

THE IMAGE & THE STONE

"And David put his hand in his bag and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sank into his forehead: and he fell upon his face to the earth."

We cannot help, as we read our daily portions, but marvel at the depth, beauty and interest of the great revelation that God made to man in the Bible. Time and time again we are struck by inexhaustible interplay of spiritual meaning and significance that runs in every direction in Scripture, like the weaving of a marvelous tapestry.

In the story of David and Goliath (so familiar to us all) this fact stands out repeatedly. In this epic encounter between faith and force, spirit and flesh, the godly and the earthly, we see all the purpose of God and the history of man focalized. The record occurs in 1 Sam. 17. The account begins (v. 1)—

"The Philistines gathered together their armies to battle."

The name "Philistine" has found a place in the English language as a common noun. It is used to describe one who is earthly, ignorant, uncultured and unspiritual. These Gentile barbarians gather their forces against Israel and Israel's first king.

How many of us know just where this great encounter between David and Goliath took place? It was a little south of Jerusalem, and halfway over toward the Mediterranean Sea. It was in the same locality where Samson's strange adventures took place—right at the border between the Israelite hill country and the level Philistine plain. It was *"between the seas—Dead and Mediterranean—in the glorious holy mountain"* (Dan. 11:45)—where Gog is to meet his end.

Throughout the story, we are inescapably reminded of Christ's two victories—first over the great and terrible giant of sin and death; and second, the victory to overcome the colossal image of the kingdom of men. Goliath is a type of both.

"The Philistines . . . pitched . . . in Ephes-dammim" (v. 1).

This name means "border of blood." In the antitype it marks the crest of human power: the *border of blood*—the point where it was broken and turned back, both at Golgotha in the past and Armageddon in the future.

For Christ, as for all, the victory must be first personal, first *internal*; then external. The real victory was won at Gethsemane and Calvary: *"Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* (That was spoken when the world did not even know he existed.) The triumph of Armageddon is but the logical and inevitable sequence of the triumph of the cross. So with us—the victory must be *personal*; all the rest will take care of itself.

Ephes-dammim, the "border of blood," is very closely related in meaning to Acel-dama, the "field of blood," purchased with the price of Judas' treachery.

"And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah" (v. 2).

"Elah" is the feminine form of "El" (God, strength, mighty one). Elah in Scripture means a strong, firmly-rooted tree. It is usually translated "oak" in the Authorized Version. Several significant things in Scripture occurred under oaks, or "Elahs." It is the word used (1 Chr. 10:12) when the men of Jabesh-gilead buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan under "the oak" in Jabesh. The custom of burying under an oak (Gen. 35:8) seems to carry the thought of resting under the overshadowing care of the Mighty One—*"Therefore shall my flesh rest in hope"* (Psa. 16:9).

Combining this though with the meaning of "Jabesh" gives us a touching picture of Israel, as typified by their first king and his noble son—failure and success.

For Jabesh is the common Hebrew word for "dried-up, withered." Saul stands for failure—the failure of one who was called and chosen, and given great honor and responsibilities.

Surely there is something *very* striking about Saul's bones and all his hopes being buried under a mighty tree in a dry and withered place! In Saul (the first king) we see the natural kingdom of Israel, buried in a withered place because of failure. But in his son Jonathan ("Gift of God"), buried under the shadow of the same mighty tree, we see promise and hope for Israel in the end. *"Unto us a Son is given, and the government (kingship) shall be upon HIS shoulder" . . . "O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up"* (Isa. 9:6; Eze. 37:12).

The figure of an Elah—a strong, well-rooted tree—is often used in Scripture for the righteous—

"Trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord" (Isa. 61:3).

"As the days of a tree are the days of My people" (Isa. 65:22).

"As a tree planted by the rivers of waters" (Psa. 1:3).

So the Philistines gather in the "border of blood"; Israel by the valley of the Mighty Tree.

"And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them" (v. 3).

Each army on a mountain slope—the valley between for the scene of the conflict. Mountains in Bible language are *powers*—the two great flesh-powers of the latter day are "mountains of brass" (Zech. 6:1)—and the *"mountain of the Lord's House"* shall be exalted above all the mountains of the earth (Isa. 2:2).

A valley is a place of sorrow, humility and trial. We find many poetic expressions based upon this thought. The "Valley of Achor" (trouble) which for Israel finally becomes a "Door of Hope" (Hos. 2:15), because *"We must through much tribulation enter the Kingdom"* (Acts 14:22).

In Psa 84 we have the Valley of Baca (tears)—

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee . . . who, passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools . . . They go from strength to strength" (vs. 5-7).

Here, by a beautiful figure, the tears of sorrow are transformed into the water of life, by faith and the strength of God.

Then there is the Valley of Jehoshaphat (God's Judgment); the Valley of Haraga (Slaughter); and the central figure—"the Valley of the Shadow of Death" (Psa. 23:4). There are *forty valleys* mentioned in Scripture, including this last one. Young's concordance lists them all, and they would make a very interesting study. (We shall remember this "40" when we reach v. 16).

"And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath" (v. 4).

Goliath means "exile." He stands for natural man in all his power and glory—an exile from God. Gath means "winepress." Goliath of Gath—"the exile of the winepress."

Our minds immediately go to the Revelation—to the "*great winepress of the wrath of God*" which is about to be typically enacted in this valley—the treading down by the victorious Christ of all human power and pride—the grinding to powder of the great Image.

"His height was six cubits and a span" (v. 4).

