

## Message #29

## I Samuel 14:1-15

Back around the year A.D. 1200, Genghis Khan began his crusade to form a Mongolian military to take over the world. In the next few years, he conquered nearly 9 million square miles from the Pacific to the Persian Gulf. He formed an impressive, ferocious military. Most of his horsemen were skilled with the long bow. But a little over 100 years later, the Mongolian empire was no longer the dominant power. It is true that in 1368, the black death did have something to do with it but it is also true that a power that had been so dominant was no longer in existence.

A few years ago, one historian wrote an article entitled “What Tactics Would An Army Use to Defeat An Invading Mongol Force?” In that article, he said there were four tactics used by those who defeated them:

- 1) They used the terrain to their advantage.
- 2) They had their men well-disciplined and well-organized.
- 3) They had effective scouting and reconnaissance.
- 4) They outsmarted the opponent by developing weapons that could defeat their weapons.

What was interesting about this article was there was no emphasis on less numbers. Most of the time the Mongolian army outnumbered the opponents and yet the opponent won even with lower numbers.

**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.**

God has never needed big numbers to accomplish anything. In fact, He can accomplish what He wants without any numbers at all. God does not need massive numbers of people to have great victories. You take a couple of people who are willing to step out in faith and trust God, and those people will experience great victory. They may appear to be outnumbered and outsmarted. They may appear to be out armed and outgunned, but they will experience victory because **victory belongs to the Lord.**

This is an amazing and exciting text. This passage shows us what just a couple of people can accomplish when God is on their side. Now the text breaks down into six narrative facts:

**NARRATIVE FACT #1** – Jonathan makes a brave decision. **14:1**

When we get done with these verses, you will be very impressed with Jonathan, who was the son of Saul. 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.

Jonathan decided that he would secretly take his young armor carrier and cross a steep crevice to go to the side of the Philistines for the purpose of attacking them. We are talking here about two guys taking on the Philistines all by themselves.

Jonathan decided he would do this and keep his father Saul out of it. In other words, he did not tell his dad he was going to do this. There may have been a couple of good reasons why he didn't tell his dad:

- 1) His dad probably would not have let him go.
- 2) There would be a risk of news of the plan spreading.

What was needed in this mission was secrecy, not publicity.

Jonathan is one brave man. Keep in mind the Philistines' army had 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen and foot soldiers so numerous you could not even count them (I Sam. 13:5).

Now what in the world could two guys hope to accomplish by crossing over to fight the Philistines? With God on their side, they could experience total 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.

**NARRATIVE FACT #2** – Saul and his men were relaxing. **14:2-3**

Now Saul and about 600 men were relaxing in the outskirts of his capital Gibeah. Saul liked to be outdoors and he enjoyed sitting under a pomegranate tree, and according to I Sam. 22:6 he enjoyed sitting under a tamarisk tree. Both of these trees gave him good shade and good cover.

According to **verse 3**, Ahijah, who was priest unto the LORD, was with Saul and was wearing an ephod. The ephod was part of the priestly garment (Ex. 28:8-14; I Sam. 2:28; 14:3). The ephod was attached to the breastplate and was used in the O.T. times to consult God to determine God's will in critical decisions pertaining to Israel. Apparently a "yes" or "no" question could be resolved by consulting the ephod and the Urim and Thummim (Lev. 8:7-8).

Now the point of this data is to show that these political and religious leaders had no inkling that God was leading Jonathan to go fight the Philistines. The king has not been consulted and the priest has not been consulted, but God was working without them.

God was working with two men who believed in Him and trusted His word. **God doesn't need the big political and religious leaders to fight a war and win; He is looking for a few who love Him and His word and trust Him.**

Let me say this. If God ever impresses on you that you need to fight the enemies of His church, then depend on Him and go fight them. The leaders may not have any clue; but God can bless you and use you. It isn't the majority here who sense the urgency of the fight; it is the minority.

**NARRATIVE FACT #3** – Jonathan does not have an easy route. **14:4-5**

There are many who have actually visited this spot and have said that the same rock formation that Jonathan faced is still there. They have also concluded that this is not an easy route to tackle.

When Jonathan studied the terrain, he decided to cross at a spot that was not easy. It was a very tough route. I am certain he picked that route because it would be the least guarded route.

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.

**NARRATIVE FACT #4** – Jonathan does have a plan. **14:6-10**

The intimidation of the route did not stop Jonathan. He was not about to get sidetracked. He saw this geographical obstacle and said, let's go for it. 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)**.

God does not need a lot of people to bring about victory. God can use lots of people or a few. 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.

According to **verse 7**, you can see why Jonathan had this guy as his armor bearer because he said to him, do anything you want and I am with you and will back you. That is loyalty

According to **verse 8**, Jonathan said we will cross over and climb up and reveal ourselves to the Philistines.

We may assume what they were going to do was to get there and remain somewhat hidden in a cave in close proximity to the Philistines (**v. 11, 13**). So their plan is to climb up to the side of the Philistines, and conceal themselves in a cave and then call out to them from there. They don't climb up there and walk out into the open.

The plan was when we get there and call out to them, if the Philistines tell us to stay put and not come closer, we will stay where we are and not move forward to fight them (**verse 9**).

But when we get there, if they tell us to come to them, then we will know that God has given them into our hands for victory (**verse 10**).

This is a gutsy move. It is a move that will lead to victory. Jonathan does have a plan and God was in this plan.

**NARRATIVE FACT #5** – Jonathan is invited to approach the Philistines. **14:11-12a**

When Jonathan called out to the Philistines, they immediately invited them to join them. The Philistines were probably mocking them saying they are so afraid of us that they are coming out of their holes in the ground where they have hidden. They probably thought these guys are coming to surrender. This is an arrogant confidence that occurs just before destruction.

**NARRATIVE FACT #6** – Jonathan has a great victory. **14:12b-15**

Jonathan said I will climb up first and you follow me. Jonathan is a front lines type of guy. He tells his servant, I'll take the lead and you follow me. He said the LORD has given them into our hands.

According to **verse 13**, the final way up to where the Philistines were was very steep because he had to use both hands and feet to get up to the top. He is climbing to go into warfare.

As soon as they got up there they started killing the Philistines. **Verse 14** says that they initially killed twenty men in about half an acre of plowed ground.

**Verse 15** says that God actually caused the earth to tremble and shake. The entire Philistine army was shaking.

This is amazing. The Philistines are petrified because of two men who trust God. You don't need big numbers to win, you need 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.**