

Is There Not a Cause?
1 Samuel 17:1-30

Introduction

People of God, we live in days when the enemies of Christ openly mock the armies of the living God without censor. They blaspheme His name, corrupt the Church, and oppress His people—while many believers cower in fear, paralyzed by accusations and intimidated by threats.

But there comes a moment in every generation when God raises up those who will not be silenced, who will not retreat, who will stand and ask the piercing question that David asked when he saw Israel trembling before Goliath: "Is there not a cause?"

Today we examine the first half of this great story—not yet the victory, but the call to courage. We'll see the battle lines drawn, meet the serpent in his scales, and discover what separates those who shrink back in fear from those who run toward the fight.

The story of David and Goliath is not merely an underdog tale. It is the climactic Old Testament illustration of the war declared in Genesis 3:15—the ongoing conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

The Two Camps (17:1-3)

The Holy Spirit records where both armies muster for battle, and each location teaches us something significant about the spiritual warfare we face today.

The Philistines gather at Ephes-dammim—"the end of bloodshed" or "the boundary of blood." They gather where violence and bloodshed are tested, where bloodshed is "measured out" or "brought to the brink." This fits perfectly, for the Philistines signify a world defined by godless violence and bloodshed—the overflow of Cain's legacy of blood-for-blood and Lamech's seven-fold vengeance.

Do we not see this same culture in our day? The world around us has become Ephes-dammim. The culture of the Left is drenched in blood—through abortion, self-mutilation, street violence, and the silencing of voices that dare speak truth. Recent murder of Charlie Kirk and the targeting of Christian schools reveal the spirit of a evil world that has chosen to camp in Ephes-dammim, where the blood of the righteous and innocent cries from the ground.

In contrast, Israel camps in the Valley of Elah—"the valley of the oak." Throughout Scripture, oaks mark the covenant of the Lord. Abraham built his first altar at the oak of Moreh where God promised his descendants would

possess Canaan. He dwelt by the oaks of Mamre where the Lord promised Isaac's birth. Jacob buried household idols beneath the oaks of Shechem while renewing his family's faithfulness to the LORD. Joshua set up his covenant stone "under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD."

Oaks signify where God's covenant promises are made, renewed, and remembered. Assembling for battle in the Valley of Elah reminded Israel they were not a people of bloodshed like the Philistines, but a people planted and rooted in the covenant promises of the living God.

The battle lines are drawn clearly for us: needless violence and bloodshed versus the promises of God's covenant. If we are going to defeat the Philistines of our day, we not compromise with the world, but further root ourselves in God's covenant.

Goliath the Serpent: Meeting the Enemy Face to Face (vv. 4–11)

Next we meet Goliath. Standing at nine and a half to ten feet tall, Goliath from Gath is the Philistine champion. While his height is impressive, much attention is given to his armor and weaponry, but most important is the description of his armor - he's decked out in bronze—giving him the fiery, reddish hue of a serpent. And his coat

of mail is literally translated a coat of "scales." These are the scales of his fish god Dagon he worshiped. And we know that all who trust in idols become like them. Dagon lost his head in the presence of the LORD, and Goliath will also lose his head before the LORD.

But Goliath's scales also signify our ancient enemy the Dragon. Pharaoh is described as a dragon having scales in Ezekiel 29:3-4—the same word used here to describe Goliath's armor. And the Devil is called the Dragon in the book of Revelation. Goliath is clearly being portrayed as the seed of the serpent, and he even has the clothes to match.

As the Philistine champion representing his entire nation, Goliath challenges Israel's champion to single combat. He taunts Israel's armies, demanding they send a man to fight. The terms are stark: if Israel's champion wins, the Philistines become their slaves; if Goliath wins, Israel will serve the Philistines. Hearing this challenge, Saul and all Israel were "dismayed and greatly afraid."

Goliath's challenge continued for forty days—the same period Israel's spies spent in Canaan before returning with their fearful report about giants. Only Joshua and Caleb trusted the Lord to deliver the giants into their hands, declaring, "Do not fear the inhabitants of the land, for the

LORD is with us." Under Saul's leadership, Israel mirrors that faithless generation, cowering before giants while their enemy mocks the armies of the living God.

