

BEDWELL GLOBAL MINISTRIES

E MAIL ADDRESS

PKBedwell@hotmail.com

Web Site Address

Bedwellglobalministeries.com.

Expository Sermon

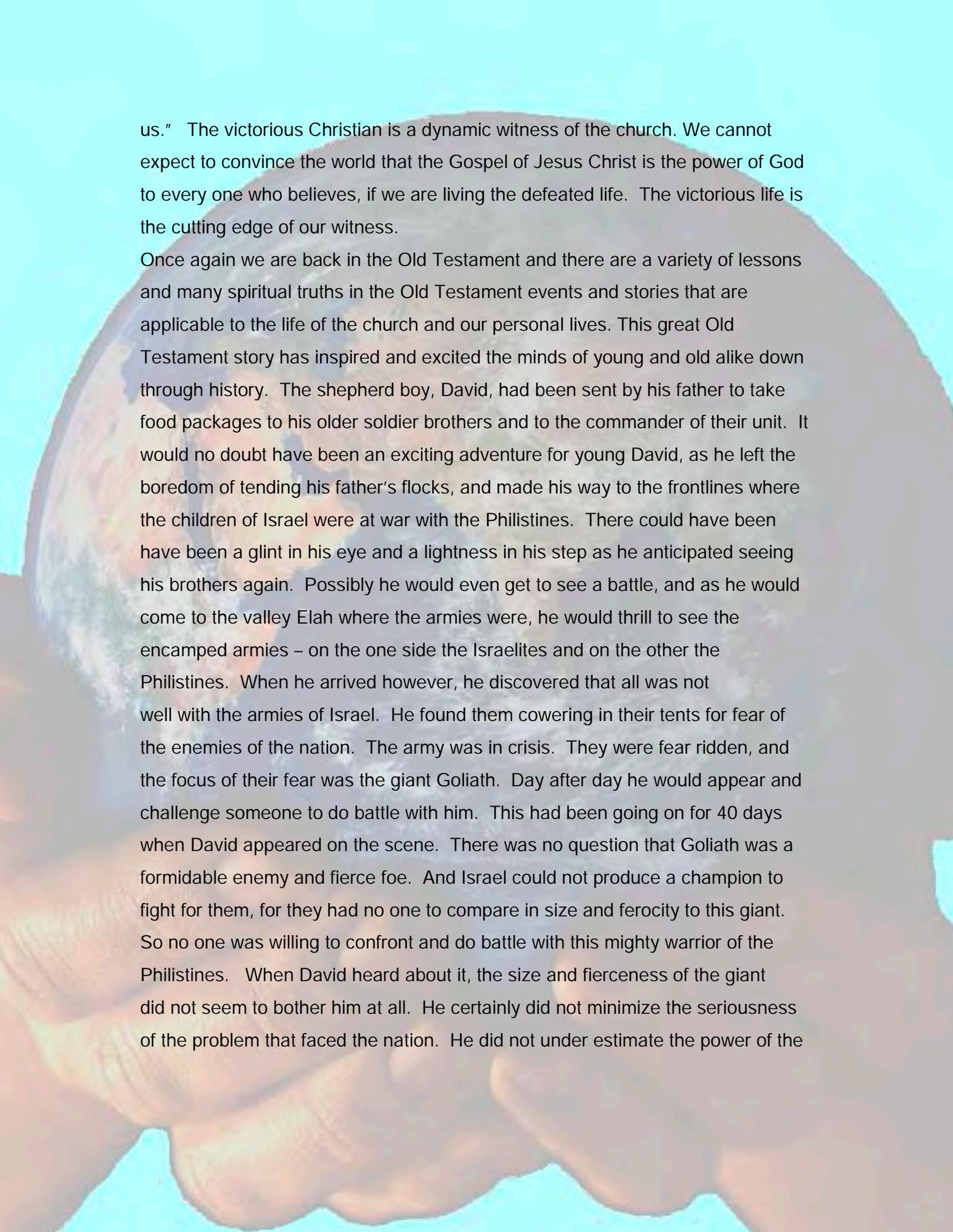
January 2018

CONQUEROR OR CONQUERED - WHICH IS IT?

