

## 1st Samuel Chapters 17 – John Karmelich

1. Chapter 17 is one of the most famous stories in the bible: David versus Goliath.
  - a) Most children in the western world, religious or nonreligious, know this story.
  - b) It is a wonderful story about facing one's biggest fears and overcoming them.
  - c) It's also challenging to teach a story that people know well.
  - d) Some commentators try to give fresh insights and teach unusual perspectives. I'm a big believer in the cliché, "The plain things are the main things and the main things are the plain things." Therefore, I am going to focus on the fundamental issues of dealing with fears, because that is the central focus of the chapter.
    - i) No matter how long we have been a believer in God, no matter how often we pray or how often we read our bible, fear can come into our hearts because it is so easy to get our focus off of God and unto our problems.
    - ii) That is why stories like David versus Goliath need to be read on an occasional basis. This story is there to remind ourselves that the "Goliath's of our lives can be overcome if we focus on God and not the giants themselves.
2. Before I get into the chapter itself, it is also important to see the story in perspective of the surrounding chapters.
  - a) In the past two chapters, we have seen the prophet Samuel tell King Saul that due to his lack of complete obedience, he will no longer be king.
  - b) God tells Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint David-the-boy as the next king of Israel. Because David is too young to be king now, there is still going to be a long period of time as we watch David's rise to power and Saul's fall from power.
  - c) The focus of the last chapter was on Samuel's anointing of David. The chapter was mostly about Samuel and the lessons God was teaching Samuel.
    - i) Although we learn a few things about the David-the-boy in the last chapter, one thing that caught my attention is that there is not one quote by David in the last chapter. There is no mention of David speaking.
    - ii) The chapter tells about God picking David. It tells how David was anointed to be a future king. He then went back (implied) to feeding the sheep. It also tells how David was called into service as a musician and an armor-bearer for King Saul.
    - iii) Chapter 17 is the first we read of David actually speaking. It is also the first act of bravery we read about David.
    - iv) Chapter 18 (next lesson) begins a many-chapter series on the rise of David and the fall of Saul. Saul's first attempt to kill David happens in Chapter 18.
  - d) So in-between the history lessons of the anointing and the rise of David, is this story of bravery by David. My question is, "Why is this chapter included? It teaches of bravery and facing fear, but what does it have to do in context of the surrounding chapters?"
    - i) The issue I'm getting at is the "word-picture" concept of redemption. That theme runs throughout the entire bible.
    - ii) One has to remember that God made promises to protect his people. Just because the Israelites picked a loser of King in Saul ☹️ doesn't negate God's unconditional promises to protect "His people". They are still His people despite their actions and God will always protect them.
    - iii) That lesson also applies to us. No matter how much we mess up, God still loves us with an unconditional love. If God is perfect in love, than He must love us perfectly. We can "mess up", but God cannot "unlove" what He loves.

- iv) Which leads us back to David. Israel messed up in picking Saul. God is saying in effect, "I told you this is wrong. You wouldn't listen. You'll have to pay the price for your mistakes. That does not mean that I, God have abandoned you. In fact, I am working on a redemption plan for you.
  - v) At that time, redemption came through David. David's defeat of Goliath meant the Israelites had relief from their enemies, the Philistines. It is another example of God's model of redemption that runs through the bible.
  - vi) Remember that one of the nicknames (titles) for the Messiah is the "Son of David". It is a commonly used term in the New Testament as Jesus is a direct descendant of David. David was sent by God as redeemer of His people. That is a model of how the Messiah is a redeemer of those who choose to follow Him.
- e) OK, time to go face a giant. ☺
3. Verse 1: Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Socoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Socoh and Azekah. <sup>2</sup> Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. <sup>3</sup> The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.
- a) Try to picture a big valley with a narrow ravine at the bottom. From the bottom of the valley are two hillsides rising up from the ground.
    - i) On one side of the valley are the Israelites; on the other side are the Philistines.
    - ii) Given the narrow ravine on the bottom, neither army could use chariots or horses to go attack the other side. Therefore, there is a stalemate for the moment.
