

Honour and Glory of the Living God

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[0 : 0 0] well let's turn from the time we have to the portion that we read, 1st Samuel chapter 17 and we can take the end of verse 26 the end of verse 26 these great words of David but who is this unshrinking Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God what is this story all about it is about the honour and the glory of the living God the honour and the glory of the living God it is full of God's teaching regarding the gospel it is full of gospel teaching it is full of the teaching of a deliverer of a saviour of a messiah a messiah who has come to do battle with the enemy to deliver to free his people in this narrative we see

David God's anointed but we see that there is a greater than David here a greater than David here and I hope as we go through this passage and this chapter we're able to see something of that the greater than David the Lord Jesus Christ David's greater son it's a familiar story and most we should all be familiar with it it's even embedded into a culture in the sense that quite often in television particularly when it comes to sport you hear people talking about the underdog so there's the the people who are bound to sort of win the contest there's the underdog and they quite often refer to a David and Goliath situation a David and Goliath situation and of course it's also found its way into our culture in the sense that this narrative is often used to talk about giants in our lives the giants that that may come into our experience but

Goliath is not a metaphor for all our problems he is not a metaphor for all our problems the narrative as we have it here describes an actual man this very big man who was almost ten feet tall this is about the honor and the glory of the living God so let's look first then at the enemy of the living God secondly we'll look at the servant of the living God and finally the victory of the living God so the enemy of the living God verses 1 to 11 set the scene for us it's a battle scene two armies two mountains and they're about to go into battle a valley between them and emerging onto the scene is this new this champion of God this giant called

Goliath Goliath Israel and the Philistines the Philistines the enemies of God and there's nothing new in that of course when you look back over the mountain in the earlier chapters you see time and time again Israel fighting with their enemies in chapter 14 and at verse 47 we see the description there of Israel fighting with their enemies on every side against Moab against the people of Ammon against Edom against the kings of Zobel and against the Philistines and against the Amalekites and against any number of people who were the enemies of the living God but this champion appears Goliath and he issues a challenge to Saul and to Israel at verse 9 and this is the challenge that he sets out choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me if he's 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 here is this very large champion of Gath Goliath and he taunts Israel and Saul for 40 days morning and evening morning and evening and it's so interesting when you come across these numbers and these weapons it's through 40 days 40 emphasizes totality it's almost as if the humiliation the humiliation that Israel is suffering and that

[6 : 1 0] Saul the king who has been rejected by God because he rejected God's word it's as if the humiliation is a total humiliation and America is bringing this humiliation out what is their response what is their response to this well their response is this at the end of verse they were dismayed and greatly afraid the words literally mean that they were crickering they were shaking in their boots at the prospect of this champion of Gath in verse 24 we see again a similar situation when they heard the words the men of Israel when they saw the man fled from them and were dreadfully afraid and not even the prospect not even the prospect of a reward in verse 25 that Saul lays for them that they would be enriched and he would give anybody his daughter and he would give his father's exemption for taxes in Israel nothing nothing would ease the fact that they were so afraid of this giant of Gath

Israel and Saul and it's so interesting when you think of Saul King Saul and the way that he is described for us in these earlier chapters for example we see in chapter 9 at verse 16 and 17 there he is there he is here's Saul the king there he is the man of whom I spoke to you this one shall reign over my people now you ask for a king and despite God's word he continued to ask for a king so God gave them a king of their choosing of their choosing and when Samuel saw Saul the Lord said to him there he is the man of whom I spoke and again in chapter 10 we see such an interesting point being presented to us in verses 23 and 24 we see these words describing

Saul and when he stood among the people he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward here was one who was taller than anybody else in Israel you could almost say that he was not quite a giant but he looked like a big man he was the king he was the king and the king historically the essential glory of the king in those days was not the splendour of his palace but his prowess in battle that was the glory of the king it was as he led the people in battle to victory over their enemies and their foes that's where the glory of the king shone most on the battlefield on the battlefield and on the battlefield he was there leading from the front he became their inspiration and they looked to him it was the reason that they were fighting he was the one to whom they were looking but you don't see

Saul taking up that role you see him quivering along with the rest of Israel quivering what is Israel doing they're acting as if God doesn't exist they're not seeing the living God they're only seeing the enemy they are forgetting they are forgetting God they are forgetting God's promises his blessings of past victories and deliverance it's almost as if the battle is over before it began it's almost as if they're absolutely resigned to defeat what was playing them well it was a severe case of as one commentator put it identity amnesia they forgot they forgot who they were that they were none other than

