

1 Samuel Chapter 17 Continued

1 Samuel 17:27 "And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him."

Told him what was proposed to be done in honor to the man that should attempt to kill him, and succeed.

"Saying, so shall it be done to the man that killeth him": As before related, that he should be enriched, marry the king's daughter, and his family be ennobled (1 Sam. 17:25).

In the last lesson, David has just arrived at the place of the battle and is appalled that no one has stepped forward to answer the challenge of this giant called Goliath. David knows, in his own heart, that the LORD will be with the Israelite that comes against this heathen giant. Saul has promised the hand of his daughter in marriage to the man who kills Goliath. There are many other gifts that will be bestowed upon that person as well. Now, the people agree that anyone who kills Goliath should receive all of these things.

1 Samuel 17:28 "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."

"Eliab's anger": Eliab, perhaps still feeling the sting/rejection of having his "little" brother chosen over him by God/Samuel (16:6-7), expressed his jealousy in anger (Gen. 37:4-5; 8, 11).

It appears that David's older brother does not like David acting so brave. It looks bad for him and the other two brothers. He is accusing David of being puffed up with pride. In a sense, he is saying; "kid, get back with the few sheep where you belong". He thinks David has snuck away, and come down to see the battle.

1 Samuel 17:29 "And David said, What have I now done? [Is there] not a cause?"

For my speaking? Is this giant invincible? Is our God unable to oppose him, and subdue him? However, David is not deterred from his undertaking by the hard words of Eliab. They that undertake public services must not think it strange if they be opposed by those from whom they had reason to expect assistance; but must humbly go on with their work, in the face, not only of their enemies' threats, but of their friends' slights, suspicions, and censures.

1 Samuel 17:30 "And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner."

From his brother Eliab, to another person right against him, and directed his discourse to him.

"And spake after the same manner: (as in 1 Sam. 17:26); inquiring what encouragement would be given to a man that should attempt to kill the Philistine, and expressing his concern to hear the armies of the living God defied by such a wretch.

"And the people answered him again after the former manner": Telling him what gratuities and honors would be conferred on such a person (as in 1 Sam. 17:25); and the design of his talking to one and another, was, that what he had said might spread and reach to the ears of Saul, to whom in modesty he did not choose to apply himself.

This is a really good question. Perhaps David's boldness makes the other men ashamed, that they have not stepped up to accept the challenge of Goliath. His brothers think of him as their little brother. The challenge remains and it seems David is the only one who thinks someone should answer the challenge. The men repeat the rewards for someone who kills Goliath.

1 Samuel 17:31 "And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed [them] before Saul: and he sent for him."

No doubt much more was said by the brave shepherd boy than the compiler of the history has preserved for us in the brief account here. David felt that supernatural strength had been communicated to him by the Spirit of God, which came upon him on the day of his anointing (1 Sam. 16:13), and it is probable that he had openly avowed his earnest desire of meeting the dreaded foe face to face. This had been reported to Saul.

Some of the men, who heard David, told Saul what he said. Saul sends for this one who is so brave.

Verses 32-37: Judging by appearances only, David was no champion. But he would rely on the Champion of Israel to "deliver" him from the enemy (see notes on 17:4-50).

David's confidence was born out of the experience of the Lord's previous deliverances on his behalf. Further, since "God" would not allow His reputation to be damaged by this "Philistine, David" was certain that God would again deliver him in this trial by conflict.

1 Samuel 17:32 "And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

"Let no man's heart fail": Joshua and Caleb exhorted Israel in the same fashion regarding the giant Anakim 400 years prior (compare Num. 13:30; 14:8-9). The heathens' hearts fail at the name of the Lord God of Israel (compare Rahab, Joshua 2:11).

David feels no fear of this Philistine, because the LORD is with him. He tells Saul that he need not let his heart within him faint, because of this problem with the giant. David calls himself, Saul's servant and says that he will go and fight Goliath.

1 Samuel 17:33 "And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou [art but] a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

“Thou art not able”: David’s faith, like that of Joshua and Caleb, was met with disbelief on the part of Saul. By all outward appearances, Saul was absolutely correct in his assessment, but he failed to consider the Lord’s presence in David’s life.

