

The Second Battle of Michmosh

In his book, *The Romance of the Last Crusade; With Allenby to Jerusalem*, Major Vivian Gilbert describes how he relived the 3,000 year old story when the British were battling towards Yericho during World War I.

On the night of February 18th, 1918, Gilbert was sitting in his tent searching through his Bible with the light of a candle. His brigade had received orders to sieze the Arab village of Michmosh that stood on a rocky hill on the other side of a deep valley. Figuring it might be profitable to benefit by Yonasan's experience, the major examined the relevant *pesukim* (*I Shmuel* chapter 13) and read how Yonasan and his arms bearer scaled the cliff, passed between two sharp rocks, *the name of the one was Bozez and the name of other Seneh*, reached *half an acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow*, and then killed twenty Philistines, leading to a miraculous rout of the enemy. Perhaps he too could instigate a smaller version of what the *Tanach* describes: *There was a great trembling in the [Philistine] camp, in the field and among the whole people... And the watchers of Shaul in the Hill of Binyomin saw, and behold, the multitude melted away and went while beating each other.*

Gilbert woke his commander and the two men carefully read through the *pesukim* to determine exactly what to look for. Patrols set out to find the place, located a small pass that led through two jagged rocks and found a small flat field lying beyond, just as the *pesukim* relate. A company of soldiers scaled the cliffs and overcame the small group of Turks guarding the field on top. Next morning, the Turks in the town thought they were being surrounded by Allenby's army and fled in disorder. All were killed or taken prisoner.

"And so," Gilbert concluded, "after thousands of years British troops successfully copied the tactics of Saul and Jonathan."