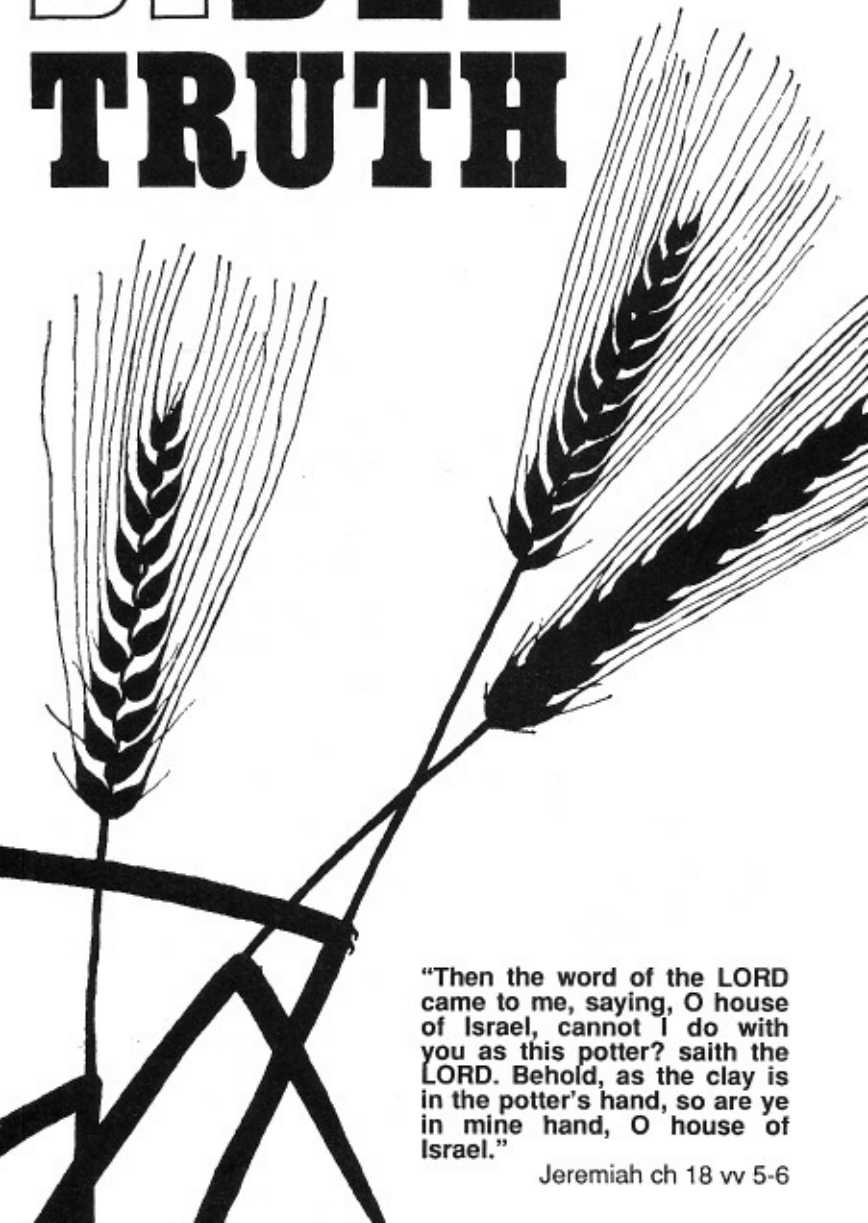


BIBLE TRUTH

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"Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."

Jeremiah ch 18 vv 5-6

Brigadier H. McIntyre C.B.E., D.S.O.

was elected a Vice-President when our Fellowship was founded in 1974. In 1979 he served as President for a couple of years before retiring from the Council in 1981. For many years he was a much loved lecturer with a good sense of humour. He specialised in military affairs and his great trust in God has been an enduring source of encouragement to people of all ages. On September 11th he will celebrate his 100th birthday and we congratulate him on his faithful service to our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. We are so grateful to him for being allowed to reprint his booklet in our magazine as a tribute to this important landmark. Those who remember him will be pleased to learn that he remains in remarkable health — his mental powers are in no way diminished and he keeps his keen interest in current affairs.

A WITNESS OF GOD'S GUIDANCE IN TWO WORLD WARS

by Brigadier H. McIntyre, C.B.E., D.S.O.

SPEAKING from a military , or, rather, from a soldier's point of view I would like to explain how I became convinced that British-Israel truth, so called, was actually real. It is in a way a tribute to a lecturer on a B.I. platform — the Rev. C. S. McKelvey — who was speaking on the subject of the invasion of Palestine from the north, as recorded in the Book of Isaiah.

