

1 Samuel 17

- David is anointed and Saul has been afflicted
 - The Lord has brought these two rivals together for a time to season one and chastise the other
 - As David's prominence and strength and notoriety increases
 - Saul's dear, jealousy and paranoia will as well
 - This is all according to God's will, as it brings about the transition of the monarchy from one to the other
 - David's rise began with his time serving Saul as a musician in the court of the king
 - David was a skillful musician who could soothe Saul's anguish from the tormenting of the evil spirit
 - The Lord would drive the evil spirit away whenever David played
 - Creating a strong bond between the two men
 - In addition to playing music, David continued to tend sheep for his father Jesse
 - He's still relatively young
 - So the people, Saul included, don't give David much thought beyond his musical ability
 - But the Lord has great plans for David
 - And what the Lord knows of David's heart He's ready to expose to the people as well
 - He just needs an adversary mighty enough to gain the people's notice
- Today David meets that adversary: Goliath
 - One survey of the most recognized stories of the Bible placed the story of David and Goliath as second only to the account of Jesus' birth
 - Virtually any child that's spent any time in church has heard the story

- Virtually every culture in the world uses the phrase “David and Goliath: to describe victory by an overmatched underdog
- It’s a story of triumph over impossible odds that never grows tired or loses its appeal
- But in the Bible, the story is much more than one of thrill of victory and the agony of defeat
 - It’s a miracle done to validate the anointing of a future king
 - And a test for Saul’s heart
 - And the story begins with a stalemate...

1Sam. 17:1 Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.

1Sam. 17:2 Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array to encounter the Philistines.

1Sam. 17:3 The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them.

1Sam. 17:4 Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

1Sam. 17:5 He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze.

1Sam. 17:6 He also had bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders.

1Sam. 17:7 The shaft of his spear was like a weaver’s beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron; his shield-carrier also walked before him.

- The enemy God raises up comes from among the Philistines
 - These people occupied the coastal plains of Israel
 - They lived predominantly in five cities which we learned about when the ark was captured
 - They stayed in the plains for the most part
 - But they were constantly warring with the Jews, seeking to occupy their high ground
 - From the time of Judges to now, the Lord has used the Philistines threat as a means of punishing Israel

- And once again they are encroaching into the hill country of Judah
 - They gathered near Socoh, in the Elah valley
 - Socoh was a town at the eastern end of the valley, while Azekah was at the western end of the valley
 - The Philistines are camped in the middle of the valley between these cities
- Saul brings his forces into the valley to stop the Philistines from moving further through the valley toward Socoh and into the rest of Judah
 - And the two armies soon become entrenched in a stalemate
 - Armies always seek high ground upon which to gain an advantage over an enemy in combat
 - So the Philistines ran up the mountain on one side of the valley
 - Naturally, the Israelites didn't want to be remain vulnerable by remaining in the valley below
 - So they ran up the mountain on the opposite side of the valley
 - Now the two armies stood on hillsides opposite one another with the valley between them
 - Neither was willing to yield the high ground in order to advance into combat for fear of losing the advantage
 - So a stalemate resulted
 - Both armies stood on their respective hillsides within shouting distance of one another
 - But neither was willing to advance against the other
 - The Philistine people were of Greek origin, so they followed Greek traditions in warfare
 - One of these Greek practices was to settle such stalemates by conducting a single fight between champions
 - Each army would select a man who would engage in a fight to the death
 - Which ever man won the fight would determined the winning army for the entire battle