Scripture Reading – 1 Samuel 17:22-50.

Introduction

Today I want to address the question which is the title of the message. When giants of problems, pressures and the pain of life confront and challenge you, do you overcome them or are you overcome by them? Are you master of your difficulties or are you mastered by them. Which is it? The issue here is not whether or not you will be confronted by them, because you will be. They are part of the fabric of life. The question is, "are you an overcomer or are you defeated by them? Defeat is not part of God's plan for your life. If you are continually defeated you need ask the question, "Why am I defeated? **This not the design of grace nor is it the purpose of love. The Cross does not allow for defeat.** A few weeks ago we brought to your attention Paul's great testimony in Romans 8:37 where he declares that "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved



us.” The victorious Christian is a dynamic witness of the church. We cannot expect to convince the world that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God to every one who believes, if we are living the defeated life. The victorious life is the cutting edge of our witness.

Once again we are back in the Old Testament and there are a variety of lessons and many spiritual truths in the Old Testament events and stories that are applicable to the life of the church and our personal lives. This great Old Testament story has inspired and excited the minds of young and old alike down through history. The shepherd boy, David, had been sent by his father to take food packages to his older soldier brothers and to the commander of their unit. It would no doubt have been an exciting adventure for young David, as he left the boredom of tending his father’s flocks, and made his way to the frontlines where the children of Israel were at war with the Philistines. There could have been a glint in his eye and a lightness in his step as he anticipated seeing his brothers again. Possibly he would even get to see a battle, and as he would come to the valley Elah where the armies were, he would thrill to see the encamped armies – on the one side the Israelites and on the other the Philistines. When he arrived however, he discovered that all was not well with the armies of Israel. He found them cowering in their tents for fear of the enemies of the nation. The army was in crisis. They were fear ridden, and the focus of their fear was the giant Goliath. Day after day he would appear and challenge someone to do battle with him. This had been going on for 40 days when David appeared on the scene. There was no question that Goliath was a formidable enemy and fierce foe. And Israel could not produce a champion to fight for them, for they had no one to compare in size and ferocity to this giant. So no one was willing to confront and do battle with this mighty warrior of the Philistines. When David heard about it, the size and fierceness of the giant did not seem to bother him at all. He certainly did not minimize the seriousness of the problem that faced the nation. He did not under estimate the power of the

enemy, but it is significant that his concern was not the size of the giant, because he asked the question almost scornfully, "who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" This is a good question. To David it was unthinkable that a giant no matter what his size or disposition, could defy, discourage and defeat the armies of the living God. To David this was disturbing, for in his mind the Israelites were not part of an ordinary army. This was the army of the Lord. To him it was inconceivable and unacceptable that any enemy could defeat and destroy the army of the Lord. His conviction of this was so strong, that he offered himself as the champion of the army of the Lord. Do not forget that David was not a trained soldier, but that did not deter him, not because he was arrogantly self-confident, but because his confidence was in God. If this story teaches us anything, it teaches us that one individual with a full trust in God, can make a positive difference in the midst of a crisis. Certainly it assures him that there will be victory in the crisis. Now when David reached the armies of the Lord, he found that they were faced with a,

1. A DISTRESSING PROBLEM. 1 Samuel 17:23-24.

If you study verses 23 and 24, you will discover that there were two fundamental problems in the nation. It was these problems that gave rise to the distress of the people. First there was

a. The External Enemy. 1 Samuel 17:23. This was the problem on the outside facing the nation. It was the most obvious one. The Israelites were at war with Philistines, and they had come to an impasse in the confrontation. The Philistines had chosen their champion warrior to do battle with the chosen champion of the Israelites. The nation whose champion was defeated would then be ruled by the nation whose champion won. The difficulty was, however, that no one in Israel was willing face the Philistine giant. You recall that the Israelites were not really satisfied with God as King, and so they asked Him to allow them to have an earthly king. God through His servant Samuel warned them about what kings would do to them. And the scripture tells us that the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No," they said, "We want a King over us." 1 Samuel 8:19-21, 20. They

