

## **A Chronicle of Redemption**

Chapter 13: The Improbable Champion

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## **CHAPTER 13: THE IMPROBABLE CHAMPION** **1 Samuel 17**

### **A Chronicle of Redemption**

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, I invite you to open with me to 1 Samuel 17. You've got at the top of your notes there, it says "A Chronicle of Redemption," and I want to recap where we've been, because we're entering into a new phase in this story of redemptive history. So, I want you to think about where we've been so far this year. We started with "Prologue." Week one, Genesis 1 through 11: creation, and the end goal is we're going to get to new creation, re-creation, but there's a whole process of redemption in between.

So, Part One was "Redemption Promised to a Covenant People." That started in Genesis 12 and went all the way to the end of Exodus, and what we saw is God initiating two major covenants with His people. First covenant is with Abraham, Genesis 12 and 15...other places...covenant with Abraham, and then starting in Exodus 3 and really solidified at Mount Sinai, the Mosaic Covenant, God's covenant with Moses. So, you've got God relating to His people through covenants. So, we looked at that.

Then, we moved into the next part, "Part Two: The Law of the Land," where Leviticus...they received the law as the giving of the law. Numbers: they take a roundabout way to get to the Promised Land. Deuteronomy: they're on the edge of the Promised Land, on the precipice of that land, and they review the law, they hear the law again a second time, and then Joshua: they take the land. Judges, which we just finished reading, is them settling into the land and things are not going well. Everybody's doing what is right in their own eyes and moral deterioration, spiritual idolatry, immorality, sexual immorality. Like, it's just rampant evil.

They were wanting a king. They're not wanting a king that will help them relate to God and covenant; they're wanting a king that will be just like the other pagan nations around them and the pagan kings that they have and the power that supposedly brings. So, they're crying out for a king, and that leads us to "Part Three: Failed Kings in a United Kingdom." Over the next...I think it's about ten weeks, as we read through the Bible and as we gather together in our worship gatherings, we're going to see King Saul first, then King David, and really, we'll see them both side-by-side tonight in a startling contrast, and then we will see King Solomon, David's son, third. So, over the next three weeks, that's where we're going, looking at those three kings.

### **Three Facets of this Story**

Today, we come to a pivotal picture of David, and David in relationship to Saul. Now, 1 Samuel 17, just so you know, is one of the longest narratives...one of the longest

stories...and it's just filled with details. It's almost like the author is putting in details everywhere, maybe even not details that are necessary, but he is wanting this story to be etched in people's hearts. So, what I want us to do is I want us to read the story and all of its details. I want us to do what we have done oftentimes with Old Testament narrative and just read a little bit and pause along the way, so we make sure we're getting the whole story and feeling the effect of the story. I want us to draw it out much like they did, and then I want us to think about what this means.

This is a pretty common story. Even people who have not grown up in church are most often familiar with David and Goliath, at least a cursory familiarity. I think it's so common that we end up missing the point. We think this is a moral tale of a boy who stands up with bravery and courage against a giant, and it takes on all kinds of applications that I'm not sure are really intended by this passage. So, I want us to read this story and think about what it really means.

So, 1 Samuel 17:1:

*Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. And they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.*

So, you've got the picture. You've got two mountains with a valley in between, kind of a dried up ravine in the middle there, and the Philistines are on one mountain, Israelites are on one mountain, and the valley is where the battle is going to take place. So, that's kind of the setup here.

Get to verse 4. *"There came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span."* A champion. This chapter is the only time that word is used in the entire Old Testament. It literally means "the man between two armies," "the decisive man." This was without question a decisive man between two armies. He is six cubits and a span tall, which works out to about nine feet, nine inches. Bro is NBA material all the way. Like, he's standing eye level almost with the rim. That works well in basketball.

So, that's the kind of height you've got on this guy, but then if you know basketball, a lot of taller guys in the NBA are kind of lanky, even a little awkward, if I could say that about a multi-millionaire who is an incredible athlete...awkward...but that's not the case with Goliath. Next verse, verse 5, *"He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail..."* like a full length coat, and it says, *"The weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze."* Works out to about 125 pounds. That's a coat. Like, he is wearing more than some of the Israelites weigh.