- Homer recorded this tradition in the *Illiad* when Hector and Achilles battle
- In fact, the word translated “champion” in v.4 is actually the Hebrew word for “man”
- Yet the translators for the NASB chose to use the word champion there to acknowledge the Greek tradition
- So the champion for the Philistines was a man named Goliath
 - His name means “to be made a captive” which is prophetic for where this battle is headed
 - More importantly, he is a ringer
 - Goliath is literally a giant among men
 - He stands over 9 ft (2.75 m) tall, though the Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls say 6 ft 6 in (~2 m)
 - His armor weighed 125 lbs (56.6 kg), the weight of an average man
 - His spearhead alone weighed about 15 lbs (6.8 kg), or about the weight of a shot put
 - Samuel gives us this extended description of Goliath to ensure we get the full picture of what Israel was facing
 - This man is a freak of nature
 - He’s not some supernatural creation, as if a remnant of the Nephilim, for they were destroyed in the flood
 - He’s simply an outlier genetically
 - If he were alive today, he would be the guy who gets drafted by the NBA
 - Or travels with the circus
 - Only this is no game...this is warfare, and this guy is easily capable of killing anyone who challenged him
 - Which is why the Philistines trot him out into the valley to challenge the Israelites

[1Sam. 17:8](#) He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, “Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me.

[1Sam. 17:9](#) “If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us.”

[1Sam. 17:10](#) Again the Philistine said, “I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together.”

[1Sam. 17:11](#) When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

- In keeping with the Greek tradition, Goliath walks down the mountain side and across the valley toward the Israelite army to challenge them
 - He asks the army why is everyone preparing to enter battle?
 - Do you not see I have come out to settle this war one on one?
 - I will represent the Philistines, so send someone who will represent Saul’s army, he says.
 - Then he promises that if he dies, the Philistines army will become slaves of Israel and vice versa
 - Either way, only one man has to die
 - The rest can live, albeit as slaves
 - That’s the offer on the table
 - We know this initial offer was met with silence among the ranks of Israel, because Goliath has to repeat his challenge in v.10
 - In v.10 it says he defied the ranks of Israel
 - The word defy in Hebrew means insult
 - So Goliath was hurling insults at Israel, daring them to send someone down to fight him
 - He was trying to provoke the fight because he was so confident he could beat anyone they sent his way
- Standing in among the troops of Israel’s army is Saul himself
 - We remember from Samuel’s description of Saul that the king stood a full head taller than any other Jew in Israel

- So imagine an army gathered with one guy standing 6-8 inches above the rest
- So if there was one guy in the army who should be sent out to fight a 9 ft giant, it would have been Saul
- And Saul knew it
- Never mind the fact that Saul was the king and a warrior who had defeated stronger enemies in the past
- But the problem this time is Saul lacks the Spirit of God
 - So Saul has no courage or confidence to enter this battle
 - Nor does he have any reason to think the Lord will grant him the victory
 - He's living in his flesh, so all he sees is a superior foe taunting him
 - He's feeling the pressure to rise to the challenge, yet he knows he won't survive so he shrinks back
- So Saul is dismayed and frightened we're told
 - And if the king is frightened into paralysis, then certainly the troops are even more so
 - The army of Israel just stands their ground without taking up the challenge looking foolish
 - And by association, the God of Israel appears to cower in the face of the threats of a pagan
- The army is stuck...they won't attack, but they can't retreat
 - But they can't stay there forever either...with Goliath taunting them

1Sam. 17:12 Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced in years among men.

1Sam. 17:13 The three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and the second to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

1Sam. 17:14 David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul,

[1Sam. 17:15](#) but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem.

[1Sam. 17:16](#) The Philistine came forward morning and evening for forty days and took his stand.

[1Sam. 17:17](#) Then Jesse said to David his son, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves and run to the camp to your brothers.

[1Sam. 17:18](#) "Bring also these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of their thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers, and bring back news of them.

[1Sam. 17:19](#) "For Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines."

[1Sam. 17:20](#) So David arose early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper and took the supplies and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the circle of the camp while the army was going out in battle array shouting the war cry.

[1Sam. 17:21](#) Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle array, army against army.

[1Sam. 17:22](#) Then David left his baggage in the care of the baggage keeper, and ran to the battle line and entered in order to greet his brothers.

[1Sam. 17:23](#) As he was talking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard them.

