

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Samuel: God's Shift Of Israel From Apostasy Under The Judges To David's Reign

I. 1 Samuel: From Samuel To The Death Of Saul

R. David And Goliath: God's Example Of Conquering Giant Obstacles To Blessing (1 Samuel 17:1-54)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

In view of the pervading sense of hopelessness in today's world this fifteenth anniversary after the September 11, 2001 attack on America, if ever we believers in Christ needed to know what God wants us personally to do to be effectively used of Him to enjoy His blessing and to be a blessing to others around us, it would be today:

(1) Last Monday, I heard Brad Davis on "The Talk of Connecticut" radio talk show say that in the last 18 months, many of his callers have told him they believe our nation has already been irretrievably ruined by its leaders. Brad did not share this opinion, but he was concerned that so many of his callers expressed it.

(2) Many Christians struggle with this same sense of foreboding: the Republican-American ("Graham urges Christians to pray for country," September 2, 2016, p. 6D) told how "(t)he Rev. Franklin Graham . . . son of famed evangelist Billy Graham," stood "on the state Capitol steps in Hartford on Thursday," September 1 before "at least 1,000 people" and said that "he has 'no hope in the Democratic Party' and 'zero hope in the Republican Party' to solve . . . the nation's ills." This event "was the latest stop on Graham's 50-state 'Decision America' tour," Ibid.

(3) We can feel at a loss to know what we are to do with giant obstacles we face in our personal lives: while I was first drafting these introduction notes, I got a call from a believer about a humanly overwhelming trial he faced.

Need: *So we ask, "What does God expect me to do to handle giant obstacles to His blessing that we face in life?"*

- I. 1 Samuel 17:1-11 reports on the big obstacle Israel faced to God's blessing in the Philistines and Goliath:**
- A. Fifteen miles west of Bethlehem, the Philistines one day came up from the western lowlands and camped on the hill south of the Elah Valley, challenging Israel to fight. Israel's army answered their challenge, camping on the hill to the north of the valley, 1 Samuel 17:1-3; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Samuel 17:1-3.
 - B. Both armies were likely afraid of each other (B. K. C., O. T., p. 448), so the 9 feet 9 inch tall Philistine Goliath offered to resolve the conflict by fighting a man from Israel, 1 Sam. 17:4, 8-9; Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 1 Sam. 17:4.
 - C. Many battles in antiquity were settled by this kind of a contest (TheWycliffe Bible Commentary, 1971, p. 286), but Goliath's challenge was just as intimidating to Israel's men as their battling the Philistine army itself:
 1. The Philistine giant was well-protected, 1 Sam. 17:5-6a, 7: he had a brass helmet, 125 lbs. of body armor, bronze shin guards and an armor bearer who went in front of him; Ibid., Ryrie, fns. to 1 Sam. 17:5, 6 & 7.
 2. His spear's bronze staff weighed 17 lbs. and its iron spearhead 16 lbs. (1 Sam. 17:6-7; Ibid., fn. to 17:7).
 3. Goliath challenged Israel to send out a man to fight him, and he defied Israel's army, 1 Sam. 17:10. He did this twice a day for 40 days, and each time Israel's men fled from him in terror, 1 Samuel 17:16, 24.
- II. 1 Samuel 17:12-54 then tells of David's famous defeat of the giant Goliath. However, the way David functioned in this event examples what God's people are to do if facing giant obstacles to blessing in life:**
- A. David was empowered by the Holy Spirit for service to God (1 Samuel 16:13), so we must *rely on the power and gifting of the Holy Spirit to respond well to giant obstacles to blessing*, 1 Tim. 4:14 and 2 Tim. 1:6-7.
 - B. Then, we must *function within Biblical parameters* as did David to overcome giant obstacles to blessing:
 1. First, we must *wait on God for the opportunity to confront the obstacle*, 1 Sam. 17:12-15: David had left Saul to care for his father's sheep in submission to his father in obedience to the Mosaic Law at Exodus 20:12, so David had to wait for God to move his father to send him to face Goliath, 1 Sam. 17:16, 17-19.
 2. Second, we must *submit to the Biblical human authority over us*, 1 Sam. 17:20: required by God's Law to honor his parents (Exodus 20:12), David then obeyed his father's directive to go to the battlefield.
 3. Third, we must *trust God even if others around us fail to do so*, 1 Sam. 17:21-26: though Israel's men fled from Goliath numerous times, David kept asking what reward he could earn by slaying Goliath since he believed that since Goliath had defied the armies of the living God, Goliath was already doomed by God!
 4. Fourth, we must *stay faithfully optimistic amid the dismay of others*, 1 Sam. 17:28-30: David's brother scolded him for talk about fighting Goliath, but David refused to doubt that he would defeat the giant!
 5. Fifth, we must *heed Biblical precedents to know what God wants us to do now*, 1 Samuel 17:31-37:
 - a. When Saul heard of David's wish to fight Goliath and expressed doubt about David's success, David told Saul of his past impressive victories over a lion and a bear in hand-to-hand combat, 1 Samuel 17:31-35.

