

PROPHETS & JUDGES

IN THE PROMISED LAND

“A student may go through all the grades of the schools and colleges of today. He may devote all his powers to acquiring knowledge. But unless he has a knowledge of God, unless he obeys the laws that govern his being, he will destroy himself. By wrong habits he loses his power of self-appreciation. He loses self-control. He cannot reason correctly about matters that concern him most closely. He is reckless and irrational in his treatment of mind and body. . . . He is ruined for this life and for the life to come. By acquiring earthly knowledge he thought to gain a treasure, but by laying his Bible aside he sacrificed a treasure worth everything else.” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 108, 109)

WEEK 20 - DAVID & GOLIATH

I. The Anointing of David

1. When Samuel saw Jesse’s sons, who did Samuel think would be chosen, and why? When God saw what Samuel was thinking, what did He tell Samuel?

2. What lesson should we learn from Samuel's mistake with Eliab?

3. How did David change after he was anointed to be king, and how did he stay the same?

II. The Valor and Humility of David

1. Saul had been rejected by God because of his disobedience. Instead of repenting and confessing his sin, what did Saul think and feel?

2. What did David learn from his time playing his harp for Saul?

3. How did David feel when he heard Goliath boasting, and saw that all Israel was afraid of him and would do nothing?

III. The Slaying of Goliath

1. What kind of armor did Goliath have?

2. What did David have?

3. In rage, Goliath burst forth a torrent of words that were calculated to terrify and overwhelm the youth, David. What effect did they have on him?

4. What was David's response to Goliath's insults and challenge?

The Anointing of David**June 8, 1888**

Six miles south of Jerusalem, “the city of the great King,” was Bethlehem, where David was born more than a thousand years before the infant Jesus was cradled in the manger, and worshipped by the wise men from the East. Centuries before the advent of the Saviour of the world, David, in the freshness of boyhood, had kept watch of his flocks as they grazed on the open fields of Bethlehem. The simple shepherd boy sang the songs of his own composing, and the music of his harp made a sweet accompaniment to the melody of his fresh young voice. The Lord had chosen David, and had ordered his life that he might have an opportunity to train his voice, and cultivate his talent for music and poetry. The Lord was preparing him in his solitary life with his flocks, for the work he designed to commit to his trust in afteryears. {1.1}

While David was thus living in the retirement of his humble shepherd’s life, the Lord God was speaking about him to the prophet Samuel. “And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. . . . Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show thee what thou shalt do; and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee. And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.” The elders accepted an invitation to the sacred feast, and Samuel called them to the sacrifice, and sanctified Jesse and his sons. The altar was built, and the sacrifice was ready. All the household of Jesse were present, with the exception of David, the youngest son, who had been left to guard the sheep, for it was not safe to leave the flocks unprotected. {1.2}

When the sacrifice was ended, Samuel commenced his prophetic scrutiny of the noble-appearing sons of Jesse. Eliab was the eldest, and more nearly resembled Saul for stature and beauty than the others. His comely features and finely developed form attracted the attention of the prophet. As he looked upon his princely bearing, he thought, This is indeed the man whom God has chosen as successor to Saul, and he waited for the divine sanction that he might anoint him. But Jehovah did not look upon the outward appearance. The Lord’s word to Samuel was, “Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh on the heart.” {1.3}

What a lesson was given in these words, not only to the prophet, but to the men and women of every generation. No outward beauty of appearance can recommend the soul to God. The wisdom and excellence revealed in the character and deportment, express the true beauty of the man; and it is the inner worth of the heart that determines our acceptance with the Lord of hosts. How deeply should we feel this great and solemn truth in the judgment of ourselves and others. We may learn from the mistake of Samuel, how vain is the estimation that rests on the beauty of the face or the nobility of the stature. We may

see how incapable is man's wisdom of understanding the secrets of the heart, or of comprehending the counsels of God without special enlightenment from Heaven. The thoughts and ways of God in relation to his creatures are above our finite minds; but we may be assured that his children will be brought to fill the very place for which they are qualified, and will be enabled to accomplish the very work committed to their hands if they will submit their wills to God, that his beneficent plans may not be frustrated by the perversity of man. Man should stand back and let the Lord do with his own as it seems good, according to his infinite wisdom and mercy. ^[1.4]