- Once again, Samuel introduces us to David as the son of Jesse
 - Jesse is a man of eight sons and he is an old man nearing the end of his life
 - Samuel gives us this detail to explain why David is still working with the flock at home
 - Because earlier we were told that David had become an armor bearer for Saul, so we might expect he would have been in the battle
 - But Jesse is old and his three oldest sons were already gone into battle
 - Therefore the family needed David's help
 - So while Saul was away at battle, David went back to his father's home in Bethlehem to serve the family
 - Meanwhile, for forty days the taunting of Goliath continues
 - Forty days is a very long time to remain encamped in the same place under the threat of war

- It had to be a miserable situation for the army, made all the worse by Goliath's taunting
- And if course, the army needs to be fed while they sit on the side of this mountain
- So the people of Israel are mobilized to support the troops (they put yellow ribbons on the trees and bumper stickers on the cars and country music bands sing the national anthem)
 - Out of concern for his sons, Jesse asks David to go to the troops with grain, bread and cheese
 - Basically, he's sending cheese sandwiches to the troops
 - Once again, David is seen as a servant bringing bread to the king
 - And Jesse wants David to return with news of the stalemate
 - As David arrives on this day, the army is moving into a battle array, preparing to attack
 - Apparently, Saul had tired of the stalemate and decided it was better to forfeit his position than withstand the taunting
 - His troops were positioning for the fight and likewise the Philistines were arrayed for battle
 - And into this tense situation, David arrives with grilled cheese sandwiches
 - Seeing the armies preparing to fight, David runs to the front lines without any hesitation
 - This is a first indication of David's fearlessness
 - He seems completely at ease with the prospect of encountering God's enemies despite the obvious danger
 - It's seems the Holy Spirit upon David gives him a courage that transcends human understanding
- As David reaches the front lines, he hears the taunting of Goliath for the first time, and he's aghast at what he hears

1Sam. 17:24 When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid.

1Sam. 17:25 The men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel."

1Sam. 17:26 Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?"

1Sam. 17:27 The people answered him in accord with this word, saying, "Thus it will be done for the man who kills him."

- Having watched the Jewish army demoralized for 40 days by Goliath's taunts, the Philistines shuffle Goliath to the front of the army in preparation for the battle
 - They assume correctly that seeing and hearing Goliath leading the attack will break Israel's will to fight
 - Sure enough, the sight of Goliath leads the men of Israel to break ranks and begin to flee
 - They explain their actions by pointing to Goliath and saying "Have you seen this guy???"
 - And then some repeat an offer Saul must have circulated among the army at some earlier point
 - That if someone would defeat this man, Saul would bestow riches upon the man and give him a daughter
 - Also, the man's house would be made free, which means they would live tax free in Israel the rest of their days
 - Nevertheless, Saul's offer hadn't been enough to motivate any man to battle Goliath
 - David know nothing of the offer, but he assumes that there must some reward for killing the Philistine
 - It's an indication of David's maturity and wisdom that he thought to ask about the reward
 - More importantly, it shows us that David was already thinking he could defeat Goliath

- You don't ask about a reward unless you are seriously considering taking up the challenge
- So we know this young boy is ready to fight a giant warrior
- David's confidence comes not from bravado or pride, which motivated Saul at all times, but from a boasting in the Lord
 - David says this Philistines is bringing reproach upon Israel
 - Reproach is shame or disapproval before an audience of others
 - Israel is suffering shame before the nations of the world because of their seeming impotence before this Gentile enemy
 - David knew Israel was in covenant with the Living God
 - To be in covenant means that the one party is pledged to protect the other
 - To give a life for the other if necessary
 - So when Israel is to be attacked by Gentiles, the Lord is obligated to defend Israel
 - It's David's faith in the promises of God that leads him to have such confidence in the face of a superior enemy
 - The enemy may be superior to Israel, but no enemy is superior to Israel's God
 - And God is in covenant with Israel
- When David asks about the reward, the men around him in the ranks explain what Saul had promised
 - But David's questioning angers his brothers, who were probably eating the sandwiches David brought them

1Sam. 17:28 Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle."

