

God's Champion Defeats the Philistine Champion

Call to Worship: Psalm 27:1-6

Hymn #81 - *A Mighty Fortress*

1st Scripture: Psalm 46

Hymn #686 - *Sound the Battle Cry*

2nd Scripture: 1 Samuel 17

Hymn #490 - *Onward Christian Soldiers*

Introduction:

God has rejected Saul as king, because of his rebellious and unfaithful heart. David, a man after God's own heart, has been anointed king, in Saul's place, and God has begun a gradual work of exalting David to the throne. The Spirit of God has left Saul and has rushed upon David, and a distressing spirit has been sent to torment Saul. One of Saul's servants has recommended that a skilled harpist be sought, to help relieve Saul of the agony he was suffering from the distressing spirit. David, a skilled harpist, and a mighty young man of God, is sought out and brought to Saul, to play before him. Whenever David plays his harp, indeed, the distressing spirit leaves Saul, and he finds relief. Saul comes to love David greatly, and makes him his armor bearer. In doing this, Saul has unwittingly set David up to ultimately be his own replacement. The irony of this profound passing of events, gives us a large glimpse of the glory of our sovereign God, whose path of providence, no one can trace or discern, and whose ways are past finding out. And that large glimpse, only grows wider, as we continue down the path of David's divinely directed life.

God has given David great favor with Saul, and now, He will begin to give him great favor and notoriety among all of Israel. Something beyond marvelous is about to happen, as we watch God fulfill His divine purpose through His chosen vessel, the shepherd boy, who was "with the sheep."

I. David and Goliath

The Israelites are at war with the Philistines, and both are situated on opposite mountains, with a valley in between them. And in the midst of their conflict, for forty days, the Philistines continually send out their champion fighter, a giant, named Goliath, to challenge a bold Israelite to "one on one" mortal combat, in the middle valley, which separates the two mountains. And as the Philistines defy the army of Israel with their giant, he repeats the same offer, day after day, "Send someone; send your best to come and fight with me, and whoever wins, the nation represented by the loser, will become the other nation's servants."

But this giant was massive and well armored. He was a minimum of 6 1/2 feet tall (potentially close to 10 feet tall--depending on manuscript evidence), obviously muscular (considering the excessive weight of his armor and weapons), and a well-trained man of war, from his youth. Needless to say, King Saul and the entire Israelite army were "dismayed and greatly afraid" of Goliath (vs. 11, 24). In fact, in verse 24, we are told that, "all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid." Goliath was a monster, and for forty days, he continually taunted the Israelites, calling them to the challenge, which, no one was willing to take.

Now, how does David happen upon this scene, to face the giant? Last we saw, David was serving the King, in some respect, both as an armor bearer and as a Harpist, who would help alleviate Saul of the torment that he was experiencing from the distressing spirit, sent by God. Some amount of time has obviously elapsed since David began serving Saul, but as to the exact amount, we are just not given that precise information. More than likely, David is a teenager, at the time he faced Goliath, as indicated by Saul's response in verse 33, when he speaks of David as being merely a "youth." What we do know for certain, is that, at this point, David was not permanently living with Saul, but rather, he served him in some part-time capacity. You will note in verse 15, we are told, that while David's three oldest brothers were among Saul's soldiers in the war, David, the youngest of all his brothers, though a servant of Saul's, "occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem." And so, David would trek back and forth, serving both Saul and his father, in this way. But again, it is interesting to note that David still cared for the sheep, up to this point, as he was able. Being in the presence of the king, he didn't think himself yet beyond the scope of caring for his father's mangy sheep. Again,

David was a true shepherd at heart, a position most people would hardly have coveted, and more than likely would have dreaded.

Well, being without CNN, MSNBC or Fox News, and several weeks into the war already, David's father Jesse, desired to know how his three oldest sons were faring in the battle. And so, he sends David, along with some supplies, to receive and bring back a report, to this end. And this is what brings David to the battlefield, where he will witness Goliath, once again, defying the armies of Israel.

