

**The Attackers: David's Victory Is His First Step toward Becoming King of Israel; Comparisons between the Philistine Idol of Dagon & the Death of Goliath, 1 Sam 5:1–2 cf. 17:49–51; Both Armies Learned the Principle: "The battle is the Lord's," 1 Sam 17:47; Masterman Speculates on the Location of the Valley of Elah; William Miller Discovers the Battlefield at Elah; Shepherd Leaders: Amos: Decline of 8th-Century B.C. Judah & Israel Similar to Present-Day USA**

**1 Samuel 17:57** - When David returned from killing the Philistine, **Abner [ commander in chief of the Israeli army ]** took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine's head in his hand.

**v. 58** - Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "The son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

- (24) This event was the first in a series of events that led to David becoming the king of Israel at which time he became the shepherd of God's people, the commander in chief of its armies, the major composer of its musical heritage, and most importantly the origin of the royal line of Messiah.
- (24) There are some interesting comparisons between the divine curse on the idol of Dagon in Ashdod and the divinely enabled execution of Goliath at the Valley of Elam.
- (25) In 1 Samuel 5:1, the Philistines took the captured ark of the covenant into the temple of Dagon and placed it beside the idol of Dagon.
- (26) The next morning they found the idol lying face first on the ground; they replaced it upright and left (v. 2).
- (27) The next morning, the idol was again face first on the ground with its head and hands broken off. The importance of this is emphasized by this excerpt:

**In the ancient world severed heads and hands were battlefield trophies that assisted the victor in establishing the correct body count. The Lord had therefore vanquished Dagon in his own temple, a premonition of things to come.<sup>1</sup>**

- (28) When Goliath taunted David, we are told that he cursed him "by his gods" meaning Dagon, whose representation was with a body and trunk of a fish but with a human head and hands.
- (29) It was God that took down Dagon and now through David, He will take down Goliath. David's well-placed river rock sunk into the giant's forehead "so that he fell on his face on the ground" (1 Samuel 17:49b).
- (30) David then did what warriors do on a battlefield: he "took his (Goliath's) sword and drew it from its sheath and killed him, and cut his head off with it" (v. 51a).
- (31) David set up the encounter by proclaiming the physical weapons possessed by Goliath as inferior to the "the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (v. 45).

<sup>1</sup> Ronald F. Youngblood, "1, 2 Samuel," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 3:600.

- (32) Goliath cursed David by his gods; David countered with the prophecy, “This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands” (v. 46).
- (33) David’s testimony was delivered not only to the army of the Philistine’s but also to that of the Jews.
- (34) This is the first occasion for David to act as shepherd to the military flock of Israel. They were to receive the message loud and clear that what was about to transpire was a battle that the God of Israel would win:

**1 Samuel 17:46b** - “I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,

**v. 47** - and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into our hands.”

- (35) The phrase “all this assembly” is made up of the particle כּל (*kol*): “all or everyone of something.” This is followed by the pronoun זֶה (*zeh*): “this” and the noun קָהָל (*qahal*): “an assembly for war.”
- (36) David issued this declaration to everybody who was in earshot, Philistine and Israelite alike. The message to the Philistines was intended as a presentation of the Gospel, proof of which was forthcoming.
- (37) The message to the Israelites was a statement of doctrine that they had failed to apply and as a result were sulking in their camp while being insulted by an “uncircumcised Philistine.”
- (38) The future king of Israel has just carried out his first leadership role as the future shepherd of the Israelite flock.
- (39) David has made the first step in becoming the greatest leader of the Israelite people. All the kings that succeed him either in the Southern or Northern kingdom were evaluated according to the reign of David.
- (40) E. G. W. Masterman speculates on the location of the Valley of Elah:

The exact position of Saul’s forces may be a matter of speculation, but the late Principle [William] Miller of Madras [Christian College], who made a special study of the locality (*Least of All Lands*, 2d ed., rev. [Edinburgh: Macniven & Wallace, 1901, ch. 5), considered that the little valley ascending Northeast from Wady es-sunt to Beit Nettif was probably the actual Vale of Elah and that here the Israelites had their fortification. His elucidation of the whole story is most convincing.<sup>2</sup>

- (41) Excerpts from Miller’s book describe his location of the Wadi es-Sunt and the headquarters of the Israelite and Philistine armies. The following reference indicates the pages cited:

<sup>2</sup> E. W. G. Masterman, “Vale of Elah,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 2:917.