1Sam. 17:29 But David said, "What have I done now? Was it not just a question?"

1Sam. 17:30 Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing; and the people answered the same thing as before.

- David's oldest brother, Eliab, burned with anger against David, so he chastises his brother for asking his questions
 - He accuses David of abandoning his post with the sheep
 - But probably the comment was meant to demean David in the sight of the soldiers since shepherding was a role for children
 - But Eliab goes a step further accusing his brother of insolence and wickedness
 - Insolence means not showing respect where it's deserved
 - Presumably, Eliab is still smarting over Samuel's selection of David instead of him, being the oldest in the family
 - As is often the case, the sins someone believes he sees in another is actually an accurate assessment of himself
 - David was innocent; it was Eliab who was wicked and disrespectful
 - David asks what have I done? I just asked a question
 - David's question poured salt in the wound of the army
 - By contemplating out loud about the reward, he was implying that the challenge could be easily met
 - Since this army had been paralyzed in fear for 40 days, David's question had the effect of implying the army were cowards
 - I'm sure hearing the taunts of Goliath for that long would make anyone's nerves raw, and David just step all over them
 - In reality, David isn't calling the army cowards; he's pointing out their lack of faith
 - David's confidence comes from having a heart after God, one God has placed in David so he would glorify the Lord
 - He knows God's power, God's promises and God's desire to glorify Himself under impossible circumstances
 - It's the story of the Exodus, of Joshua in the land and of the judges
 - And David is expecting to see it again now
 - So David asks again to be sure he understands the terms

- David's interest in obtaining Saul's reward catches everyone's attention, and the word gets back to Saul that someone was ready to take up the challenge

1Sam. 17:31 When the words which David spoke were heard, they told them to Saul, and he sent for him.

1Sam. 17:32 David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

1Sam. 17:33 Then Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth."

1Sam. 17:34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock,

1Sam. 17:35 I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him.

1Sam. 17:36 "Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God."

1Sam. 17:37 And David said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the Lord be with you."

- Saul hears that David is visiting and wishing to claim the reward, so Saul summons him
 - David enters the king's presence and immediately declares that no one need worry, he would fight the battle for the army
 - He sounds like "Have no fear, Underdog is here!"
 - I doubt David's pronouncement would have been any less convincing if he actually were Underdog
 - Saul loses all heart at the sight of David
 - He says you are not able to go against Goliath
 - You are a child, he is a warrior trained since youth
 - Obviously, Saul is thinking entirely in human terms
 - This is Saul's pattern at every turn
 - He moves from relying on the Lord to relying on flesh
 - Later he moves further away from the Lord turning from his flesh to cultic powers seeking deliverance

- The Lord knew that this moment would come, and so He prepared David with experiences David could use to convince Saul the Lord was with him
 - He tells Saul he has already battled lions and bear and won
 - In these days, lions and bear were still indigenous to Palestine
 - And lions being carnivores and bear being omnivores, sheep were often on the menu for both
- Once when a lion or bear would come to attack the flock, David would grab the animal by the main or hide and kill him
 - It's hard to imagine a young boy managing this task without supernatural intervention
 - And that's who David credits when he relates the story
 - And that's his point
 - If the Lord was working to help him kill wild beasts in that way, then certainly David knew the Lord would be with him in battling a man
 - Goliath was just another predator threatening God's flock
- David's story sheds some light on how his relationship and understanding of the Lord developed
 - As we read last week in the Psalms, David was prepared by the Lord from birth with a special heart
 - David knew the Lord from birth
 - And he was being preparing to follow the Lord in a special way through experiences like this
 - That's the only explanation for why a young boy would even consider to engage in a fight with a lion or bear
 - Any normal preteen or even teenager would flee in terror from such a scenario
 - But David engaged in the battle in confidence, not once but twice at least

- This is a man with a very special understanding of God and his power in life
- His thinking is reflected in Psalm 138

Psa. 138:1 I will give You thanks with all my heart;
I will sing praises to You before the gods.