This would be around 10 to 11 feet. Six is the number of man; 666 is the Man of Sin (Rev. 13:18). This family of giants had six fingers on each hand, six toes on each foot (2 Sam. 21:20). Goliath had six pieces of armor.

"Six cubits *and a span*." Surely the six cubits represent the 6,000 years of the measure of the flesh's rule on earth—the measure of the image. But what about the "span"? This Hebrew word occurs seven times in the Scriptures: once here, once speaking of God measuring the *heavens* with the span (Isa. 40:12), four times in measuring the high priest's breastplate (Exo. 28:16; 39:9), and finally once in Ezekiel (43:13) in measuring the border of the altar of the Millennial Temple.

Seven occurrences, and all except this one measure divine things—heaven, the breastplate of judgment, the altar that is the very center of the worship of the Millennial Age. Are we not forced to the conclusion that the span beyond the six cubits is the millennial period—the highest and last period of the existence of natural flesh—the period of transition *spanning* between man's measured six cubits of rule, and the unmeasured divine expanse beyond? (We shall find this thought reinforced when we come to consider the Stone sinking into the Image's head in this span period.)

Vs. 5 & 6 inform us that Goliath was covered with *brass* armor. It could not be otherwise, for brass stands for the flesh, as *gold* does for the Spirit. We remember Moses' serpent of brass, and that "serpent" and "brass" in Hebrew are from the same root and are almost identical words. Solomon made 300 shields of *gold* for the Temple of God (the Gideon-army of faith), but because faith failed, the Egyptians came and took away these golden shields and Rehoboam tried to conceal the shame of the loss by the pitiful subterfuge of 300 shields of *brass*. Paul exhorts (Eph. 6:16)—

"Above all, take the shield of Faith" (Eph. 6:16).

It must be a golden shield of spiritual faith; a brass shield of faith in the flesh will not do.

Samson's encounter with the Philistine Delilah was in this same locality. The struggle between Samson and Delilah was just as deadly, though in a different way, as David's with Goliath—but there the God-appointed champion of Israel failed, and the Philistine triumphed. *And Samson was bound with "fetters of brass."*

That incident occurred in the valley of Sorek just north of this valley of Elah—the opposite side of the mountain. Whereas Elah means a "mighty tree," Sorek means a "choice vine." God said to Israel, *"I planted thee a noble vine"* ("sorek" in the original).

The vine looms *large* in Samson's life, for he was ordained a Nazarite unto God from his mother's womb. The mark of the Nazarite was uncut hair and total abstinence from the vine. The forbidden vine, of course, in this symbol, is the corruption of the world, headed up in the harlot whose wine deceives all nations.

Samson was deceived, and fell, in the valley of Sorek—the valley of the Vine. And the false woman who had deceived him sold him in shame to her Philistine accomplices.

Returning to Goliath, we see this mighty champion of the flesh defying the armies of God. And Saul and all Israel are terrified. That is the picture up to v. 11. Truly a sad, shameful picture—all in the bondage of terror—not a man who is able to cope with this giant of the flesh—this godless Philistine who insolently challenges and defies them all.

But v. 12 introduces a complete change. Up to this point, the picture of fleshly might has been building up against God's people. V. 12 is a sudden and striking break in the narrative—

"Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah, whose name was Jesse" (v. 12).

Here is the one man (and he but a youth) upon whom all the salvation of terror-stricken Israel depends—a young boy with the fearless courage of faith. And all these brave and experienced men of war let him go forward as their champion to fight the Lord's battle, knowing that victory or defeat for Israel rested solely upon this boy. What a scene!

"That Ephrathite of Bethlehem-Judah." Bethlehem—"The House of Bread"—had no significance in Israel up to this time, except that Rachel (the type of the Old Covenant) died there, and it was there, too, that Boaz (meaning "Lord of Strength") took a faithful Gentile for his bride, who was to be ancestress to both David and Christ. (Likewise *Jerusalem* does not enter the scriptural picture until David's time, except in the brief foreshadowing of its greatness that we get in the Melchizedec vision.)

But now is typically fulfilled Micah's yet unspoken prophecy—

"But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel . . .

"And this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land . . . we shall raise against him (the Assyrian) seven shepherds and eight principal (princes of) men" (vs. 2-5).

"Assyria" is a term applied frequently to the invader of the latter days. In Goliath the Assyrian had typically come, and a shepherd of Bethlehem is needed to destroy him and deliver Israel.

David was a shepherd from Bethlehem, and—strangely enough—he is spoken of as both the *seventh* and the *eighth* son of Jesse. He is called the 7th in the genealogy (1 Chron. 2:15), and 8th here in the history (vs. 12-14). Possibly one son was by a concubine, or for some other reason was excluded from the genealogy.

Seven denotes perfection; eight, a new beginning—the 8th day, a new week—the 8th note, a new octave. Jesus rose the 8th day—the first day of a new week. Circumcision was on the 8th day—a symbol of the complete cutting off of the flesh at the end of the Millennium, the beginning of the 8th 1000 years. Eight were saved in the ark, the greatest type of a new beginning after a complete washing away of the old. So we find the 8th day memorialized in Ezekiel's Temple (43:27), and the entrance of that Temple was by 8 steps (40:31).

PART TWO

"Jesse went among men for an old man in the time of Saul."

Why are we told that? To carry out this same symbolization of *a new beginning*. Paul says (speaking of the Law of Moses)—

*"In that He said, A **new** covenant, He hath made the first old. That which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."*

David, type of a new beginning, comes out of the old when the old is done. Isaac (type of spiritual Israel) but *not* Jacob (type of natural Israel) is spoken of as the "son of his father's old age."