He has this coat, and in addition to this coat, he *"had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head..."* the point of the spear *"...weighed six hundred shekels of iron,"* 15 pounds. The point of the spear weighed 15 pounds. This guy is undoubtedly the man, and to take it one step further, *"his shield bearer went before him."* Not only is he this giant brute man with all of this heavy armor that he is able to move fluidly in, he's got a sidekick who goes with him and carries a shield the size of a man. You notice when Goliath shows up at the party.

So, what happens is Goliath shows up. It says in verse 8,

*He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together."*

### **An invincible character.**

So, basically, what we've got here...the first two facets of the story: one, an invincible character. This is the most detail we have about a warrior, and all of the reasons why you would not want to come face-to-face with this guy in battle.

### **An impossible challenge.**

An invincible character, and second, an impossible challenge. Basically, what Goliath has just done is he has challenged some poor Israelite to a game of one-on-one with him. Goliath versus one person in a fight.

Who would want to do that? Who would want to go against this man? I've shared with you before, my older brother Steve was, in high school, a heavyweight state wrestling champion, and he was the man. Like, in that heavyweight state wrestling championship match, he just picked up this 300 pound guy and threw him on his back. Like, you don't play with my older brother Steve. We had one good friend, kind of a country kind of a guy, and he always said, "Well, David, I think you got pushed away from the trough at your home," and I think that would be accurate. I would not describe myself as a strong brute man. I know that's surprising. This was in high school. I mean, now things are different, but I appreciate you laughing at that.

So, Steve and I...a little different, and the unfortunate thing...my brother Adam is down here, like, we were instruments for practice with our older brother Steve. So, the only weapon in my arsenal was run. Like, that was the weapon that I would use, and it was a weapon of avoidance. I was more passive when it came to wrestling with Steve, and I could outrun him and that was key.

So, that's exactly where the Israelites find themselves. It says in verse 11, "*When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.*", i.e. "I'm not going out there." Even Saul, who is the only one physically qualified...closest one physically qualified to go to Goliath. We learned earlier in 1 Samuel that Saul was head and shoulders above everybody else in Israel, but he is going to sit back and do nothing, scared as can be along with all of the other Israelites.

So, that's the scene when you get to the end of verse 11. You've got this giant of a man defying Israel. Not just the people of Israel, but the God of Israel, shouting out, shaming them. The Israelites...the whole army of thousands sitting back in fear. Then, it's almost movie-like. It's just immediate cut to another scene. So, you go from the battlefield to a nice, sunny meadow with a handsome shepherd boy.

Verse 12,

*David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in*

*years. The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. For forty days, the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.*

So, what you've got is three of David's brothers are on the battlefield watching this take place, and David is back here caring for the animals. So, David's father, Jesse, calls him aside, and verse 17, *"Jesse said to David his son, 'Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. Also, take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well..."* and I love this phrase right here, *"...and bring some token from them."*

Like, bring a little something back from the battlefield. Jesse has no clue what David is going to bring back from the battlefield. He's going to bring back Goliath's head. How is that for a token? A 9'9" guy's head you're going to bring back. So anyway, we don't know that yet, but it's just kind of interesting to think about.

So, he says, "I need you to go to the battlefield. Take them resources, find out how they're doing, bring something back from them." So, verse 19, *"Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host was going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry."* So, he got there in the morning, and so the picture is, just a little background there, about a 15 mile journey. So, David left early in the morning, got there early in the morning, which means he just, you know, ran a nice half marathon in preparation for what's about to happen, as he takes on this giant.

So, he gets there, verse 21. *"Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. As he talked with them, behold, the champion..."* There it is again. *"...the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him. All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid."*

Now, I want you to picture this scene. This just shows again the towering nature of Goliath, that when he comes out, he speaks...he shouts exactly what he shouted before. He shouts, and all of these other conversations that are going on among thousands of Israelite soldiers are immediately silenced, and they go into panic as he speaks. He's done this for 40-plus days.

