

A Giant Problem

(2 Samuel 21:15-22)

8/3/16; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

I had a friend in high school who was a history nut.

When we would get our history textbooks for World history or US history or even SC history, he would devour them in a matter of days.

I can still see him sitting in geometry class reading his history book...

And because he was an avid reader, he did great on the vocabulary portion of the SAT...

Which was good because he didn't do so good on the Math section...

At that time in my life, I had little to no interest in history...

Nothing about the past fascinated me...

I asked my buddy one time why he was so fascinated with events of the past...

And let me add, he was especially fascinated with the Civil War and World War 2...

And I asked him, why are you so obsessed with that stuff...

And his answer was simple but brilliant...

There is so much help available for today by remembering yesterday...

Though I didn't get it then, I get it now...

And I have come to love history myself...

And I would even say to you that God uses history in the lives of believers to teach us and encourage us...

People get lost in the value of the OT for our lives today...

Yet, listen to the value of the OT for the Christian...

1 Cor 10:1

10 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock

was [a]Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.

As Paul writes to the Corinthian church, he writes about the history of the nation of Israel...

How Moses had led them, but how Israel was not always obedient to God...

Now, where would Paul have read about Israel's past?

In the OT, which gives us the history of Israel in the world..

And what is the value of Israel's history?

Verse 6...

6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them [b]did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them [c]did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them [d]did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as an ex-

*ample, and they were written for our instruction,
upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

Long story short, the history of Israel (all the things they did, -the good and the bad,) were examples for the Corinthians to follow or avoid..

And they are even examples for us for us tonight....

And we have learned from Israel and the people in Israel on Wednesday nights...

And tonight, we get another lesson, and my friend would be so excited if he were here...

Because tonight, we get a history of some battles that Israel fought...

We don't get a lot of detail on what happened...

We don't get the blood and the gore...

We simply get a snapshot of 4 giants who were killed by Israel...

Now, we all know about Goliath being killed by David...

That is one of the first stories any kid in Sunday School learns...

But Goliath is not the only giant in the Bible...

If you read in Numbers and Joshua, there were groups of people known for their tremendous height and size...

Goliath was most likely a descendant of these giant men which are known as Rephaim in Genesis 14...

Well, Goliath had children and brothers apparently who were giants like him who fought for the Philistines against Israel...

And long story short, we are going to read about four of those relatives of Goliath who all fought against Israel and all ended up dead...

Now, in the big picture before we look at the details of these battles, what's the point of putting this history of giant victories in 2 Samuel 21...

Well, we talked last Wednesday about how these final 4 chapters of 2 Samuel were most likely included to provide a happy ending to David's life...

If you remember, much of the final section of 2 Samuel from chapter 11 to chapter 20 contains some dark days in David's life...

After he sinned with Bathsheba, God brought consequences of sin into his home and his life...

Family feuds, family crimes, family jealousy...

David's son murdering his brother..

David's son with a desire to murder his own father...

In short, the end of 2 Samuel do not shed the best possible light on David's life...

Therefore, in chapter 21, 22, 23 and 24, we get some flashbacks in David's life that serve to put a nice happy ending on David's life...

David is not the worst king ever in the history of Israel, even though he has committed his share of sin...

In fact, David is Israel's greatest king...

David is even described as a man's after God's own heart..

David's family line is going to bring Jesus into the world...

So, David holds a grand place in the plans of God in the world...

Therefore, it makes sense that it would nice to tack a happy ending on to the story of David's life found in 2 Samuel..

And last week in the first 14 verses of 2 Samuel 21, we were reminded that David was a king who kept his word and a king who showed compassion to His people...

In those 14 verses, we saw David honor his promise to protect Jonathan's son Mephibosheth....

And we saw David show compassion to a woman named Rizpah who had watched her sons hang to pay's for Saul's sins....

And now we come to verse 15 in chapter 21, and the scene completely shifts....

We go from a time of famine in Israel to a time of war in Israel....

And this history of battles is going to be given to us tonight to once again paint a positive picture of David as we draw to the end of his life...

In these verses from 15-22, we are going to see David as a defender of Israel, who goes out and takes on God's enemies...

But we are also going to see David as the hope of Israel, who needs to be protected so that David's line survives and Israel has a future...

This is really going to be a very uneventful section of 2 Samuel, but let's squeeze out all we can from these verses...

Let me read verses 15-17 to get us going tonight....

I have entitled this first set of verses...

I. David Is Valiant (15-17)

15 Now when the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David went down and his servants with him; and as they fought against the Philistines, David became weary. 16 Then Ishbi-benob, who was among the descendants of the [j]giant, the weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of bronze in weight, [k]was girded with a new sword, and he [l]intended to kill David. 17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah helped him, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, “You shall not go out again with us to battle, so that you do not extinguish the lamp of Israel.”

From verse 15, we know that this history of David and Israel is not in chronological order...

Even the battles within this final section don't always happen back to back to back...