Saul was looking at the physical strength of this youth, and not at the Spirit within him. Saul had difficulty understanding things of the Spirit. He tries to explain to David that he is too small, too young, and too inexperienced to go against the giant.

Verses 34-37: Before he gained public prominence as Israel’s champion and king, David learned humility and confidence in the Lord while out in the fields tending sheep, with no one but God watching. Only faithfulness in the small things prepares God’s servants for greater service in His kingdom (Luke 16:10).

1 Samuel 17:34 "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:"

In answer to his objection of inability to encounter with one so superior to him; and this answer is founded on experience and facts, and shows that he was not so weak and inexperienced as Saul took him to be.

"Thy servant kept his father's sheep": Which he was not ashamed to own, and especially as it furnished him with a stance of his courage, bravery, and success, and which would be convincing to Saul.

"And there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock": Not that they came together; though Kimchi so interprets it, "a lion with a bear"; but these are creatures that do not associate together. Besides, both could not be said with propriety to take one and the same lamb out of the flock: to which may be added, that David (in 1 Samuel 17:35), speaks only of one, “out of whose mouth he took the lamb”; The meaning can only be, that at different times they would come and take a lamb, a lion at one time, and a bear at another.

1 Samuel 17:35 "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."

Whether a lion or a bear; but mention after being made of his beard, a lion rather is meant.

"And smote him": either with his fist, or rather with his shepherd's staff.

"And delivered it out of his mouth": Snatched it out from thence, or obliged him to drop it, by beating him.

"And when he arose against me": After he had let go the lamb, threatening to tear him in pieces for attempting to disturb him in his prey, and take it away from him.

"I caught him by his beard": Such as lions have; hence a lion is often called in Homer, the well-bearded lion. Kimchi thinks the beard with the nether jaw is meant, which David caught hold on.

"And smote him, and slew him": Tore him to pieces, as Samson did (Judges 14:5), or slew him with some weapon in his hand.

The incidents with the bear and the lion were actually two different instances. There were bears and lions in this area at the time of David. In fact, they were feared greatly by the shepherds tending their sheep. David is telling this to Saul to make him realize that he has no fear of Goliath. He also is saying that Goliath would be no worse foe than the lion, or the bear, which he had killed earlier.

1 Samuel 17:36 "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."

"The lion and the bear": Just as David tended his flock of sheep and protected them from the lion and bear, his new responsibility as shepherd over Israel required him to eliminate the threat of Goliath.

The thing that angered David worse than anything else was the fact that this giant is actually coming against God, when he comes against God's people. David truly believes that he can kill Goliath.

1 Samuel 17:37 "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."

"The Lord ... he will deliver me": Just as Jonathan believed earlier (14:6). David had a wholehearted faith in the God of Israel.

"The Lord be with thee": One of the first explicit indications in the text that Saul knew that the Lord was with David (15:28).

David was very well aware that the strength he had to kill the bear and the lion was not his own, but the strength of God within him. He believes God will be with him as he fights Goliath. David is so confident, that it convinces Saul. Saul tells him to go ahead and do it. Saul knows that when the LORD is with someone, he can do miraculous things. Saul speaks the blessing on David, "the LORD be with thee".

1 Samuel 17:38 "And Saul armed David with his armor, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail."

Not with what he wore himself; for it cannot be thought he would strip himself of his armor in the field of battle, and when just going to it. Besides what suited the one would not be fit for the other, their bulk and stature being different. But this was some armor Saul had brought with him, besides what he wore himself, to furnish anyone with it that might want it.

"And he put a helmet of brass upon his head": Such an one, though not so large as Goliath had, these being usually made of brass (see 1 Sam. 17:5).

"Also he armed him with a coat of mail; which probably was of brass also, and like that of Goliath's too, only lesser (1 Sam. 17:5).

1 Samuel 17:39 "And David girded his sword upon his armor, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved [it]. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved [them]. And David put them off him."

Which Saul also perhaps furnished him with.

"And he assayed to go": Made an attempt, and had a mind to go thus equipped; he at first showed an inclination to go in such a habit, but afterwards would not.

"For he had not proved it": As warriors were accustomed to do; so Achilles did; he never made trial of such armor before, he had not been used to it, and knew not how to behave in it, or walk with it on him; it was an encumbrance to him. Abarbinel renders it, "but he had not proved it"; he would have gone with it but for that reason. The Targum is, "because there was no miracle in them;" because if he had made use of this, there would have been no appearance of a miracle in getting the victory over the Philistine, as was by using only a sling and stones.

