

**Title:** The Humble Beginnings of Salvation

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 17:1-30

**Series:** God, the True King!

1. Introduction:

- a. Today we encounter a passage that most are familiar with. The story of David and Goliath is one of the most recognizable stories in all of Scripture.
- b. Much has been said about this story, and the crucial question for us to consider today is: What is the teaching of our narrative?
  - i. We can make major errors when we do not stress the proper view of a biblical narrative. If we don't listen to what the text is saying, we will end up bringing in all sorts of interpretations that God never intended. In this passage, the particular error is to speak about being courageous in the face of "your Goliaths" or "Facing your Giants."
  - ii. Beloved, we must protect ourselves from such errors in interpretation. We must protect ourselves from the mistake of thinking that this passage is about what we can accomplish if we are more faithful than those around us.
    1. One way of protecting the integrity of the passage is to note where the narrative talks about God and what we learn about Him.
      - a. God is the main character, not David and certainly not Goliath in this particular narrative.

2. Sometimes there is also a keyword or term that provides the main theme.

a. In our narrative, that keyword is “**reproach.**” Goliath, the enemy of the people, **reproached** God openly. Here, we have a fight between God and Goliath and not necessarily between David and Goliath. Goliath is not merely mocking Israel; Goliath is dishonoring the Holy God.

c. Therefore, our purpose today is not to lose sight of how God has delivered His people from their greatest enemy. God provides the unexpected deliverer by which the people of God vicariously enjoy victory. Make no mistake about it; God alone is the God of salvation.

i. Neatly tucked within our passage is a prophetic utterance of the coming Christ, our great champion.

2. Verses 1-3: The beginning of the Gospel: Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. And they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. (2) And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. (3) And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.

- a. Our passage opens with the enemies of God starting a war against the Israelites. The Philistines invade Israel's land to make it their own. Throughout Scripture, one of Israel's greatest enemies was the Philistines.
  - i. The Philistines were constantly trying to destroy that which God was building.
  - ii. In Scripture, they represent the oppressive force of the world, and in this particular passage, they are led by a daring and magnificent champion who represents Satan himself.
  - iii. Immediately our passage draws us in. The similarities between our passage and life today cannot be stressed enough.
    - 1. We have an army (the world) led by a ferocious champion (the devil) constantly defying and trying to destroy those God would save.
    - 2. Like Israel, we are impotent to save ourselves from such an enemy. We cower, run, and hide at the sight of such a magnificent adversary.
    - 3. It is equally true that the Giant's victory enslaves the people of God, and only in the giant's defeat can the people ever be free.
    - 4. Therefore, the people of God need a champion to fight and defeat this terrible foe.
- b. Do you see it, Beloved? In our opening verses, we have the beginning of the Gospel.

3. Verses 4-7: The enemy of the Gospel: And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. (5) He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. (6) And he had bronze armor on his legs and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. (7) The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him.

a. From the midst of the Philistine's camp comes their champion. Goliath makes an unforgettable impression. The writer makes sure we are awed with his line-upon-line description of Goliath's size, his protective armor, his offensive weaponry, and the weight of these things. Let us look at this description of Goliath:

- i. His height, which was never before seen, was approximately 9'9" tall.
- ii. His armor, which he carried with ease, weighed approximately 126 pounds.
- iii. His spearhead weighed 15 pounds. He had no difficulty carrying and throwing such a weapon.
- iv. He had a sword that most men couldn't even budge.
- v. Because his armor was made of bronze, he glimmered and shone in such a way as to strike terror in the hearts of all opponents.

- b. He was not only grand in stature and strength, but he was a warrior and a natural-born killer.
  - i. He is described in the rest of the chapter as an experienced and trained soldier. From His youth, Goliath had been killing and conquering the enemies of the Philistines, enslaving the masses.
- c. Beloved, do you see it? The reader is immediately aware of the significant presence of this enemy, of great and unparalleled danger. Goliath represents a visual representation of what Satan, our great enemy, must be like.
  - i. No man can survive against such an enemy. No man has the physical gifts and experience to defeat such a foe. This becomes evident because all of Israel, including both Johnathan and Saul, choose to hide from Goliath. All of Israel is impotent and defeated.
    - 1. We must understand that what was true of them is true for us today. We are unable and unwilling to face such an enemy; we, too, are impotent to defend ourselves from the ruler of this world.
  - ii. We find Israel in desperate need of a champion. Israel is in desperate need of a deliverer.
- d. Here we encounter the Gospel truth about our natural condition and ability before the enemy of our souls.
  - i. How is your life right now? Have you been trying to win a fight that you cannot? You can be victorious but only in Jesus Christ!

4. Verses 8-10: Satan's hatred for the God of the Gospel and those whom God would save: He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. (9) 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." (10) And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together." (11) When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

a. In these verses, we hear the voice of the enemy.