Psa. 138:2 I will bow down toward Your holy temple
And give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth;
For You have magnified Your word according to all Your name.

Psa. 138:3 On the day I called, You answered me;
You made me bold with strength in my soul.

Psa. 138:4 All the kings of the earth will give thanks to You, O Lord,
When they have heard the words of Your mouth.

Psa. 138:5 And they will sing of the ways of the Lord,
For great is the glory of the Lord.

Psa. 138:6 For though the Lord is exalted,
Yet He regards the lowly,
But the haughty He knows from afar.

Psa. 138:7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me;
You will stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies,
And Your right hand will save me.

Psa. 138:8 The Lord will accomplish what concerns me;
Your lovingkindness, O Lord, is everlasting;
Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

- David lived with a confidence that the Lord would answer Him when he called, as the Lord promised
 - It's that confidence that drives so many of David's psalms
 - Saul must have sensed that confidence in David
 - So he tells David to go ahead into battle for Israel
 - But Saul doesn't have the kind of walk with the Lord that David knows
 - He's not capable of seeing the supernatural possibilities even now
 - Saul fears Goliath, while David fears the Lord
 - Therefore, Saul still believes he needs to help the odds a little by equipping David for the battle

[1Sam. 17:38](#) Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor.

[1Sam. 17:39](#) David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. So David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." And David took them off.

[1Sam. 17:40](#) He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.

- In a somewhat comical moment, Saul attempts to dress David in his battle garments and armor
 - Remembering Saul's height and David's youth, we can only imagine that David was swimming in Saul's clothing
 - Once more, Saul trusts in armor more than the Lord
 - Even to the point that he would handicap David's movements in battle
 - Robert Gordon said that Saul tried to turn David into an armadillo, hiding him behind the armor
 - Out of respect for the king, David gives a try at wearing the ridiculous outfit
 - But quickly, he says I can't go to battle with these
 - He says they aren't "tested" which means he hasn't learned to use the equipment
 - It was a polite way of dismissing them without stating the obvious...they didn't fit
- Instead of a sword or armor, David chose to go to battle with something he had tested well: a sling and a few stones
 - And no doubt David traveled with his sling everywhere since it was a primary weapon of defense for shepherds
 - He collects five smooth stones
 - Along one side of the valley runs a small brook that turns dry most of the year

- The Jewish army occupied the side of the valley where the river ran
- So David simply dropped back a short distance from the army to collect his stones
- We don't know why David collected five, since he only uses one
- But the number 5 in scripture is the number for grace, which suggest the Lord is working to grant His favor upon David
- It's unclear exactly the size of these stones though most of us assume smallish river stones
 - Archaeologists who have studied shepherd's slings used in this period of history tell us the stones were more likely the size of baseballs
 - And the speed of the stone thrown by a sling approached the speed of a big league pitch (80 mph or 128 kph)
 - So getting hit by such a stone would leave quite an impression
- A sling of this day is nothing like the one sold to children today
 - In David's time, a sling was a long piece of tanned leather doubled over with a pouch attached at the fold
 - A large stone could be placed in the pouch
 - Then the shepherd held both ends of the strap in one hand while swinging it rapidly to gain speed
 - At just the right moment, the shepherd released one end of the strap launching the stone at high speed
- Experienced shepherds could send stones flying hundreds of feet with great accuracy
 - They used slings to control the sheep, scare off predators or defend against thieves
 - No doubt David was very accomplished in using his sling against moving targets at great distance (like sheep)
 - So the prospect of hitting a large, stationary target like Goliath would be child's play for David

- Then David enters battle

[1Sam. 17:41](#) Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him.

[1Sam. 17:42](#) When the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance.

[1Sam. 17:43](#) The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

[1Sam. 17:44](#) The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field."

[1Sam. 17:45](#) Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.

[1Sam. 17:46](#) "This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And 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,

[1Sam. 17:47](#) 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."

[1Sam. 17:48](#) Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.

[1Sam. 17:49](#) And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground.