"And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them": He thought fit to acquaint Saul with it that he could not go thus equipped, and his reason for it, lest he should be offended with him.

"And David put them off him": Took off the helmet from his head, ungirded the sword upon his armor, and stripped himself of his coat of mail, and went forth entirely unarmed.

This armor was too heavy and cumbersome to move around in. It would be an honor for the king to give him his armor. David must refuse because, he cannot freely move around in the king's armor.

1 Samuel 17:40 "And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a srip; and his sling [was] in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine."

"Staff ... stones ... sling": The tools of the shepherd proved to be appropriate weapons also for Israel's shepherd. One of David's honorable and chief men of battle, Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, slew a formidable Egyptian warrior (2 Sam. 23:20-21), with a staff like the one David carried toward Goliath.

The number "five" symbolizes grace. David was clothed in the same clothes he wore to shepherd the sheep. He had a slingshot in his hand, and stopped and picked up the five smooth stones. Smooth stones would be easier to fling in a straight line. David knew the LORD would strengthen him, and he would be victorious.

1 Samuel 17:41 "And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield [went] before him."

Advanced by slow steps because of the weight of his armor and the bulk of his body; yet with a haughty air and a proud gait.

"And the man that bare the shield went before him": (See 1 Sam. 17:7).

1 Samuel 17:42 "And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was [but] a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance."

He looked about for his antagonist, to take a view of him, what sort of a man he was, expecting to see one much like himself; but observing a puny young man, he despised him in his heart, and perhaps looked upon it as an affront to him to send such a man to fight with him.

"For he was but a youth": His age was one reason why he despised him, being, as before observed, about twenty years of age, and not come to his full strength, a stripling, as he is called (1 Sam. 17:56), and another reason follows.

"And ruddy, and of a fair countenance": Looked effeminate, had not the appearance of a soldier, or of a weather beaten veteran, exposed to heat and cold, and used to hardships.

It appears that, David walked out into the valley to meet the Philistine. The giant did not realize at first, that this was just a boy coming against him. Goliath and his armour-bearer came to meet David. When the giant got close enough to see David, he saw this red-haired youth standing here to meet him. David did not have on armor, so that made him look even smaller to Goliath.

"Disdained", in this particular instance, means scorned.

1 Samuel 17:43 "And the Philistine said unto David, [Am] I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods."

"Dog": Goliath uttered a statement of ironic truth about himself of which even he was unaware. As a wild dog can be a threat to the flock and must be chased away or killed, so must Goliath.

When Goliath "curses" David, he cursed God Himself (Gen.12:3). God was bound by His covenant to curse Goliath in return.

The giant cursed David by the Philistine's false gods. The dog was thought of poorly in this area of the world. The Israelites called those who were not Hebrews, dogs. It was a disgrace for the giant, Goliath, to fight against this youth. Goliath felt it made him appear small.

1 Samuel 17:44 "And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field."

This was David's moment of truth. He had just infuriated a giant of a man and if God was not who He claimed to be, David was as good as dead. The plan of redemption for the whole world was at stake, because the Savior was to come through David's descendants.

It was really hard for Goliath to move around in all of this heavy armor. He wants David to come to him. It is not unusual for someone fighting to make bragging statements, like Goliath makes here.

1 Samuel 17:45 "Then said David 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."

"In the name of the Lord of hosts": Goliath came out to battle in his own name; David came to battle in the name of the Lord of all the hosts (armies; compare Deut. 20:1-5).

Goliath had cursed David in the name of his false god. Now, David expresses his own faith in the LORD. In a sense, David is saying, "My God will defeat you Goliath". David has every confidence in the LORD. David says, "you put your faith in your weapons, but I put my faith in my God".

Verses 46-47: David underscored before the battle that his victory would display God's power, "the battle is the Lords" (Psalms 44:6).

1 Samuel 17:46 "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."

"All the earth may know": David fought in the name of the Lord and for the glory of the Lord, whose name and glory will extend to the uttermost parts of the earth, to all nations (Joshua 4:24; 2 Sam. 22:50; Psalm 2).