Eliab passed from the inspection of Samuel, and the six brothers who were in attendance at the service, followed in succession to be observed by the prophet, while all present beheld the scene with the deepest interest; but the Lord did not signify his choice of any of the seven sons of Jesse who stood before the man of God. With painful suspense Samuel had looked upon the last of the young men; the prophet was perplexed and bewildered. Turning to Jesse he inquired, "Are here all thy children?" and he answered, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep." Samuel was relieved at once, for he knew that it was one of the sons of Jesse that had been selected by the Lord as the successor of Saul. In decided tones he commanded, "Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither." ^[1.5]

The lonely shepherd on the hills of Bethlehem was startled by the hasty summons of the messenger who announced that the prophet had come to his father's house, and had sent for him. With surprise he questioned the reason that the prophet and judge of Israel should desire to see him; but without delay, he hastened to the altar. "Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." As Samuel beheld with pleasure the handsome, manly, modest shepherd boy, the voice of the Lord spoke to him, saying, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." The prophet had accomplished his appointed work, and with a relieved heart he returned to Ramah. ^[1.6]

The great honor conferred upon David did not serve to elate him. As humble and modest as before his anointing, the shepherd boy went back to the hills of Bethlehem, and watched and guarded his flocks as tenderly as ever. But with new inspiration he composed his melodies, and played upon his harp. Before him spread a landscape of rich and varied beauty. The vines, with their clustering fruit, brightened in the sunshine. The forest trees, with their green foliage, swayed in the breeze. He beheld the bright luminary of day flooding the heavens with light, coming forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. The bold summits of the hills reached toward the sky, and in the far-away distance rose the barren cliffs, and the blue heavens garnished by day with the splendid glory of the sun, and by night with the silvery radiance of the stars. And beyond was God. He could not see him, but his works were full of his praise, and daily revelations of the character and majesty of his Creator filled the young poet's heart with adoration and rejoicing. In contempla-

tion of God and his works, the faculties of David's heart and mind were enlarging and strengthening for the work of his after-life. {1.7}

The light of day, gilding forest and mountain, meadow and stream, carried the mind up to behold the Deity, the Father of lights, the Author of every good and perfect gift. What an enlargement of mind such contemplations brought to the simple shepherd. He was daily coming into a more intimate communion with God. His mind was constantly penetrating into new depths, for fresh themes to inspire his song, and to wake the music of his harp. He poured out the rich melody of his voice upon the air, and it echoed from the hills as if responsive to the rejoicing of the angels' songs in Heaven. {1.8}

David, in the beauty and might of his young manhood, was taking a high position with the noblest of the earth. His talents, as precious gifts from God, were employed to extol the glory of the divine Giver. His opportunities of contemplation and meditation served to enrich him with that wisdom and piety that made him beloved of God and angels. As he contemplated the perfections of his Creator, richer discoveries of God opened before his soul. As his admiration increased more and more, his heart thrilled with more fervent adoration and ecstasy. As obscure thoughts were illuminated, as difficulties were made plain, as contradictions were reconciled, as perplexities were harmonized, fresh songs of melody and praise were offered before God. Each ray of new light brought forth fresh bursts of rapture, and sweeter anthems of devotion, to the glory of God and the Redeemer. The love that moved him, the sorrows which beset him, the triumphs that attended him, were all themes for his active thought, and, as he beheld the love of God in all the providences of his life, his heart beat with more fervent adoration and gratitude, his voice rang out in a richer melody, his harp was swept with more exultant joy; and the shepherd boy proceeded from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge; for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him. {1.9}