  - b) There is no mention of why this war was occurring or how the armies happen to be assembled at this location. The end of the last chapter was about the anointing of David and the "distressing spirit" bothering Saul. Now we are reading of this war gathering.
    - i) Therefore, "some time past" since the last chapter. David might be a few years older than the events of the last chapter. We don't have a time frame.
4. Verse 4: A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. <sup>5</sup> He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; <sup>6</sup> on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. <sup>7</sup> His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him.
- a) Here is the first we read of Goliath. A more literal translation is that he was over "six cubits" in height. A cubit is roughly 18 inches, so Goliath would be over 9 feet tall.
    - i) Personally, I don't have any trouble with this being a literal translation. Is it possible this was an exaggeration as the story was retold through the years? Possibly, but there is also archeological evidence of ancient people growing to great heights.
    - ii) Some commentators spend a lot of time defending the literalness of Goliath's height. Personally, I always state, "If you can handle the first sentence of the bible, you can handle the rest". If you believe in a God capable of making the heavens and the earth, then it is possible to have a 9-foot tall man.
  - b) The emphasis is these three verses are on how big this guy was.
    - i) There is a classical joke that came from when Johnny Carson was the host of the Tonight Show on television. To paraphrase, he would say, Goliath is very big. The audience would yell out, "How big is he?" and Johnny would go from there to tell a bunch of jokes to describe how big he is.
    - ii) In that sense, that is what we have here. The description of his helmet, his armor, his spear, are all relevant to a man who is over 9 feet tall and muscular. Again, I happen to hold a literal view of all of this equipment.

- iii) The point of this description is that it is intimidating. If the fact that Goliath is nine feet tall doesn't get you, then all of the armor-descriptions would scare a soldier. Most people could not lift the weight of his armor.
      - a) At this point I can get into a detailed study of all of Goliath's equipment, but in a short time you're going to forget the details. What is important is that Goliath in his size, stature, and equipment is intimidating to anyone.
- 5. Verse 8: Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. <sup>9</sup> If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." <sup>10</sup> Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." <sup>11</sup> On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.
  - a) Goliath was proposing a "civilized" way to end the battle stalemate.
    - i) Remember that the Israelites were on one side of the valley and the Philistines were on the other side of the valley.
    - ii) To paraphrase Goliath, "Attention Israelites. As opposed to both sides attacking and lots of people getting killed, how about you Israelites send out your best soldier. We fight one on one to the death. Whoever wins that battle will win the war and the losers have to be servants to the winners."
  - b) The key words to this paragraph are the last ones in Verse 11: "Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified."
    - i) First we read that Saul was terrified.
      - a) Remember one of the reasons why God picked Saul and the Israelites liked this guy was that he was head and shoulders taller than anyone else (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 9:2, 10:23). I'm guessing the people looked at Saul and said, "Hey, we picked you because you're a tall dude. You go attack this guy!" ☺
      - b) Remember that Saul was a reflection of what the people wanted. The Israelites dealt with fear and God gave them a king who reflected that fear.
    - ii) Next we read that all the Israelites were terrified.
      - a) I guess the Israelites forgot their bible lessons. ☺ God promised the Israelites that He would drive out their enemies before them (Ref. Exodus 23:30, Deuteronomy 7:22). The Israelites were focusing on their problems at hand and not on the bible.
      - b) Before we shake our heads and tisk-tisk the Israelites, think of situations where you were scared to death you couldn't get through them, and "somehow" God got you through.
      - c) One of the reasons David stands out in this story (coming up) is that he puts his trust in God's promises over the situation at hand. The armies of Israel were looking at Goliath and thinking they couldn't win. They were focusing on their problems and not God.
- 6. Verse 12: Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's time he was old and well advanced in years. <sup>13</sup> Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. <sup>14</sup> David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, <sup>15</sup> but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.
  - a) Here we get an introduction of David again.
    - i) It seemed strange to me that the bible just didn't refer to David as "just David" at this point. In Verse 12, we have the mention of his father Jesse and the fact that David was one of 8 sons.

