

The Undefeatable Enemy Is an Impossible Threat, and No One Can Defeat Him, But God Will Send the King He Has Chosen to Rescue His People

1 Samuel 17:1-32

- Strategy for preaching this, it being one of the most known passages in the Bible, and God's purposefulness in it.
 - Week 1 - The threat of Goliath, and no one to fight him, and God bringing David to emphasize the reality of defying the armies of the living God. Week 2 - David's victory over Goliath. Week 3 - What David demonstrates to us about the walk of faith. How this points to Jesus.
 - There is purposefulness in this being the ultimate demonstration of faith, concern for God's glory, and empowering, immediately after the rejection, anointing, and service, and before the hatred that will mark the rest of the book.
 - David defeating Goliath is the definitive description of the one God has chosen and who is after his heart providing victory for Israel, in contrast to the fearful and rejected king, Saul, and everyone else. The story particularly stresses God's enabling and glory, will also lead to Saul's hatred of David, and is essential in the redemptive storyline leading to Jesus.
 - In the first part of the account, the threat of Goliath is significant, everyone, including Saul, is helpless and afraid, and David is providentially sent in bringing supplies to emphasize the significance of defending the glory of God, and how God is the only hope in seemingly impossible circumstances.
 - It is the biggest threat yet, maybe in all of Samuel. No one steps up. If God does not provide something or someone, the Philistines will decimate Israel. But God, who has always been faithful, is providentially faithful here, in sending his chosen king into the circumstance, to trust him, defend his glory, and be his instrument to rescue when there is no hope.
- I. Vs. 1-11 - The setting emphasizes a dreadful circumstance for Israel in the undefeatable nature of the enemy of God's people, the taunting of God and his people, and the failure and fear of the king.
- The way this connects to what's happened, with Saul's rejection, David's anointing, and David serving Saul.
 - **Vs. 1** - The Philistine army gathers for battle at Socoh (4th time. 100 times mentioned in 1 Sa., 24 in 2 Sa.), in Judah (Encroaching.), between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. **Vs. 2** - Saul (Attention drawn to him, as rejected king.) and Israel encamp in the Valley of Elah (About 15 mi. w. of Bethlehem. Control of this valley would give the Philistines access into the hill country of Judah.), and line up against the Philistines (Method of battle. Will be mentioned again in vs. 21.). **Vs. 3** - The Philistines are on the mountain on one side, Israel on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them (Site exists. Hills a couple hundred feet tall with a lower area between.). **Vs. 4** - There came out from the Philistines' camp a champion (Official designation. Skilled and accomplished. Representative.) named Goliath of Gath (Gath - Chps. 5-7. A large or powerful person or organization.), six cubits and a span tall (9'9"). Nu. 13:32-33 - All the people that we saw in it are of great height. And there we saw the Nephilim [the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim], and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them." 2 Sa. 21:22 mentions giants in Gath killed by David and his men.). **Vs. 5-7** - Description of weaponry. The best. 13:19-23 and blacksmiths. Bronze helmet. Coat of mail five thousand shekels of bronze (125 lbs.). Bronze armor on his legs. Bronze javelin. A spear with a shaft like a weaver's beam. The head weighed six hundred shekels of iron (15 lbs.). His shield-bearer went before him. **Intimidating and undefeatable.** **Vs. 8-10** - He taunts Israel, "Why have you come out to 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 (Representative warfare and significant outcomes.). I defy the ranks of Israel this day (Defying God. Vs. 45.). Give me a man, that we may fight together (There is no one. Impossible situation.). **Vs. 11** - When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid (Saul is "king," yet the emphasis is on his fear. Rejection and failure.).
- II. Vs. 12-16 - The redescribing of David is purposeful in contrast to the circumstances.
- **Vs. 12** - David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse (Ephrathite and Bethlehem. Rachel's burial. Naomi's family. Elkanah, Samuel [1:1; 1 Ch. 6:16-30 - Levite.]. Ru. 4:11 - May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem... Mi. 5:2 - But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.), who had eight sons, and was already old in Saul's time. **Vs. 13** - Jesse's three oldest sons, Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah, had followed Saul to the battle (16:6-9. Same names. Not anointed. Eliab's anger in vs. 28. None of them can do anything. Following Saul.). **Vs. 14-15** - David was the youngest (16:6-13.), and went back and forth

from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem (Attention drawn to God's perspective.). **Vs. 16** - For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening (40? 80 instances. No one. **This is impossible, unwinnable, and a threat against the welfare [or more] of God's people.**).

