

Old Testament Types of the Lord David conquers Goliath (Satan is defeated)

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The New King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

Introduction

The full title of this series was Old Testament types, pictures or glimpses of the Lord. I regard this morning's topic as more of a glimpse than a type! David certainly serves as a type of the Lord Jesus in his kingship, and as a shepherd of God's people, but David's battle with Goliath, as recounted in 1 Samuel chapter 17, isn't really part of that type. However, there are certainly some interesting observations and parallels that should make our study helpful and informative. Even in those passages that the Bible itself makes clear are types or pictures, we should always be careful not to push the details too hard, or try to make something of every single feature. I shall be extra careful today not to press anything too forcefully. What follows are simply some reflections on how the story of David and Goliath helps us think about the great defeat of Satan that Christ accomplished at Calvary.

We are certainly on more solid ground thinking about what we can learn about Christ's work for us from this narrative, than when some use it to encourage us to "Slay our Goliaths," or something similar! As we shall see, this is not a story about how we can be the heroes in our own battles, it's about how we need a champion to fight on our behalf.

As we work through the passage, we will be noticing some of the characteristics of Goliath that teach us things about Satan, and some of the qualities of David that point us towards Christ. But before we go any further, we need to read the first portion of our text.

"Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered at Sochoh, which belongs to Judah; they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. And he had bronze armour on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. Now the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him. Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, 'Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the 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 will be our servants and serve us.' And the Philistine said, 'I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.' When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid" (1 Samuel 17: 1-11).

First a little bit of geography by way of context. Bethlehem, the home town of Jesse, David's father, is about five or six miles south of Jerusalem. The valley of Elah, where the battle was fought, is about fifteen to twenty miles to the west, so about a day's walk away. The Philistines had five main cities in their territory, often listed in the Old Testament, and they are clustered to the West of the valley of Elah, none of them more than forty miles away. The Philistines have been fighting with Israel since the days of Joshua. In fact, they were in the land much earlier, being mentioned back in Genesis 26 in relation to Abraham. So the enmity is of very long standing. This time the battle is focussed around one individual, a giant called Goliath. It wasn't unknown for disputes to be resolved by a fight between a champion from each side rather than a full pitched battle. The Philistines have picked themselves a man over nine feet tall, or around three metres if you think in metric! His coat of mail weighs around seven stones, or 45 Kg, his spear has a shaft that you or I couldn't get our hands around and the spearhead alone weighs about 15 pounds, or 7 Kg of iron. His armour is all bronze, the best metal of the day. He is clearly very big and very scary.

Unsurprisingly, none of the Israelites are keen to engage him in one-to-one mortal combat! All of them, including Saul, are "dismayed and greatly afraid." Saul is described elsewhere as being head and shoulders above the rest of Israel, and was appointed king so that he could fight battles for his nation, but he has no intention of taking on Goliath's challenge!

So then, we have a big, scary enemy that is far too powerful for ordinary human beings to defeat. That certainly reminds us of Satan, the one who is God's enemy and the enemy of the human race because he wishes to spoil anything and anyone that might bring honour and pleasure to God. In Revelation 9:11 Satan is called Abaddon or Apollyon; Hebrew and Greek words that both mean destruction. In John Bunyan's book Pilgrim's Progress, Apollyon is pictured as a giant straddling the way, and this giant stands blocking Christian's path. Bunyan was presumably borrowing some of the imagery from the description of Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. As non-Christian's, Satan is our enemy because he wants to pull as many people into Hell as possible, as a way of striking back against God. It has been accurately said that God cares about human beings as individuals and loves us as such, but Satan sees people simply as pawns, or cannon-fodder, in a battle against God. He is the enemy of non-Christian's because he is the enemy of God. That doesn't make him any less scary or threatening as a foe. Our sin, and the death that results from sin, give Satan a huge weapon to wield over us. As Hebrews 2:14 & 15 describe it,

"[Christ] Himself... through death... destroy[ed] him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release[d] those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Satan remains our enemy when we become Christians, but I will come back to that a little bit later.

Not only is Goliath frightening he is proud, arrogant and a man of violence. Let's briefly look at each of those characteristics.

Pride

Goliath is entirely confident of his own victory. We know that pride is one of the chief characteristics of the devil. In Isaiah chapter 14, Isaiah moves on from describing the proud king of Babylon to depicting the devil himself when he talks about the fall of "Lucifer, son of the morning." Isaiah describes how he went from aspiring to, "Exalt [his] throne above the stars of God," saying,

“I will be like the Most High,” to the final outcome when he, “Shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the pit.”