David is not fighting to receive glory for his own name. He has dedicated this fight to the glory of the God of Israel. Now, David tells Goliath what he will do to him in this battle. Notice, he says, the LORD deliver thee into mine hand. After this battle, all will know the LORD, He is God.

1 Samuel 17:47 "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."

“The battle is the Lord’s” (compare Deut. 31:6; Judges 7:18). David fully understood the chief issue, i.e., the Philistines were in effect challenging the Lord by confronting the Lord’s people.

This statement was as much for these faint-hearted Israelites, as it was for the Philistines. This would renew the faith of the Israelites, as well as cause fear of the Israelite's God to flow through the Philistines. David is assured that the LORD will deliver these Philistines into the hands of the Israelites.

1 Samuel 17:48 "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."

“David hasted”: David, unencumbered by armor or fear and emboldened by faith in God, ran to meet Goliath.

David did not run from them, he ran toward them.

1 Samuel 17:49 "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."

The very first stone that David slung hit the mark. He found an opening on the forehead, just above the eyes, and hit Goliath there. The stone was thrown with such strength, that it sunk into Goliath's head, and he fell forward on his face.

1 Samuel 17:50 "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."

“No sword”: Iron weapons were scarce in Israel (13:19).

A contradiction has been imagined between the various reports as to Goliath’s slaying. (In 2 Sam. 21:19), Elhanan appears to be the one who killed the “Philistine” giant. However (1 Chron. 20:5), reports that Elhanan actually slew Lahmi, Goliath’s brother. The King James resolves the problem by adding the words in italic (“the bother of”) Goliath, to harmonize the three passages.

We see that David easily defeated the Philistine. David did not carry a sword with him to the battlefield.

1 Samuel 17:51 "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."

“Cut off his head”: David completed his promise given to Goliath (in verse 46a). The Philistines would later do the same with Saul’s head (1 Sam. 31:9).

“Fled”: David’s exclamation that there is a God in Israel (verse 46), was proven before the Philistines, who were no strangers to the wrath of Yahweh (1 Sam. Chapters 5-7). They wisely fled in terror, but did not honor the terms of Goliath if he lost (17:6-9).

It was customary to “cut off” a vanquished foe’s “head”, as a sign of decisive victory.

The nearest place to find a sword was on Goliath. David ran to him, and stood on top of him, while he drew Goliath's sword. David had promised to cut off the head of Goliath, and he did that very thing. The Philistines turned and ran when they saw Goliath, their champion, was dead. They were afraid of David's God.

1 Samuel 17:52 "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."

From their encampment and entrenchment, or they prepared for a pursuit.

"And shouted, and pursued the Philistines": Shouted when they first set out, and continued shouting as they pursued, to animate their own troops, and terrify the enemy.

"Until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron": Which was one of the five principalities of the Philistines; so that they pursued them to their own cities, and to the very gates of them.

"And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim": A city in the tribe of Judah, and seems to be the same with Sharaim (see Joshua 15:36). Josephus says, there were killed of the Philistines thirty thousand, and twice as many wounded.

"Even unto Gath, and unto Ekron": Josephus has it, to the borders of Gath, and to the gates of Ashkelon, which were two other principalities of the Philistines. According to Bunting, the whole chase was this, to the valley and river Sorek four miles; from thence to Ekron eight miles; to Ashkelon twenty miles, and to Gath twenty four miles. That is, from the place where Goliath was killed.

1 Samuel 17:53 "And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents."

This was the remainder that escaped having gotten into their fortified cities.

"And they spoiled their tents": Which they left in their camp, all their armor, goods, money, and provisions, they found there, they seized upon as their prey and booty. These they did not stay to meddle with as soon as the Philistines fled, but first pursued them, and slew as many of them as they could. Then returned to the spoil; which was wisely done.

This brave act of David's caused the Israelites to believe they could defeat the Philistines, and they chased them, and fought them. The Israelites killed, and ran off the Philistines that did not die. The Israelites spoiled the tents in the camp of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 17:54 "And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent."

“To Jerusalem”: The Jebusites, who were the inhabitants of Jerusalem, were a stubborn, resistant people (Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21; 19:10-11), particularly to the tribe of Judah. They doubtless began to feel some anxiety concerning the victory of this Beth-lehemite. The head of Goliath was a constant warning to them over the ensuing days as to their future (2 Sam. 5:6-10).