David arrives at the Israelite camp, as the heat of battle is about to begin. Both the Israelites and the Philistines were arrayed for battle, and preparing to meet again, to engage in war. Realizing that his time was short, he left the supplies in the hands of the supply keeper, and quickly rushed to his deploying brothers before any fighting should begin. Being now at the scene of war, while speaking to his brothers, David witnesses the taunting acts of the giant Goliath. And furthermore, he sees all of the "battle ready" Israelites, running and fleeing away from Goliath, being dreadfully afraid of his apparent great strength and power. And as this is happening, David is beginning to grow confused and concerned, because, after all, the Israelites have the true and living God on their side. In a very unnatural sense, David is hardly impressed with the greatness of the giant, because he is very well aware; supernaturally well aware of the greatness of His God. So, in his mind, he is like, "Why are our people running away from this Philistine dog?" [Reminds me of Elisha, when he and his servant were surrounded by the Syrian army, like two helpless lambs, and he, seeing the invisible army of God, responds, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them," and Elisha prayed to have his servant's eyes opened--2 Kings 6:16-17]. David could see the invisible realm, containing God's power and strength, as it were.

And, as these things are going through David's mind, he overhears some of the Israeli soldiers saying, in verse 25, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be that the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption from taxes in Israel." And David asks the men who are near him about this, and they affirm the matter to be true. And David's thoughts begin to make their way out vocally here, when he adds, "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies *of the living God?*" (vs. 26).

And brethren, here is another one of those critical "message banners," which ought to speak loudly to us, in light of all that we have considered in the last few chapters. Now, while King Saul is experiencing the evident loss of boldness, confidence and strength, that he once had (when the Holy Spirit was upon him), and which he forfeited because of his gross disobedience toward and rebellion against God, another profound consequence of disobedience has emerged on this scene. The Israelites, who rejected God as their King, and demanded that Samuel give them a king like the rest of the nations, who could lead them into battle, were beginning to sprout forth the evident weakness of that fulfilled desire. Here, they had their king; they had a king, like the nations; their king who had no genuine fear of God, and he was incapable of confidently leading them in the battle. What they needed was their God; the God who once led them to prosper against many nations, far stronger, far more advanced, and far greater than themselves. And because God was not with their king, all they could see was the outward show of the Philistine Giant. They were bound, chained, and limited by a natural, worldly, godless, understanding of their present dilemma. But David, who was filled with the Spirit, saw the real picture; he was able to travel beyond the earthly and into the heavenly. And from his standpoint, Goliath was a tiny, harmless flea, when viewed in the broader context of the heavenly realm, which exposed the glory of the "*living* God."

Well, not unlike our Lord Jesus' brothers, who despised and looked down upon Him during His earthly ministry, David's brother Eliab, who *could not see* (along with the rest of the Israelites), judges David from within the realm of his personal blindness, and grows angry at David's bold comments. After all, how could little shepherd boy, brother David, make such bold comments against the giant, who has defied even the great (kingly looking) Eliab, for the past forty days. It kind of hurts when your much younger brother, right from the outset, shows great boldness over a matter that has terrified you for forty days, especially, when you have always been looked at, as the mighty and strong one in the family (remember Samuel's words in chapter 16). Needless to say, God is here repeating very loudly, as it were, "I look at the heart!" And so, Eliab sharply rebukes David, wrongly accusing him of being proud, and of coming there, merely to satisfy his inner itch, to see the battle.

David, of course, knowing full well that he was there in obedience to his father, briefly defends himself and his motives (also expressing his warrant for his comments against the giant),

and then turns to speak to other soldiers about the present dilemma, ensuring that all of the information he had received was accurate. And as David continues to speak boldly and strongly against Goliath, word begins to make its way back to Saul, concerning the overly confident and clearly insane, shepherd boy. What would ever possess a youth like David, as bold as he is, to speak so little of the massive giant, Goliath?

Needless to say, Saul sends for David, his faithful servant and armor bearer, to address this matter. And we are told in verse 32, "Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." "Your highness, tell the Israelite soldiers not to worry, and to lay their anxieties and fears aside. I will go and fight this giant." Having gotten a good glimpse of Goliath, and standing in the presence of young David, Saul was anything but ready to wipe the sweat off of his forehead in relief, preparing to blow the victory trumpet. After all, sometimes, youth lack wisdom and tend to run head long into trouble, feeding off of emotions, and with very little thought. And so, King Saul seeks to set the matter straight, "Uhhh, David. You are incapable of fighting with this Philistine. You are a mere youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth." In modern, non-sugar coated lingo, that would translate, "David, this guy is huge, and he will maul the tar out of you!"