III. Vs. 17-18 - God will sovereignly use Jesse sending David with supplies for him to learn of the circumstance.

- **Vs. 17-18** - Jesse sending David with grain and bread for his brothers, and cheese for the army, and being told to find out how his brothers are doing and bring back word, will bring him to the location where he will learn what's going on with Goliath. This is emphasizing the everyday humble service of David, and also the ordinary events of God's providence that he ordains and directs to accomplish his will, and use people.

IV. Vs. 19-23 - David providentially arrives with supplies and greets his brothers in time to see what's going on with Goliath.

- **Vs. 19** - Saul, David's brothers, and all the men of Israel are in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines (There's no real fighting going on. There is a comprehensiveness to the fear and helplessness.). **Vs. 20-21** - David rises early in the morning leaves the sheep with a keeper, and takes the provisions, as Jesse had commanded him (Again, 15 miles from Bethlehem. The threat is close to home. Submission to father.). He comes to the encampment as everyone is going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry (Sovereign timing.), as Israel and the Philistines draw up for battle (again, this is just a formality, because of Goliath and fear.). **Vs. 22** - David leaves the provisions with the keeper of the baggage and runs to the ranks and greets his brothers. **Vs. 23** - As he's talking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, comes up out of the ranks of the Philistines and speaks the same words as before (The lengthy restating is to emphasize David observing this for the first time.). And David heard him (The one upon God's Spirit has come, who trusts God, and is zealous for his glory, has noticed the threat, and will act, when no one else will or can.).

V. Vs. 24-27 - While everyone else is afraid of Goliath, David is zealous for God's glory.

- **Vs. 24** - All the men of Israel, when they see Goliath, flee from him and are afraid (Retreating back to battle lines. This is comprehensive.). **Vs. 25** - They say, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel (Israel and its "God" are helpless.). And the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel (No taxes. Merab and Michal in chp. 18. Still, it is stressed that no one will or can. It has to be the one God has chosen, upon whom his Spirit rests.)." **Vs. 26** is the most important verse in this half of the chapter - David says to the men standing by him, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel (Possibly vs. 24-25 is something that continues to be repeated, helplessly, but David did not hear it. The word "reproach" is crucial. David sees what's happening as an affront to the God who is supposed to be Israel's God and Rescuer.)? **For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"** **Vs. 27** - The people essentially repeat vs. 25 to David, telling him what Saul offers.

VI. Vs. 28-32 - David will not allow his brother's rebuke to deter him from his zeal for God's glory.

- **Vs. 28** - Eliab hears David speaking . He's angry at David, and says, "Why've you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle (There when he was anointed. Jealousy. Joseph's brothers.)." **Vs. 29** - David said, "What have I done now? Was it not but a word (God's glory carries greater weight.)?" **Vs. 30** - He continues asking the same question and getting the same answer (Only he has this perspective.). **Vs. 31** - Saul hears about it and sends for him. **Vs. 32** - David wasn't running his mouth: "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine (no one else trusts God enough or is zealous for his glory, but God's chosen does. This is the type of king they need.)."

VII. We can learn much from this, particularly about Christ and faith, but four realities can be seen from this part of the text.

- A. This is pivotal in the story.
- B. This anticipates God bringing Jesus into an impossible situation to be the only one who could provide initial and continuing rescue (Ro. 8:32 - He who did not spare his own Son...)
- C. Like in chapter 16, God is always providentially directing our circumstances to accomplish his purposes, for our good and his glory (2 Co. 12:8-10 - ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.).
- D. The glory of God for which David is so zealous compels us also (Ph. 1:20 - as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.).