Now, put yourself in David's shoes. As you hear this, as you hear this guy come out and defy not just the people of Israel, but the God of Israel, and to shame the God of Israel, maybe the first time that David had ever heard the name of God defamed. What's going through his head as he hears that and then sees all the people of God, all the Israelites, all these soldiers go into panic in fear? So, David starts asking, "What is going on here? Verse 25, *"The men of Israel said, 'Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel. And the king will..."* Now, here's what the king is going to do.

King Saul, sitting back, doing nothing, so he offers a prize for anybody who will go out and fight Goliath, and here's what he offers...three things. The king will enrich the man who kills him with, number one: great riches. So, great riches, assuming, of course, that you defeat

Goliath. Second, will give him his daughter. We find out later Saul's daughter, not necessarily that much of a reward, but it's part of the package. So, you've got riches, you've got wife...his daughter...and then make his father's house free in Israel, which is basically free from taxes, obligations.

Like, what an appropriate text for this week. Like, how great would it be to be free from taxes, like, forever? So, anyway, I mean, we pay our taxes, but it would be nice. So, I'm guessing there's a few people in here who wouldn't mind taking on Goliath if that was at stake right now. Save a lot of trouble this week. Some CPA's wouldn't mind doing that.

So, here's the picture. That's what's before him. David responds, *"...said to the men who stood by him, 'What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?' And the people answered him in the same way, 'So shall it be done to the man who kills him.'"*

I want you to notice with me here how David's description of this scene is totally different from the way these other guys were talking about this scene. They say to David, "Did you see this man, the man who came up?" David says, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?" Like, "Who does he think he is, apart from the people of God, worshipping other idols, not a part of the covenant people of God. Who is this? Who is this guy?" Earlier, he said he's come to defy Israel. David says, "He's come up to defy the armies of the living God." This is deeper than just defying an army. This is defying the God...true God.

So, David is getting incensed at this picture. He keeps asking around, verse 28, *"Now Eliab his eldest brother..."* A little note about Eliab. In 1 Samuel 16, right before this, when Samuel went to Jesse's house to anoint the next king of Israel, Eliab was the logical choice. He was the guy when Samuel shows up, "Hey, this guy needs to be the next king." However, that's where we find that verse that *"Man looks at outward appearance. The LORD looks at the heart."*

So, David was anointed, and the reasonable choice watches that happen, probably a bit bitter. *"His eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, 'Why have you come down?'"* It's almost derogatory here. *"And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?"* Like, where are your animals? *"I know your presumption in the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."* Verse 29, *"David said, 'What have I done now? Was it not but a word?'"* Like, "Calm down, bro. Just asking some questions." Verse 30, *"He turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him again as before."* So, David is researching and making it clear that he is willing to take on Goliath.

Now, that word starts to spread, and it spreads eventually to Saul, and here's what happens. *"The words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and [Saul] sent for him [for David.]"* So, now, we're going to see these two guys: the present king of Israel, the future king of Israel face-to-face, and we're going to see a contrast between the two of them.

Verse 32, *"David said to Saul, 'Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.'"* You see his boldness, his courage, his confidence, and Saul replies. *"Saul said to David,"* verse 33, *"You are not able to go against this Philistine and fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth."* Saul is looking at David just like the world would look at David. "Not a chance. You know, 20 year old, maybe a little less...shepherd, this giant who is a warrior. There's no way."

So, *"David said to Saul..."* it's one of two kinds of impassioned, powerful mini-speeches from David. He says,

*"Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."*

I want you to realize what David just did, because he pointed out the problem with Saul and all of these other Israelites that are cowering in fear. Saul and the Israelites were believing that Goliath was the giant, and that was not true, because even if he was 9 feet, 9 inches tall, with all of this brute strength, Goliath is a dwarf in comparison with the Lord, Yahweh, God. "The Lord, He is great and He is able to deliver. This is just an uncircumcised Philistine, and nobody...we follow the Lord, the Lord who has delivered me from lions and bears, He has no problem delivering me from this uncircumcised Philistine." Isn't that huge? Like, it's all perspective.