The Valor and Humility of David

August 3, 1888

After the rejection of Saul as king of Israel, David was anointed by the prophet as the future ruler of the people of God. But although he was aware of the high position which he was to occupy, he continued his employment as a simple shepherd, content to await the development of the Lord's plans in his own appointed time and way. {2.1}

When King Saul realized that he had been rejected of God, and when he felt the force of the words of denunciation that had been addressed to him by the prophet, he was filled with bitter rebellion and despair. His health was affected by the mental worry in which he indulged, and at times he was almost insane with the thought of coming disaster to himself and his household. His counselors advised him to seek for the services of a skillful musician, in the hope that the soothing notes of a sweet instrument might calm his troubled spirit, and turn his thoughts away from his grief. {2.2}

In the providence of God, David, as a skillful performer upon the harp, was brought before the king. The shepherd boy was employed to play before the ruler

of Israel, and, if possible, to charm away the brooding melancholy which had settled, like a dark cloud, over the mind of Saul. The king was ever occupied in anticipating the ruin that had been brought upon his house by his own course of disobedience and rebellion. It was not true repentance that had bowed the proud head of Saul. He had no perception of the offensive character of his sin in the sight of God, and he did not arouse to reform his life and character. His heart was not humbled because he had disregarded the express injunctions and commands of the Ruler of the universe; therefore he did not return to his allegiance to the Head of all kingdoms, but brooded over what he thought was the injustice of God in depriving him of the throne of Israel, and in taking the succession to its privileges away from his posterity. He felt that the valor which he had displayed in encountering his enemies, should offset his sin of disobedience. He did not accept with meekness the chastisement of God; but his proud spirit became desperate, until he was on the verge of losing his reason. [2.3]

David came before Saul, and played with all the skill that his long practice had given him; and his lofty and Heaven-inspired strains had the desired effect. The evil spirit seemed to be driven away, and the king was restored to his usual calmness. As David stood, for the first time, in the presence of Saul, there were many thoughts that filled the mind of the young musician, and served to fasten this scene upon his memory with an indelible impression. When his services were not required at the court of Saul, David returned to his flocks on the hills, and continued to maintain his simplicity of spirit and demeanor. Whenever it was necessary, he was recalled to minister before the king, to soothe the mind of the troubled monarch till the evil spirit departed from him. But although Saul expressed the greatest delight in David and his music, the young shepherd went from the king's house to the fields and hills of his pasture, with a sense of relief and gladness, to care for his flocks with a tender and faithful care. [2.4]

David was growing in favor with God and man. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he now set his heart more thoroughly to do the will of God than ever before. He had new themes for thought. He had been in the court of the king, and had seen the responsibilities of royalty. He had discovered some of the temptations that beset the soul of Saul, and had found out some of the mysteries in the character and dealing of Israel's first king. He had seen the glory of royalty shadowed with a dark cloud of sorrow, and he knew that the household of Saul in their private life were far from happy. All these things served to bring serious thoughts to him who had been anointed to be king over Israel. While he was absorbed in deep meditation, and harassed by thoughts of anxiety, he turned to his harp, and called forth strains that elevated his mind to the Author of every good, and the dark clouds which seemed to arise in the horizon of the future were dispelled and dispersed. [2.5]

On one occasion, as the evening shadows gathered, and he laid aside his harp, he saw a dark form moving stealthily upon his flock. It was a bear, fierce with hunger, that sprang upon the sheep of his care; but David did not flee for his life. He felt that it was the very hour when his charges needed his protection. He lifted his heart to God in prayer for wisdom and help, that he might do his duty

in this time of peril. With his strong arm he laid the bear in death at his feet. At another time he discovered a lion with a bleeding lamb between his jaws. Without hesitation the youthful shepherd engaged in a desperate encounter. His arm, nerved by the living God, forced the beast to release its bleeding victim, and as it turned, mad with disappointment, upon David, he buried his hand in its mane and killed the fierce invader. His experience in these matters proved the heart of David, and developed in him courage, and fortitude, and faith. God was teaching David lessons of trust. As Moses was trained for his work, so the Lord was fitting the son of Jesse to become the leader and guide of his chosen people. In his watch-care for his flocks, he was gaining an appreciation of the care that the great Shepherd has for the sheep of his pasture. [2.6]