So also both Joseph and Benjamin. Omitting the sons of the concubines, Joseph and Benjamin were *the seventh* and *eighth* sons of Jacob. John the Baptist, too, was called the son of his parents old age—he marked the end of the old dispensation and the beginning of the new.

The three eldest sons of Jesse followed Saul to battle. They were among the fearful who cowered before Goliath. These clearly stand for natural Israel, the elder brethren. We find later that they revile the youth David because they are under the bondage of fear and he is not.

Why are their names given here? This chapter is so obviously and inescapably a symbolic miniature that there must be a significant reason, and we need only to look up their meanings to discover the reason.

Eliab means "God is my Father." This, of course, refers to the origin of Israel, and their special position in God's sight—"Israel is My son, even My firstborn," said God to Pharaoh (Exo. 4:22).

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt" (Hos. 11:1).

Abinadab means "The Father is willing, liberal, gracious." This is the background of all Israel's history—

"All day long (that is, all during their daytime as a nation in God's favor) have I stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom. 10:21).

Shammah means "desolation, astonishment, ruin." This word and its derivatives are used scores of times in speaking of the judicial desolation of Israel for faithlessness, as in Jer. 4:7—

"The lion is come up from his thicket. The destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way. He is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate (shammah)."

Truly the "destroyer of the Gentiles" had entered the land, and they were typically in their present Shammah state, the state they must be in when the David-champion is raised up as their Deliverer. Hosea says of Israel (6:2)—

"Come, and let us return unto the Lord...After two days He will revive us: in the third day (Shammah) He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight."

Then follows that beautiful verse—

"Then shall we know, IF we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning: and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

"His going forth is prepared as the morning." On the third day, "very early in the morning," he arose to life and glory, and in Israel's "third day" their Sun of Righteousness will arise upon them, bringing with him the gentle life-giving rain, made up of the vast multitude of droplets "*whom no man can number*" drawn up into the heavenlies by the Sun's power out of the ocean of nations, purified in the process, and constituting the "*great cloud of witnesses*" that surround him in glory (Rev. 1:7)—

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him."

This combination of Sun and soft, gentle rain will bring forth the manifestation of the *Rainbow of the Everlasting Covenant*, confirmed to Noah at his new beginning after the earth's purifying baptism (Gen. 9:16); manifested to Ezekiel in the cherubim-vision of God-manifestation as Israel's long night began (Eze. 1:28); overarching the throne in the Kingdom picture of Rev. 4; and finally encircling the head of the mighty Rainbowed-Angel who comes to pour out the seven Thunders of final judgment, and declares that "*There shall be time no longer.*"

"In the third—Shammah—desolation—day He will raise us up." *Three* is the number of *resurrection*, regathering, receiving again. In the third year of his righteous reign Jehoshaphat sent *princes and priests* to teach the Law of the Lord in *all the cities of Israel*, to turn them again to the Lord (2 Chr. 17:7).

Hezekiah, after receiving the message of death, was delivered from death and went to the house of the Lord on the third day (2 Kgs. 20:5). Under the Law any who were defiled by contact with *death* had to be purified the third day (Num. 19:12).

Jesus in Gethsemane went away three times and prayed to be delivered from death, praying—

"... with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared ..."

—and was raised up on the third day, just as the earth on the third day of Creation rose up out of the waters in which it had been buried in baptism. The spring awakening of the vegetable creation from its winter of death is the yearly type, reminder, and promise of the resurrection. So we find it was on this same third day of Creation that all plant life sprang into living being. Jesus raised *three* people from the dead.

"David fed his father's sheep at Bethlehem" (v. 15).

We learn how faithful was his care by the incidents of the lion and the bear. It is a striking contrast—David *preserved* his father's *sheep*; Saul *lost* his father's *asses*. Sheep are clean animals. Throughout the Scriptures they symbolize the faithful flock. Asses are unclean, and represent natural, ignorant, fleshly people. The "burial of an ass" was the lowest, most dishonorable form of burial. It is recorded in Job (11:12)—

"Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt."

And of the heathen that Israel doted on, God said: *"Their flesh is as the flesh of asses"*—coarse, carnal, and unclean.

"And the Philistine (Goliath) drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days" (v. 16).

Forty is the period of probation, trial and judgment. Several illustrations will occur to mind—the waters of the flood, Israel in the wilderness, Nineveh's probation, Jesus' temptation, etc. We recall the *forty valleys* of Scripture. Israel was given a final forty years of probation after the crucifixion of the Messiah. Moses' life was divided into *three* periods of exactly *forty* years each—40 years exposed to the honors, advantages and enticements of Egyptian royalty, but he turned his back on the *"treasures of Egypt"* and *"chose to suffer affliction with the people of God"* (Heb. 11:25); after having, at the age of 40, *"supposed that his brethren would have understood how that God by His hand would deliver them,"* he waited 40 years in the wilderness, until it was testified that—

"The man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3).

—then 40 years of labor for a hostile and unthankful people.

The challenge is a *double 40*. Eighty times—morning and evening for 40 days—Goliath casts reproach upon the people of God. They had full opportunity, but not a man in all Israel dared to face him. Compare this with the "mighty men" and mighty deeds of David's reign.

Was it that they feared to face death? Or was it that they feared to take on single-handed the responsibility for the deliverance or servitude of Israel? Were they waiting for the Spirit of God to move some one in the camp? Had Israel's courage and hope fled because they knew God was not with their king?