- ii) In fact, we get a partial family listing of David's three oldest brothers. The only direct mention of David is the fact he went back and forth between the battle and home. He probably delivered news back and forth as well as supplies.
    - iii) In the last chapter, when Samuel wanted to anoint a son of Jesse, and didn't know which one to anoint, these same three brothers were mentioned, but no one else.
    - iv) I suspect these three brothers were the only ones "of age" that were capable of being a king at the moment, just as they were the only ones capable of being a soldier at this moment. That is why they were listed.
  - b) I think the point of these verses is to show how "insignificant" David was before he was went to go attack Goliath.
    - i) David wasn't one of the soldiers on the battlefield. He was the youngest of eight boys (I feel bad for his mother ☺) and was home taking care of the sheep.
    - ii) David was the most insignificant as he was the youngest.
    - iii) OK John, and your point is? ☺ Never, never underestimate how God can use you or me in any situation. What is "insignificant" to the world is an opportunity to God. If God picked a soldier to overthrow Goliath, that soldier would get "partial credit" due to his military skills. With David, God gets all the glory.
      - a) One of the patterns you pick up throughout the bible is how God goes out of his way to pick "insignificant" people to lead others to redemption. Most of the bible hero's come from unknown backgrounds. Often they have their own fears and shortcomings to deal with. The point is God wants to show us that He can and does pick anybody to do His will, as long as we are willing to give God the glory for the victories.
7. Verse 16: For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.
- a) Maybe it's just me, but if I was in this valley with the Israelites, and Goliath came out bragging every day for 40 days, I would start looking for a bow and arrow. At the least, I would some fruit and vegetables to throw at the guy. ☺
    - i) I guess if a bunch of Israelites attacked the guy, a bunch of Philistines would respond and everyone was scared to start a full-fledged war.
  - b) The number "40" in the bible is associated with trials:
    - i) With Noah, the rain lasted for 40 days and 40 nights. (Genesis 7:12)
    - ii) The Nation of Israel wandered in the desert for 40 years (Numbers 14:33)
    - iii) Jesus fasted 40 days before he began his public ministry (Matthew 4:2)
    - iv) So here we have another "40" days of Goliath harassing the Israelites.
  - c) Try to picture this 9-foot guy with all the armor standing up at the bottom of the valley, taunting the Israelites to send over a man. I'm guessing the shape of the valley was a natural sound amphitheater where everyone could hear the guy's yells.
8. Verse 17: Now Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. <sup>18</sup> Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them. <sup>19</sup> They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines."
- a) The next step in the story is David's father Jesse tells David to go take some food to his three oldest brothers in the battle.
  - b) Notice how God is working in the background. If Jesse only had three sons in the battle, Jesse had five other sons to choose from to send food to the battle. Remember that Jesse knew David was anointed and one wonders if he picked David for that reason.

- c) Maybe Jessie figured, “Well, if David is going to be king one day, then I know David won’t get killed going back and forth. It’s safe to send him.” Either way, Jessie was trusting in God’s future promises by sending David to the battle.
  - d) The verse also mentions that Jessie took food for the commander of his three sons as well as for the sons themselves. Jessie was taking care of those who were taking care of our children. That is a subtle reminder for us to help support those who are influencing our children, from their teachers to their youth pastors to whatever mentors they have.
  - e) I suspect that David has not been to the front for at least the 40-day time span that Goliath was threatening everyone. Given David’s personality, if David had been there say, two weeks ago, he would have challenged Goliath then. One gets the impression that when David gets there, it is the first he hears of Goliath. Therefore, it has been at least 40 days since David has been back and forth from the battlefield.
9. Verse 20: Early in the morning David left the flock with a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry. <sup>21</sup> Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. <sup>22</sup> David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and greeted his brothers. <sup>23</sup> As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. <sup>24</sup> When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear.
- a) It’s interesting to read all of this from David’s perspective.
    - i) All David was doing was being obedient to his father. His father told him to take supplies to the battle and David started walking (or possibly riding a mule).
      - a) It was about a 15-mile journey from Bethlehem to the battlefield.