God's chosen people they were none other than the armies of the living God and the God the covenant God was their God their God they were comparing themselves in a sense to the giant rather than being aware of who they were as the army of the living God and it's a lesson for us of course in all of these things when we are descended with challenges we must avoid looking at those challenges of faith in fear in fear we must rest on the presence and the power and the grace of the one who rules and has become our father in heaven here is the enemy of the living

[12:11] God here are the enemies of the living God and as we go through the scripture as we look back through the scriptures and as we look forward in the scriptures you see a stream of people rising up against God of armies and of people rising up against God and where did the enmity begin where did the enmity begin well it began in the garden of Eden with the fall of man this narrative and the other narratives we see about the enemies of God ought to take us back to Genesis 3 and it ought to take us back and remind us of the ongoing conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent between the armies of the living God and the armies of the devil the devil the great challenger to God here is a challenger to Israel and he's a challenger to

God and the God of Israel and the armies of the God of Israel there is a challenger the great challenger to God the devil who rebelled against God from the beginning the mystery of iniquity how we don't know but since then the conflict between God and the devil and between heaven and hell rages on it rages on and it's irreconcilable 1 John reminds us too that in the New Testament there is a reference there to the children of God and the children of the devil these are solemn words that remind us all there are only two camps you are either in Christ you are either in that kingdom of God and his

Christ or you are in the kingdom of darkness of the devil there is no in between there are only the two camps in Christ or out of Christ in a state of sin and misery under the rule and the authority of the God of this world and the God of this world and we were seeing in Psalm 2 of that very conflict kings of the earth do set themselves to plot against the Lord and his anointed saying thus let us asunder break their bands and cast their cords from us defying the living God here was this man defying he was blaspheming he treated

God and the people of God with utter disdain he was a blasphemer and it's remarkable when you read these words in Psalm 2 they remind us of course of our day when there is such evidence of this very same thing no restraint no boundaries nobody telling me what to do and how to do it no authority a complete rebellion and rejection of any kind of authority but God says to us in Galatians 6-7 do not be deceived God is not mocked here was this champion defying mocking blaspheming God is not mocked for whatever one sows that will he also reap the enemy the enemy of the living

God the wonder of the gospel of course is that God wants his enemies to be the friends of Jesus and we were once enemies alienated from God and from the commonwealth of Israel but through everything that Christ has done we are translated transferred by the power of God out of that kingdom of darkness into the marvellous life of the kingdom of God and that's what Christ does that's what the gospel does and that's what must be true for you and for me so the scene is set and in verse 12 the servant of the living God comes onto the scene and verse 12 begins with those words now David was the son of that

[17 : 46] Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah whose name was Jesse sent by his father to take food to his brothers and to the commander of their thousands and this obscured shepherd who was in Saul's court as you know from the previous chapter and who would leave the court and go to help his father out and feed his sheep and he comes from feeding the sheep and he goes and he comes into the situation and he runs into the army and greets his brothers and he cannot believe what he sees and what he hears and notice the end of verse 23 notice the end of verse 23 so

David heard them so David heard them he heard the words of Goliath he heard the words of this enemy of God he heard these defiant mocking words and he is quite astonished and he speaks himself he speaks himself who is this uncircumcised Philistine why does he specifically refer to that uncircumcised Philistine because he is identifying the very fact here are the covenant people of God God's covenant people here is one who is outside the covenant here is one who is outside the covenant outside of God's face and favor and blessing under the curse and wrath of God he knew that the words of this enemy of God this Philistine were an offense to God defying the armies of God mocking the armies of God means defying and mocking God the same situation as you have very close to it at least in the New Testament Saul Saul why are you persecuting me but he was persecuting the church the people of God and in persecuting the people of God he was persecuting Jesus I am Jesus who you are persecuting I am Jesus who you are persecuting and he was absolutely amazed at these words and amazed at the people of

God and he speaks David speaks Deobar Davis that great commentator on these Old Testament books notes this point that not only did David face one enemy but he faced three enemies who were the other two enemies that David faced well one of the enemies was none other than his brother Eliab the eldest and it's very interesting when you look back at chapter 16 about Eliab's mystery what does the scripture say about Eliab verses 6 and 7 of chapter 16 so it was when they came that he looked at Eliab and said surely the Lord's anointed is before him but the Lord said to Samuel do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature because I have refused him and here was Eliab and he wasn't very happy with David and it is more than just a brotherly argument more than just a brotherly argument this is pure disdain he accuses him of evil of evil