In all these things we see the similarity with the great antitype. The whole issues of life and death for mankind rested on the success or failure of Christ.

"All we like sheep have gone astray...and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6).

We wonder about Jonathan, who had previously—with his armor-bearer—attacked and defeated a whole garrison of the Philistines, and inspired Israel to faith and victory. We note immediately after David's victory, *"The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."*

So Jonathan was an anxious spectator of these strange events. Jonathan, more than anyone else, fully appreciated the fearless depths of David's faith, for he too was fearless and faithful.

But something had held him back from facing the challenge of the Philistine giant. It may have been some circumstance that would cast no reflection on his courage. Jonathan is to David as the Bride is to Christ, and it is no reflection on the Bride that she is unable to overcome the giant-power alone.

Jesse said to David (vs. 17 & 18)—

"Take this bread, and run to thy brethren, and see how they fare, and take their pledge."

How reminiscent of Joseph, and of Joseph's greater antitype! "Take this bread to thy brethren, and see how they fare."

"Run to them," the father said (v. 17). The matter was urgent—far more urgent indeed than Jesse realized.

"And take their pledge." What does that mean? Whatever the literal meaning may be, we can clearly see its fittingness in the type. Of the time of Jesus' mission, Isaiah said: *"Seal the law among my disciples."* And Jesus' own words come to mind, *"This is my blood of the new covenant."* Truly he "ran to his brethren" to "take their pledge."

David was sent to take his brother's pledge, but it would seem from their antagonistic reception that whatever was meant by the expression did not occur. Likewise Jesus was sent with bread to make a new covenant with his brethren, but they likewise railed on him. Moses and Joseph, similar deliverers of their brethren, received similar treatment.

"And David rose up early in the morning" (v. 20).

Rising up early is a term used in Scripture to denote care, concern and diligence. The Psalms speak often of awakening early to praise God. The thought is to be awake and watching with eager gratitude for the first dawning of the new day.

Each new daybreak is a type and promise of the great dawn of glory to come. Daybreak is the most inspiring and uplifting time of the whole day—a fact most of us completely miss in our artificial mode of life. It is no meaningless detail that it should be, and that it should be recorded, that Jesus rose from the dead *"very early in the morning."*

Jeremiah is the great warning prophet of the period of Israel's casting off, and *eleven* times in his book God declares that He—

"Rose up early and sent prophets.... "

—but Israel would not hear. *It was the eleventh hour for Israel.*

"And David left the sheep with a keeper" (v. 20).

This is the same word translated "watchman" where Isaiah says: *"Watchman, what of the night?"* It means watcher, keeper, preserver, guardian.

Jesus said to Peter (John 21:15-17), *"Feed my sheep."* Just before his conflict with the giant sin-power on behalf of his brethren, he told his disciples: *"What I say to you I say to all, **Watch.**"*

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, to give the household meat in due season?...Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing."

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"And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren" (v. 22).

Because the battle had been put in array (v. 21), David could not take what he had brought direct to his brethren, for they would be at the battle front. No actual fighting had begun, but the armies were lined up against each other. *So David would actually seem to appear before his brethren empty handed*, and they misconstrued his motives and purpose in coming.

Like David, when Jesus came to his brethren he found them in combat and conflict with the enemy—not only externally with the Romans (which they understood and keenly felt, but also inwardly, with the power of sin, which they neither understood nor felt).

To all appearances he too brought nothing with him to them. They expected a Messiah to come in royal power. We are told he emptied himself and made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant.

What a pleasant, friendly greeting David receives from his eldest brother—

"I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart" (v. 28).

What volumes this tells us of Eliab's character, and the relation between David and his brethren! The word here translated "naughtiness" is quite a strong word—not playful in any way. Elsewhere it is translated "wickedness" and "evil."

To appreciate the significance of this greeting we must remember that David was already divinely anointed heir to the kingdom. And his brethren knew this, for they had witnessed his anointing (by a prophet that all the nation accepted) when he was chosen before them (as the Jews had witnessed the Spirit-anointing of Jesus at his baptism by John). But it would appear obvious that David's brethren had no faith either in him or his anointing.

PART THREE

"And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath"—1 Sam. 17:23.

—and all the men bravely drawn up for battle draw back and cower before him. (We may find ourselves speaking of their fear a little disparagingly, but perhaps we should ask ourselves how we would have acted in the circumstances.)

But the boy David could not understand the action of the men of Israel—

"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (v. 26).

—that is, why doesn't someone go out and destroy him and remove the reproach from Israel? And the men he spoke to told him that Saul had offered his daughter and great riches and freedom for his father's house, to any who would face Goliath (v. 25)—yet with all these inducements no man had come forward.

The conqueror of Goliath should be given the king's daughter. Psalm 45 declares—

"The king's daughter is all glorious within ... "

—note particularly the *"within"* . . .

"... her clothing is of wrought gold" (v. 13).

"Wrought gold" is faith shapen under the hammer of affliction. Now, who is the *"king's daughter"*? This whole psalm, we find, is a beautiful song concerning Christ and his Bride. It contains the tribute to Christ that Paul quotes in Heb. 1:9—

"Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

The conqueror of Goliath should also receive *"great riches."* Paul's use of this word in his various delineations of the glories of the Truth adds great depth to its meaning. He speaks of—

"The riches of God's goodness" (Rom. 2:4);

"The riches of His wisdom and knowledge" (Rom. 11:33);

"The riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7);

"The riches of His inheritance" (Eph. 1:18)

—and, above all

"The unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8).