But rather, these verses a collection of war stories, and in the very first one of these, we find David leading Israel into battle in verse 15....

This may have been early in his reign as king or late in his reign as king...

It simply isn't clear from what is written here...

But what is clear is this...

David is doing what any brave and valiant king would do, he is at the front leading his army to take on the Philistines...

Now, we have met the Philistines over and over in 1 and 2 Samuel, but they are the nation to Israel's west right along the Mediterranean Sea...

You can see the land of Philistia on this map...

And so David leads his men into battle, but at the end of verse 15, we read this...

David grows weary in battle...

And he finds himself at the point of death as a giant named Ishbi-benob is prepared to kill him...

You can see that this giant is equipped with the weaponry to do it...

According to verse 6, he is standing over David with a new sword that weighs almost 7 pounds...

But just then as the sword is about to fall on David, Abishai kills Ishbi-Benob....

So, what do we see here that puts David in a good light?

We see a king who was out fighting with his men...

If you can remember from 1 Samuel. what did we see in Saul?

He was always the one under the shade tree when he should have been out battling Israel's enemies...

What do we often see in other who are in positions of leadership?

We see men who run to the back lines in battle...

Men who aren't ready to risk their lives for anything..

Men who hide from trouble...

Men who are more ready to sit in the recliner than join the fight...

David is not one of those men..

In fact, the time that David has the darkest days of his life is when he stays behind in Israel while his men go out to battle in 2 Samuel 11...

And while he is taking it easy, he commits adultery with Bathsheba and ends up murdering her husband...

Men of God are not called to be idle....

The saying that the devil dances in evil pockets is often very true...

Staying busy is a good way of staying out of sin, but more importantly, it is a good way to lead by example...

The best leaders in the Scriptures are not those who dictate but those who serve...

The way to way to be a leader that God honors is to lead by doing and serving...

David was that kind of man even as king of Israel...

Now, let's think about David's actions and let our minds fast forward to David's ultimate descendant, - the Lord Jesus Christ...

I guess if God had allowed it, He could have just sent Jesus to earth for a few days...

Had him killed and raised him from the dead to become a sacrifice for sin...

Yet, what do we see in Jesus?

Someone who comes to earth to live for 30 + years in human flesh to experience the struggles of His people...

To take on the temptations of Satan...

To deal with everyday life and family and problems...

What we see in Christ is not Someone who cheated by sitting on the sidelines and then going to the cross....

No, Jesus walked in this world to show his people how to live, how to die, and how to be born again...

Jesus didn't use his unmatched power to overcome temptation...

Rather, he allowed himself to be tempted in all things, but still remained obedient to the Law of God..

I get so tired of people who make Jesus into some fluffy and weak kind of image....

Let me tell you, Christ was a warrior who led His people into battle...

He didn't chicken out even in the face of the cross....

He prayed to the Father and he went into battle, and just when it looked like Satan had won...

God steps in and raises him from the dead and victory is snatched from the jaws of defeat...

Just like David was rescued from sure death, God rescued His son from certain death to give victory to us all..

But let remind you, you can't be close to death unless you are in the fight....

And David was a warrior and so was our Lord...

Now, this close escape from death for David led David's men to say this in verse 17...

“You shall not go out again with us to battle, so that you do not extinguish the lamp of Israel.”

David's men don't want to go out to battle with them again...

They see the danger of it for David, and don't want the lamp of Israel to be extinguished..

So what does that mean to extinguish the lamp of Israel...

Well, Israel began to understand that their prosperity as a nation came from having David as their king....

And to help us keep the right perspective, the blessings are not a result of David being more special than other kings...

Rather, the blessings that came to Israel as a result of having David as king were simply because God had promised to bless David and his line as they led Israel...

And the thought of David dying in battle and having God cut off their blessings was enough for David's men to tell him to stay home..

Now, that verse is a lead in to the rest of the verses of this chapter...

Which will include 3 of David's men defeating 3 more giants...

And the point is not to bring glory to these men necessarily (although they were brave men), the point is to show that David's men went to great lengths to protect him....

Let's move to these final 5 verses, and then we will make some closing thoughts and conclusions...

I have entitled this final section...

II. David Is Valuable (18-22)

Verse 18...

18 Now it came about after this that there was war again with the Philistines at Gob; then Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Saph, who was among the descendants of the [m]giant. 19 There was war with the Philistines again at Gob, and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite [n]killed [o]Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. 20 There was war at Gath again, where there was a man of great stature who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also had been born to the [p]giant. 21 When he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimei, David's brother, struck him down. 22 These four were born to the [q]giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

What we see in verses 18-22 are 3 more times when David or his men struck down the giants who fought for the Philistines...

In verse 18, one of David's men named Sibbecai struck down a giant named Saph...

In verse 19, one of David's men named Elhanan struck down a giant named Goliath...

Now, this presents a problem for some people...

Because they say that David was the one who killed Goliath....

There are two possible solutions...