Arrogance

Goliath obviously thinks of himself as invincible and has nothing but contempt for the people of Israel. In the temptations in the wilderness, described in Matthew chapter 4, Satan offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if only Jesus will fall down and worship him. Requesting worship from the One who is God has to be the very height of arrogance! If he can behave like that towards Christ, we can be pretty sure of the contempt in which he holds mere men and women.

Violence

A little later Saul will describe Goliath as, “A man of war from his youth” and the giant will threaten David with some blood-curdling remarks. There is no doubt Goliath was a violent man. Satan specialises in violence as well. On multiple occasions during the Lord’s life, he stirred up people to try and kill Jesus. Revelation has some chilling descriptions of the violence Satan, and his accomplices, will stir up in the future. It is not unreasonable to view the acts of violent oppressors and warlords today as being ultimately inspired by the devil. As I write this, Putin’s Russian army is carrying out acts of cruel violence in Ukraine. We can see in his carelessness of human life and the callous treatment of his own troops, as well as those he has declared to be his enemies, the hallmarks that have always characterised the cruel leaders that Satan stirs up.

We also see the enemy, Goliath and the Philistines, usurping power in what should be the domain of God and His people. Israel have been in the land for hundreds of years and the cities that the Philistines control, and the valley the battle is being fought in, are all part of the land that God gave to Israel. God made the world and the human race that He placed in it to care for it. Satan came along in the Garden of Eden and corrupted the human race and therefore brought God’s curse on the physical world as well. Ever since then, he has acted as the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) and the “god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan is a usurper in God’s world, but one with a great deal of power, certainly much more than mere humans can wield, as we thought a few moments ago.

If there is a terrifying, boastful enemy and a frightened and cowering people, then the scene is set for a hero to come to the rescue! We had better press on with our reading.

“Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name was Jesse, and who had eight sons. And the man was old, advanced in years, in the days of Saul. The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. David was the youngest. And the three oldest followed Saul. But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem. And the Philistine drew near and presented himself forty days, morning and evening. Then Jesse said to his son David, ‘Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried grain and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp. And carry these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand, and see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them.’ Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, and took the things and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the camp as the army was going out to the fight and shouting for the battle. For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array, army

against army. And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper, ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines; and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard them” vv. 12-23.

Just when we might have thought there was no hope of deliverance, we are introduced to David. At first glance, he is an unlikely match for the giant Goliath. He is the youngest son of Jesse, an inhabitant of the quiet town of Bethlehem, and a descendant of Ruth and Boaz – see the book of Ruth for that backstory. If we had been reading earlier in the book of 1 Samuel we would have seen him playing his harp to improve the depressive moods that periodically came on King Saul. A young man, the youngest of eight brothers, a harp player and the custodian of a small number of his father’s sheep – not a very promising military champion! [When Isaac Watts first published his hymn, “When I survey the Wondrous Cross,” the second line of the first verse read, “Where the young Prince of Glory died.” It was changed to avoid any apparent allusion to a historical prince of England, but it did highlight the relative youth of Jesus when He gave His life on the cross. As I advance through my fifties, the age of 32 or 33 seems dreadfully young to die, and in His time, a teacher, or Rabbi, of such youth would have seemed very unusual, if not presumptuous.](#)

[In passing, notice that Goliath didn’t just make his challenge once. He presented himself twice a day for forty days. We said at the beginning that the quarrel between Israel and the Philistines had been going on as long as anybody could remember. So it is with our enemy Satan. The hostility is longstanding and perpetual, and there is no escaping from it.](#) David was sent on a mission by his father. An errand to check on the welfare of his brothers; a mission he willingly undertook. It isn’t difficult to see the parallels with the Lord Jesus who, at the request of His Father came to this world, initially to His own people, the Jews.

When David arrived at Elah he was able to hear first-hand the threats of Goliath. I am reminded of that lovely passage in Exodus 3:7,8, where Jehovah says,

“I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them.”

“I have seen,” “[I have] heard,” “I know,” “I have come down.”

What a lovely set of statements, and how perfectly demonstrated by the Lord Jesus. In heaven He saw, heard and knew our predicament, but then He came down to earth. Like David, He saw and heard first hand what the situation was and was prepared to do what was necessary to be a deliverer. But I am getting ahead of the narrative again, so let’s read another section.

“Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, ‘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?’ ...Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab’s anger was aroused against David, and he said, ‘Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle.’” vv. 26 & 28.

