

1 Samuel 17:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

Analysis

Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

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 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

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

וְאֵת אֲתָּה בָּאָרֶץ כִּי גַם הַדָּבָר הַכְּהֵן עֲבָדֶךָ אֲלֵיכָהּ H1571 H853 **both the lion** H1571 **and the bear** **slew** **Thy servant** H1961

H738 H1677 H5221 H5650

מִקְדָּם	מִקְדָּם	כָּאַמְּדָה	בִּזְהָה	הַעֲרָה	הַפְּלִשְׁתִּים
H3588	H1992	H259	H2088	and this uncircumcised	Philistine

מִם: אֱלֹהִים מִעֲרָכָת חִרְבָּה
 of them seeing he hath defied the armies God of the living
 H2779 H4624 H430 H2416

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 17:10 (Parallel theme): And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

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