When war was declared between Israel and the Philistines, three of the sons of Jesse went to follow Saul in the army of Israel; but David remained at home. On one occasion his father sent him with a message to visit the camp of Saul, and to learn whether or not his elder brothers were still in safety and health. Jesse sent with his son a present to his absent ones, which was to be divided among their companions in the camp. [2.7]

As David drew near to the army, he heard the sound of commotion, as if an engagement was about to begin. He felt his spirit stirred within him, and he hastened on his way. And "the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle." Israel and the Philistines were drawn up in array, army against army. David ran unto the army, and came and saluted his brothers. While he was talking with them, Goliath, the bold champion of the Philistines, came forth, and with insulting language, defied Israel, and challenged them to provide a man from their ranks who would meet him in single combat. He repeated his blasphemous challenge, and David heard him, and when he saw that all Israel was afraid of him, and would do nothing, and that his defiance was hurled in their faces day after day, without arousing anyone to go forth and silence the voice of the boaster, his spirit was stirred within him. He was fired with zeal to preserve the honor of the living God, and the credit of the children of Israel. He could not endure to see this bold idolater permitted day after day to mock the chosen of the Lord, without making an effort to overthrow his proud vaunting and derision. [2.8]

The armies of Israel were becoming depressed and discouraged. They said one to another, "Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up; and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel." To be sure that he understood them, David inquired of the men that stood nearest to him, "What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" [2.9]

Eliab, David's eldest brother, when he heard these words, knew well the feelings that were stirring the young man's soul. Even as a shepherd of the flocks of Bethlehem he had manifested daring, courage, and strength not easily accounted for; and the mysterious visit of Samuel to their father's house, and his silent

departure, had awakened in the minds of the brothers suspicions of the real object of his visit. David was not regarded with the respect and love due to his integrity and brotherly tenderness. He was looked upon as merely a stripling shepherd, and now the question which he asked was regarded by Eliab as a reflection cast upon his own cowardice in not silencing the giant of the Philistines. In passionate language the elder brother exclaimed, "Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." The answer of David was decided and respectful: "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" ^[2.10]

Someone carried the words of David to the king, and the youth was sent for, to appear in the royal presence. Saul listened with astonishment to the words of the shepherd, as he said, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." Saul strove earnestly to turn David from his purpose, saying, "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he is a man of war from his youth." The young man was not to be turned from his desire. He remained firm, courageous, and determined, only waiting for the permission of the king. He replied in a simple, unassuming way, relating his experiences while tending the sheep. "And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee." ^[2.11]

The Slaying of Goliath

August 10, 1888

For forty days the host of Israel had trembled before the haughty challenge of Goliath, the Philistine giant. Their hearts failed within them as they looked upon his massive form, measuring six cubits and a span, or ten and a half feet, in height. Upon his head was a helmet of brass, he was clothed with a coat of mail that weighed five thousand shekels, or about a hundred and fifty-seven pounds, and he had greaves of brass upon his legs. The coat was made of plates of brass that overlaid one another, like the scales of a fish, and they were so closely joined that no dart or arrow could possibly penetrate the armor. At his back the giant bore a huge javelin, or lance, also of brass. "The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron; and one bearing a shield went before him." ^[3.1]

For forty days, morning and evening, Goliath had approached the camp of Israel, saying with a loud voice, "Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will

we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.” No one had dared to go against this boaster, until David, stirred with indignation at the proud words of the idolater, offered himself to Saul, as one who was willing to fight for the glory of God and the honor of Israel. {3.2}