I know your pride and the insolence of the evil of your heart but you have come down to see the battle he treats David with utter disdain the David whom God had chosen the anointed one he treats him with utter disdain who do you think you are you just an obscure shepherd you're nothing we're soldiers in Saul's army you're nothing and of course there's the third enemy who is King Saul himself King Saul himself you are not able to go he says in verse 33 you are not able to go against the spirit of sacrifice but you are a youth and he am out of war from his youth standing before [23 : 28] God was the one who God rejected because Saul had rejected the word of God Saul had rejected the word of God and God dealt with him abundantly an enemy of God and David speaks verses 36 and 37 your servant has killed both lion and babe and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them seeing he has defied the armies of the living God he's saying to Saul this man this man is defying God the honour of God is at stake here Saul can you not see that and can you not see this that the Lord will save the

Lord will deliver look at verse 37 moreover David said the Lord the covenant name of God this is the first time it's used in the narrative here the Lord the covenant God who is faithful to his promises the faithfulness of God the faithfulness of God and David has seen what God can do he has experienced the living God in the wilderness when he was intending his father's sheep but when a lion and a bear came and took a lion to the block I went out after it and struck it little did David know that God was preparing him he was preparing him and all that he needed to go out against the champion of God the enemy of God happened then when he was keeping his father's sheep this is more than just David the shepherd this is

David God's anointed he speaks with such authority does he not with power he's a spiritual man this is a spiritual man the defiance of the enemy of God is is causing grief to his soul to his spirit

his soul was exceedingly troubled by this enemy but what does he do what does he do he goes he goes out I will go he says at verse 22 let no man's heart fail because of him your servant will go you're not going Saul nobody else in Israel is going I will go I will go he speaks so powerfully and so spiritually he's faithful he's faithful to his calling faithful in his calling faithful to his calling and the experiences that he experienced as a faithful shepherd are the things that will now make him faithful as he goes out to battle against the champion of Gath and he goes and he walks out onto the field onto the field it's so important to be faithful in your calling every one of us whatever that may be whatever your employment is whatever your situation is you must be faithful in all of it in all of it one commentator noted this he said why on earth did the son of god become a carpenter why on earth did the son of god become a carpenter the answer is this to fulfill all righteousness to keep the law six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work to fulfill all righteousness to magnify the law he had a calling to be a carpenter to follow in his father's footsteps and he does it well and the commentator adds this and the skills he learns in the obscurity of his cap are the very things that will take him to the cross faithfulness to god diligence in his calling integrity in his work consecration to god these things that may a carpenter of him to the glory of god will make him a saviour to the glory of god be faithful to your calling you and me and experience your calling whatever it might be that relationship with the living god the living god it's such a powerful term the name of god is a study in and of itself the living god that's what the soundest when we sang in psalm 84 my very heart and soul cry out oh living god for thee what is your soul crying out for what's it cry out for for satisfaction for pleasure for doing my own thing getting my own way and doing my own will we must cry out to god the living god and what do we see the servant of god doing no sign of king saul but here we see the anointed one going out to meet the great challenger verse 40 and he drew near to the philistine he went out to face the enemy the enemy and notice this the description that you have of goliath in the opening verses and particularly in verse 5 he had a bronze helmet on his head and he was armed with a coat of mail with a coat of mail literal translation is this a body armor of scales a body armor of scales just like a serpent he was the embodiment of a serpent he was the enemy of god the enemy of god and we've got to realize that in the scriptures that these enemies of god arise that behind them stands the devil fanning the flames stoking up this enmity fanning the flames of enmity against the lord and against his man and he goes out and he goes out the more you read this narrative and the more it goes on the more you begin to see the greater than david the words of matthew 16 21 from that time jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to jerusalem he must go up to jerusalem he set his face as a flint towards jerusalem towards calvary towards the battle who was he going to do battle with with the enemy with the great enemy with satan and with hell with sin and death and hell all the things that were part of the tools or the armory that satan had at his disposal i will go he says you almost hear the sound of psalm 40 lo i come to do thy will these great words that were spoken by christ before all eternity i'm coming to earth i'm coming down i'm coming down into this fearful pit and into this mighty clay of this world that is sin ridden and i'm going to deal with sin i'm going to deal with sin notice what he says in verse 45 verse 45 then david said to the philist and you come to me with a sword with a spear and a dagger but i come to you in the name of the lord of hosts in the name of the lord of hosts sometime after this david writes in psalm 118 these very words blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord and of course in the new testament these words are picked up by christ and they refer to himself because he ascribes these very words to himself to himself goliath was defying saul and israel and god and nobody sees david walking out into the field of battle alone it's as if he completely loses the plot and starts spirit more enmity and curses and blaspheming what happens in the battle that takes us on to the third point the victory of the living god the victory of the living god god david's faith is in the living god in the lord of hosts the lord who does not save with sword and spear for the battle is the lord's but he will give you into our hands what is god doing in this narrative god is saying here is my anointed one here is my anointed one here is my champion here is the captain of my salvation here is my anointed the battle is the lord's and so it was god gave david the victory david knew who he was before god there was no identity crisis there was no amnesia he knew who god was his faith and his trust was in god and david slays goliath with a stone a single stone and the theories regarding stones are many and they we had a visitor recently in our home and a lovely lady lovely lovely christian who offered a theory of her own we were just having a conversation and she said oh she said the the the the was by stones because goliath had four brothers one for each brother well i'm not sure i would absolutely agree

