

For the past few weeks we have been following young David. First, as he was anointed by Samuel, and secondly, as he was summoned by Saul to serve in his court. This brings us this morning, to begin to consider his confrontation with Goliath.

There are three reasons why I've decided to examine this confrontation in two sermons: first, it's a rather long and detailed account (it takes up the entire 17th chapter that is 58 verses long); secondly, it's something of a turning point in the life of David (and the nation of Israel); thirdly, as it's an important type of Christ's defeat of Satan, it provides an abundance of theological and practical truth.

Thus, while I intend this morning to survey vv1-30, I hope to return a second time finish the chapter in the near future. This morning, in covering vv1-30, I want to provide a historical survey of the interpretation of David and Goliath, spending the majority of our time on the third of those interpretations.

- I. The Liberal View
- II. The Moralistic View
- III. The Evangelical View

I. The Liberal View

1. By "liberal view" I mean, the view of those who do not hold to the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of Holy Scripture.
2. Thus, such people will interpret a passage like David and Goliath in one of two ways—as an allegory, or a myth.
3. (1) An allegory—by this is meant, while David may have actually fought Goliath, they don't focus on the details.
4. They would say—the main point of the passage is that David defeated the enemies of Israel, who are collectively attributed to Goliath.
5. Thus, according to this view, Goliath represents the enemies of God as a whole—he's symbolic of our enemies.
6. (2) A myth—by this of course is meant, perhaps was a real person, but there was never a giant named Goliath.
7. What do we say to such people? Well, we would argue that 1Sam.17 is real actual history, just as much as 1Sam.16 and 1Sam.18.
8. We believe that 3000 years ago, a young Hebrew man named David, stood before a massive Philistine named Goliath.
9. Just as we believe Adam, Noah, Moses, and Samson, were all historical figures, so we believe David and Goliath were real historical figures.
10. Now, I don't necessarily feel obligated to combat this view, other than asking this question—as we read through 1Samuel 17, isn't it rather evident that it recounts a real historical narrative.
11. And I believe, if we were to be honest, we would have to conclude that it does—and thus, it really comes down to whether or not we believe it.
12. The Scriptures contain many things that proud man rejects—a talking serpent, a world-wide flood, and a giant named Goliath.

II. The Moralistic View

1. By "moralistic view" I refer to the common thinking of many professing Christians within broader Christianity.
2. I'm in no way questioning their faith or sincerity, but I am questioning their interpretation of this passage in particular and the OT in general.
3. Simply put, I'm here referring to the view that the primary purpose of David and the Goliath is to teach Christians how to fight their battles.
4. Let me clarify, I do believe that a legitimate and necessary reason for this account is to provide practical help on spiritual welfare.

5. In fact, I hope to directly provide these practical lessons in our next two sermons, as we consider vv31-39 and vv40-58.
6. But the view I am here rejecting, views David as he defeats Goliath as excessively or primarily an example of moral behavior.
7. We, all like David, need to truth God and defeat our personal giants, thus, David is viewed foremostly as an example to follow.
8. Perhaps I can summarize the moralistic view by a meme I saw on Facebook a few weeks ago, from a friend of mine.
9. Meme—"If God puts a Goliath before you, then He must believe there's a David within you"—I don't mean to be unkind.
10. This isn't the point of David and Goliath—the passage isn't intended to point us within to ourselves, but without to Christ.
11. Thus, as we are considering the moralistic view, I want to remind you, there are basically three purposes in OT narratives.
12. (1) There's a historical purpose—that is, David and Goliath are real historical figures that live in an important time in Israel's existence.
13. (2) There's a practical purpose—that is, Christians must be reminded by David, our strength comes from God.
14. (3) There's a typological purpose—that is, the ultimate point of the passage, is to point forward to God's promise in Christ.
15. And thus, it's important to keep all three of these in mind—all three are important, and all three have their place.

III. The Evangelical View

Here I am using the term Evangelical in the older sense. Today almost everybody claims to be Evangelical. The word, as you likely know, simply means "according to the gospel," and thus refers to a Christ-centered view of Scripture.