Saul decided to permit the shepherd to make the venture; but he had small hope that David would be successful in his courageous undertaking. Command was given to clothe the youth in the king’s own armor. The heavy helmet of brass was put upon his head, and the coat of mail was placed upon his body, while he was girded with the monarch’s sword. Thus equipped, he started upon his errand; but ere long he turned back, and began to retrace his steps. What was the trouble? Was he afraid? The first thought in the minds of the anxious spectators was that David had decided not to risk his life in meeting an antagonist in so unequal an encounter. But this was far from the thought of the brave young man. {3.3}

When he returned to Saul, he begged permission to lay aside the heavy armor, and he said, “I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them.” He laid off the king’s armor, and in its stead took only his staff in his hand, with his shepherd’s scrip, and a simple sling. Choosing five smooth stones out of the brook, he put them in his bag, and, with his sling in his hand, he drew near to the Philistine. The champion strode boldly and proudly forward, expecting to meet with the mightiest of the warriors of Israel. His armor-bearer walked before him, and he looked as if nothing could stand before him. As he came nearer to David, he saw but a stripling, called a boy because of his youth. His countenance was ruddy with health; and his slender form, unprotected by armor, displayed all its youthful outline in marked contrast to the massive proportions of the Philistine. {3.4}

Goliath was filled with amazement and anger. His indignation burst forth in words that were calculated to terrify and overwhelm the daring youth before him. “Am I a dog,” exclaimed the giant, “that thou comest to me with staves?” Then the Philistine poured upon David the most terrible curses by all the gods of his knowledge. He cried in derision, “Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.” This haughty threat only served to inspire the youth with loftier courage, and to kindle in his breast a greater zeal to silence the enemy of his people. He did not weaken before the champion of the Philistine. He knew that he was about to fight for the honor of his God and the deliverance of Israel, and his heart was full of calm faith and hope. {3.5}

David stepped forward, and addressed his antagonist in language that was both modest and eloquent. And he said to the Philistine, “Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philis-

tines 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. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands." {3.6}

What an inspiration of courage and lofty faith was displayed by the simple shepherd before the armies of the Israelites and the Philistines. There was a ring of fearlessness in his tone, a look of triumph and rejoicing upon his fair countenance. This speech, given in a clear, musical voice, rang out on the air, and was distinctly heard by the listening thousands encamped for war. As David's rich voice uttered the words of trust and triumph, the anger of Goliath was roused to the very highest heat. In his rage, he pushed up the helmet that protected his forehead, and rushed with determined hatred to wreak vengeance upon his opponent. The son of Jesse was preparing for his foe. Both armies were watching with the most intense interest. "And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 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 sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth." {3.7}

Amazement spread along the lines of the two armies. They had been confident that David would be slain; but when the stone went whizzing through the air, straight to the mark, they saw the mighty warrior tremble, and reach forth his hands, as if he were struck with sudden blindness. The giant reeled, and staggered, and fell prostrate to the ground. David did not wait an instant. He knew not that life was extinct. He sprang upon the prostrate form of the Philistine, and with both hands he laid hold of Goliath's heavy sword. A moment before the giant had flourished it before the face of David with the boast that he would sever the youth's head from his shoulders, and give his body to the fowls of the air. Now it served to work the will of the servant of God. It was lifted in the air, and then the head of the boaster rolled from his trunk, and a shout of exultation went up from the camp of Israel. {3.8}

The Philistines were smitten with terror. They knew that the day was lost. In horror and confusion they began an irregular retreat. The shout of the triumphant Hebrews echoed along the summits of the mountains, as they rushed after their retreating enemies, and they "pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent." {3.9}

Answer Hints

Section 1: | 1) 1.3 | 2) 1.4 | 3) 1.7, 1.9 |

Section 2: | 1) 2.1, 2.3 | 2) 2.5 | 3) 2.8 |

Section 3: | 1) 3.1 | 2) 3.4 | 3) 3.5 | 4) 3.6, 3.7 |

This lesson is from a 13-week (1-quarter) set of Sabbath School lessons for youth and young adults called *Prophets & Judges*, based on a series of articles by Ellen G. White in *The Signs of the Times*, 1881–1882.

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