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How was it David knew instinctively what had to be done when he encountered Goliath???

I have just written this little article as a result of a brief email exchange with one of our younger ministers.

I would like to think it will prompt prayer, amongst Free Presbyterians in particular, for the rising generation of ministers who face the task of fighting with the Goliaths of today.

Let me encourage you to share this article with friends.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:4-11, 20-26

"And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. And 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. And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, 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. And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle. For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army. 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. And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. And the men of Israel said, 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. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, 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?"

That is rather a long text for an article but what we have to observe from these verses will not take long to state!

1. THERE WAS A MARKED DIFFERENCE IN THE INSTINCTIVE RESPONSES OF THE MEN OF ISRAEL AND THE SHEPHERD BOY!

The men of Israel were overcome with fear and ran from the blaspheming Philistine and utterly failed to do what it was that the Lord would have had them do.

"When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid," verses 11 and 24. David's reaction was very different indeed.

"And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, 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? And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine. . . . Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a



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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 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. 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," verses 26, 32, 45-47.

While the sight and sounds of Goliath turned the Israelite soldiers and their king into quivering jellies, it had a very different impact upon David.

He was immediately moved by a jealousy for the honour and glory of his God, the God of Israel and was determined to shut the mouth of the giant!

2. IT WAS NOT A MATTER OF PERSONALITY THAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE BUT SOMETHING THAT HAD HAPPENED TO DAVID A LITTLE EARLIER IN HIS LIFE.

"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. But the LORD said unto Samuel, 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. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, 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. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. " verses 1, 7, 11-13.

The difference between the cowardly soldiers and the courageous shepherd was nothing pertaining to human persona or temperament but it was the fact that upon the shepherd there rested the grace and power of the Holy Ghost!!!

3. IT WAS THE SAME GRACE, BESTOWED AT PENTECOST, THAT TURNED PETER FROM THE FEARFUL MAN WHO DENIED KNOWLEDGE OF HIS SAVIOUR INTO THE FEARLESS PREACHER OF CHRIST AND DENOUNCER OF HIS MURDERERS!

"Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew," John 18:27. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain," Acts 2:22-23.

What is needed in this day, is another band of men within the Free Presbyterian Church endued with the very same Spirit as David and Peter.

By nature we all are as was Peter pre-Pentecost! We are weak and totally unable to take the field against the Lord's enemies and we will vacillate and temporise rather than boldly challenging the 'Goliaths' of this day.

Indeed, we will, like David's brethren, take offence at any who suggest that we should be doing more rather than merely dressing up as soldiers, but doing no fighting! "And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, 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," verse 28.

I have always had to smile at this verse. How 'self-inflated' was Eliab to speak to David so and to refer to him coming down merely to see the battle! The truth was David was sent of his father to seek his brethren's



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welfare. In this he was a wonderful type of our Saviour.

However, if he came out of idle curiosity to watch the battle, he was going to be very disappointed for his brothers, and all the rest of Israel's army, were very determined that there would be no battle! Is it not recorded that "all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid," verse 24?

The spirit of a David will always offend and annoy an Eliab because it shows up his failings and highlights what it is he should be doing.

God's servants need to get over this and seek for the mighty blessing of the Holy Ghost whereby they will be endued with the courage and bold daring of a David!

4. DAVID'S BOLD ACTION RESULTED NOT ONLY IN THE KILLING OF GOLIATH BUT IN THE ENDUING OF THE COWARDLY ISRAELITE ARMY WITH GREAT COURAGE!

"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. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and 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," verses 49-53.

Bless God, when He raises up a David, He will raise up many 'mighty men' to associate with him and support him in the battle!

Is that not what we need today? I think it is. May the Lord bring to pass.

Amen.

Ivan Foster.

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