This view sees a broader and bigger picture of Scripture, in that it sees the entire Bible as pointing to Christ and His redemption. This doesn't mean that every passage equally points to Christ, but it does mean that the whole of Scripture is intended to direct our minds to the person and work of Christ.

Thus, as I've already said, while we don't deny David provides several important practical lessons about our spiritual warfare (which I hope to return to in the next sermon), here I want to consider the big picture, and suggest three broad themes, as seen in David and Goliath, that relate to Christ defeating Satan, and liberating God's weak and needy people (as I suggest there are three main players in this narrative – Goliath, Saul and the Israelites, and David, I want to consider, the enemy, despair, and savior of God's people).

A. The enemy of God's people

1. Here I want to suggest that, Goliath as the archenemy of physical Israel, was a picture of Satan, the great enemy of God's people.
2. And thus, I want to provide five things about Goliath, that teach us important truth about Satan (or perhaps more simply – 5 ways Goliath shadowed Satan).
3. (1) He was mighty and powerful, vv3-4—"The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span."
4. Now, most of you may know, that not every person is in agreement concerning how tall Goliath was—suggestions range from 7 to 9 feet.
5. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of armor, that weighed around 150 pounds.
6. He was also covered with bronze armor on his legs, had a bronze javelin on his back, and he carried a large spear.

7. We learn from v7, that the iron spearhead alone weighed almost 20 pounds—this man was a mighty soldier indeed.
8. Now, the fact that Goliath was the champion of the Philistines, meant that he had proven himself a great warrior.
9. He had proven himself in previous battles to be uniquely gifted and able—he was the most skilled among the Philistines.
10. Though he himself was a Philistine, just as the rest of the army, he was recognized as the fiercest of all Philistines.
11. Thus, I trust, brethren, that it's rather evident that Goliath here depicts or portrays the power and strength of Satan.
12. (a) He is described like the Strong Man in the gospels, Lk.11:21-22—"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils."
13. As we shall see next time, David describes Goliath as trusting in his armor (that is, in contrast to trusting in God).
14. (b) He is described as a great dragon or serpent—the phrase in v5 "a coat of mail" is literally "a breastplate of scales."
15. In other words, Goliath is here portrayed as a great serpent or dragon, both of which are elsewhere applied to Satan.
16. Rev.12:9—"So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."
17. Here our great enemy is described as a "great dragon" to underscore his power, and "that serpent of old" to underscore his craftiness.
18. He's then called "the Devil" which means "the accuser" and "Satan" which means "adversary"—the great enemy of God's people.
19. (2) He was the leader of a great army, v3—"The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them."
20. Now, let me remind you at this point, that the Philistines had a large and powerful army that terrorized other nations.
21. Perhaps we can say, Goliath led a great army, comprised of evil and mighty soldiers, who sought to kill and destroy.
22. And so, we learn from Scripture, that Satan is the champion or leader of a great host of fallen angels called demons.
23. Eph.6:11-12—"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of the age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."
24. Notice, Paul first mentions the devil (v11) and then a spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places (that is, in heavenly realms).
25. In other words, brethren, while we are said to fight against Satan, we actually fight against his spiritual hosts (multitudes).
26. Because Satan is not all-present (as God is), we fight against Satan indirectly through demons and this world system.
27. Perhaps put another way—while Scripture says we fight Goliath, we actually more fight against his Philistine army.
28. (3) He despised the people of God, v10—"And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together."
29. This Hebrew word rendered "defy" is a rather important word in this story—it's used a total of six times within it (vv10, 25, 26 [2x], 36, 45).
30. It literally means "to reproach, taunt, blaspheme, or defy"—it contains the idea of challenging with a sense of defiance.
31. It's not so much that Goliath was defying the nation of Israel, but he was actually defying the God of the Israelites.