* * *

"... and make his father's house free in Israel."

That was the great purpose of Christ's battle with the enemy of his brethren—to make his father's house free in Israel.

"Whosoever committeth sin is the slave of sin . . . If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:34-36).

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"And Eliab's anger was kindled against David" (v. 28).

Why? The most natural cause in the world—*fear and jealousy*. He, the eldest, a man of war, was afraid of Goliath. David, the youngest, a boy, was not. David's fearless words reflected on him, the elder brother, and being a natural man he reacted with anger and blustering—calling David names and attempting to humiliate and belittle him. Eliab said—

"With whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?"

The "*few sheep in the wilderness*" have always been a matter of scorn and reproach to the faithful. So few can resist the argument of numbers that the fewness of the "little flock" has always been a stumbling-block.

We expect this from the world, but it is sad and discouraging to see this same outlook in the brotherhood—"We are the majority, and so that proves we must be right. You are just a 'fragment,' so you must be wrong."

But the sheep have always been few—and *they have always been in the wilderness*—outcast and despised. And it has always been Christ's humble work to care for his Father's few sheep in the wilderness—the poor and downcast of the world, not the rich and well-favored.

But the time is coming for the humble shepherd to manifest himself as the mighty deliverer. To the "few sheep" he says—

"Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12:32).

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The words of this shepherd boy come to the ears of the distraught king, and he is so desperate that he sends for him. And the poor shepherd boy says to the mighty king—

"Do not be afraid! I will destroy this Philistine."

Saul reasons according to the thinking of the flesh—obsessed with Goliath's armor and might—

"Thou art not able to do it" (v. 33).

Why not, if God is with him? What difference do Goliath's size and natural advantages make? There again is that same fatal human obsession with sheer weight and bulk and the outward appearance of strength. David replies—

"I kept my father's sheep, and there came out a lion and a bear . . . And I slew both . . . and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them . . . the Lord will deliver me" (vs. 34-37).

A lion and a bear. What does that make us think of? What will Christ first encounter when he first comes to deliver his sheep?

Up to the present we have been reminded mostly of Christ's *first* advent to conquer the great enemy SIN, which held all men in fear and bondage of death. As we proceed, however, we shall find our minds directed more to the circumstances of his *second* coming (though not to the exclusion of the first).

When does Christ slay a lion and a bear? Just before he issues his challenge to the great image of the Kingdom of Men. In fact, like David, it forms the very background and stepping-stone of that challenge.

For first he subdues the Kings of the South and the North—Britain and Russia—the *Lion and the Bear*—the latterday Egypt and Assyria, as they squabble over his land—the pasture of his sheep. Then the challenge goes to the kingdoms of the world—

"Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7).

* * *

"As a roaring lion and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over poor people" (Prov. 28:15).

The scripturally-trained eye sees that this is the character of all the sin-powers of the earth, of which the Kings of the North and the South are the latterday heads and representatives.

Picture Palestine—God's Own pasture—the ravaged battle-ground between rival world-powers that Korea has been, and we can readily visualize the lion and the bear among the sheep.

* * *

David's faith was entirely in God—not in any way in himself. Therefore he had no doubts about the outcome, for *God cannot fail*. This is the frame of mind we must develop, if we are to be among the chosen few.

God cannot fail, and He has specifically promised "*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*" in those that truly love Him.

"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

His workmanship, and GOD CANNOT FAIL. Do we grasp the tremendous and revolutionary significance of this passage? **Whether or not we do is the key to life or death.**

"Filled with all the fullness of God . . . according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:19-20).

This is what we must sell all to obtain. This is what we must seek agonizingly and unceasingly, as for hid treasures, until we find it—for **this is life, all else is death.**

"ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US."

* * *

"And Saul armed David with his armor, and put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail" (v. 38).

Saul attempts to arm David as Goliath is armed. That is simply fighting flesh with flesh. A "helmet of brass" (flesh) is the direct opposite of the golden helmet of salvation on which David relied.

The children of the Spirit are no match for the children of the flesh if they attempt to meet them on their own ground with their own weapons. Here the children of the flesh have all the advantage of numbers, experience, prestige and learning. Here is where the churches of the world—afraid of appearing unlearned, afraid of being left behind, afraid of being called "obscurantists"—have given away their scriptural foundation and undermined their only bulwark by meeting the evolutionists halfway in their speculations.

The children of the Spirit must find higher ground for the conflict. *They must NOT be drawn down into the Philistine plain*, but must stay up in the Israel hills. Their defense must lie in holiness and faith, and the consequent indwelling, invincible power and presence of the living God—

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord . . . he that hath clean hands and a pure heart" (Psa. 24:3-4).

If we can reach this point, we are unconquerable. If the children of God haven't these things, they are no match for the wisdom of the world. It is only as instruments of God's use that they succeed against all the advantages that are on the world's side.

So David wisely put off all Saul's brazen armor. He did not even retain the helmet as protection for his head—the most vital part, but went forth in his simple shepherd's garb, with no natural protection at all. He realized it was all or nothing. *Part* of the armor would have been worse than none—it would have impeded his movements and chances for success without giving him any guarantee of adequate protection.

This is a problem and decision we must all face. There is no use putting on *half* the world's armor. If we want to rely on the world's way of protection, let us go all the way. But if we want to rely on God, let us go all the way in *that* direction. Sad indeed is the man who grasps at both and gains neither!