continued, "Then we will be like other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles. And God granted their desire. The serious mistake was that they wanted to be like other nations. Now remember that the other nations were pagan nations. They were idolatrous nations. God was not honored in those nations. It is always a disastrous step when the people of God want to be like a sinful society about them. Disaster is on the way when we compromise with the world so as not to offend it. It is a clear recipe for defeat. The Israelites got their king, but now in the crisis where was he? Was he not supposed to go before them and fight their battles? 1 Samuel 8:20. But where was he? He too was cowering in his tent. This was an extremely difficult problem and they seemed to be no way out. The giant was not to be underestimated. He was a formidable enemy who was 9ft tall. He wore a bronze helmet and his coat of armor weighed about 125 lbs. The point of his spear weighed about 15 lbs, and in this way he presented himself as a fierce daunting enemy. He was the external problem the nation faced. While this was a seeming impossible difficulty, in David's mind there was nothing that could convince him that the giant could not be defeated. He believed as Paul said many years later, "If God be for us who can be against us." But there was a greater enemy to be conquered in Israel in that crisis. And that was,

b. The Internal Enemy. 1 Samuel 17:24,28,33. There was an enemy more insidious, more destructive and more malignant than any external enemy. It was the internal enemies. No army can confidently and victoriously face the external enemy unless the internal enemy has been defeated. There were in Israel that day, internal enemies that were eroding the courage and sapping the strength of the armies of Israel. Fear and doubt had gripped them." 1 Samuel 17:24. Fear is the birth child of doubt. The real enemy here was unbelief. They had lost their vision of God and His power. Their vision was obsessed with the might and the power of the giant." They were so giant conscious that they lost their God consciousness. When the Israelites saw the giant they ran away from him in great fear." They placed their faith in the ability of their king, but he was hiding in

his tent. And because he failed to confront the giant, it seemed that all was lost and fear invaded their ranks. They thought that they no one else to fight for them. King was in his tent and no champion was found in Israel. This fear produced panic and paralysis. So they were defeated before they ever fought a battle.

Paul wrote that the victory which overcomes the world is faith. When fear dominates the heart, faith moves out. An obsessive fear and faith do not walk hand in hand. Fear and defeat are companions. Fear crippled them and so victory was out of the question. Solomon in his Proverbs 29:45 wrote "Fear of man will prove to be a snare." Fear entraps. Fear disables. Fear paralyzes. Did not Peter deny his Lord three times because of fear, and the disciples locked themselves in an upper room for fear of the Jews. The 2nd enemy to facing the giant was destructive criticism. 1 Samuel 17:28. Eliab, David's brother speaking to the men about the giant, burned with anger at him and asked "why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down to watch the battle." Here was David's brother cowering in his tent with fear criticizing David who was going to do something about the problem. Eliab didn't have the faith or the courage to confront the giant, but was eager to criticize anyone who would do so. At this point in the story, David had not directly said what he intended to do, but his words in verse 26 and 27 indicate that something could be done. He could not understand why giant could defy the armies of the living God and get away with it. Why was there no one to challenge Goliath? And Eliab censored David. Instead of saying to David, we will support you David, Go for it David! Fight Him David! Destroy him David! He chastised him. The attitude guaranteed defeat. David, however, ignored his brother, and pushed aside fear and pursued in his questions about this distressing problem. But in this story, as you follow David, you will observe that he possessed,

2. A DISCERNING PERSPECTIVE. 1Samuel 17:32-37.

For being so young, David was extremely wise and discerning. He did not view

the whole of life within the limits of one problem, the giant Goliath. He viewed the one giant in the light and context of life as a whole. But more importantly, he viewed the one giant in the light of the God he served. David placed God at the center of the whole of life. His discerning perspective was based on what God had done for him in the experiences of life. If you study his words in verses in 1 Samuel 17:32-37 you will discover why David was so discerning. Firstly note that,

a. He Looked Back and Found Confidence. 1 Samuel 17:33-34, 36. What is striking about David is that he was eager to fight the giant." There was a confident faith in him. There was no doubt in his mind that he would win the battle, and so he would not be deterred. Even King Saul himself, said to him, "you are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him, you are only a boy." David's confident reply was partly because of what had happened in the past. He told of how he been tending his father's sheep when on two separate occasions a lion and bear had made off with his father's sheep. He quickly pursued them and destroyed them, and these are his concluding words in reply to King Saul's discouraging words. 1 Samuel 17:36. "You servant has killed both a lion and bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God." David looked back on his life and remembered how God had faithfully helped him in his hour of crisis. And the backward look gave him confidence to face the present hour of crisis. He looked back and found confidence. Then,