Some have questioned the accuracy of this statement, especially since “Jerusalem” did not fall to Israel until the days of David’s kingship. Actually, no control of Jerusalem need be indicated here. David merely took Goliath’s “head” to the gates of Jerusalem as a sign of David’s own intentions for the city. Like the great Goliath, even Jerusalem would fall to God’s armies.

David kept the armor of Goliath as a trophy. He took the head back to show the people of Jerusalem the power of their God. The armor became the private property of David.

Verses 55-58: Some have suggested a conflict here with the account (in 16:18-23). This is not the case. Although “Saul” knew and loved “David,” his harpist, his question here concerns only the name of the family to which David belonged, so that proper recognition and reward might be given (verse 25). The two accounts are supplementary, not contradictory.

1 Samuel 17:55 "And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son [is] this youth? And Abner said, [As] thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell."

“Abner” (see note on 14:50).

“Whose son”: David’s lineage was of the utmost importance to Saul at this point, since the victor over Goliath would marry into his family (17:25; 18:18).

This surprising question may indicate that Saul’s distressing spirit (16:14-15), affected his mental capacities. Or perhaps he was curious about David’s lineage.

It appears that Saul did not know who David's parents were, and neither did Abner.

1 Samuel 17:56 "And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling [is]."

Still the question is the same, being very desirous of knowing of what family he was, for the reason before given (see 1 Sam. 17:55).

Saul wants to get to know David better. He tells Abner to find out for him, whose son David is?

1 Samuel 17:57 "And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand."

Carrying his head in triumph, and no doubt accompanied with the acclamations of the people.

"Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand": To give an answer to the king's question concerning him, who could best do it but David himself; and that Saul might have the opportunity of rewarding him, according to his merit, for so great a piece of service he had done for Israel, of which the head in his hand was a sufficient proof.

David had brought the head of the Philistine giant with him. It was not difficult to locate him, because of that. Abner takes David for an audience with the king, so the king can ask David himself, who his father is.

1 Samuel 17:58 And Saul said to him, Whose son [art] thou, [thou] young man? And David answered, I [am] the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite.

Still the question was such as did not necessarily imply ignorance of his person, but of his family.

"And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite": Which doubtless refreshed the memory of Saul, and he quickly called to mind who he was. This interview was very probably at Gibeah of Saul, which was the place of his birth and residence (1 Sam. 10:26), and where he kept his court, and to which he returned after the above victory was obtained.

David tells him that his father is Jesse. He explains that Jesse lives in Beth-lehem a few miles from Jerusalem. Saul wants to keep up with this youth. He might need him again.

1 Samuel Chapter 17 Continued Questions

1. What was David appalled about at the battlefield?
2. What had Saul offered to anyone who would kill Goliath?
3. Whose anger was kindled against David, when they heard what he said?
4. What sarcastic question did he ask David?
5. In a sense, what is David's older brother saying to him?
6. Who is the only one who even considered answering Goliath's challenge?
7. What does David say to Saul?

8. Why did Saul think David should not go against Goliath?
9. What incidents does David tell, to make Saul realize he can kill Goliath?
10. Where had David's strength come from?
11. What does Saul tell David, after he heard about the lion and bear that David killed?
12. What did Saul give David, to try to help him in his battle against Goliath?
13. Why did David not take it?
14. What weapon did David carry?
15. How many stones did he pick up out of the brook?
16. What does the number "5" symbolize?
17. Where did David and Goliath meet to fight?
18. Who came out with Goliath?
19. What does "disdained" mean?
20. What did the Philistine say, when he saw David was a youth?
21. The giant cursed David by the Philistine's _____.
22. Why did Goliath want David to come to him?
23. The Philistine had come against David with what instruments of war?
24. David came to the Philistine in the name of the _____ of _____.
25. In a sense, what is David saying to Goliath?
26. What has David dedicated this fight to?
27. Who was the statement, in verse 47, made for?
28. Exactly what did David do, when he ran at Goliath?
29. What happened to Goliath?
30. What did David use to cut off the head of the Philistine?
31. What happened to the rest of the Philistines?
32. What did David do with the head of Goliath?

33. What did David save for himself?