  - b) Also notice how the text says, “David left his things with the keeper of supplies”.
    - i) In other words, he didn’t abandon his job of taking care of the sheep just because his father sent him off on another assignment.
    - ii) This is a reminder of the principal that God tests our faithfulness in “little things” before we move on to bigger assignments. Sometimes we think of our own little roles in life as insignificant. Often those roles are tests by God before we get “promoted” to bigger opportunities.
  - c) This scene would make a great play or movie. Imagine David walking up to the brothers and saying, “Hey guys, greetings from home. I brought some fresh cheese sandwiches to eat. ☺ Then, all of sudden, Goliath makes his daily appearance, and everyone, including David’s three brothers run for the nearest cleft to go hide. David is probably standing there thinking, “What is everyone running for?”
  - d) This text is another reminder how “fear” like faith is contagious. Notice in Verse 20 that the Israel army was preparing for battle. It is almost as if “we’re sick and tired of this guy taunting us” and they get ready to charge. When Goliath appears, the fear comes back.
10. Verse 25: Now the Israelites had been saying, "Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his father's family from taxes in Israel."
- a) Verse 25 is another example of the fear of Saul. Instead of Saul leading an attack against Goliath, Saul spreads the word in effect that if anyone is willing to challenge Goliath, they will get money, his daughter (i.e., become a prince) and be tax exempt for life.
    - i) On the surface, it sounds pretty impressive. Even if the daughter wasn’t that good looking, it’s hard to say no to a lifetime of tax exemption. ☺
    - ii) The problem is it also shows a lack of leadership by Saul. This is Saul also saying in effect, “I’m too scared to fight this guy myself. I’m desperate for someone to fight the guy so here is my incentive”. Saul’s fear spread to the camp.

11. Verse 26: David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" <sup>27</sup> They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, "This is what will be done for the man who kills him."
- a) These verses teach that David did not hear of Saul's incentive program.
  - b) Notice David was willing to take a stand even before he heard of the rewards.
  - c) It's just my opinion, but even if Saul never made this offer, David was more than willing to take on Goliath. My point is David didn't do it for the financial incentive, he did it because David couldn't stand the thought of the God of Israel being taunted.
  - d) This leads us into the whole issue of taking a stand when people ridicule God.
    - i) In such cases, should we physically attack people? This is a complicated question. On one hand, we are not to make Christian converts by force. If you put a gun to someone's head, they won't convert out of a change of heart, but a fear of the gun. On the other hand, God expects us to be His witnesses to the world and not be passive when God is publicly mocked.
    - ii) You know the expression, "any publicity is good publicity?" That is why in some cases, ignoring ridicule is best. There are other more serious situations where it needs to be directly confronted and God defended.
      - a) For those that don't know, there is a whole field of Christianity called "apologetics". That is a Greek word that is not about apologizing, but about giving reasons to defend one's faith and why one believes.
      - b) "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15b NIV)
    - iii) There is a saying that "In order for evil to win, all it takes is for good people to do nothing". One of the great lessons of David and Goliath is the willingness of "someone" to take a stand and make a difference.
    - iv) The epilogue of this chapter is the Israelite army routing the Philistines after David's victory. It was never David's intent to lead the army. His only intent was to take a stand for God. My point is we never know how God can use one person and the impact it can have on many others.
12. Verse 28: When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he 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 only to watch the battle."
- a) Well, so much for Eliab's gratitude for David bringing him the bread and cheese. ☺
  - b) Here we have this one verse reference to David's older brother. He sees David coming to visit him and essentially, curses David out for coming to watch the battle.
  - c) The interesting part about this verse is it "pretty much ends here".
    - i) There is no further discussion between Eliab and David.
    - ii) There is no punishment by God to Eliab making this statement.
    - iii) It appears the main purpose of this statement is to show some family resentment, at least between the oldest brother and the youngest brother.
  - d) Let me throw some ideas at you to consider:
    - i) Remember the Israelite army is scared. That would include David's three older brothers who were part of the army. Could Eliab be taking his frustrations out on David? Remember Eliab knew that David was anointed by Samuel. Could this be a streak of jealousy in the older brother?