This parallels Western Civilization's posture in recent decades. We've trembled before enemies who have paralyzed us in fear, calling us bigots, racists, Nazis, fascists, xenophobes, homophobes, and the like. And because we cared more about trying to distance ourselves from their false accusations instead of trying to be faithful to God and not caring what they say about us, we allowed them to capture our institutions without resistance.

Like Israel under Saul, we sat paralyzed and in fear while modern-day Philistines made their boasts, blasphemed our God, took over our governments, schools, our churches, our culture, and nation. They mock God openly, exalt sin, and threaten violence against us when we resist.

But the armies of the living God must remember that we are not called to tremble before giants. The battle belongs to the Lord. When the church roots itself in the promises of God, we need not fear their accusations or their power. We must have courage and root ourselves like oak trees in the power and promises of God, and not fear what man can do to us.

The Courage of David: A Heart for God's Glory (vv. 26–27)

Enter David. He was not there to hear Goliath's initial challenge, but when sent to bring supplies to his brothers, he hears the Philistine's words and sees the Israelites' fear. And David asks the question: "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

This question reveals that David read the world aright—he had a proper understanding of the friend-enemy distinction. He understood that at the foundational level there is a war that exists between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. He knows that this will be a fight to the death between the covenant people of the Lord and their enemies.

The reward for the one who kills the Philistine is significant—he will be given the king's daughter in marriage. Doug Wilson is fond of saying that the whole Bible can be summed up in this - Kill the dragon, get the girl.

For killing the Serpent Goliath, David will be given Saul's daughter Michal in marriage. And for crushing the head of

Satan on the cross, the Lord Jesus received as the Church as His Bride.

Also, his father's house will live tax-free in Israel, meaning David's household would be adopted into the king's family. The king's sons are free in the land.

But notice what motivates David most. While these earthly rewards are good, David's primary desire is to make God's name great by removing the reproach and shame that this Philistine's mocking blasphemy has brought upon Israel. David's desire is to Make Israel Great Again. And to make that happen, the Philistines must be absolutely and totally defeated.

David understands there is no neutrality or unity between those whose core beliefs center on the glory of God and the exaltation and rule of His people, and those who hate Him and want to kill us and enslave us. David knows what time it is, and he is ready to go.

Eliab's Rebuke: The Spirit of Compromise (vv. 28–30)

But when David's eldest brother Eliab hears him speak, he lashes out in anger against him. He scolds David, mocks him, and accuses him of neglecting his duty, of pride, even of having an evil heart. But Eliab's words are nothing but

projection. It is common for people to condemn in others what they secretly know about themselves.

Eliab had a duty to defend Israel, yet he shirked it. So to soothe his own guilty conscience, he accuses David of neglecting his sheep. He calls David proud, because it is easier to tear down a zealous man than to pull yourself up to a greater height of courage. He says "I know that you have come down that you might see the battle"—which is rich, because here they have been for forty days, and there has been no battle.

Eliab is unwilling to face the enemy himself, yet quick to rebuke the man who is ready to fight. He is quick to judge the intentions of a faithful man's heart and condemn him, without ever having really spoken with him to determine his motives. Eliab sees David's zeal for God as more of a problem than the blaspheming Goliath who brings shame and reproach upon the people of God.

How often is the same spirit of Eliab found in the church today? Some Christians refuse to confront the giants of our age, only to turn around and attack those who are zealous to take the fight to the enemy. They cloak their fear in pious phrases—"Don't be political," "Don't rock the boat," "Just preach the gospel." But beneath the religious language lies the same paralysis that kept Israel trembling before

Goliath for forty days. And when they see another believer ready to act with zeal, who has more desire to see God glorified and His people victorious than to worry about what the enemy thinks and says, they respond with suspicions and accusations.

Is There Not a Cause?

And what does David say in response to his brother's rebuke? "What have I done now? Is there not a cause?"

Is there not a cause? The honor of the living God is being assaulted and blasphemed openly everywhere. The armies of the LORD are being shamed and reproached. Babies are being murdered by the millions. Children are being disfigured and mutilated. We are being systematically poisoned and slowly killed by the substances they spray in our skies and add to our foods and waters.