When we...just kind of pause real quick. When we face difficult things, difficult circumstances, obstacles in front of us, the more we focus on them, the bigger they get, don't they? They just get so big, so overwhelming, so consuming, and it's in those moments, we need to realize God is greater. No matter how difficult the circumstance is, challenging the obstacle is, our God is supremely greater. He is more than able to take this circumstance or this obstacle and deliver you in the middle of it.

So, David says that to Saul. Saul looks back at him and says, *"Go, and the LORD [may Yahweh] be with you."* So, verse 38, *"Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, and David strapped a sword over his armor."* This is almost a little ironic. Like, Saul is telling David how he should go into battle. Like Saul has any ground to stand on. He's the coward sitting back here doing nothing.

David puts this on, *"tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, 'I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.' So David put them off."* Now, we know how big Saul was, and David was not, and so we know he was dwarfed in this armor. However, this picture of him having it on and then taking it off is symbolic on two levels. Think about it. One, he is putting off the stuff that this world would say you need to fight in order to show that the Lord alone is who I need to fight, but then, on an even deeper level, this comparison, this contrast between King Saul and future King David, this is a picture of David saying, "My kingship will look a lot different than yours, because yours, yes, reflects the pagan ostentatious kings who would draw attention to themselves with all the stuff they could surround." David takes it off, and he says, "I'm going out in the line of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses, who went out as shepherds with nothing but the provision and the promise of God."

So, that's what he does. He goes. It says in verse 40, *"He took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch."* Probably like tennis ball size. *"Sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine."* Now, you've got the setup for UFC whatever number. Like, Ultimate Fighting Championships, SmackDown, whatever, is about to happen between Philistine Goliath. He's got all the stuff

that this world has constructed to make him equipped for battle, and you've got David, and all he has are five stones fashioned by the hand of God Himself.

The stage is set, verse 41: *"The Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. And the Philistine said to David, 'Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?'"* Apparently, he didn't see the stones. He probably wishes he'd have had seen the stones, but, "Come to me with sticks?" *"And the Philistine cursed David by his gods."* Immediately, our mind, we read this, we go back, God's promise in the beginning to His people through Abraham, "I will bless..." Genesis 12:1-3. *"I will bless those who bless you and whoever curses you, I will curse."* Unbeknownst to Goliath, he has just brought down judgment upon himself by cursing the man of God. He is going to experience the curse of God.

Verse 44, *"The Philistine said to David, 'Come to me and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.'"* Now, they were fighting words, but David is not to be done when it comes to Old Testament trash talk. I want you to listen to what he said. This is good. You know, when you get in a situation like this, and you think, "Oh, I wish I would have said that." Like, David says it all.

*[He] said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the hosts of the Philistines [not just yours, but all the Philistines] this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."*

That's good. What David just said to Goliath is clear. "Goliath, in just a moment, you're going to realize, and all the Philistines behind you are going to realize, and all the Israelites behind me that are cowering in fear are going to realize that there is a God in Israel who is supreme, and He will not be defied by anyone, and He will demonstrate His glory and destroy you." That's strong. "The battle belongs to the Lord. He will fight this for me."

So, with the trash talking complete,

*[When] the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. You can hear a collective gasp on both mountains. And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead and he fell on his face to the ground.*

Knocked out. Step one, Goliath falling down...don't miss this. Hold on to this because we're going to come back to it in a second. Goliath falls down, face down on the ground.

Now, we're going to see in the next couple of verses talking about David killing Goliath, and there's some discussion and debate over when Goliath actually died. I think the lights went out at this point in some fashion. That's what happens when a stone sinks into your forehead. However, when he actually died is really, maybe, a little bit more up for discussion or debate, but I want you to listen to this. *"David prevailed over the Philistine*

*with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David."*

Pause. This is exactly what David had said would happen, *"The LORD saves not with sword and spear,"* and it just so happens. You go back to Leviticus, and you see that the punishment for blaspheming God was...anybody know? Stoning.

*"Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword..."* So, Goliath's own sword, *"and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it."* Step two: decapitation. Now, this is...I know it's kind of gruesome, but it's the story, so go with me here. Step one: he falls face down on the ground. Step two: head gone.