David sees that the fight is really between God and His enemies and that any fight against God is always an unequal struggle. David’s brothers however are not impressed. They have a disdain for their little brother that so many older siblings have demonstrated down the ages! They

misunderstand his motives, imply, quite unjustly, that he is neglecting his duties with the sheep, and claim to be able to look into his heart and see pride and insolence there. When Christ came into this world we know that his half-brothers, the sons of Mary and Joseph did not accept who He was or have any respect for Him. But it was wider than that. John says,

“He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him” John 1:11 (ESV).

Jesus came to the world He had made and the nation He had chosen and His own people would not receive him. But that didn't discourage Him from completing His work of deliverance. Let's read on.

“Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported them to Saul; and he sent for him. Then David said to Saul, ‘Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.’ And Saul said to David, ‘You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.’ But David said to Saul, ... ‘Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God’... Then [David] took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine” vv. 31-34 & 36 & 40.

It's rather ironic to hear young David reassuring the towering King Saul that everything will be okay, there is no need for fear, and that he, David, will go and fight the giant Goliath! Saul is not initially convinced but doesn't seem to require too much persuasion. Perhaps he is just pleased that he doesn't have to go and fight himself! Refusing Saul's offer of armour and sword, David selects the unusual weapons of a staff, or stick, a sling and five stones and sets out to meet Goliath. Here then we have a picture of Christ undertaking to take on our enemy for us. You may be familiar with the lines from Charles Gabriel's hymn that say,

“He took my sins and my sorrows,
He made them His very own.
He bore the burden to Calvary
and suffered and died alone.”

Those words are based on Isaiah 53, which describes, in advance, how Christ would take our guilt upon Himself, and take our place on the cross and in death.

Let's read one final section of our chapter.

“And the Philistine said to David, ‘Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!’ Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts’ ... So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore

David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled” vv. 44, 45, 48-51.

The first thing that catches my attention in this part of the story, is the way that David “hurried and ran” to meet the enemy. For me, this echoes the readiness of the Lord Jesus to confront Satan for us. [I’m not forgetting the way that Jesus prayed,](#)

[“If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” \(Matthew 26:39\).](#)

[Or the horror that the Lord felt in the Garden of Gethsemane when He contemplated what He was about to suffer. But I still see a willingness to meet the foe and a readiness to stand in our place to save us. It is also relevant that David’s fight with Goliath was down in the valley, in this case the literal Valley of Elah. When the Lord Jesus went to meet the foe, it was in, not just, “The valley of the shadow of death,” that Psalm 23 speaks about, but the valley of death itself.](#)

David needs just one stone to fell Goliath to the ground. A blow perfectly aimed and totally effective. In contrast to the huge number of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, Hebrews 9:28 says,

“Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.”

Since David is not carrying a sword of his own, he takes the big, heavy sword that is still lying in Goliath’s sheath, and uses that to cut off the giant’s head. So the giant Goliath is despatched using his own weapon! Many of us sing a hymn by Samuel Whitelock Gandy called, “His be the Victor’s name.” Verses two and three say,

“By weakness and defeat,
He won the meed and crown.
Trode all our foes beneath His feet,
by being trodden down.

He Satan’s power laid low,
made sin, He sin o’erthrew.
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
and death by dying slew.”

As I have already noted, Satan’s great weapon against us was death. And it was using this weapon that Jesus defeated Satan! It was by going, voluntarily, into death that Jesus took away our sins, destroyed the power of death that came from those sins, and rose triumphant in resurrection; ready to give new life to those who will put their faith in Him. This was how Satan was defeated.

Goliath had promised that if he was defeated, the Philistines would serve the Israelites. Satan always has been a liar and a deceiver, so it should come as no surprise that the Philistines didn’t keep their side of the bargain! However, they were routed by Israel in a great victory as they ran away in terror after the death of their supposedly invincible champion. They still stuck around as a nation for a few more years after this though, and continued to be a thorn in the Israelites’ side.

We know that although Satan was thoroughly routed at Calvary, he has not just disappeared from the scene. He is still the enemy and accuser of God’s people today, and will remain active until his final judgement at the end of time. But since Calvary, Satan has been a fundamentally defeated foe, and we should rejoice in the great victory that Christ has won on our behalf, and look to Him

to provide the strength for us to stand against the efforts of the enemy while He leaves us in this world.

Lord Jesus, we rejoice in the fact that although You, "Fought the fight alone", Your conquest is ours. We had no hope of prevailing against Satan and no means of escape, so You came to our rescue. Keep us from thinking we can fight our own battles in our own strength, and teach us to keep looking to You, even as we do have to join the fight that will keep raging until Your return, Amen.

Thank you for listening to this truth for today talk on Old Testament Types of the Lord - David conquers Goliath (Satan is defeated), talk number T1250.

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