

1 Samuel 17:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

Analysis

And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

Goliath's taunt frames the conflict in political terms - 'servants to Saul' - missing the deeper reality that Israel served Yahweh. His proposal of representative combat offered seemingly reasonable terms, yet accepting would place Israel's fate in human hands rather than divine deliverance. The challenge 'choose you a man' exposed Israel's crisis: they had no one willing or able to face such opposition in human strength.

Historical Context

Ancient treaties often imposed vassalage, with the defeated becoming 'servants' ('avadim) to victors. Goliath's terms reflected standard ancient Near Eastern diplomatic practice, where military defeat meant political subjugation and tribute obligations.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do spiritual enemies attempt to frame conflicts in purely human or political terms?
2. What does Israel's paralysis teach about the inadequacy of human resources against spiritual opposition?

Interlinear Text

לֹבֶם	תֵּי	אָמָר	וְשָׁבָא	לְ	מָעָרָכָת	אֶל	יְיָקָנָא	לִיעַמְדָן
And he stood	and cried	H413	unto the armies	of Israel	and said			H0
H5975	H7121		H4634	H3478	H559			
לְמַה	תִּצְאָה	רְאֵת	לְעָרֵךְ	הַמְּלָכָת	וְאַל	לְשָׁאָל	בְּרוּ	
H4100		H3318	H6186	H4421		H1262	H3808	
unto them	Why are ye come out		in array	to set your battle				
		H3318			H4421			
אֲנָכִי	הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי	עֲבָדֵיכֶם	וְאַתֶּם	לְשָׁאָל	לְשָׁאָל	בְּרוּ		
H595	H6430	H859	H5650	H7586	H1262			
am not I a Philistine								
לְכָם	אֲשֶׁר	וְיַיְךְ	אַלְכִי					
H0	H376	H3381	H413					
you a man	for you and let him come down							

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 8:17 (Parallel theme): He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