b. He Looked in and Found Courage. 1 Samuel 17:26, 31, 32. It did not occur to David that the armies of the living God would back down in the face of this giant. Defeat was not in his thinking and it certainly was not on his agenda. David looked within and found courage. In verse 32, He said to King Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; you servant will go and fight him." David looked within and discovered courage. Goliath was a real formidable enemy with which he had to contend. This was not a grandstand play put on for the nation. He knew the power of the giant, but exercised courage beyond his years. If he

lost this battle the Philistines would be in control, and this was a real terrifying enemy. "During his years as premier of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev denounced many of the policies and atrocities of Joseph Stalin. Once, as he censured Stalin in a public meeting, Khrushchev was interrupted by a shout from a heckler in the audience in the audience. "You were one of Stalin's colleagues. Why didn't you stop him? "Who said that," roared Khrushchev, - an agonizing silence followed as nobody in the room dared to move a muscle?" Then Khrushchev replied quietly, "Now you know why." Courage is that spirit which knows the enemy, but is still willing to confront him. Adrian Rogers tells about the man who bragged that he had cut off the tail of a man-eating lion with his pocket knife. Asked why he hadn't cut off the lion's head, the man replied: "Someone had already done that." That is a false courage. David's courage resided in himself and did not retreat from the reality of a dangerous enemy. But David also,

c. Looked Forward to Conquer. 1 Samuel 17:46. David faced the giant and said to him, "This day will the Lord hand you over to me and I'll strike you down and cut off your head." What audacity is this! But it is the audacity of unflinching courage. This is the language of a conquering faith. It is the spirit of a man **whose faith rests in the unshakable power of God. It is that kind of faith, as Charles Wesley would say that, "laughs at the impossibilities and says it shall be done."** Genuine faith looks forward to conquer. This was not a grandstand play put on for the nation. He recognized that the giant was a danger to the nation. Though young and with no experience as a soldier, he was willing to face up to a formidable enemy. David was not looking for retreat or a defeat. He looked forward to conquer. Segments of his battle line were falling back in disorder and defeat. "Beat the retreat!" shouted Napoleon to a drummer boy. Saluting smartly, the heroic drummer boy said "Sir, you never taught to beat a retreat. I can only beat a charge!" The lad's reply kindled new courage in Napoleon, who instantly gave the command, "then beat a charge drummer boy!" He did and seeming defeat was turned into victory. David looked forward to conquer. Defeat was not

on his agenda. In the shadows of his faith and courage stood God watching over him and he knew it. David possessed the spirit of the hymn writer, whose words breathe with faith and courage. **“Crowns and thrones may perish – but the church of Jesus will remain – Gates of hell can never, against the church prevail. We have Christ’s own promise which can never fail.”** The Hymn writer said it well **“We have Christ’s own promise which can never fail,”** for He said on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. Note the certainty of the words **“The gates of Hades will not overcome it.”** Whether it be the church or whether it be the Christian facing the enemy of his soul, victory is promised. Therefore like David we should look forward to conquer. Note what He said to the Giant, **“This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I will strike you down.”** There is no scriptural reason to be defeated. There is no justification for us to be overcome, and no reason for us to fear. The giants are cut down to size when God comes into the picture. We can defeat each giant which challenges us. Paul latched on to this truth. **“I can all things through Christ who strengthens us.”** David faced the giant with courage. He looked back and found confidence, he looked in and found courage and he looked forward to conquer. And conquer he did. But all of this was possible because he had faith in,