with that in fact i'm not sure i would agree at all but the theories are many one of the theories I do like though is this in Leviticus 24 16 the law of Moses reminds us that those who blaspheme God will be stoned to death those who blaspheme God will be stoned to death but we can't get lost in that we have to see the greater narrative here the victory of the living God

[37 : 39] David kills Goliath and not only that he cuts off his head it's so symbolic it is so symbolic the greater that David is here the promise in Genesis 3 you shall bruise the serpent's head the serpent's head to kill a serpent they say you have to cut off his head cut off his head and here was this enemy of God who was killed and his head was cut off cut off it's quite interesting when you look back over this narrative and when you read about texts like this that you come across these narratives that are full of nuances and full of thoughts and one such as this in chapter 5 and verse 4 when the Philistines had taken the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod when the Philistines took the ark of God they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon and when the people of Ashdod rose early in the morning there was Dagon fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the Lord so they took Dagon and put it in its place again and when they rose early the next morning there was Dagon fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the Lord the head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off of the threshold only Dagon's torso was left of it the head of Dagon the head of

Goliath the enemy of God the giant slain of the victory the Lord's the battle the battle is the Lord's the battle is the Lord's but what does Israel then do?

they see the king they see the anointed king the real king the victorious king and they go and they chase the Philistines fled and the Israelites and the Israelites are rejuvenated and they chase the enemies of God and they slay them they slay them the cry of the battle is the Lord's is a cry that resonates the world's and has its fulfillment at Calvary at Calvary where the giants of where Satan was destroyed destroyed by Christ's death he destroyed the one who has the power of death that is the devil took away his power and his authority and a sense in which the giants of sin and death and hell dealt with by Christ once and for all once and for all the God who spared not his only son the God who spared not his united the God who spared not his united here and how shall we out with him freely give us all things nothing can stand in the way if you're a believer in Christ Jesus nothing can stand against you who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect no one no one the Christ who conquered sin and death and the grave makes us more than conquerors more than conquerors so what shall we say then in conclusion the Lord's anointed facing the Lord's enemy in the Lord's name for the Lord's glory the reality is that we too are anointed by the Holy Spirit every Christian is anointed by the Holy Spirit and every Christian is sent out in Jesus' name to wage war against the enemies of God it is time for us to wage war against the Philistines in our heart against the Philistines in our heart C.S. Lewis once said this when he realized just what was in his heart he concluded this my name is Leech my name is Leech the people of God can often feel like that they can feel like that but it's so unfortunate for us to say with Paul in 1 Philippians 15 57 but thanks be to God we may fail we do fail but that doesn't deny the fact that the victory is the Lord's the victory is the Lord's Calvary is a reality and the victory is the [43 : 56] Lord's Christ died yea rather is risen again it's time for us to do battle with the enemies the enemies within and the enemies without and to stand up for Christ and to be counted and by faith in him and by trusting in him we can overcome and the scriptures remind us they remind us Romans 16 verse 20 they remind us that although in Christ we have been freed from the guilt of sin and although we've been freed from the power of sin and that's so important for us to remember that in Christ we've been freed from the gift of sin and the power of sin it has no authority over us no dominion but sin still resides in us still resides in us through our cost through our shame and we may fail but like David there will be a final victory there will be a final victory because God has promised this in

Romans 16 20 and this is in relation to Christ the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet Amen may the Lord bless these thoughts on his own