The nation's children are being brainwashed. We are now being openly murdered in the streets and on subways and in our schools. Millions of foreigners are coming here to replace us, flooding our streets with fentanyl, destroying our people. Foreigners bring their demon gods over here to worship them in our once-Christian land. Satanists are given full permission and to set up their Baphomet demon goat next to Nativity scenes, and many of our Christian

leaders care more about protecting their right to do so, than putting it to an end. We have an pathological hospitality in the West, begging our enemies to dispossess us and replace our Christian heritage with their demons gods.

So I ask you, Is there not a cause? Where is the Church of Jesus Christ? Where are the Christian Men? Do you honestly think for one moment that if you just leave these people alone they will leave you alone? Do you think that if you just abide by their wishes and apologize for being white, Christian, and conservative, and try not draw attention to yourself that they will not come after you and your children? Is there not a cause?

People of God, do not let the fear and timidity of others who are morally and spiritually compromised with the spirit of the age rob you of zealous obedience to God. Better to be slandered and treated with suspicion and false accusations by the Eliab's of this world than to join them in their cowardice and not fight. Those who are bold in faith will always be despised by those who shrink back from the fight. Those who desire safety over freedom deserve neither and will lose both.

The Call: What Time Is It?

We stand at a crossroads, people of God. For too long, we have allowed the enemies of Christ to set the terms of engagement. We have been defensive when we should have been offensive. We have been apologetic when we should have been bold. We have been fearful when we should have been faithful.

David saw clearly what time it was. He understood that some battles cannot be avoided, some lines cannot be uncrossed, some provocations cannot be ignored. When the enemies of God openly blaspheme His name and bring reproach upon His people, neutrality and inaction becomes complicity. Silence becomes surrender.

The question David asked echoes through the ages to us: "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" Who are these enemies of Christ that they should mock His church with impunity? Who are these servants of Satan that they should corrupt our nation, poison our children, and blaspheme our God without resistance?

Is there not a cause? There most certainly is a cause. The same cause that motivated David. The same cause that has motivated every generation of faithful believers who refused to bow the knee to Baal, who would not worship

the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar, who would not deny their Lord even unto death.

The cause is the glory of the Living God and the victory of His kingdom over the earth. The cause is the honor of Christ's name and the protection and prosperity of His people in the earth. The cause is the advancement of righteousness and the defeat of wickedness in the earth. The cause is the triumph of truth over lies, light over darkness, good over evil, in the earth.

Conclusion: Choose This Day

The armies are assembled. The battle lines are drawn. The challenge has been issued. We sent one man to them already, and they killed him. But like Abel, though he is dead, still he speaks. Who is the new man to stand up against the Goliath of our day?

On one side stands the wicked who are encamped at Ephes-dammim—the boundary of blood, where the enemies of God gather in their Satanic scales and bronze, mocking the armies of the living God, demanding our surrender, threatening our destruction.

On the other side stands the righteous in Valley of Elah—the valley of the oak, where the people of God's covenant

gather, rooted in His promises, armed with His truth, confident in His victory.

Goliath still stands. The reproach still remains. And although victory has been promised to us, the Church still cowers in fear. But God is raising up Davids in our generation—men who will not be intimidated by the enemy's size, men who will not be silenced by the enemy's threats, men who will not be deterred by their own brothers' rebukes.

The question that burned in David's heart must burn in ours: Is there not a cause?

If you believe there is a cause—if you believe the honor of God is worth defending, if you believe His people are worth protecting, if you believe His kingdom is worth advancing, that this nation is also worth saving—then stop cowering like Israel under Saul. Stop attacking your own brothers, like Eliab. Stop being paralyzed by fear of what the enemy might say or do.

Stand up. Speak up. Step forward. The battle belongs to the Lord, but He calls His people to fight. The victory is assured, but it requires courage. The enemy is already defeated, but he must still be engaged in battle.

Next week, we will see David's victory and learn how God wins battles through faithful servants armed with His truth. Chiefly the Lord Jesus Christ. But today, the question hangs in the air, demanding an answer from each of us:

Is there not a cause?

Amen.