3. IN DIVINE POWER -- THE POWER OF GOD. 1 Samuel 17:37, 45-47.

There are two things are related to David’s faith in the God of Israel. The first is

a. David’s Confidence in Presence of God in the Crises of life. 1 Samuel 17:37, 45-47. What comes through in this story is that David viewed the events of life in the light of God’s presence and power. David had an unshakable faith in the God of Israel. He firmly believed in the power of his God. His defiant words make this clear when he faced the giant. **“I come against you in the name of the Lord God Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you defied. This day the Lord will hand me over to you.”** David was both amazed and appalled that the armies of Israel cowered in their tents while the giant Goliath defied them. This

should not be, said David, "who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" There is almost a contemptuous tone in his voice which seems to portray him as being derisive. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" In effect he was saying, "Who are you to defy the armies of the Lord God Almighty? This was not the first time that had confronted seeming difficulties. His words to King Saul in verse 37 make this clear, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and paw of the bear will deliver me from the Philistine." The confidence of a certain victory over the giant was a result of his confidence in God. The crises of life were not the central issues in his life. The problem that he faced was serious, but there was factor that went beyond the problem. It was the God factor. Because this was settled in his heart, life's crises could be faced victoriously.

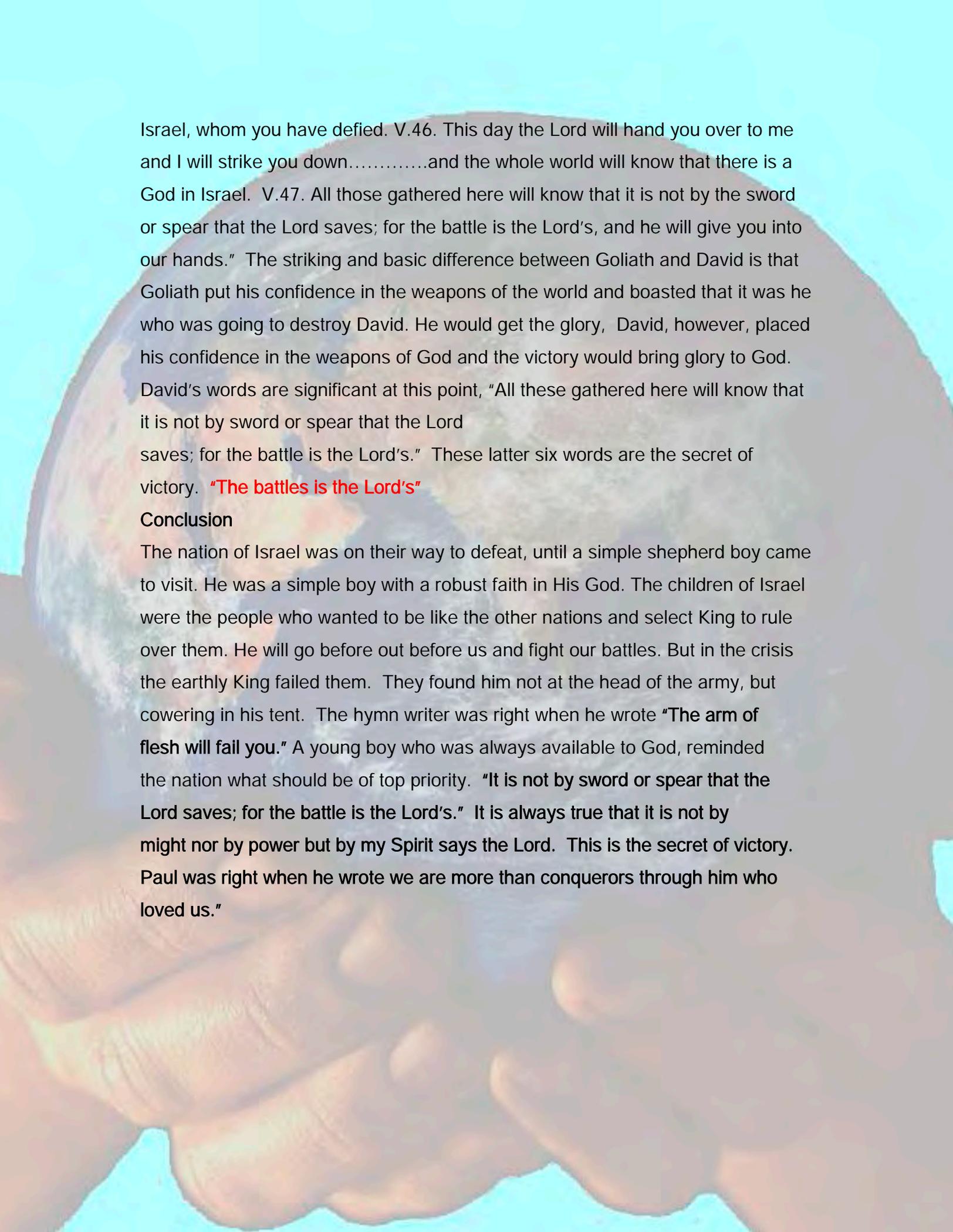
Let me remind you of what we Paul said that "in all things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Romans 8 v, 37 - 38, Any crisis in life no matter what it is need not defeat tthe Child of God." Paul in that same chapter declares that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Not even death! That which is considered to be the ultimate enemy. Love's victory guarantees that nothing will able to sever us from the love of God. The critical issue here is not the malignancy of the enemies arrayed against us, but faith in the power of the presence of God to equip and fortify us in the crises of life. It is through Him that we are more than conquerors. David's confidence of victory was born in his confidence in the presence of God with him. The second thing related to David's faith in the God of Israel was, **b. David's Commitment to the Power of God in the Crisis. 1 Samuel 17:37, 45-47.** Because David had a confidence in the presence of God in the crisis he had confidence in the power of God to give him victory. You cannot divorce these two qualities. With the abiding presence of God comes the power of God. Power is an attribute of God, and God does not rent out His attributes. Spiritual power is only available to us when God comes and fills our lives. God acts in

