

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

1 Samuel 14:24 And the men of Israel were distressed that day (בַּיּוֹם): 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.

Israel wins against all odds!

1. Against numerical superiority!

1 Samuel 13:5 And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven.

2. Against strategic superiority!

1 Samuel 13:17 And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual:

1 Samuel 13:18 And another company turned the way to Bethhoron: and another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

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

3. Against technological superiority!

1 Samuel 13:19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: **1 Samuel 13:20** But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. **1 Samuel 13:21** Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. **1 Samuel 13:22** So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.

Philistines: early iron age

Israel: late bronze age

4. With divided leadership

1 Samuel 14:1 ... But he told not his father.

1 Samuel 14:3 And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD'S priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

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 armourbearer were not there.

5. With spiritual confusion!

1 Samuel 14:3 And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD'S priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

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.

1 Samuel 14:19 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: and Saul said unto the priest, **Withdraw thine hand.**

Deuteronomy 20:1 When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. **Deuteronomy 20:2** And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, **Deuteronomy 20:3** And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; **Deuteronomy 20:4** For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

It is difficult to know exactly what Saul knew and believed:

- He didn't know who Samuel was!
- Did he know about Eli & family?
- Did he know Deut. 20?
- Or, did he use the priests, ark and accoutrements for magical purposes?
- Why did he stop?

6. With unlikely resources / help!

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.

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.

What an extraordinary group!

- Traitors → maximally
- Mercenaries → minimally
- Plus cowards!!!

7. By providential events / circumstances!

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.** 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.**

1 Samuel 14:19 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: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand. 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.**

Psalms 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Psalms 115:3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Psalms 135:5 For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Psalms 135:6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Psalms 75:6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

Psalms 75:7 But God is the judge: **he putteth down one, and setteth up another.**

8. By godly initiative

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.

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.** 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.

1 Samuel 14:11 And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, **Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.** 1 Samuel 14:12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, **Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing.** And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. 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.**

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.

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

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.