William Miller, "Elah," in *The Least of All Lands: Of Palestine in Relation to Its History*, 2d ed. (Edinburgh: Macniven & Wallace, 1901), 120–126; 130–145.<sup>3</sup>

28. **Amos** was a shepherd from Tekoa, a village about five miles south of Bethlehem, who wrote the Book of Amos. He was not a student of the Hebrew schools for prophets, yet God called him to that ministry.
29. In 761 B.C., his assignment was to carry the prophecies of the Lord to the kings of the two kingdoms: Uzziah \u-zī'-a\ of the Southern and Jeroboam \jer-ō-bō'-am\ of the Northern Kingdom.
30. The overriding issues in both kingdoms were the loss of cultural integrity which is exactly the charge God is leveling against the people of present-day USA.
31. Thomas E. McComiskey's Introduction to the Book of Amos in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* summarizes the problems that Amos addresses in his prophecy.
32. As we read a few paragraphs you will discover that the behavior patterns practiced by the Jews almost 3,000 years ago are the very same ones that currently threaten the freedom of client nation America:

The eighth century B.C. was unique in the history of Judah and Israel. It witnessed the toppling of the northern kingdom from the glory of economic prosperity and international influence to virtual subjugation by a foreign power. It also witnessed the near collapse of Judah, averted only by the steadying hand of King Hezekiah, who could do no more than slow Judah's progress toward certain ruin.

At the same time, however, the eighth century witnessed the rise of one of the most potent moral forces the world has ever known—the writing prophets. They denounced the sins of their contemporaries and also looked far into the future as they spoke of deliverance for both Jew and Gentile.

In 802 B.C. the internal difficulties that had plagued Judah also ended with Uzziah's accession to the throne (792–740 B.C.). He built a powerful army and increased Judah's mercantile activities.

In the northern kingdom, Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.) came to the throne at roughly the same time as Uzziah. Jeroboam restored much of the territory that had fallen to Damascus (2 Kings 14:28).

The brilliant leadership of Uzziah and Jeroboam brought Judah and Israel to heights of prominence second only to Solomon's golden age. The kingdoms prospered financially and at that same time expanded their borders. But as their economic well-being and national strength continued to foster their security, an internal decay was eating at their vitals. It was primarily moral because it involved a basic violation of the covenant established by God at Sinai. (p. 269)

Not only did the people disobey by worshiping idols, but they also violated the social legislation of the covenant. Amos is particularly vehement in denouncing the lack of social concern in his time. Unbridled lust characterized the Canaanite observances. The intrusion of similar observances into Israel and Judah could lead only to a rending of the social fabric. The ethical concerns of the law were no longer necessary in a cult that required only external ritual.

<sup>3</sup> Link to the book on amazon.com: [http://www.amazon.com/The-Least-All-Lands-Palestine/dp/1148376968/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1340322670&sr=1-1&keywords=William+Miller%27s+The+Least+of+All+Lands](http://www.amazon.com/The-Least-All-Lands-Palestine/dp/1148376968/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1340322670&sr=1-1&keywords=William+Miller%27s+The+Least+of+All+Lands)

The social concern inherent in the very structure of the law was forgotten. God's will, as it applied to the nation of Israel, was ignored; and this spurred the eighth-century prophets to action. Though their protest was largely ignored (2 Kings 17:13–14), it contributed to the establishment of a believing remnant.<sup>4</sup> (p. 270)

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<sup>4</sup> McComiskey, “Amos,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 7:269–70.