First of all, Elhanan could be another name of David since both were from Bethlehem...

I don't think that is the best solution..

David is always called David for the most part in the Bible...

The second solution is to say that two men could be named Goliath...

I think that is very possible, since the name means giant....

The final solution is to allow for the possibility that that the words "the brother of" Goliath...

And that would mean that a man named Elhanan killed Goliath's bother in verse 19...

I like this solution best for one reason...

And that reason is found in 1 Chronicles 20:5...

18 Now it came about after this that there was war again with the Philistines at Gob; then Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Saph, who was among the descendants of the [m]giant. 19 There was war with the Philistines again at Gob, and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite [n]killed [o]Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. 20 There was war at Gath again, where there was a man of great stature who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also had been born to the [p]giant. 21 When he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimei, David's brother, struck him down. 22 These four were born to the [q]giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

You see 1 Chronicles runs parallel to 2 Samuel...

And in 1 Chronicles 20, we see this same episode retold...

And in those verses, we see that Elhanan killed the brother of Goliath the giant....

So the question is why didn't the writer of 2 Samuel include this...

And the short answer is we don't know...

It doesn't really matter.

Whether Elhanan killed another man named Goliath or whether he actually killed Goliath's brother is of no real importance...

The simple fact is that another giant is dead and David is safe from more threats on his life...

And then the third giant to die here has no name....

We can simply call him Mr. 6 Digit because he has 6 digits on each hand and foot...

From verse 20, he may have been the Goliath's son...

And it seems very likely because he did exactly what his father did...

Look at the first part of verse 21..

He defied Israel...

In other words, he taunted Israel and Israel's God...

Like father, like son....

Big mouths usually get handed down to the next generation...

But unfortunately, big mouths often end up as dead bodies...

And that is exactly what happens here as David's nephew named Jonathan strikes him down....

And so in 22, we get the summary of what we just read....

Four giant men fell to David and his servants during his reign as king over Israel....

And the clear thought is that David would fight but David was also worthy of protection...

Now, why is that?

Well, blessing came through David to Israel..

From a human perspective....if David were dead, Israel would crumble...

Now, we know that God protects his people, but he often does it through other's people bravery...

David had brave men around him, and they were glad to guard him with their lives...

What do we see in David's descendant?

Is Jesus someone worthy of protection?

Well, I think you see it a little bit in his lifetime...

The disciples would often refuse to listen to Jesus talk about his own death...

Peter even cut off an ear in an attempt to keep the Romans from arresting him...

Now, Peter was ignorant of the plans of God...

If Peter had completely understood that Jesus had to die to save him from his sins, he may have escorted Jesus to the cross himself...

But he didn't completely get it at that point...

Though Jesus came to die and wasn't even protected by His Father from death, He is now very much worthy of protection today...

We, like David's men, should guard our Lord's name and reputation...

We should fight for His gospel...

WE should defend his honor when people attack it...

We should lay our lives down for his glory and his church...

If David was valuable, David's Lord was far more valuable...

How dare we as His people not guard Him...

No, he is not here on earth in need of our protection..

But his name is attacked and his reputation is assaulted...

And we must be ready to defend and guard it when give the chance...

Refuse to let people slander your Lord...

Refuse to let people talk about the lack of Jesus' power...

His name is to be guarded and defended by His people....

Just like David's life was guarded by his servants...

Conclusion

Let me a few closing thoughts to this chapter....

#1 - Goliaths never go away.

Sure, David may have killed Goliath in 1 Samuel, but Goliath has brothers and sons and relatives that come back to fight...

And look, you may have overcome some troubles and trials in your life, but you will be free from them...

The Christian life is a journey from one trial to the next because we are trying to live out our faith in the midst of a fallen world filled with fallen people...

Just when you sit down in the recliner, you realize you need to get up and do something else...

That is how life is...

David defeated Goliath as a young man but at the end of his life, there are Goliaths friends that still want him dead...

I am not trying to be the bearer of bad news, but Christians often forget that the enemy never sleeps and he never stops looking to devour...

Be ready for battle as long as you live in this world...

#2 - *God never goes away either.*

The story of David is this...

The giants came and the giants fell...

And the simple reason is this...

God never departed from protecting David...

2 Samuel may be a story of story of David's downfall, but it is also the story of God's grace and kindness to David...

IF anyone deserved to be abandoned by God, it would have been David...

He did everything to throw away all he had, yet God never allowed it...

He was always there protecting David and his kingdom....

And he is always there cleaning up our messes and showing his grace...

Let me end tonight with a familiar passage in the book of Romans....

Romans 8:31...

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? 33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; 34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was [l]raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of [m]Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written, "For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You know what?

Even David tried to separate himself from God's love and protection, but even he failed to do it...

He tried to throw off God's love time and time again.

Yet, guess what David discovered?

Nothing can separate us from the love of God, not even the stupidity of our sin...

And David was living proof of that...

And we are also living proof of that, amen?

Amen.

Let us pray.