Notice with what ease does the enemy defy God's people? With what ease does he rage against Israel?

i. **1 Peter 5:8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

1. Goliath is an accurate representation of Satan.

2. He is a raging, blaspheming foe that demands a champion to kill.

b. However, hanging over our passage and the fear that it naturally produces in the heart of all people are the words of God from the previous chapter. Do you remember those critical words? Don't you forget them, Beloved? God spoke to Samuel:

i. **1 Samuel 16:7** But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the

outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

1. Things are not as they seem, and the matter is not hopeless.
2. As impressive and terrifying as the enemy is, we are not to be overcome by sight, but rather, we are to live by faith. Is there anything too difficult for God to do? Is there any enemy that God cannot trample underfoot? God always wins!
  - a. **Romans 8:38-39** For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, (39) nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- c. Sure of himself, Goliath the enemy suggests that the results of the battle between champions should be vicariously applied to both sides.
  - i. When Saul and all of Israel heard the words of the Philistine, they were despondent.
    1. The stark reality of impending slavery crushes Israel. To a certain extent, because of the fear that has gripped them for over forty days, they are already slaves. They know that there is no champion among them able to defeat such an adversary.
      - a. If no one defeats the undefeatable enemy, the people are doomed.

b. This is also the state of condition for all men before salvation. We read in **Ephesians 2:1-3** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins (2) in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— (3) among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

5. Verses 12-18: The Gospel's unexpected Champion: Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. (13) The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. (14) David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, (15) but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. (16) For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening. (17) And Jesse said to David his son, "Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. (18) Also take these ten cheeses to the

commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well, and bring some token from them.”

- a. At this point of the narrative, we are introduced to David, the young man God had ordained as the next king of Israel, unbeknown to Saul.
- b. The description of David is not as exciting as that of Goliath. He is not impressive in size or experience. We know nothing of his past exploits at this point in the narrative.
  - i. David is the least in his father’s house, even after being ordained by Samuel. His brothers are at war, and David runs back and forth and takes care of the sheep. He is simply an errand boy.
- c. Without knowing what is to come, we are left to ask why our story introduces such an unimpressive character?
  - i. But remember Beloved, David’s life parallels the life of our Savior.
- d. Here we get another glimpse at the Gospel. Jesus, the savior of man, was physically also unimpressive. Many saw and mocked him not believing that salvation could come from someone like Him.
  - i. **Isaiah 53:2B** ...he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.
  - ii. **Matthew 27:39-44** And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads (40) and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” (41) So also the chief priests, with the scribes

and elders, mocked him, saying, (42) “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. (43) He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” (44) And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

- e. The beauty of the Gospel is its unexpected Champion. No man could ever conceive that God would reconcile the world to Himself through His son, who takes the form of one of us.

6. Verses 19-27: Zeal for God’s has consumed Him: Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. (20) And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host was going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry. (21) And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. (22) And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. (23) As he talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him. (24) All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid. (25) And the men of Israel said, “Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to

defy Israel. And the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel.” (26) And David said to the men who stood by him, “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?” (27) And the people answered him in the same way, “So shall it be done to the man who kills him.”

a. **And David heard him.** The giant speaks one too many times. And God’s appointed champion hears the blasphemy railed against the God whom he loves.

i. **For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?”**

David speaks for the first time. David brings in a whole new worldview. Up to this point, the narrative has been “godless,” but now David injects a godly question.

1. Doesn’t having a living God make a difference? This uncircumcised Philistine has mocked the living God.

ii. David saw things correctly. David knew what all of Israel did not. The God of heaven must be honored.

1. Having been ordained to be the next king, he understood that he was God’s representative. He understood that he was the instrument of salvation for God’s chosen people.

a. David is willing to substitute himself for God’s people and fight and win the battle on their behalf.

- b. Because David is their champion, the people will eventually follow him as king.
- c. God will save His people only through His chosen redeemer.

7. Verses 28-30: The Savior and His Gospel are often rejected: Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, “Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle.” (29) And David said, “What have I done now? Was it not but a word?” (30) And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him again as before.

- a. Let us not ignore Eliab. In chapter 16, he was a mirror of the handsome Saul. His tongue drips contempt as he alludes to David’s “few sheep in the wilderness and declares a perceived evil in the heart of David.
  - i. **Commentary**: In fact, one might say David has to fight three Goliaths in this chapter, for in Eliab, he faces the contempt of Goliath, and in Saul, he meets the mind of Goliath. All that before he faces the carcass of Goliath himself.
- b. Because of his unimpressive nature, notice how quickly men turn their back on David. His father never thought highly of him, and here his own brother rejected him.

- i. Here again, we see the savior of the Gospel. We read,
1. **Mark 6:2-3** And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? (3) Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.
  2. **John 1:10-13** He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. (11) He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. (12) **But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, (13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**
- c. Beloved, today, do not reject Jesus Christ. His physical appearance might not look impressive. Perhaps you walked in here today with a low opinion of Jesus Christ. I pray that today’s sermon has shown you the value of Him, who is priceless. I pray that you would realize that you, yes, you, need God’s champion and redeemer. If you are not in Christ, you are enslaved to the champion of this world, and you cannot defeat him. Come to Christ, the victorious

champion. His victory over the Goliath of this world can be your victory as well.

8. Benediction:

- a. **Romans 10:9-10** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (10) For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

**Public Reading of Scripture**  
**John 14:1-7**