- e) What this verse does show is that David was initially rejected by his own family. For a guy who is going to be king, he couldn't even win the hearts over of his own brothers, let alone the people of Israel.
    - i) This reminds me of something Jesus taught: "A prophet is not without honor (i.e. has honor) except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." (Mark 6:4b, NIV)
    - ii) Jesus point is that the hardest converts to win are often members of your own family. Jesus half-brothers knew him as their oldest brother and never accepted him as the Messiah until after the resurrection.
    - iii) A lesson to learn as Christians is that we are usually called to preach to people other than our own family. If Jesus couldn't convince his own brothers of his deity, how are we ever to be witnesses to our own siblings? Don't get me wrong, I strongly believe in being a good witness to my extended family and praying for them. My point is that sometimes the best "witness" to a sibling is someone outside the immediate family.
  - f) I also see "a demonic spiritual overtone" to this section:
    - i) Did Satan know that David would be the next king? Of course, he was aware that Samuel anointed him.
    - ii) Did Satan know that the Messiah could come through David? Don't know. Satan was aware that the tribe of Judah would produce the Messiah, as there were predictions to that effect back in Genesis Chapter 49. So Satan is aware that David was from the tribe of Judah and that God anointed him as a future king.
    - iii) Therefore, consider the possibility that the taunting by his older brother, and the future harassment by King Saul has "demonic overtones" as Satan's primary goal is to stop or at least slow down God's redemptive plan for mankind.
13. Verse 29: "Now what have I done?" said David. "Can't I even speak?"<sup>30</sup> He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before.<sup>31</sup> What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him.
- a) Notice David's remark in Verse 29: "Now what have I done?"
    - i) That speaks volumes. That alone tells us that this conflict between brothers was not the first recorded incident between the two.
  - b) The next thing David does is turn to someone else and inquire about Goliath.
    - i) Remember a few verses back that David was questioning, "Who is this Goliath guy anyway? Why doesn't someone attack him?"
    - ii) The point here is David walks away from his brother. David didn't just sit there and argue with his brother. David is not going to let the fact that his brother has a problem with him to stop what God called him to do. That's a nice model for us. When God calls us to do something, and we start getting ridiculed for our ideas, don't let that discourage us. Walk away and focus on what God calls us to do.
    - iii) "Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife; quarrels and insults are ended." (Proverbs 22:10, NIV)
  - c) The last part of this paragraph tells how David's willingness to fight Goliath was reported to Saul. Remember this is an army dealing with fear. Everyone was looking for someone to step up and challenge Goliath. Once word got out around the camp that David was interested, word got back to King Saul and then Saul sent for him.

14. Verse 32: David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." <sup>33</sup> Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth."
- a) Here we have King Saul trying to talk David out of fighting Goliath. Saul reminds David that he is just a boy while Goliath was trained to be a soldier since he was a boy.
  - b) This leads back to a verse from the last chapter:
    - i) "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16:7 NIV)
    - ii) What was King Saul doing to David? "looking at the outward appearance". Saul was sizing up David and came to the conclusion he didn't size up. ☺
    - iii) Saul saw David as a brave, but naïve young man willing to stand up but knew he would be no match for Goliath.
  - c) What is to be noticed is the determination of David:
    - i) His older brother basically yelled at David and said go home.
    - ii) The King of Israel said to David, "Sorry kid, you're not qualified".
    - iii) Did David listen to his brother? No! Did David listen to the king? No!
    - iv) Part of the inspiration of this story is David willing to take a stand for God despite those around him saying he couldn't do it. Leadership often requires standing up to those who are trying to lead us.
    - v) If you believe God is calling you to a specific task or mission, don't let others mock you or say you can't do it, despite their position of prominence. The world is full of people who say "you can't do this". Which leads back to God's comment of "The Lord looks at the heart". If you have a heart for God, the body follows.
15. Verse 34: But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. <sup>36</sup> Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. <sup>37</sup> The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."
