

1 Samuel 17:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul.

Analysis

Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul.

The Goliath narrative demonstrates that human impossibilities create opportunities for divine glory. David's confidence rests not in weapons or military training but in the character of the God who delivered him from lion and bear. His declaration that 'the battle is the LORD's' establishes the theological principle that spiritual victory comes through faith in God's power rather than confidence in human strength. The contrast between Saul's armor (representing human methods) and simple shepherd's weapons (representing faith) teaches that God uses unexpected means to accomplish His purposes and receive glory.

Historical Context

The establishment of monarchy around 1050-1010 BCE represented a dramatic political and theological shift for Israel. Unlike surrounding nations where kings were considered divine or semi-divine, Israel's kings were supposed to function under God's ultimate authority as laid out in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. The Benjamite tribe occupied strategic territory between Ephraim and Judah, making Saul's selection a politically astute choice to balance tribal rivalries.

Archaeological remains from this period show increased fortification and centralization of settlements, confirming the transition to state-level organization.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does this passage deepen our understanding of God's character, purposes, and ways of working in human history?
2. What specific heart attitudes, thought patterns, or life practices does this passage call you to examine or change?
3. How does this passage connect to the larger biblical narrative of redemption and point toward Christ and the gospel?

Interlinear Text

וְדָוִד	בְּנֵי יִם	בְּאֲנָשִׁים:	אֶפְרַת י	הַזֶּה	מִבֶּן יִת	לְ חָם
Now David	sons	and the man	H673	H2088	H0	of Bethlehemjudah
H1732	H1121	H376				H1035
יְהוּדָה	וְשֵׁם ו	יֵשׁ י	וְל ו	שְׁמֹנֶה	בְּנֵי יִם	בְּאֲנָשִׁים:
H3063	whose name	was Jesse	H0	and he had eight	sons	and the man
	H8034	H3448		H8083	H1121	H376
בִּימֵי י	שָׂא וְל	זָקֵן	בָּ א	בְּאֲנָשִׁים:		
in the days	of Saul	for an old man	went	and the man		
H3117	H7586	H2204	H935	H376		

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 35:19 (Parallel theme): And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Beth-lehem.

1 Samuel 16:18 (Parallel theme): Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.

1 Samuel 17:58 (References David): And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.

Ruth 4:22 (References David): And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

Matthew 1:6 (References David): And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

Matthew 2:6 (Parallel theme): And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

1 Samuel 16:1 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.