"He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages: They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled.

Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim; cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem".

(Isa. 10:28-32).

Now when I heard that account it immediately struck a bell because it had been my job to carry out a reconnaissance of mid-Palestine with a view to preparing for any invasion from the north.

At that time it was very doubtful what Churchill would do, for there was Vichy-France in Syria, and the Germans were advancing into southern Russia. I happened to be in the Italian hospital in Jerusalem, which, as a matter of fact, overlooked the Mount of Olives. Having been wounded in Tobruk, and being fit enough to walk, and being more or less convalescent, I was given the job of reconnoitering the

routes into Jerusalem from the north: and, of course, those three routes mentioned in the above passage are the actual routes an army would take.

Now Michmash itself has a very important strategical position. The town, now known as Mukmas has only 400 inhabitants: it is on a plateau, a very convenient place for parking mechanical vehicles.

In the days when the Philistines were there, of course, they did not have mechanical vehicles; nevertheless, this was a most convenient area for planting large quantities of heavy vehicles. On the other hand the Pass at Michmash lies south of the plain, or plateau, and must be travelled through in order to reach Jerusalem. It is also a route leading down to Jericho that is to the east, so that any invasion from the east must come through Michmash.

Now it was so apparent to me from this prophecy that that was the truth from a military point of view; not only was it so in the days of camels or in the days of horses and chariots, but in modern times that must be one of the routes for the invasion of Palestine, and, remember, it is only nine miles from Jerusalem.

We all know the story of Jonathan and the way in which he and his armour-bearer climbed up the gorges at Michmash and surprised the Philistines. One of the most interesting things about that story is Jonathan's saying that if they should say, Come up, then we must go up, for the Lord has delivered them into our hands: if, on the other hand, they say, Stay where you are and we will come down, then we will stand. Now that is the exact reverse of the normal military procedure which implies the fact, "You are discovered, come up to us if you dare." Now precisely the same thing happened in the Palestine campaign when Michmash once again became a very important tactical point, because it was absolutely necessary for us, that is to say, the force under Allenby, or what was then called the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, to break away in the east, cross the Jordan, and link up with the Arabs, and also, because there was a railway going up through the desert. Now there was no railway at all in those days in Palestine, and it was equally important that the Turks should be induced to believe that the main threat would come from the east, and not along the sea-coast, for Allenby's whole point was to advance up the coast because he was very strong in cavalry. Michmash was a key position, and it was essential that Michmash should be taken, and it was taken in precisely the same way as with Jonathan and his armour-bearer. The reason was that the Brigade Major of this particular brigade of infantry — the Royal Londoners, the 60th — was a great student of the Bible.

The brigade had been ordered to take Michmash, the reconnaissance had been carried out and the plan had been made: it entailed just an ordinary military plan which would mean just four battalions of

infantry being employed and a prospect of about 50% casualties. Thus they were quite prepared to wipe out or knock off two battalions: it was a very strong position. However, when this Brigade Major took his Bible and looked up what Jonathan had done the plans were altered, and only one single company of infantry went up the route which Jonathan had taken, and precisely the same result was obtained. That is to say that the Turks were so surprised that they thought they were surrounded, and they fled, and I believe our casualties in this attack were about 10 or 11 men.

Now that was through a study of the Bible, and that incident made me first begin to consider that there must be real truth in British-Israel teaching. I thought back, and looked introspectively into some of my own experiences, and the one which made the most impression on me was that of the operations in Norway, for, whilst thinking it over it became very apparent to me that in that phase of the war we were saved by the Hand of Almighty God Himself. There were no other means by which we could have been able to get safely out of Norway. The important fact remains that the troops that did get away eventually formed the nucleus of the 8th Army which was really rather remarkable.

When in Norway we had, there, something like 20 or 30,000 troops, and our main object then was to deny to the Germans the iron-ore fields at Narvik. The iron ore came through Narvik from Sweden. This we succeeded in doing; we seized the iron ore: it was mainly a naval operation, for it was the navy who closed the fjords into Narvik, which enabled us to get ashore some 20,000 troops. The original object was that we should occupy the north with a view to liberating the whole of Norway, and, if possible, use Norway as jumping-off ground for the campaign in northern Europe, that is to say, directly against Germany. That plan, however, was defeated: it was entirely prevented because of the swift German advance into northern France. It was really the complete collapse of the French which meant that we had to leave Norway, and get away as quickly as we could.

