

1 Samuel 13:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

Analysis

And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

The chapter concludes with Philistine forces at 'the passage of Michmash,' controlling the strategic pass that Jonathan will use for his assault in chapter 14. The Hebrew mattsab ('garrison' or 'outpost') indicates an advance position designed to prevent Israelite movement. This geographical detail sets up the narrative tension: the enemy controls the heights, Israel cowers below, and only divine intervention can change the situation. The stage is set for faith's triumph over fear.

Historical Context

The pass of Michmash was a narrow, steep-sided gorge that provided the main route through the central highlands. Control of this pass gave the Philistines strategic dominance over the entire region. The terrain features - two rocky crags flanking the pass - would figure prominently in Jonathan's daring attack.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does strategic positioning by enemies of God's purposes set the stage for divine intervention?
2. What 'impossible situations' in your life might be preparation for God's dramatic action?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּצֵא	וְמִצְרָיָם	פָּלָשָׁת יִם	אֶל	מִצְבֵּה רֹאשׁ	מִכְמָשָׁה:
went out	And the garrison	of the Philistines	<small>H413</small>	to the passage	of Michmash
H3318	H4673	H6430		H4569	H4363

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 10:28 (Parallel theme): He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages:

1 Samuel 14:1 (Parallel theme): 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.