

Title: God's Sustains His Cause
Scripture: 2 Samuel 21:15-22
Series: The Promise of the Messianic Kingdom

1. Introduction:

- a. Our passage today seems to be a small collection of heroic deeds by David's men. It almost seems out of place with the narrative before and what is to follow.
- b. However, our passage is crucial because in it, we see the kingdom under divine protection. We learn that God sustains both the king and the kingdom.

2. Verses 15-17: God Preserves His Ministers: There was war again between the Philistines and Israel, and David went down together with his servants, and they fought against the Philistines. And David grew weary. (16) And Ishbi-benob, one of the descendants of the giants, whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of bronze, and who was armed with a new sword, thought to kill David. (17) But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid and attacked the Philistine and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, "You shall no longer go out with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel."

- a. Our story introduces us to a relative of Goliath named Ishbi-benob. From the passage, we conclude that Ishbi-benob was also a giant. We are told that his spearhead weighed **three hundred shekels of bronze**, which was seven and one-half pounds. We also read that he was equipped with a new sword.

- i. In other words, he was an imposing figure, like the Goliath of old. Here we see a towering man of great might waging war against God's people.
 1. There is some truth to the thought that some trials and temptations can recycle themselves in our lives. But what are we to do when that old trial suddenly becomes new? How do we fight against those things that, by God's grace, we have defeated before?
 - a. The key to victory in today's battle against the giants of old is the same key that brought victory when we first encountered Goliath. The people of God overcome terrible and repeated persecution by entrusting themselves to God and then fighting in His strength.
- b. We note that in the middle of the conflict, Ishbi-benob noticed David was struggling in the battle. David was visibly exhausted and lagging. At the time of this story, David was an older man. The strength of youth, that same strength that God had used to defeat Goliath, was no longer present in his body. The giant saw an opportunity and moved in for the kill. What an incredibly ironic victory this would have been for the giant. A young David had killed his ancestor; now Ishbi-benob could kill the elderly David.
 - i. There is a theological point to be made here. We affirm that God has a way of protecting and sustaining His loved ones. It was God's sovereign leading that caused Abishai to notice the trouble that David was in. Abishai rushed to David's

aide, fought with Ishbi-benob, and through divine empowerment, killed him.

1. It is wonderful to learn that David's men were giant killers, too. They had learned the skill in the school of David. By watching, walking with, learning from, and fighting alongside David, they had learned how to give their youth to God and do great things.
 - a. There is a beautiful lesson for us here. The things we learn, we can pass down to the following generations. We can teach the following generation how to deal with life's great struggles. Our legacy is cemented not in memorials but in the lives of those we touch.
- c. This close call sobered David's men. They came to realize what was obvious. No matter how used by God, every man will eventually be hindered by the passage of time. They passed a new war policy and imposed it on David in a solemn covenant: **You shall no longer go out with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel.**
 - i. The stakes for Israel were too high, the risk too significant. Should David's life be taken in battle, Israel would stumble in darkness and confusion. King David's life meant light for Israel; his death would spell spiritual darkness.
 1. We know that no man is irreplaceable. However, David was God's appointed king who led Israel into the presence of the True

King, and there was no one ready to take his place yet.

2. In a genuine sense, David was Israel.
 - a. David was God's King who guided Israel on the path of holiness.
 - i. Beloved, as we age, we might not be able to do what we had done before, but we are still valuable and beneficial in the hands of God. David cannot fight on the battlefield anymore, but he can still lead the nation's heart toward God.

d. Sometimes, God uses a man in a mighty way. Here, we cannot help but think about those critical moments in redemptive history when the peace and security of many of God's people seemed to rest on the troubling situation of one person.

- i. Moses, David, and Paul
 1. The God of heaven has always defended his sovereignty: He preserves the seed, deliverer, or king. The Pharaohs, Herods, and Cesars of this world cannot prevail against God's purpose or His ordained ministers.

3. Verses 17-19, 21: God Honor's His Servants: But Abishai the son of Zeruiah came to his aid and attacked the Philistine and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, "You shall no longer go out with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel." (18) After this there was again

war with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Saph, who was one of the descendants of the giants. (19) And there was again war with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, the Bethlehemite, struck down Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam...(21) And when he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimei, David's brother, struck him down.

