

The God of the Valleys (3)

The battle between David and Goliath in the Valley of Elah, is one of the most well-known stories of the Bible. Many have suggested that it serves as a powerful metaphor, symbolizing the triumph of faith over seemingly insurmountable challenges.

While this may be the case, the story given to us in First Samuel chapter 17, record details of a battle that actually took place. When Goliath challenged the army of Israel, David, the shepherd boy defeated the Philistine giant with a sling and a stone. David refused to put on armour, since he had never used it before. He went to the brook and chose five smooth stones (1st Sam. 17:40). Armed with these and his faith in the living God, David went to face the giant in the Valley of Elah

David said to the Philistine, *“Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied”* (1st Sam. 17:45). David had experienced God’s deliverance in the past, and knew of His power and might.

There was an occasion when David was keeping his father’s flock of sheep and a lion and a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock. David caught the lion by his beard and killed him and took the lamb out of his mouth. David said to Saul, *“The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear; he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine”* (1st Sam. 17:34-37).

Earlier, the Lord sent Samuel to the house of Jesse in Betlehem, saying, *“I have provided me a king among his sons”* (1st Sam. 16:1). Samuel looked upon Eliab, Jesse’s oldest son and because of his outward appearance, thought that he must be the king that the Lord had chosen. The Lord refused all of David’s older brothers. He reminded Samuel of the fact that he was able to see past the outward appearance into the very heart of an individual, *“the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart”*.

The Lord removed Saul from being king, because of his disobedience and failure to carry out specific instructions from the Lord (1st Sam. 28:18). Samuel said to Saul, *“the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart”* (1st Sam. 13:14). The Psalmist wrote, *“I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him”* (Ps. 89:20). Interestingly, Paul spoke to the people of Antioch regarding the Lord’s choosing of David as king of Israel, *“I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will”* (Acts 13:22).

The Lord Jesus is God’s chosen King. The psalmist wrote prophetically of Him, *“yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion”* (Ps. 2:6). He has fulfilled all of God’s will. Just before going to the cross the Lord Jesus prayed to the Father, *“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do”* (Jn. 17:4).

Goliath, the Philistine giant said to the army of Israel, concerning the man who would fight him, *“if I prevail against him and kill him, then shall ye be our servants and serve us”* (1st Sam. 17:9). We were servants to sin and Satan. The Lord Jesus fought against the enemy who held us in bondage.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews tell us that it was through His own substitutionary death on the cross, that the Lord Jesus delivered us from the grip of the enemy, *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (Heb. 2: 14-15).

The stone from David’s sling sunk into the forehead of the Philistine giant. Then David used Goliath’s own sword to cut off his head. The Lord Jesus is often referred to in the Scriptures as a *“stone”*. It is interesting to note, however, that in the book of Genesis, when the Lord foretold of the defeat of the serpent, He spoke of the *“seed of the woman”*, again referring to the Lord Jesus, as bruising the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15).

Paul wrote in the book of Colossians of the tremendous victory of our Lord Jesus through His cross, *“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it (His cross)”* (Col. 2:15).

*From the realms of highest glory,
To this sin benighted earth;
Marvel at the wondrous story;
Son of God of virgin birth.*

*Born of such a lowly station,
Blessed be His holy name;
To procure a full salvation,
Son of God from heaven came.*

*Took upon Him human fashion,
Though in very form of God;
Touched with feelings of compassion,
In the pathway which He trod.*

*He the law of God fulfilling,
To the cross would steadfast go;
Love unbounded made Him willing,
Venture forth to meet the foe.*

*He, the wrath of God enduring,
Has triumphantly emerged;
Our eternal life securing,
By His blood our sins are purged.*

*Sin and Satan are defeated,
From sin’s bondage we are free;
Thus Redemption is completed,
Reverently we bow the knee.*

Bernie Payne