

1 Samuel 17:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

Analysis

And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

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

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

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

וַיִּשָּׂא מִן הַצֹּאן	וַיֵּצֵא	וַיֵּטֶשׁ	בַּבֹּקֶר	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיִּשָּׂא מִן הַצֹּאן
rose up early	and left	H853	the sheep	H5921	
H7925	H5203		H6629		
וַיִּשָּׂא מִן הַצֹּאן	וַיֵּצֵא	וַיֵּטֶשׁ	בַּבֹּקֶר	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיִּשָּׂא מִן הַצֹּאן
with a keeper	and took	H1980	H834	had commanded	as Jesse
H8104	H5375		H6680	H3448	
וַיִּשָּׂא מִן הַצֹּאן	וַיֵּצֵא	וַיֵּטֶשׁ	בַּבֹּקֶר	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיִּשָּׂא מִן הַצֹּאן
him and he came	to the trench	as the host	was going forth	H413	to the fight
H935	H4570	H2428	H3318		H4634
וַיִּשָּׂא מִן הַצֹּאן	וַיֵּצֵא	וַיֵּטֶשׁ	בַּבֹּקֶר	וַיֵּלֶךְ	וַיִּשָּׂא מִן הַצֹּאן
and shouted	for the battle				
H7321	H4421				

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 26:5 (References David): And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

Luke 19:43 (Parallel theme): For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

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