- a) David here is giving his military resume to King Saul. ☺ He is stating that while being a shepherd, he has killed both a lion and a bear in order to protect them. David closes with "if God has protected me from a lion and bear, he will also protect me from Goliath".
  - b) David is not saying this to brag. Remember that David is in front of King Saul. If Saul says he can't go fight, David has to obey that order.
    - i) Therefore, it is necessary for David to plead his case before Saul.
    - ii) Also notice that David doesn't give himself credit, but God. David states that it was the LORD who delivered him and not his own skills.
  - c) In a sense, David understood that there was no way Goliath could kill him.
    - i) David understood that Samuel had anointed David to be the next king.
      - a) If David understood Samuel to be a prophet from God and David believed God, then God must rescue David from Goliath.
      - b) That alone is a wonderful example of faith. David knew God had a plan for his life, and it involved being the next king. Notice David didn't mention that part to Saul. ☺ But David did know that since this would happen "one day", then God must rescue David from Goliath the same way God rescued David from a lion and from a bear.
    - ii) That is the secret to having faith. God makes all sorts of promises to believers. Our job is to trust in those promises and walk by faith "it will happen".



- iii) One of the classic promises that most Christians learn is, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV).
      - a) That promise was given to Jeremiah during one of the roughest times of his life. Since (not if!) God loves us with an unconditional love, we too can trust in that same promise given to Jeremiah. If we are trusting in that promise that we are to live knowing that God is going to do great things in our life. Does that mean we'll avoid disaster and tragedy? No. Jeremiah had to suffer tremendously and we may too. The point is that God can and does use people for His glory and we get to be part of that plan.
- 16. Verse 37b: Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."
  - a) OK, the sales pitch worked. ☺ Saul gave the ok for David to fight Goliath.
- 17. Verse 38: Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. <sup>39</sup> David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off.
  - a) Saul's next idea was to say to David in effect, "OK kid, if you're going to fight Goliath, you are going to need some military equipment. Take my armor and sword. David tried it, and then took it off and said, "I am not used to them." I suspect David could barely walk in this equipment and took it off.
  - b) From "human logic", Saul was doing the right thing. If David was going to fight Goliath, then at the least, he would need a sword and some protective equipment.
    - i) The problem with Saul (among other things ☺) is that he always saw things from the human perspective and not God's perspective. David understood that God would protect him and none of this "stuff" would help him. If anything, it would only hinder him.
    - ii) Notice how God gets all the glory through the inevitable victory over Goliath. If David had worn any of this stuff, Saul could have bragged, "Well, if it wasn't for the fact that David used my sword, he never would have won". God does not share his glory with anyone. It was necessary for David to reject the equipment.
      - a) I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols." (Isaiah 42:8b NIV)
  - c) We also get back to the concept of "doing God's will and not letting anyone stop you." Be careful of the world trying to "help you" in doing God's work. Sometimes that help is more of a hindrance than help.
- 18. Verse 40: Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.
  - a) There is a classic bit of bible trivia one can play with this verse. Here it mentions that David took five stones to go fight Goliath.
    - i) The question becomes, if David trusted God, why was it necessary for David to get five stones? Was David afraid he might miss on the first few shots?
    - ii) The classic response is that Goliath had 4 brothers (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 21:19 and 22). David was ready to take on the whole family! ☺ Now did David know Goliath had 4 brothers when he picked up the five stones? I doubt it. It is just a "cute little connection" between the five stones with Goliath and his four brothers.
  - b) Another interpretation is that the number "five" in the bible is associated with the grace of God. David getting five stones maybe a word picture of God showing unmerited favor (i.e., grace) on David in his battle against Goliath.

19. Verse 41: Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. <sup>42</sup> He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. <sup>43</sup> He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. <sup>44</sup> "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"
- a) Here comes the classic confrontation between David and Goliath.
    - i) Goliath begins by taunting David.
    - ii) Notice inverse 43 that Goliath cursed David "by his gods". That means that Goliath specifically cursed the God of Israel as well as David himself.