[1Sam. 17:50](#) Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand.

[1Sam. 17:51](#) Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

- David went out and Goliath met him, but he took one look at David and became insulted
 - The Jewish army had sent out a young boy to defeat Goliath
 - Even worse, they sent a pretty boy
 - In this case, the point is that David was not a hardened warrior
 - And it's clear David hadn't even been a participant in the encampment, since he didn't show the wear of a 40-day encampment

- Goliath says do you think I'm like a dog that needs to be disciplined with a stick?
 - And then Goliath, in his anger at being dismissed so disrespectfully, begins to curse David by the Philistine gods
 - Finally, he taunts David promising to kill him easily and leave his body as food for birds
- This is prideful bravado, of course, but it's very similar to Saul's perspective too
 - Earthly, fleshly, entirely devoid of any consideration for the God of Israel and His power
 - The taunt is important because it offers David an opportunity to respond in defense of the God of Israel
- David begins in v.45 emphasizing he has the greater weapon
 - While Goliath has brought swords and the like
 - But David has the Lord fighting on his side
 - And the Lord of Israel is an army unto Himself
 - And when you taught Israel, you taught the Living God as well
 - He may not always choose to act, at least not right away
 - But rest assured the Lord will defend Israel in His day
 - This is still a truth today
 - Israel remains God's people in covenant
 - They are disobedient and are suffering under His judgment for a time
 - But in the end the Lord will defend His people
 - And to taunt Israel is to taunt the living God to your own destruction
 - Then David proclaims his confidence that the Lord is about to deliver a victory to him
 - Moreover, David will remove his head

- Finally, the army of the Philistines will be defeated as well
- And all of them will become food for wild animals so that the world knows the God of Israel
- This statement is a brief summary of David's entire life
 - He leads a nation of God's people by covenant into battle before the nations so that the world may know the God of Israel
 - He does so in confidence that the Lord will deliver a victory
 - And he relies on the Spirit
 - He doesn't do it perfectly, of course
 - But he brings the people into greatness
 - Including giving them the city of Jerusalem and a temple mount
 - Secondly, David becomes an example within Israel
 - As he declared to Goliath, David will win this victory to remind the people that they serve a God who delivers by His own hand
 - The nation has emerged from a time of judges and now Saul with an almost complete disregard for the Lord's word
 - They have forgotten who they serve
 - They give little regard for the Lord's ability to deliver them
 - They are living in the flesh, relying on themselves
 - And David is going to remind them they serve a living God
- At this point, David displays even more courage, running into the battle rather than waiting for the battle to come to him
 - He takes the first stone out of his pouch, slings it and it hits the Philistine in the forehead
 - The stone goes into his skull, knocking him out
 - The penalty in Israel for blaspheming the Lord was stoning
 - So in this case, Goliath is judged rightly according to God's law

- The stone knocks Goliath to the ground, but many overlook a detail in the story...the stone only knocked Goliath out
 - It may have been a mortal wound in the end, but David doesn't wait to find out
 - Notice in v.51 says David kills Goliath by cutting off his head with his own sword
- When the Philistines saw this result, they fled in terror
 - So much for becoming slaves of the Jews
 - You can't trust a Philistine
- David's victory brings a rout for Israel

1Sam. 17:52 The men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the slain Philistines lay along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron.

1Sam. 17:53 The sons of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines and plundered their camps.

1Sam. 17:54 Then David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent.

- The Philistines retreat to the two nearest Philistine cities
 - But many were killed along the way by the chasing Israelites
 - Eventually the army turns back and plunders the Philistine encampment
- David takes the head of Goliath and brings it back to Jerusalem
 - This is a curious reference since at this time the city was a Jebusite city and David lived in Bethlehem
 - Samuel may be referring to the later day when David moved into Jerusalem, meaning David kept Goliath's head as a trophy
 - He also kept Goliath's sword, which eventually was placed in Nob
- Next time, we move into the effects of this victory on David's life and relationship with Saul