

1 Samuel 17:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

Analysis

And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

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

הָלְכוּ	שָׁלֹשׁ	בָּנָיו	יֵשׁוּ	הַגָּדֹל יָם	הָלְכוּ	אַחֲרָיו
that went	And the three	sons	of Jesse	eldest	that went	and followed
H1980	H7969	H1121	H3448	H1419	H1980	H310
וְהָלְכוּ	בְּמִלְחָמָה הָ	וְשֵׁם	שָׁלֹשׁ	בָּנָיו	אֲשֶׁר	הָלְכוּ
Saul	to the battle	and the names	And the three	sons	H834	that went
H7586	H4421	H8034	H7969	H1121		H1980
בְּמִלְחָמָה הָ	אֵלִיָּא ב	הַבְּכֹר	וּמִשְׁנֵי הוּא	אֲבִי יִנָּד ב		
to the battle	were Eliab	the firstborn	and next	unto him Abinadab		
H4421	H446	H1060	H4932	H41		
וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁי	שִׁמָּה:					
and the third	Shammah					
H7992	H8048					

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 2:13 (Parallel theme): And Jesse begat his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimma the third,