

98 Michmash

Names (also known as)

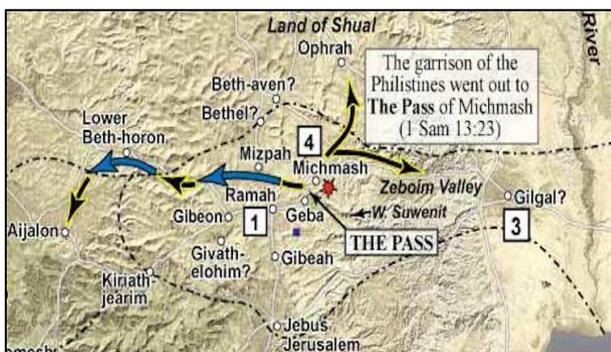
Machmas, Michmas, Mukhmas (Arab village today).

Etymology

Strong’s H4363 – hidden; from the root *kamas* which means to store away.

Location/Description

Michmash is located 11 kms (7 miles) north of Jerusalem. The hill country has many deep canyons (wadis) that run east to west and restrict traffic making north to south passage difficult. The exception is the “pass” in the Wadi Suwenit where the valley cuts through the hills making north to south passage easier. Michmash is on a cliff and has a commanding position over this pass making it an important military location.



Scriptural references

Old Testament

1 Sam.13:2,5,11,16,23; 14:5,31; Neh.11:31; Isa.10:28

The references in Samuel refer to the battle between Israel and the Philistines during which Jonathan and his armour bearer won a great victory. The reference in Isaiah is about the Assyrian advance into Israel.

Famous characters

Jonathan
Saul
General Allenby

Brief history

The town of Michmash is most notable for its connection to the story of 1 Sam.13 and 14. Jonathan had defeated a Philistine garrison and in response the Philistine army came up

en masse to fight Israel. We are told that the army had 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen and men as the sand of the sea in number (1 Sam.13:5). Due to Saul’s poor leadership the children of Israel fled from before this army and were in danger of further defeat as Saul hid under a tree (1 Sam.13:6-7; 14:2). Jonathan then acted, moved by his faith in Yahweh to go up against the host that was encamped at Michmash. Jonathan and his armour bearer took an alternate route to the camp of the Philistines. Instead of taking the pass he chose to pass through the two projections Bozez and Senah and go up the cliffs. God then gave a great victory over the Philistines through the faith of Jonathan and his armour bearer (1 Sam.14:1-23).



Later in history the pass by Michmash was used by Sennacherib in his invasion of Israel, which was prophesied by Isaiah. It was also the home of Jonathan Maccabaeus and the seat of his government for a time while they conducted guerrilla raids on the Romans.



During the First World War, General Allenby and his forces were to face a Turkish army at Michmash. One of the majors remembered that Michmash was mentioned in his Bible and while he read over the passage he noted that there was an alternate route that Jonathan had taken in his battle. When he

showed the passage to Allenby the general used the secret path and finding it lightly guarded won the battle and took the town - an amazing story showing the hand of God at work as He used Allenby to fulfil His purpose. A miraculous victory took place twice in the same place.

The lesson of Michmash

In looking at Michmash we need to understand the enormous difference between Saul and Jonathan, and the danger that comes from being like Saul and not being active in the truth. We need to follow Jonathan's example and be doers of the word, not hearers only. So that God can work through us to bring about His will and purpose.

Sources:

Smiths Bible Dictionary
Biblewalks.com
Wikipedia

(Compiler – Dan Leadbetter)