Now, I want you to hold your place here in 1 Samuel 17 and go back with me real quick to 1 Samuel 5. I want to remind you of something that happened before this among the Philistines. See what had happened, you look at 1 Samuel 5, the Philistines had captured the ark of the covenant. The picture of the glory and the presence of God with His people. You don't touch it. You carry it. When they end up getting it back, like, somebody is struck down dead for touching it. Like, this was the picture of the holiness of God, and the Philistines capture it. When they capture it, they decide to put it in the temple where their god, Dagon, lives.

So, you've got this false god, this idol, in his home...listen to this story, 1 Samuel 5:1. *"[When] the Philistines captured the ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon and set it up beside Dagon."* They put them up next to each other, and listen to this. *"When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD."* Step one: face downward before the picture of the true God.

Listen to what happens next. *"So they took Dagon, put him back in his place."* Poor Dagon. Verse 4, *"When they arose early the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold."* Step two: decapitation. So, the picture was false god struck down before the supremacy of the one true God. 1 Samuel 17, representative of these people, struck down and decapitated before the servant of God. This battle belongs not to David primarily. This battle belongs to the Lord.

So, naturally the Philistines decided not to hang around. The end of verse 51,

*[When] the Philistines saw that their champion was dead and they fled. The men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine [a nice token] and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.*

### **An improbable champion.**

Three facets of this story. The invincible character, the impossible challenge, and third, the improbable champion. Who would have thought that the champion would not be the 9'9" giant, but a shepherd 20 years old, or around about that. Why was he the champion? Not because of his strength or his skill, but because of two primary factors. Number one, because he was passionate for the glory of God. David...don't miss this. David never saw the giant in Goliath. He knew the whole time that the giant was the Lord.



When he came upon this scene, and he saw the name of God being defiled and defamed, he could not sit idly by. He took what seemed like a risk, what thousands of other trained Israelite soldiers did not even think about doing. He steps forward in order to show the supremacy of God. Passionate about the glory of God, and second, confident in the power of God. He knew the Lord who delivered him from lions and bears would deliver him from the Philistine. "The battle is the Lord's," he said. "He will give Goliath into my hand." That is the story of David and Goliath.

## Three Levels to this Story

Now, we're beginning to see how this story is so much more than about a shepherd boy being brave. There is something much, much deeper going on here, and it's much deeper than you or me saying, "How can we be brave in the face of giants in this life?" I want you to think with me about this story on three different levels. I want you to think with me about a level of individual history, national history and redemptive history.

Here's what I mean by that. Think of a...of some of the stories we've looked at already this year. Think about Abraham offering his son Isaac on an altar. This story is really about three different levels. You've got individual history: you've got a father and a son, and a father about to sacrifice his son. Then, step it up another notch, and you've got national history. This has huge ramifications, not just for Abraham and Isaac, but for the people of God in the Old Testament. This is the promised heir, the one would bring the line of descendants in the people of Israel, and he's about to be sacrificed, and God provides a lamb for the preservation of His people, the people of Israel. That's national history.

Now, take it up one more notch, redemptive history, and this is bigger than just Israel in the Old Testament. This is a story of a God who takes a sacrificial lamb and provides it to preserve His people. It is a picture, a glorious picture of Christ. We looked at the Passover. Yes, this is a story about what happened on a particular night, as Israelites fled Egypt and what was going on on that level, but in a deeper way, this was God delivering His people from slavery, to bring them into a new covenant...Mosaic covenant...and a Promised Land. This was huge, and He did it by the blood of a lamb. Takes it to a whole other level, where we see that God has redeemed us from slavery to sin, to freedom from sin, and He has done it by the blood of a lamb. See individual history, national history, redemptive history.

### Individual History ...

It's kind of like the Google Earth thing, where you look at something really closely, then you broaden out, and you broaden out some more to see the whole picture. So, think about this with me, individual history. Smallest kind of basic level, lowest level, what we just read. Very simple. The character, the invincible character is Goliath. This is simple. The challenge, the impossible challenge was to defeat the giant. You have a character who's causing the problem, Goliath. The challenge: you've got to defeat the giant. Who's going to do that? Day after day, the answer the Israelites are giving is no one. Not even the king can do that. That's where we see that God is raising up another king, which leads to the improbable champion we just talked about: David, the-soon-to-be king.