* * *

"And he took his staff in his hand" (v. 40).

—his shepherd's staff. We cannot help wondering why David carried his staff into this encounter. What could he possibly have thought of doing with it against this great, heavily-armed giant? *Naturally* speaking, this is one of the most difficult things to understand, but as to the *spiritual* significance we are guided by the 23rd Psalm. Truly David was here walking into the "*valley of the shadow of death*," and he declares—

"I will fear no evil: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

The staff is clearly the sustaining and comforting presence of God. And surely he needed comfort! We remember that David wrote this Psalm, and that it expresses his thoughts and feelings (while, of course, being a foreshadowing of the mind of Christ).

Therefore the taking of the staff—apparently from a natural point of view so unreasonable—seems to give us a marvelous insight into his frame of mind as he went down to meet the mighty Philistine champion in this valley of the shadow of death, as the army of men and the people of God watched in tense silence.

PART FOUR

"And he chose five smooth stones out of the brook"—1 Sam. 17:40

"Five smooth stones." First, why five? Wasn't one enough?—he actually only used one. David said to Goliath (v. 45)—

"Thou comest to me with a sword, and a spear, and a shield: but I come to thee in the Name of Yahweh of hosts."

—the Memorial, Covenant Name David's sling and five stones represent the power of the Name of Yahweh set against Goliath's spear and sword. Paul, speaking of the armor of faith (Eph. 6:17) says the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God.

David has no sword—its place being taken by the stones of his sling—so these in his case stood for the Word of God. They could not represent anything else; the man of God has no other weapon.

What was the Word of God in David's day? In what way was five connected significantly with it? The answer is obvious—at that time the Word of God was the Book of the Law—the *five* books of Moses—the five smooth stones out of the brook of living waters—"Written and engraven on stones," as Paul testified (2 Cor. 3:7). Of Jesus it was foretold, in the Psalm (110) that is the keystone of Paul's argument concerning Christ's Melchizedek-greatness—the Psalm that speaks of his enemies becoming his footstool:

"He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the heads . . . He shall fill the places with dead bodies: he shall wound the heads over many countries."

The Psalms tell us of what brook he drank—

"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste!" (119:103).

"Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures; for with Thee is the fountain of life" (36:8-9).

"As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God" (42:1).

And Proverbs 18:4 (RV)—

"The wellspring of wisdom is as a flowing brook."

The five books of Moses are the entrance-way to the Old Testament, as the four Gospels are to the New. So we find that the *outer* veil of the Sanctuary entrance was upheld by *five* pillars with brass sockets (Exo. 26:36), while the *inner* veil of the Most Holy Place was upheld by *four* pillars with silver sockets (v. 32).

The principal subject of the five books of Moses is *sacrifice*—all the types and ordinances of *typical* sacrifice (just as the four Gospels portray all the elements of the *true*, living sacrifice and its great central fulfillment and example). From Eden forward—through Noah's offering and the consequent confirmation of the everlasting covenant—Abraham and Isaac on Mt. Moriah—all the sacrifices of the Law—everything centers in the *"Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."* The *first* of David's 5 stones struck the Sin-Image in the head and heralded victory—directing our thoughts to *Genesis* and the *beginning* of the promise of the seed to smite the serpent's head.

Now the *sling*—the weapon used to destroy the adversary—required a death for its preparation. Like the garments that God prepared to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness, it was made of the skin of a slain animal.

It was the sling that gave all the power to the stone in fulfilling its mission. By just throwing the stone himself, David could (naturally speaking) have accomplished nothing. But the sling developed a tremendous striking power—almost incredible accomplishments as to force and accuracy of aim are related of ancient slingers. (We realize that the power and aim in this case, of course, was supplied and directed by God, even as it was in the great antitypical sling that cut down the mighty enemy Sin.)

But there seems more to the number five than just a linking with the Law of God. When we think of *stones*, we think of—

The stone which the builders (the elder brethren) rejected, and which became the head cornerstone (Psa. 118:22); and

The stone cut out of the mountain without hands that smote and destroyed the image (Dan. 2:34).

Here is a smiting that is strangely parallel to this latter verse—though with one significant difference: one stone smites the Goliath-image on the *head*, one strikes it on the *feet*. But the result is the same—the Image is destroyed, and Israel is delivered.

The Nebuchadnezzar image represents the accumulated history of the *four* world empires that collectively make up the Kingdom of Men. David's selection of five stones relates his victory, therefore, to that of the *fifth*, Stone Kingdom that filled the earth.

We note that they were *"smooth"* stones—nothing about them sharp, coarse, irregular or rough. *But they were not made smooth by the artifice of man.* They were "cut out without hands." They were made smooth by the

grinding and polishing action of running water. Where the term "*running*" water is used in the regulations of the Law (as Lev. 15:5, 6, 50-52), the original is *chai*—"living." The fitness of the symbol is very striking.

It may be noted too that—contrary to possible first impressions—a *smooth* stone accomplishes the slinger's purpose much better than a rough one. It leaves the sling more freely and accurately, and flies truer in its course. Surely an impressive lesson here!

"And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth" (v. 42).

It seemed an impossibly unequal contest, and the Philistine champion was angrily insulted that Israel should send out such an opponent to make a fool of him. How God delights to humble the pride of the pompous and the mighty, in order to teach His eternal lessons! How often does He in His wisdom use *weakness and fewness* to confound great numbers and apparent strength!

And how often a faithful young boy is the honored instrument of His purpose, used to abase the mature in power and wisdom.

