

1 Samuel 17:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem.

Analysis

But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem.

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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

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

כִּי	אָתָּה	לְרֹא	וְתַּשְׁאֵל	מֵעַל	בַּשְׁבִּירָה	הַלְּבָנָה	וְיָמָן
But David	went	and returned		H5921	from Saul	to feed	H853
H1732	H1980	H7725		H7586		H7462	sheep

אָבִיו	בֵּית	בֵּית	לְבָנָה
his father's	H1	at Bethlehem	H1035

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.