- b. Such victories were won by David's trust in God (1 Sam. 17:37a): Deuteronomy 7:20-23 taught that God would slowly let Israel conquer Canaan lest the wild animals increase against them, so David had known that God had wanted him to subdue the wild animals like bears and lions he faced while a shepherd.
- c. God had **also** pledged victory over pagans in Deut. 7:23-24, so David wanted to fight Goliath in faith in that pledge due to God's past fulfillment of His Deut. 7:20-23 pledge to help him slay wild beasts, 17:37!
6. Sixth, we must **use the abilities and experience God has already invested in us**, 1 Sam. 17:38-40: David refused to use Saul's weaponry since he had not tested them, using instead his familiar shepherd weapons.
7. Seventh, we must **do our best even with limited resources, trusting God to make us effective**: I learned in seminary that ancient warriors ground their sling stones to be perfectly round so they would not curve off of the mark. David did not come ready to fight, so he had to get his stones from the brook, 1 Sam. 17:40. He chose the five roundest ones he could find lest the first several veered off-course, trusting God to help!
8. Eighth, we must **honor the Lord while facing the giant obstacle**, 1 Samuel 17:41-47: in facing the giant, David honored the Lord, claiming He would give Goliath and the Philistines into Israel's hands to show that He is God and saves not by human might, a this truth found in Deuteronomy 20:1.
9. Ninth, we must **act wholeheartedly**, 1 Sam. 17:48-51: as Goliath started to approach David to fight, David **ran toward** him to enhance the force of his slung stone and also possibly to limit the opportunity for his imperfect brook stone to veer off its mark. The stone hit with such force that it punched through Goliath's forehead and into his brain, felling the giant for David to behead him by use of Goliath's sword, 17:48-51.
- C. David's dramatic slaying of Goliath demoralized the Philistines who fled before Israel's men, 1 Sam. 17:52-54.

Lesson: *David defeated the giant obstacle to Israel's blessing, by (1) relying on the Holy Spirit and (2) functioning within Biblical parameters: namely, he (a) waited on God for the opportunity to fight Goliath, (b) he stayed under God's human rule over him, (c) he trusted God regardless of the unbelief in others, (d) he stayed optimistic versus the dismay of others, (e) he relied on Biblical precedents to know what to do in conflict, (f) he used the abilities and experience God had already invested in him, (g) he did his best even with limited resources, trusting God for the victory, (h) he honored the Lord while facing Goliath and (i) he acted wholeheartedly in God's will.*

Application: *(1) May we believe in Christ to be saved and equipped by God for victory in living, John 3:16; 2 Peter 1:3. (2) Then, if facing "giant" obstacles to blessing, may we follow David's example for God's blessing.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Nabeel Qureshi (Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus, 2014, p. 192) writes that as a devout Muslim, "a repulsion to the Trinity was part and parcel of my Islamic identity." So, when he asked the Christian, David Wood to explain the Trinity, though David heeded 1 Peter 3:15 and gave his best answer, it made no headway with the devout Muslim, for as Nabeel himself noted, "My mind had been made up well before I met him that the Trinity was unviable." (Ibid.)

However, God then made David's Biblically obedient witness effort effective! Nabeel later took a course in organic chemistry at Old Dominion University (Ibid., p. 193) in which his professor, "Mrs. Adamski," once projected in the front of the room "three large depictions" of the nitrate molecule to describe molecular resonance. Mr. Qureshi explains: "Different arrangements of the electrons in certain molecules are called 'resonance structures.' Some molecules . . . have three resonance structures or more, like the nitrate on the board." Nabeel added, "Mrs. Adamski concluded the lesson by commenting, 'These drawings are just the best way to represent resonance structures on paper, but it's actually much more complicated. Technically, a molecule with resonance is every one of its structures at every point in time, yet no single one of its structures at any point in time.'" (Ibid., p. 194)

Nabeel was stunned! He reasoned, "The three" resonance structures "are separate but all the same, they are one. They are three in one," Ibid., p. 195. Mr. Qureshi admits, "That's when it clicked: if there are things in this world that can be three in one, even incomprehensibly so, then why cannot God? And just like that, the Trinity became potentially true in my mind," Ibid., p. 196. The book goes on to tell how Mr. Qureshi came to trust in Christ.

God took David Wood's best effort to obey 1 Peter 3:15 in answering devout Muslim Nabeel Qureshi who challenged him about his belief in the Trinity and made it believable to Nabeel through an illustration given by a secular professor in organic chemistry! The "giant" obstacle of clarifying the truth of the humanly difficult doctrine of the Trinity to a questioning, devout Muslim was overcome by the power of God!

Of note, God used an illustration in nature, and Romans 1:20 claims nature shows "the invisible things" of God, "even his eternal power and Godhead" so that all men, including Muslims, "are without excuse."

May we trust in Christ and heed the example of David of old to defeat giant obstacles to blessing!