Joseph, Samuel, David, Joash, Jeremiah, Daniel, Jesus—seven who were hardly more than children when the burden of the divine purpose began to rest upon them in their generation.

What purer faith is there than the faith of a simple child? This priceless characteristic is so often lost in the hardened adult—

"Unless you turn, and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3 RSV).

* * *

"And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?"

Knowing how the term "dog" is used in Scripture—to represent those of the world outside the divine covenant—we see far more in this statement than Goliath meant. In David's sight—and in God's sight—that is *exactly what he was!*

We see this in David's word to Saul (vs. 34-37). If God had helped him defend his father's sheep against a lion and a bear—great and noble animals, as animals went—then he could surely with the same help defend God's sheep against this uncircumcised barbarian, this "*dog*" which was frightening them with its blasphemous barking. There is no stronger term of contempt in the Scriptures than "dog." We get the feeling of the word more in the current use of the word "cur."

The crucifixion Psalm (22), which antitypically parallels this encounter, makes clear the meaning of "dog" (vs. 16-20 RSV)—

"Dogs are round about me; a company of evil doers encircle me ... Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!"

And in the last chapter of the Bible we are told, as the final consummation of the age-long struggle—"OUTSIDE are the dogs . . . murderers. . . idolaters" (v. 15 RSV).

* * *

David's reply to Goliath shows a faith that did not contain the slightest shade of doubt or fear—

"I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth—that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel!" (v. 46).

"Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). If the cause is right, there can be no thought of failure, regardless of apparent odds or appearances. The earth *must* be taught that there is a God in Israel, and this can only be done by works of faith—for works of faith are works of God. He works by and through the faith of the faithful.

As we trace the symbolism of these events, let us compare the statement of David to Goliath with the prophetic wording concerning the destruction of Gog. The similarity is striking—

"Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble . . . that ye may eat flesh and drink blood."

"And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel" (Eze. 39:17, 7).

And again, of the same event in Rev. 19:17—

"And he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come ... and eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains ..."

* * *

*"And David **hasted**, and **ran** to meet the Philistine"* (v. 48).

—another impressive evidence of the entire absence of fear or doubt, and an indication of eagerness to do God's work.

There are many interesting and instructive cases of *running* in Scripture. Who is the first man spoken of as running, and for what purpose? It was Abraham, the *"father of the faithful."*

And the incident gives evidence of his robust eagerness to serve that was among the things that pleased God about him. When he saw strangers (that later turned out to be angels), he *ran* to offer them his hospitality (Gen. 18:2). His heart was in it—he was alive—nothing of the abomination of insipid lukewarmness. And when he had greeted them warmly and prevailed upon them to tarry and eat, he *"hastened"* to the tent to tell Sarah to prepare (v.6), and then he *"ran"* to the herd to fetch a calf, and *"hasted"* to dress it (v.7). Then as they ate he stood by them, waiting to be of further service (v.8).

Truly an inspiring example of zealous activity! *Abraham was at this time 100 years old*—"old and well stricken in age," as he is described in the previous chapter.

To walk in the way of God is duty. To *run* in that way with joyful, tireless eagerness is pleasure. In David's beautiful picture of the Sun of Righteousness (Psa. 19), he says—

"He is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race."

In the Song of Songs, the Bride exclaims (1:4)—

"Draw me; we will run after thee, and be glad and rejoice in thee."

But sometimes, though the spirit is eager and willing, the flesh is weak, and running is not the pleasure we would like it to be. Then let us remember the inspiring promise (Isa. 40:31)—

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

It is they who are portrayed in Ezekiel's glorious vision of the Four Living Creatures—

*"They **ran** and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning ... whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went."*

PART FIVE

"The stone sank into Goliath's forehead"—1 Sam. 17:49.

Here is typically fulfilled the Edenic promise that the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head. The antitype stretches from Calvary to the destruction of Nebuchadnezzar's image. Smiting the *feet* of Nebuchadnezzar's image indicates the time and circumstance of the smiting. Smiting the *head* in the case of Goliath indicates (as in the Eden promise) the mortal, final nature of the blow.

The location of the blow teaches us that, to illustrate another aspect, the application of the time symbol is reversed—Goliath's *head* represents the same latter-day period as the Image's *feet*. Perhaps one thing this indicates is that in the time of the end human knowledge will have reached its apex, as Daniel was caused to prophesy (Dan. 12:4). Looking at the race in the figure of a man, the present is the period of its greatest mental accomplishment—the forehead period. It is very fitting that the Little Stone should strike it there—at the height and culmination of its pride.

Goliath was six cubits—and a span. The striking down of the image is at the end of the 6000 years of human rule—the transitional *span* period, when, like the original head-kingdom of Babylon, it was "*measured and found wanting*" (Dan. 5) and therefore given into the hand of Cyrus who proclaimed the return of the captives and the rebuilding of the Holy City.

"And he fell on his face to the earth" (v. 49).

To fall on one's face is an indication of the humblest subjection and obeisance. Such will be the position of all who constitute the kingdom of men when the Little Stone's work is done.

Christ destroys the kingdom of men, but he does not destroy all the individual people that make up that kingdom. So we can see a little more in this stone *sinking into the forehead*. The forehead represents the mind. To be sealed in the forehead (as in Rev. 7:3) is to have something impressed on the mind. So the Little Stone impresses itself into the minds of all people—

"The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord."

"All shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest."

—and this knowledge and recognition will bring them to the position of humility and worship: they will "fall upon their faces to the earth."