- a. Because Abishai, Sibbecai, Elhanan, and Jonathan fought for the covenant people, they are presented here as God's servants.
- b. Interestingly, this military record mentions each of these warriors by his full name: Abishai, son of Zeruah; Sibbecai the Hushathite, Elhanan, son of Jari; and Jonathan, son of Shimei, David's brother. God honors these men who yielded themselves to Him. These men, at great risk, had fought against these giants, the descendants of Raphaim. These soldiers had endangered their lives to do these extraordinary deeds, and even though all praise belongs to God, his chosen instruments must be respected. So God writes their name in the book that shall never pass. These men will never be forgotten. They will forever be listed in the pages of Scripture as giant killers.
 - i. Learn this lesson, Beloved. The Bible is filled with ordinary people who, trusting in God, were used mightily. Sometimes, we have their names, and other times we do not. But we can rest assured that God knows each Christian who has answered His call and marched forward against incredible odds.

1. An example of this truth is found in **Romans 16:3-4** Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, (4) who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well.
 2. **Acts 15:25-26** it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, (26) men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 3. **Philippians 2:29-30** So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, (30) for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.
4. Verses **Genesis 15:18-21**: God Fulfills His Promises: On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, (19) the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, (20) the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, (21) the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Gergashites and the Jebusites.”
- a. All four of the giant aggressors in our story are said to be from the '**offspring of the Raphah**' (see vv. 16,18, 20,22). They belonged to a group of the **Rephaim**, who lived in Palestine land before the conquest and were notorious for their humongous size.

- b. The last of Goliath's descendants were these four Rephaim serving with the Philistines. Their death at the hands of David's men teaches us about the reliability of God's promise in Genesis 15:18-21. Not only had God fulfilled his word about the Rephaim, but He had delivered Israel from the Philistines as well.
 - i. **2 Samuel 3:18** Now then bring it about, for the LORD has promised David, saying, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of all their enemies.'”
 - ii. What Saul's regime did not do, David's, by God's power, did.
 - c. The theology of our passage is clear: God's promises prove firm even to the end.
 - i. You and I need to hear and understand this truth. As we march toward the conclusion of time, we should be an encouraged people because God is faithful to His promises.
 - 1. **1 Corinthians 1:9** God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
5. Verses 20-22: God Silences His Enemies: And there was again war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature, who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number, and he also was descended from the giants. (21) And when he taunted Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimei, David's brother, struck him down. (22) These four were descended from the giants in

Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

- a. The writer gives us a description of this warrior but not his name. He was unusually impressive - a huge soldier with six digits on each hand and foot.
- b. But the problem was not in his hands. The issue here is this giant's blasphemous tongue.
- c. He should have known better.
 - i. **He taunted Israel.**
 1. The verb used in Greek is ***Harap***. It means to reproach, defy, mock, deride. It is the verb used repeatedly in 1 Samuel 17 for Goliath's derision of Israel and of God.
 2. Like his ancestor before him, this giant began to mock and deride God. He thought it was ridiculous that Israel would believe in God. He verbally assaulted the God of heaven in earshot of His people. Sinners don't always learn the lessons that they should have learned.
 - a. So the Giant mocks God! We must ask ourselves, what did he expect to happen? Would God allow this sinful man to blaspheme His holy name and character? No, He won't!
 - ii. So, we know what happened to Goliath, and therefore, we know what will happen to this no-named blasphemer. This ignorant giant refused to learn from the lessons of the past. He who mocks and derides God's people also derides their God.

1. **Acts 26:13-15** At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. (14) And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ (15) And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.
- iii. So what happened to one blasphemer, Goliath, must now happen to another, this giant. This Giant met the same end. Dead men cannot blaspheme God.
 1. Beloved, those who persecute God’s people will one day be silenced.
 - iv. The giant dies! His death is another promise of what is to come, another assurance of what will be, another picture of how it will be at the end. His lifeless tongue of this giant still testifies to God's people. What does this dead tongue say? Here is how it will be at last, all your enemies will be silenced.
 1. **Isaiah 54:17** no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, declares the LORD.”

6. Benediction:

- a. **Psalms 18:3** I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.

Public Reading of the Word
Psalms 18:1-19