I had the job of covering the withdrawal, because as any artillery man will tell you, it is always the artillery that has to cover a withdrawal: their units are the last on the ground, and with a few sappers they have eventually to cover every withdrawal of any kind. It was a very tricky position because we had no air support at all in Norway; the Luftwaffe were completely in the ascendancy, and at that time the Germans had the very finest of the Luftwaffe operating there. The question was to get this 20,000 away without losing a large majority. The air force, such as it was, was supposed to land on a landing ground we had constructed in order that we might have air-cover, and they would simply abandon their machines and go off by boat. They landed on H.M.S. "Glorious" about 100 miles further south instead of coming direct to our

landing ground and the Luftwaffe bombed the "Glorious" and sank her with the entire British Air Force on board: there was not a single plane left, so that we were entirely without air-cover.

We embarked and put to sea, and had in this transport some 13 ships of which the biggest was the one I happened to be on — the blue-star liner "Arandora Star" which, later on, was sunk — and we were covered by one single naval vessel — the "Southampton" — which had been badly bombed, and was down at the stern, so that her guns could not bring to bear, that is to say, she was listing very badly and was of little use. On board the "Southampton" was the admiral commanding, the Marquis of Cork, and one known to the sailors as good old Ginger Ball. Ginger Ball was a man of great determination who said, "We are going to get away from Norway." We did. We put out to sea almost due west, and do not forget we were in the Arctic Circle in June, and it was bright sunlight the whole day long, that is to say the sun never sank below the horizon, and it was most beautiful weather; there was no wind and the sun was shining brightly when we put to sea.

This convoy of lame ducks had been gone about 12 hours, I suppose — and as the "Southampton" could only steam 10 knots we had to go at the same speed — when, out of the blue, came what we had feared, a German reconnaissance plane. It was a "Heinkel" and it flew round and round us for half an hour quite happily, and we could not do anything about it, for we had no guns; they were all left behind: they had all been blown up: we hadn't a gun between us, only a few rifles and machine guns, but nothing else; the "Heinkel" eventually flew off.

Now we knew very well that the two German Pocket Battleships, the "Gneisenau" and the "Scharnhorst" and another one were only about 100 miles south of us. It was only a matter of about five or six hours' steaming at fairly full speed for them to be amongst us, and it looked as though we were entirely finished. What actually happened was that about an hour after this Heinkel had flown round us there descended in a most extraordinary way a dense mist, and not only this, but a complete fog came down. This fog was so complete that each of the ships in the convoy had to close up to a few cable-lengths: it was a question of just keeping one another in sight, it was not one of avoiding action or of zig-zagging: we simply had to close up and proceed as fast as we could at our 10 knots straight out to sea. This fog came down about 5 o'clock in the evening just when we least expected it. I happened to be on the bridge of the "Arandora Star" in which all my troops were. Incidentally, I had a complete British regiment of Artillery, some 1,200 men and a battalion of Chasseurs-Alpins which was commanded by a sort of Corsican brigand: this was a French outfit which was about 1,000 strong; and a very fine Polish regiment.

(continued on page 18)

(Brigadier continued from page 7)

I had the only prisoners which I had insisted on taking away with us. They were 50 of the Luftwaffe's crack pilots, who, otherwise, would have been left behind. I saw them sitting on the quayside, and said, "You come with me". They were going to be abandoned along with all the guns, and so on, but I said, "Well! we will take you, and you will accompany me." We shut them up in the baths. They were all officers and crack pilots at that.

About 10 p.m. it was still bright: it would have been bright sunlight had it not been for the dense fog which had loomed ahead of us, when, suddenly, I thought I saw two shapes emerging out of the fog — the German Pocket Battleships: this is just what I had feared would happen. They passed, I suppose, about 1,000 yards ahead of us into the haze, out of it, and into it again, and they missed us. There was, of course, no radar in those days. That was a most extraordinary experience and one which at the time I could not very well analyse, but the most interesting part about all this was that fog continued for three solid days — a most unusual circumstance at that time of the year, and we steamed through that for three solid days by dead reckoning, until about the third when it cleared, opening the way for the second part of the drama which was that on the horizon I again saw two ships, but what ships were they? We could not find out by wireless: that would have been disastrous for we should have advertised our position, but as we drew nearer we saw the ensign flying. These ships were the "Hood" and another battle cruiser.

I cannot think or talk of these happenings now without feeling an extraordinary sense of relief at the sight of those two British battleships. I remember Ginger Ball making a signal to the effect that we had been saved by the hand of Almighty God, without which we would never have got away.

