

1 Samuel 17:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.

Analysis

And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed 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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

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

אֶחָד וְפָלָךְ וְהַגָּדָל יָמָן וְשִׁלְשָׁה
And David H1931 was the youngest H6996 and the three H7969 eldest H1419 followed H310
H1732 H7586

שָׁאֹל:

Saul
H7586

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 16:11 (Parallel theme): And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.