

1 Samuel 17:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

Analysis

If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

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

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

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

אִם	אֹכֵל	לְהִלָּחֵם	אֹתִי	וְהָפִית יוֹ	וְהָיָה יוֹ	לָךְ
H518	If he be able H3201	to fight H3898	H854	against him and kill H5221	H1961	H0
לְעֶבְדִּי		וְאֵם	אֲנִי	אֹכֵל	לֹא	
him then shall ye be our servants H5650		H518	H589	If he be able H3201	H0	
וְהָפִית יוֹ		וְהָיָה יִתָּם	לִּנְוֹ	לְעֶבְדִּי		
against him and kill H5221		H1961	H0	him then shall ye be our servants H5650		
וְעִבְדֶּתְּ		אֶתְנוּ:				
and serve H5647		H853				

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 11:1 (Parallel theme): Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

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