power when He is a priority in our living. David had confidence in the presence of God. He possessed an unwavering faith in Him

Saul tried to equip David with his own armor but it did not fit him. David said I cannot fight in these and so "he took his staff and five smooth stones from the stream, and put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag, and with a sling in his hand, approached the Philistine." You will note that there are are two different **perceptions** in this encounter. There is first,

i. The Perception of the Giant. 1 Samuel 17:42-43. He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, "am I dog, that you must come to me with sticks? And the Philistine cursed him by his gods. 'Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field." That is how Goliath saw him. He put his faith in his size, his armor and his weapons. What was a small boy with a staff, a few stones and a sling going to do against the giant with the latest equipment of the day? Goliath's view point is not new. It is essentially the view point of the world. It is a view point that had come down through the centuries. Get the biggest, the latest and the most to win the victory. Let us gather together all the wisdom of the world. Let us organize all the strength and power of the flesh. Let us build up a formidable arsenal of human weaponry. Small boys with smooth stones and sling will not do it. It is foolish to think in that way. Carnal weapons are what are essential. This is the perception and the viewpoint of the giant and most certainly it is the viewpoint of the world. But God's word says to us it is the foolish things of the world that confound the wise. The giant discovered that his weapons were impotent against the power of God. The second perception is,

ii. The Perception of David. 1 Samuel 17:45-47. The words of David reveal and deep insight into of what should be of top priority in life. He understood the values and principles of God. Note what he says in verses 45-47. David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with the, sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty the God of the armies of



Israel, whom you have defied. V.46. This day the Lord will hand you over to me and I will strike you down.....and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. V.47. All those gathered here will know that it is not by the sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands." The striking and basic difference between Goliath and David is that Goliath put his confidence in the weapons of the world and boasted that it was he who was going to destroy David. He would get the glory, David, however, placed his confidence in the weapons of God and the victory would bring glory to God. David's words are significant at this point, "All these gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's." These latter six words are the secret of victory. **"The battles is the Lord's"**

Conclusion

The nation of Israel was on their way to defeat, until a simple shepherd boy came to visit. He was a simple boy with a robust faith in His God. The children of Israel were the people who wanted to be like the other nations and select King to rule over them. He will go before out before us and fight our battles. But in the crisis the earthly King failed them. They found him not at the head of the army, but cowering in his tent. The hymn writer was right when he wrote **"The arm of flesh will fail you."** A young boy who was always available to God, reminded the nation what should be of top priority. **"It is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's."** It is always true that it is not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord. This is the secret of victory. Paul was right when he wrote we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."