  - b) Another famous bible proverb is "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18 NIV). That means that a good sign that someone is about to "go down" is that they are full of pride.
    - i) Archeologists have found what they believe is the style of armor that was worn by Goliath. This includes a full helmet shield. Picture the type of helmet worn by a medieval knight, the kind that covers the entire face. In other words, Goliath had a face shield to protect himself against say, a slingshot. The problem is Goliath was full of pride. His ego was thinking, "I'm so much better than this kid, I don't even have to lower my face shield.
      - a) Obviously I'm reading things into the text that are not there. My point is that Goliath's ego was his downfall. Proverbs 16:18 applies to him.
      - ii) I remember Mel Gibson in the movie "The Patriot" describing the British General leading the opposition. The comment was in effect, "The man is brilliant, but he had a big ego. That ego can be used against him." That is Mel Gibson applying Proverbs 16:18.
  - c) Let's get back to pointing out David's faith and trust in God.
    - i) David's own brother tried to stop David. Didn't work.
    - ii) King Saul had his doubts about sending David. Didn't stop David.
    - iii) Saul tried to "help" David with armor. David turned it down.
    - iv) Now here is "Big Goliath" trying to taunt David. David got past the fear of Goliath by focusing on the power of God, which David understood to be bigger than the size and pompous words of Goliath.
20. Verse 45: David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with 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. <sup>46</sup> This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup> All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."
- a) To me, this is the high point of the story. To me, the battle is already over. Even if David were to lose the battle, redemption would come to the Nation of Israel by some other means because in the end, "God always wins" and God always fulfills his promises.
  - b) That is essentially what David is saying here. David knew he was going to win.
    - i) Not because David was stronger. Not so David could show off his slingshot skills. David's best line in the chapter is, "The whole world will know that there is a God in Israel". David wanted to be used by God to glorify God.
    - ii) That's the ideal Christian life in a nutshell. We turn our lives over to God for the purpose of glorifying Him. We desire to do God's will, not so much that we'll be better people, but that God Himself gets the glory for our lives.

- c) Notice in Verse 46 David says, "I'll strike you down and cut off your head."
    - i) Remember David wasn't carrying a sword! In order for David to do that, he had to kill Goliath with his slingshot and then kill Goliath with his own sword!
  - d) The next issue is, "Why was David doing this public taunt of Goliath?"
    - i) I doubt it was to put any fear into Goliath. In David's mind, Goliath was dead.
    - ii) The purpose was for everyone in earshot to understand that, "There is a God in Israel". This message was meant for the Philistines as well as the fearful Israelites.
  - e) Here's something to think about: Does God ever want us to kill nonbelievers when they are taunting "the true God?" No.
    - i) One of the Ten Commandments is not to murder. (Exodus 20:13). To kill in self-defense is not murder. Here was Goliath the soldier threatening the armies of Israel. This is a self-defense killing.
  - f) The final thing to notice is David's comment, "It is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."
    - i) Translation: You can't defeat God's will with superior technology.
      - a) "No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you." (Isaiah 54:17 NIV)
21. Verse 48: As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. <sup>49</sup> Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.
- a) Here is the actual killing of Goliath. To me, this is almost an epilogue to the story.
    - i) David trusted in deliverance of God and God "came through".
    - ii) David knew that he was going to be king one day and therefore "how" God rescued David from Goliath was "God's problem". David had to win because God's reputation was on the line.
  - b) The secret to winning the battles of life is not superior technology or superior skills, but trusting that the outcome belongs to God. Does that mean we win every battle in life? Of course not. Sometimes losing is part of "God's will" too. This is about our attitude. The secret of life is to know that "History is written in advance" and God knows the outcome of all battles. If we trust in that knowledge, and know that God wants the best for us, we can have a positive outcome.
    - i) A modern illustration is like watching your favorite television hero on a weekly series. You know that somehow, "The hero will get out of this mess" because he has another show to do next week. ☺ You don't know how the hero will get out of that mess, but you know they will. God works that way in our lives. We don't have to worry because God wants the best for us and God wants to work through us to glorify Him. If we learn to live that way, it changes our perspective and, frankly, we'll enjoy life a lot more as well!