32. This, as we shall see in further next time is really a major point—in fact this is what caused David to become indignant.
33. V26—"Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"
34. This was the issue—the issue wasn't so much that Goliath had ridiculed the nation or army of Israel, but in fact, he had mocked the God of Israel.
35. David knew this was more than a battle between two armies (or two nations)—it was a battle between two Gods (the true God of Israel and the false god[s] of the Philistines).
36. This is why, brethren, Goliath ultimately hated the Israelites—he hated Israel because he hated the God of Israel.
37. And so too brethren, why do you think Satan hates Christians so much—it's because He hates God, and he knows how much God loves His people.
38. Rev.12:17—"And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ."
39. Revelation 12 describes Satan's defeat (and thus fall) by the Male-Child, and his intense hatred for His followers.
40. Thus, by "the woman" and "her remnant" are meant, the church collective (woman) and each member individually (remnant).
41. They are described as "those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus Christ"—that is, they believe the gospel and obey the law.
42. And so it's because they love God and obey God, that the dragon is enraged with them, and makes war with them.
43. (4) He was boastful and loud—we know he was loud because he spoke from the valley as was heard on the other mountain.
44. Thus, he spoke loud and boastful blasphemies, which produced fear and trembling in the hearts of the Israelites.
45. And dear brethren, this is exactly what Satan does—he roars like a lion, speaking blasphemies to frighten the sheep.
46. 1Pet.5:8—"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."
47. (5) He was experienced—Saul described Goliath in v33 as "a man of war from his youth"—that is, he's been fighting since his youth.
48. In other words, he was a trained killer—he had great experience in the art of war—he was highly skilled in battle.
49. O brethren, stop and think about your enemy, who is far greater and deadly than Goliath, for he too is a "man of war from his youth."
50. Satan has been leading his spiritual hosts into battle against God and His people, for thousands of years—he's very experienced.

B. The despair of God's people

1. Here I am thinking about Saul and the Israelite army, who were all utterly and absolutely frightened at Goliath.
2. V11—"When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid" v24—"And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid."
3. The word "dismayed" means "to be cast down because of fear or terror"—perhaps I could say—they lost heart.
4. Why—because they were "greatly and dreadfully afraid"—and as a result they fled when they saw and heard Goliath.
5. Now, I suggest to you that this is where we are in this story—we are not in the first place, David, but the fearful Israelites.
6. There wasn't a man among them, who had the ability or courage to stand against Goliath, let alone defeat him.

7. There is a sense in which Goliath held Saul and the Israelites in fear—they were a slave to his might and power.
8. This suggests at least two things about all of God's people by nature—all men are enslaved by Satan, and terrified by Satan.
9. (1) All men are enslaved by Satan, Lk.11:21—"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace."
10. Here we find that Satan guards his goods, which are kept in own palace, which refer to poor enslaved Gentiles.
11. I say that because the next verse describes Christ, as the Stronger than the strong man, who defeats the strong man and plunders his goods.
12. This has reference to Christ's work on the cross, through which He defeats Satan, and liberates His native captives.
13. Thus, the phrase in Lk.11:21 "his goods are in peace" refer to native man, enslaved to Satan, and kept by Satan.
14. Man is kept in peace in that he's ignorant of his bondage, and truth be told, is actually a willing slave of Satan.
15. (2) All men are terrified by Satan, Heb.2:14-15—"Inasmuch then as he children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetimes subject to bondage."
16. In what way the devil had "the power of death" is explained as "subjecting native man to the fear of that death."
17. In other words, the devil terrorized his captives with the fear of death—he terrorized them with what death brings.
18. And again, this points to the deception of Satan, because he doesn't have any real authority to threaten us with death.
19. Thus, on one hand, God has given this power to Satan as a punishment to man, but on the other hand, as a thief, Satan has stolen it.
20. But either way brethren, this is the terrible condition of all men by nature—they are enslaved and terrified by Satan.

C. The savior of God's people

1. Verse 12 begins with one of my favorite words—"But David"—"But David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse."
2. David is introduced into this narrative in a very unique way—there's Goliath, the fearful Israelites, and now David!
3. But I also think it's important that he's introduced in the way he is—merely the son of Jesse who was from Bethlehem.
4. There's an intended contrast in this description—on the one hand, there's mighty Goliath, and on the other hand, there's David from Bethlehem.
5. (1) He was anointed of God—this of course took place back in chapter 16, when Samuel was commanded to anoint David.
6. If you remember, anointing with oil, was an external symbol of the inward empowering work of the Holy Spirit.
7. Thus, as we shall see later in the chapter 17, David does not stand before Goliath in his own strength or power.
8. David was anointed by God, in part, to defeat Goliath—thus, soon after he was anointed, he stands before Goliath.
9. This of course was similar to His greater Son, for right after Christ was anointed (at His baptism), He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.
10. And why was Christ led into the wilderness, but because He needed to do battle with one far greater than Goliath.

