The Prosperity Gospel of David and Goliath, Part 2 (1 Samuel 17: 31-54)

1. Discussion (v.31-37)

- Somehow, David's inquiry about the rewards of the victor against Goliath, combined with his theocentric confidence, had reached the ears of Saul (v. 24-27, 30).
- After Saul summoned David before him, David offered him a word of encouragement: "do not be afraid." (v.11, 23, 32). David refers to himself as Saul's servant, which lays the foundation for David's refusal to kill Saul in the near future (chapters 18-30).
- Saul looks at David and comes to the conclusion that he is young and unable to fight the Philistine; the same observation that Goliath makes (v.42).
- David submits his resume before Saul, which includes his bravery as a shepherd: if a lamb was taken by a lion or bear, David would recover it. If the bear or lion rushed against David, he struck it down (v.34-35).
- The Hebrew word "paw" in reference to the lion and bear is the same word for "hand" of the Philistine. David is placing Goliath in the same sphere as a lion or a bear; they are beasts that threaten sheep. Just as David protected his father sheep, so David will protect God's sheep, Israel.
- David, for the first time in all of chapter 17, ascribes glory to God's covenantal name by using "the LORD." David recognizes this as a covenantal battle; he is simply the instrument that the LORD will use.

2. Preparation (v.38-40)

- Shockingly, David convinces Saul to give him permission to represent Israel. Saul offers David his armor, but David rejects it because it was "not tested" (v.39).
- David rejects the armor for several reasons:
   - The LORD has already clothed David with His Spirit (16:13).
   - This armor account stands in contrast with Goliath's armor. David is not comfortable bringing humanly-manufactured tools to this fight; all of Goliath's and Saul's armor and weaponry were manipulated by man; his staff, sling, and stones were naturally occurring.
   - Once David defeated Goliath, Saul could claim some responsibility in the victory (13:1-4).
- There is irony in Saul, as king, placing "his armor" on David; this thematically displays what the reader has already been informed of unbeknownst to Saul.

3. Altercation (v.41-47)

- Rejecting Saul's armor, yet receiving his benediction, David ran out to meet Goliath.
- When the Philistine "saw" David, he noted that he was young. This is the same conclusion of Saul (v.33).
- Goliath mocks David and his "stick." This was his shepherd's rod, which was used to fight off wild animals. Goliath is offended: he jeers at David and asks whether David is going to "hit him with a stick" as he would a wild dog.
- Ironically, Goliath rightly identifies himself as a dog, which is categorically similar with the lion and the bear; all of them are wild beasts.

- Goliath then "curses" David by his gods (v.43). This "cursing" is theologically significant because in God's covenant to Abram (Gen. 12:3) He promises that He will bless those who bless him, and curse those who curse him. David, by extension of Abram, is going to hold Goliath accountable; first, David is going to strike him down, and then cut off his head. Afterwards, the Philistines will be struck down and the birds of the air and beasts of the field will feed on their flesh.

4. Confrontation (v.48-53)

- Prior to the verbal altercation, David had armed himself with a sling, shepherd's rod, and five stones. These stones would be anywhere from the size of a baseball to that of a softball. These stones could reach a velocity of 100-150 miles per hour.
- David ran quickly, while Goliath just "moved forward."
- Goliath has not only cursed David, but also defiled the LORD (v.26, 45). The Mosaic Law detailed the punishment for blasphemers: death by stoning (Lev. 24:16).
   - David stoned Goliath (v.50). As the witness, he casted the first stone; it "sunk" into Goliath's forehead, shattering his glabella and frontal lobe.
- Goliath fell on his face. The reader is brought back to the first and second morning of the ark's lodging in Ashdod at the temple of Dagon; the first morning, Dagon was lying face first. The second morning, his head was decapitated.
- David, in a similar manner, took Goliath's sword out of its sheath and cut off his head. This was to publicly shame Goliath, since he was already dead (v.50).
- The Israelites' enemies believed that the LORD was the God of the hills, not of the valleys (1 Kings 20:23-28). David has proved that the battle is the LORD's (v.47). David defeated Goliath in a valley (v.3) and then followed the battlefield customs of the day in not only decapitation, but also the stripping of weapons and armor (1 Sam. 31:9).

5. Observation:

A. <u>David...is David</u>: He is the son of Jesse, an Ephrathite, from the tribe of Judah, who was a shepherd. He was anointed with a horn of oil, and Israel's next king. The LORD rushed on him continually.

B. <u>David's actions were aligned with God's promises to His covenant people Israel</u>: God promised Abram land, seed, and blessings (Gen. 12:1-3). He also commanded the Israelites to conquer the Promised Land; it is theirs by inheritance. David knows that the Philistines are to be routed out; the LORD is with him because he is anointed, and he is from the tribe of Judah. David will defeat Goliath because of God's covenant.

6. Application:

As the Christ's church, we are to be zealous for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). We will be persecuted for righteousness' sake (Matt. 5:11-12; Colossians 1:24) and must trust the LORD that He will do what is right (Genesis 18:25). While publicly we will be viewed as the outcasts and scum of society (1 Cor. 4:13), we should rejoice that we have Christ as our advocate at the right hand of God (Rom. 8:34). In David, at best, we get an inconsistent example of piety. With Christ, we get Him; His passive and active obedience.