  - c) Notice that David beat Goliath "based on the skills he had acquired".
    - i) David knew how to use a slingshot. Years of being a shepherd taught him how to use it and protect the sheep.
    - ii) My point is "God does use what skills we do have". Never underestimate what God-given talent and skills you have acquired in life and how God can use them.

22. Verse 50: So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him. <sup>51</sup> David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.
- a) David didn't cut off his head to make sure he was dead. The stone already killed him. David cut off his head to fulfill David's own vow to do so. It was also a public demonstration of leadership. David wanted the Israelites to see that this enemy was "beatable". It was done as inspiration to the Israelite army as well as to show the Philistines that you don't mess with the God of Israel.
23. Verse 51b: When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. <sup>52</sup> Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron. <sup>53</sup> When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp. <sup>54</sup> David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, and he put the Philistine's weapons in his own tent.
- a) A few bits of geography to help to explain the verses: There were five towns in Israel that were controlled or dominated by the Philistines. (Remember the five golden rats for the five Lords of the Philistines back in Chapter 6?) Two of those towns were Gath and Ekron. They were the two closest to the battlefield.
  - b) The text mentions "men of Israel and Judah". Judah is singled out among the 12 tribes of Israel probably because they were the largest. They are also David's tribe.
  - c) What is interesting is that David brought Goliath's head to Jerusalem.
    - i) At that time, Jerusalem was controlled by the group called the Jebusites. It wasn't until 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel Chapter 5, where David attacked and conquered Jerusalem.
    - ii) It is almost as if David was thinking, "God promised all of this land of Israel to us, and we're going to conquer it. Today it is the Philistines, tomorrow the Jebusites!"
    - iii) It gives you some insight into the faith and thought process of David.
  - d) Also notice how David inspired the Israelite army. These were the guys who were afraid of Goliath and didn't move for 40 days. All it takes is good leadership to change the attitude of an army of people!
24. Verse 55: As Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is that young man?" Abner replied, "As surely as you live, O king, I don't know." <sup>56</sup> The king said, "Find out whose son this young man is." <sup>57</sup> As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with David still holding the Philistine's head. <sup>58</sup> "Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him. David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."
- a) This is a puzzling section of the text. It appears that Saul didn't know who David was. If you read the text carefully, Saul knew it was David. The questions Saul was asking were about David's father Jesse. King Saul wanted to know who David's father was.
  - b) So why was Saul inquiring about David's father at this point?
    - i) One possibility is that Saul promised his daughter would marry whoever defeated Goliath. Maybe Saul just wanted to check out the family.
    - ii) Maybe Saul was just curious about David's faith and assumed his father gets the credit for raising David to have such bravery.
    - iii) The other possibility is that Saul knew that he would lose his kingdom one day and maybe he suspected God was raising up David. So Saul is inquiring as to his background.

- c) The question becomes, “Why is this paragraphs included in the text? How is it relevant to the story and what can we learn from it?
  - i) We don’t get any clues from the next chapter, it changes stories.
  - ii) I think this is about the pitiful lack-of-faith condition of King Saul. Saul was “looking for excuses”. He couldn’t accept the idea that God was working directly through David and was looking for some “logical explanation” of how David won. Maybe Saul figured that his father gave him some special training.
- 25. OK, the giant is dead and it’s time to wrap up for the week. The big word-picture idea has to do with “fear and faith”. It is an overriding theme through all of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel. The story of David and Goliath is another reminder that when we focus on our problems and not God, they become giants and we become afraid to attack them. If we turn the situation over to God, God will work with “whatever we have in our hands” and can overcome any obstacle.
- 26. Let’s pray: Heavenly Father, this is a story that is so familiar to us. That becomes a danger as we tend to read it as a long-ago fairy tale and fail to apply it to our own lives. Help us to remember that you are bigger than any “Goliath” we have to face. Helps us to have the faith of David, who took a stand for God and knew that no obstacle can stand in the way of God’s will. May our faith in You grow so our actions can follow. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.