David then explains to Saul how he has rescued lambs that have been taken out of his father's flock by bears and lions, grabbing them by the beard and killing them, when they have turned on David. Goliath would be as one of those fierce animals, and "moreover, the same God, who has delivered me from the paw of the lion and the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this uncircumcised Philistine." You see, David's ultimate confidence was in his God. Again, that was the strength that he drew from. His eyes were fixed there, and that being the case, Goliath looked quite small. Isn't it the case, brethren, that when God has revealed His divine power to us through past battles, we are better strengthened, and more confident to face our present battles, knowing God is with us. The bear and the lion of David's past, were mere preparations for this day, as he was preparing to now face the giant. One might arguably say, "Why has God allowed such fierce animals to challenge David, by attacking the sheep under his care? Is not God sovereign?" Indeed He is, and He used those prior difficult circumstances to prepare David for present and later circumstances, and he will use this present trial to prepare him for later circumstances. All in all, our trials, brethren, drive us to God, do they not? They

drive us to seek His divine power for help. And as we are driven outside of ourselves for strength and help, God delivers, and in doing so, He rebuilds our *confidence* in and *dependence* upon Him (two essential human qualities that have been eroded by the fall).

Saul then consents, responding with the words of verse 37, "Go, and the Lord be with you!" And then, he tries to clothe David with his own armor (armor, which Saul should have worn, as he should have accepted Goliath's challenge, as God's king---another fruit of his rebellion and loss of courage). And David just cannot move properly in the armor. Realizing that the armor would actually hinder David (from David's standpoint), and that God was stripping down "Gideon's army" (from God's standpoint--to greater manifest His glory in David), David lays all of the armor aside (sword and all), and prepares to face the massive, well armored giant (who comes with "shield bearer" and all), carrying nothing more than his shepherd's staff, a bag of five smooth stones and a sling.

David then walks out to meet the armored tank of a giant, and Goliath is amused by the scene, and begins to mock and ridicule David. "Are they kidding me?! They can't be serious! For forty days, I have offered this challenge, and no one has been willing to take it; and there are far bigger and much better armed soldiers than this, and they send out this good looking, farm boy, with a stick and a sling?" "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" "We are not here to play fetch son, do you realize that? What are you going to do, attempt to make me do tricks for you or something?" Putting the humor aside then, he moves on to curse David by his Philistine gods, and then shouts aloud in verse 44, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field." And then, David responds with the divinely inspired words of verses 45-47; caption words, which are meant to define exactly what is about to happen, so that everyone present will clearly know that this is a work of God. Here, God is speaking through David, as it were, carefully setting the stage for revealing and exalting His own glory, in the presence of all. This is Moses, speaking of the impossible deliverance, God is about to bring to the Israelites, as he is preparing to bring them out of Egypt. This is Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, declaring beforehand, the miraculous preservation that God was about to bring about, as they were to be cast into the blazing furnace. This is God showing that He is all-sovereign, and that no physical force in this entire world (even universally combined) could ever thwart His plan. It is God saying to America, today, "Don't trust in your numerous bombs

and your advanced technologies, but rather, trust in the living God, for, the battle is His, and He could undo every power in this entire world by means of a shoe lace, if He so desired! This is God, using his faithful creatures to bring glory to His Name, so that the world may know that there is a God in Israel!

Goliath then begins to move forward toward David, and I love David's response to this movement. You see, as the giant begins to move toward you, you might begin to have second thoughts; you might back up a little bit, in fear, as reality begins to settle in here. But, we are told in verse 48 that, "David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine." David was anxious to get in there and to let this giant have it. "This Goliath, mocks God's army and seeks to defy the living God, let me at him. By the power of God, I am going to rip his big head off!" And David then pulls out one of his smooth stones, sets it in the sling, whirls it around and whips the stone at Goliath. And the hidden voice of divine sovereignty carries that stone right into the forehead of Goliath. It lodges into the front of his skull and brings the giant down, face first to the ground, unconscious. Now, David doesn't even have his own sword to use, at this point, so he takes Goliath's sword from out of its sheath and cuts off the giant's head with it. And the giant's head becomes the symbol of victory and the great testimony of God's glory before the world.