"But there was no sword in David's hand" (v. 50).

He had no military weapon. His sling was just that of a shepherd—just designed to keep prowling animals from his sheep. He faced Goliath with just the equipment of his natural, peaceful occupation. Two principles are here emphasized—one applying to the first advent of Jesus and our present dispensation; the other to the future manifestation of divine, irresistible power.

"The weapons of **our** warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:4).

It was David's *faith*, rather than his skill or strength, that slew Goliath. Indeed, for this combat he deliberately *refused* the armor and weapons of warfare, realizing that his only hope lay in complete dependence on the help of God. As he himself said:

"The battle is the Lord's . . . God will deliver thee to me" (vs. 46-47).

It is the lesson of Gideon, reiterated by Jonathan (1 Sam. 14:6)—

"There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."

But the cryptic remark about there being no sword in David's hand applies also to the day of Christ's power (Zech. 4:6-7)—

"Who art thou, O great mountain? . . ."

—"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?"—

"Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain . . not by might, nor by power ..."

—that is, not *by human* might or power—

"...but by MY Spirit, saith Yahweh of Hosts."

"There was no sword in David's band."

* * *

"Therefore David ran . . . and drew out Goliath's sword . . and cut off his head therewith" (v. 51).

In the destruction of the great day of God's wrath—

"Every man's sword shall be against his brother" (Eze. 38:21).

The armies of the great image are cut up by their own weapons. Then shall be fulfilled the warning and the promise—

"All that take the sword shall perish with the sword . . . Here is the patience and faith of the saints" (Matt. 26:52; Rev. 13:10).

* * *

"And David brought the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem."

Heads stand for rulerships. This is the obvious and natural meaning—often used in the Scriptures. So David's act symbolized the cutting off of all ruling power, and transferring all the world's headship and authority to Jerusalem—"city of the Great King."

"But he put Goliath's armor in his tent" (v. 54).

This is recorded in *contrast* to the taking of the head to Jerusalem. It surely must have some significance: what is the point in it? Perhaps the connection of thought in Isa. 2 gives the answer:

"Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem . . . Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:3-4).

Here the rulership being centered in Jerusalem is connected with the worldwide abolition of war. Throughout the Bible, *"tent"* signifies a passing, impermanent condition of things—something temporary. Paul points out in Heb. 11 that because of faith Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelt all their lives in tents, thus testifying that they were but pilgrims in a passing state of affairs.

The Rechabites in Jeremiah's day dwelt in tents instead of houses like the rest of Israel (Jer. 35:7) as a testimony to their separation and pilgrimage among the corruptions of Israel; as a witness that the present was not permanent—that it was not the promised eternal Rest of God.

So to put the armor and weapons of war in the tent, in contrast to taking the head to Jerusalem, shows that they represent a passing state of affairs—that war must pass away and be superseded by eternal peace—

"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord" (Isa. 11:9).

The final verses of this chapter (1 Sam. 17) have occasioned difficulty to some—the fact that Saul does not appear to recognize David, though David had formerly been with him, and had been accustomed to play before him to soothe his troubled spirit.

But there are several possible factors that could explain these circumstances. A year or two (perhaps more) could have elapsed between. This would be most likely the time that David would be changing from a beardless youth to a full grown, bearded young man. Moreover, Saul's mental condition was subject to violent changes, involving recognition.

Possibly, too, the spirit of Saul's enquiry may have been: "Who is this person who has such fearless faith, and through whom God has wrought such wonderful deliverance?"—after the spirit of the disciples' awed exclamation (Matt. 8:27):

"What manner of man is this, even the wind and sea obey him!"

Whatever may be the solution of this point, this closing incident forms a striking and fitting conclusion to a chapter of great figurative significance. David comes before the rulers of Israel after having wrought deliverance in the face of a menace that had terrified the nation. Saul the ruler says to Abner the captain of the host: "Who is this?" Do not our minds turn irresistibly to a similar event?—

"Who is this that cometh from Edom?" (Isa. 63:1).

—that comes from the slaughter of the oppressors of Israel.

"What are these wounds in thine hands? . . . Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6).

David had previously appeared before Saul in the position of a healer whose ministrations were designed to soothe Saul's mind and banish his evil spirit. On later occasions we know that in these fits of evil, Saul more than once attempted to slay David who was trying to heal and help him. It is quite possible, therefore, that Saul had made similar attempts before, for we know that something had caused David to leave Saul, though Saul's malady and need for David's help continued. How fitting, then, is this final scene in which the mighty

deliverer reveals himself as the one who had previously been among them as the gentle healer from Bethlehem!

"And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1 Sam. 18:1).

Jonathan—the faithful, unselfish, spiritually-minded member of Saul's household—his soul was knit to the soul of David. His love for David was greater than the love of women (2 Samuel, 1:26).

This spiritual union of Jonathan and David, following David's great labor of deliverance—*the most striking instance of mutual love in Scripture*—is it not typical of the joyous marriage supper of the Lamb? *"The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David."*

"Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul" (1 Sam. 18:3).

We have been called out of the perishing world to be a party to a love of which this—however wonderful—is but a shadowy type. There is no power in the world like the ennobling, transforming love of God—

"God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

Let us therefore draw near to God with a pure heart—eager to receive, and absorb, and deeply enjoy the full measure of the power of divine love.

"For the things which are seen are temporal: But the things that are not seen are eternal."

(Taken from "Be Ye Transformed" Volume 3 pages 39-63 by Bro. G. Growcott)