Now those same troops that got away from Norway went to Gales camp in Scotland and linked up there with the remnants of the 51st (Highland) division that had escaped from St. Valerie, and, together, they formed the basis of what eventually became the 8th Army, and that is how and why I continued my military career with that particular army. Little did I know at the time that I was to proceed from the Arctic Circle almost to the Antarctic and then back to the desert, for I had served the whole of the 1st World War in the desert and I thought I had finished with it. I had had seven years of it from the frontier of India to Mesopotamia from 1914 to 1921. If I were to be engaged on active service again I had hoped for a salubrious place like France, for a green countryside, or for a land flowing with milk and honey, but not the Desert. However, I was much mistaken, because we received our orders and with an escort hotly pursued by German submarines all the way round the Cape and almost into the Antarctic.

That was the convoy that was sent off by Churchill on the 4th August, 1940 — the very anniversary of War in 1914. I was here once again given orders to cover this convoy with guns. A number of letters appeared in the Press and questions were asked in Parliament about the foolishness of Winston Churchill sending troops out of Britain at a time when Britain might be invaded from Europe: but how correct he was! He made the military decision, and that was the next thing that showed me that we were being guided by Almighty God. That was a decision of the utmost importance because that convoy, which consisted entirely of large ships, was, of course, the first convoy to go out there, and carried the nucleus force of the 8th Army. Prior to this all that existed in Egypt was the 7th Armoured Division and a battalion of Guards in Cairo, and, I think, a brigade of infantry. This convoy took out all the guns to begin with: it was very necessary equipment for that coming army.

It has always struck me, the more so during this last war, that we, the British, without exception, are the people most adaptable to a war in a desert. I had been in Baghdad for 2½ years before this war broke out, and it was apparent to me even then that the Arab, — not the true Arab, but the Iraqi and the Egyptian, — was far less at home in the desert than was the British soldier. The British soldier adapted himself to the desert in a most remarkable way: he found the desert to his liking and many, many times since wherever I have gone, they have said to me.

"Well, Sir, What about being back in the desert? That's the place to fight a war! You do not want to get mixed up in these nasty hedgerows; let's get back to the desert, we can fight happily there, and with acumen: we can use our skill: we can mystify and delude the Hun."

Which is exactly what we did. We mystified and deluded him in a way no army before his has been so dealt with. This applies, also, particularly to the Italians who never knew whether we were in front, behind or at the side of them. They had not the slightest idea what was happening, and the only reason was because we, the British, had adapted ourselves to the desert. Our long-range desert groups used to proceed 2,500 miles by compass to pass through parts of the country which had been marked impassable by the Italians themselves. I remember arriving on one occasion at a Bedouin encampment whose inmates could not at first be persuaded that the British had indeed arrived. I was with my Adjutant and, as a matter of fact, we had lost our way: we were in a motor vehicle and it was rather late at night, but this was a very important Bedouin encampment whose inmates were so surprised that they immediately killed the fatted calf: in fact, they were delighted, but they never expected any white man could have arrived at such a place, much less with a motor vehicle. I

give you this occurrence because to me it is another proof, another example from a military point of view that we, in some way or other, have this capacity for fighting, manoeuvring or travelling through difficult and impossible places, and this, as I say, has been completely borne out.

In the desert we used the formations laid down for all Israelites in the Book of Numbers: that is to say we moved in a square formation. Now we did not move all day long in such a formation because we had no camels: sometimes we wished we had the glorious camel, neither had we horses, but only mechanical vehicles which, though they can cover long distances, require above all things petrol and oil, without which no movement is possible. Many a time I would have been delighted to have the smelly old camel once again because he can proceed on practically nothing, whereas your motor vehicle is limited to large stocks of petrol and oil. Within these limits we travelled in the form of a square which was formed by having armoured vehicles such as tanks on the four sides of the square, and at each corner there was a pennant, that of the unit which was on that side of the square, so that at night there could be no mistake. The higher commanders had special pennants flown at the corner of the square. In the centre we had all the soft-skinned vehicles as we called them; these were lorries for rations and water and medical supply carriers. Your anti-tank guns were placed at the corners, your heavier guns in the centre to fire outwards.

That was precisely the same formation as that described in the Book of Numbers, and it is rather significant that we should have reverted to this practice in the latest type of warfare.

I was so impressed by these among other events from the military point of view that I am now convinced that, certainly, in the last war, we were guided, we were protected, we were given the delivering hand of Almighty God, because we could never have survived; the odds were too great in the first two years, not only in numbers, for we were vastly outnumbered, but it was a question of machinery. We were in every way outnumbered not much in the Navy but particularly in our land and air forces. The Germans had prepared for this war: in all these years he had spent far more money, his equipment was very much more up-to-date, and under no conditions would you have thought it possible that we could have survived.

"Let us give praise to Almighty God, because without the hand of Almighty God all our efforts would have been in vain."

Such was the message of the 8th Army after we had cleared the Germans out of North Africa. I feel it was a correct message. I also think that at that time every fighting soldier in the 8th Army echoed it.