It's not coincidence that right before 1 Samuel 17, at the end of 1 Samuel 16, that's where we see David anointed as the future king of Israel. It's not a coincidence. Setting the stage for this picture, individual history.

### **National History ...**

Now, let's take it up another notch, national history. We know that David and Goliath standing in this valley represent so much more than just themselves. It's not about a fight between two men. It's about a fight between two nations. Now, we've got the characters: surrounding nations. Most notably, the Philistines. One historian said, "The Philistines were the chief national security issue for the Israelites residing in the central mountains." They had settled the land in Judges and things were not going well, and these pagan nations were rising up.

So, the challenge is deliver God's people. Who is going to deliver God's people from these nations and their idolatry and their immorality and the threats that they are bringing upon Israel? Who's going to do that? Israel is already succumbing to the Philistines who capture the ark or this or that. Who's going to deliver them? Is Saul going to deliver His people, God's people? Saul's sitting back doing nothing.

That's where we see that God, in a decisive way, raises up the improbable champion: David. Not just the soon to be king, but the shepherd king. He does become king, and this is a picture. We didn't read the rest of Samuel...1 Samuel 17 and then into 1 Samuel 18, but what we find out is that David begins to be lauded, praised, higher than Saul himself. God is raising him up, David the shepherd king, who will show that there is a God who reigns over all who will fight for His people, and this king will show that God is worthy of worship. So, that's what's going on this level of national history.

### **Redemptive History...**

However, this is not just a story about something that happened a few thousand years ago in a valley. This is a picture that God is painting of something much, much more wonderful and much, much greater. Story goes like this. The stage is set in this story for one day, when the invincible character, Satan...think about it with me. Goliath and all of his idolatry and blasphemy and immorality is a picture of something and someone much greater. He's a picture of the devil who has wooed the Philistines after foreign gods, who has wooed all of these surrounding nations after foreign gods. The devil who has wooed the Israelites themselves into idolatry and immorality, and the devil who has wooed every single one of us in this room to turn from the one true God and to follow after other gods, whether ourselves or our money or our pleasures. The devil who has lured every single one of us into what 2 Timothy 2:26 calls his "snare," in the devil's snare.

Invincible character, the evil one, the Adversary. The impossible challenge: destroy sin. Satan holding captive to the hearts of man. Who will take him on? Who will fight against the prince of this world? Who will fight against the evil one who is set out on destroying God's people and defaming God's name? Will you?

The stage is set, for out of the shadows of Bethlehem...which is where David was from...out of the shadows of Bethlehem steps an improbable champion, born into a humble family in an impoverished condition. Living, not with the armor of this world and all of its robes and ornaments, walking among the people, loving and caring and heading to an encounter where He will come face-to-face with sin and Satan and death itself on a cross, all for the glory of His Father. John 12, *"What shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour.' No, it is for this reason I came. Father, glorify your name. Show your glory."*

So, He takes on sin and Satan and death on the cross, and by the power of God, He is raised to life, and we see the improbable champion: Jesus our Savior King. He has killed the giant. He has destroyed Satan.

## Three Prayers from this Story

### **God, help us to live with passion for Your glory.**

Now we are ready to understand what this story means for our lives. It is not, "Go out and be brave this week when you face giants in your life." No, it's so much deeper than that. Think about it. I've put in here three prayers from the story that I want us to pray...me to pray, you to pray. One: God, help us. Help us to live with passion for your glory. Help us to see your greatness over any giant and to desire your glory over anything else.

The point of the story is not to be brave in the face of giants. The point is to be passionate about the glory of God. We face difficult circumstances and challenging obstacles in our lives, and I'm guessing across this room there are innumerable such obstacles facing you. The reality is when you face those obstacles and those challenges, the goal is not to focus on the giant and, "How do I do this with a giant or this or that?", the goal is to say, "God, I want your name glorified in this circumstance, in this obstacle, and if that means you keep the obstacle there like you did in Paul's life in 2 Corinthians 12:7, and three times he asked, 'Remove this thorn from my flesh,' and God says, 'No, I'm going to keep it there, and my grace is going to be sufficient for you, and I'm going to be exalted in this situation,' then, so be it, because more than I want to be rid of difficult circumstances, I want your glory and I want your name to be exalted."