The Philistines, let's say, beyond amazed, probably realizing that something divine has taken place here, begin to flee, and the Israelites pursue them and demolish them, all over the place. Following this, they plunder their tents, and rejoice in the God-given victory. For forty days, they had no clue as to how they could overcome this large obstacle, but now that the flood has past, God has begun to bring them safely to dry land.

Saul then inquires again, as to who this boy's father is, and upon finding out, he sends request to Jesse, seeking to have David live permanently under Saul's care. The anointed shepherd boy has now obtained full residence in the royal court, and he has gained great favor and notoriety in all Israel!

II. Conclusive Thoughts and Applications

1) Brethren, notice again God's sovereign hand at work, as He continues to edge David toward the throne. To be sure, many trials are up ahead, but all of these are to form and advance, "the man after God's own heart." And in doing so, again, God will leave ongoing glimpses of the coming, greater "Son of David." Here, God has placed David in view of the public eye, and that, in such a way, that all of Israel would honor and respect him. God brings David to the battle scene, fills him with an unnatural Spirit-driven boldness, delivers the giant Goliath into his hands, and exalts him in the eyes of all of the people. And because David continually acknowledged his dependence upon God throughout the whole scene (David was not looking to make a monument for himself), God was greatly glorified in the process of this exaltation. The scene closes with the shepherd boy, holding the giant's head in hand, fulfilling the prophetic caption given by the shepherd boy earlier, namely, that God does not bring about deliverance by "sword and spear," but by His Name, so that all the earth will know "that there is a God in Israel!" "The battle is the Lord's!"

2) Brethren, is not God constantly seeking to draw our attention away from what is *visible* and toward what is *invisible*, so that, we can stand fast confidently in the face of all that is *visible*, and by this means, glorify our God, who is *invisible*? Our entire study of the Book of Revelation sought to constantly carry us behind the scenes; behind what is seen, and into the realm of the unseen, so that we could persevere and overcome, unto the glory of God, and the preservation of our own souls. And all throughout Scripture, God is attempting to bring our minds behind the curtain of the visible, so that we might, by faith (which accesses the invisible), rely upon our invisible God and His resurrection power.

Do we not see that again here? Goliath is a very real, visible, tangible problem; a problem far too big for any and all of us, but if God is for us, no one...not even Goliath...can be against us. And brethren, here is the key of application to us, with regard to this point: We need to constantly access what is invisible, if we are going to stand firm, in the face of what is visible. We need to *exercise* our faith. If we are not constantly, daily, in the Word; if we are not constantly, daily in prayer; if we are not praying together as a body, we will find ourselves like the Israelites, utterly terrified and despondent, at the threat of a very visible Goliath. We need boldness and grace, and that comes through prayer, brethren; that comes by spending time at the

feet of Christ. [Consider the example of the disciples in Acts, when they were threatened by the religious leaders; ordered *not* to preach in the Name of Jesus. They prayed; God shook the place, and their confidence multiplied ten-fold. And they turned the world upside down! We need such prayer meetings here, brethren!].

3) Recognize again, here in David, a glorious picture of the coming Christ. As some have correctly stated, we are naturally like those helpless, anxiety filled Israelites, overwhelmed by the constant threat of the giant. We are incapable of dealing with the far greater threat; the far more massive, weight of our sin; and God's Law keeps us back from any means of advancement because of this. But our Champion; the Lord Jesus Christ, lunges forward toward the giant, without fear, and conquers him by means of His cross! And He lops the head right off of our sin; and He crushes the head of the serpent, and sends us forward to crush the remaining Philistines! He gives us the victory! The battle is the Lords! By the glorious Son of David, who has conquered satan, sin, death, and, who has fulfilled the Law for us, we are completely victorious over our enemies. Our sin, and every speck of opposition, which comes against us, is ultimately crushed under our feet, because of Christ! Let us then continue to live in and out of this victory, brethren...all to the glory of God!

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25