11. (2) He was taunted by the enemy, v16—"And the Philistine drew near and presented himself forty days, morning and evening."
12. This means, Goliath taunted Israel for 40 days, which of course is the same thing that Satan did for Christ in the wilderness.
13. Lk.4:1-2—"Then Jesus, being filled with Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil."
14. We know from Matthew chapter 4, that no small part of this 40-day battle, concerned the tempting taunts of Satan.
15. Matt.4 (vv3-9)—"If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down" "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."
16. What are these, but the blasphemes tauntings of God's archenemy, who like Goliath, desired to be served (worshiped).
17. (3) He was despised by his brothers, v28—"Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."
18. Do you remember that time in the gospels, when Jesus refused to go openly into Jerusalem because of His enemies?
19. Jn.7:3-5—"His brothers therefore said to Him, Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world. For even His brothers did not believe in Him."
20. These words of Jesus' earthly brothers, must be understood as sarcastic and mocking—"You claim to be the Messiah. If You really are, then openly go into Jerusalem that Your disciples can see Your supposed miracles and believe in You."
21. In other words, they were questioning Jesus' motives—they were depicting Him as being deceptive and untrue.
22. This is exactly the same thing David's brother was saying about him—he accused him of being a deceitful fraud.
23. (4) He crushed the head of the serpent—this of course takes us further into 1Sam.17, where we find David crushing the serpent's head.
24. 1Sam.17:49-51—"Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone and struck the Philistine and killed him. But there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled."
25. Why does this passage place such an emphasis upon Goliath's head—David crushed it with a stone, and then cut it off?
26. I suggest it's because of the very first gospel promise in the Bible, Gen.3:15—"He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."
27. This is actually a threat made to the serpent in the hearing of our first parents—thus it was both a threat and promise.
28. God promises to send His Son, the seed of the woman, the Son of David, who will crush the head of the serpent.
29. I suggest this is at the very heart of the story—David crushed the head of the giant, as a type of Christ to come.
30. This was another way God was ensuring His OC people that He had not forgotten His original promise (Gen.3:15).
31. (5) He fought as representative of the people—Goliath wanted to settle the battle with two representatives from each army.
32. This actually was a rather common way to settle battles in olden days—two champions represented two armies.

33. Now, it's important to understand—this was done with the understanding that the army with most powerful god would win.
34. 1Sam17:8b—"Am I not a Philistine, and you he servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together."
35. Thus, the fate of the entire nation was left to one young man—his performance would determine their destiny.
36. And surely brethren, we can see the similarity between this and Christ—for He fought on behalf of His people.
37. Do you Him there, dear friends? Walking down to the Valley of Elah? Standing before the strong man, as our Stronger than the strong man?
38. But our Savior does not crush the serpents head with a stone, but instead a cross, for it through His cross He defeated our enemy.
39. What a wonderful truth this is! Christ has defeated Satan! This means he can no longer torment us by fear of death.
40. O Christian—I bring you good news this morning! Our Greater Than David, has defeated the great dragon, the serpent of old!
41. His power over you has been broken—he is no longer your master—you have been liberated by your Champion!
42. How did the Israelites respond to Goliath's defeat—we find from v52, that having seen the victory, they pursued the Philistines.
43. What possibly could have turned them from being a fearful bunch of cowards into bold and courageous warriors?
44. It was this—they now realized they fought as victors—they fought at the back of their new champion—David!
45. And so it is—we too have the victory in Christ—dear brethren, we do not fight a losing battle—the war has been won!
46. And let me simply say to you this morning who are presently among the Philistines, fighting against God's Anointed.
47. Throw down your weapons, forsaken your folly, bow the knee and kiss the Son, and then you too, can put on your armor, and fight for Jesus. Amen.