Passion about the glory of God in every problem we face, that our passion might not be our safety or our security or our comfort or our plans or the things being worked out all the way we want them to be. That our passion would be, "God, glorify your name." That's success. "Glorify your name; your name be exalted in every problem we face, and then in every place we go." Oh, this picture, it just challenges me. Seeing David coming up to the battle that first time, hearing the name of God defamed and rising up and saying, "I cannot sit idly by with you all. Something must be done."

So, God raise up a people all across this room, who this week scatter throughout the city of Birmingham, and throughout the city and homes and neighborhoods and workplaces live to make the glory of God known. That doesn't mean we go out and start throwing stones and chopping people's heads off. What we do is when we're sitting with someone who does not know and does not worship and delight in the glory of God, that we do not sit silent. We tell them of His goodness and His glory and His grace. They might know Him and worship Him because He is worthy of the glory of every single person in this city, and we want them to know His glory. We want His name to be exalted in this place. That's one takeaway from this text, that we would leave this place tonight with a zeal, a passion for making the glory of God known in this city.

Obviously, not stopping there. It's why we're doing what we're doing in India. Not because we're altruistic, just think of something cool to do. No. There are millions of gods being worshipped in India, and Yahweh God is not being glorified, and so, we are not going to sit back silent. We're going to do something about it, and we're going to give our resources so that God receives worship in India. That's what drives us in every problem we face and every place we go.

### **God, help us to live with confidence in Your power.**

Second: God, help us to live, then, with confidence in your power. Here's the beauty. God wants His glory known, and He gives us power to make His glory known. It's the whole point of what happened. The battle is the Lord's. When we are living for the glory of God,

then it's not up to us and our strength and our skill. He gives us the divine resources of heaven to make His glory known. The battle belongs to Him.

So, now think about this. In light of the fact that Christ is our Savior King, the improbable champion, who has taken on sin and Satan and death itself, and He has conquered, do you realize what this means? We put ourselves, when we read this story, just automatically in the shoes of David. "Okay, what do we need to do like David?" The reality is if this story is pointing at us, the fact that Christ has conquered on our behalf, then, we're really, at this point, more in the shoes of these Israelites, because the giant has been slain. Satan has been destroyed.

The battle is over. Christ has conquered sin, and you and I now are free to run and experience that victory. You realize what this means. This means we do not fight for victory. The victory has already been won. Christ has conquered sin. We don't fight for victory; we fight from victory, and there's a huge difference there. Because in your battles with sin and temptation this week, if Christ is in you, child of God, if Christ is in you, then you are not weak in that battle. You are strong. You have power over sin, like, don't let the Adversary convince you otherwise. He's defeated. He has no power over Christ in you. He is defeated, and you are now living out the victory that Christ has bought on your behalf.

So, when you face that temptation that keeps coming back over and over and over again, know this: it does not have power over you. Christ has power over you. He lives, He dwells in you and gives you everything you need to overcome that. So, take confidence in that. Let that sink in, let that melt into your heart and mind, that we are not fighting for victory. We are fighting from a position of victory.

### **God, help us to look to Jesus as our champion.**

All of that points us to this final prayer. God, help us, then, to look to Jesus as our champion. He is our champion in every single temptation and sin we encounter. Christ is our champion, and our eyes are fixed on Him. In His power, for His glory, in every temptation and sin we encounter and in every trial and struggle we experience. I don't know the multiplicity of struggles and temptations and hardships and difficult circumstances that are represented around this room, but I do know this: Christ has conquered sin and suffering, Satan and death, therefore, you have absolutely nothing to fear. You have absolutely nothing to fear. Fix your eyes on Christ, your champion, and as you fix your eyes on Him, be passionate for the glory of God and confident in the power of God. This is the Christian way.

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