

DAVID AND GOLIATH THE VALLEY OF ELAH, PART II (1 SAMUEL 17:12-27)

Note: This sermon can be viewed at the follow links: [YouTube](#) or [Sermon Audio](#)

The passage today, and in other verses to come, in the Hebrew is much different than that of the Septuagint, or Greek translation, of the Old Testament. The verses from 12 to the 31 are missing, as are also verse 41 and from verse 54 to the end. Of this, Adam Clarke, someone I generally agree with, says the following –

“Notwithstanding what Bishop Warburton and others have done to clear the chronology of the present printed Hebrew, it is impossible to make a clear consistent sense of the history, unless these verses are omitted. Let any one read the eleventh verse in connection with the thirty-second, leave out the forty-first, and connect the fifty-fourth with the sixth of 1 Samuel 18, and he will be perfectly convinced that there is nothing wanting to make the sense complete; to say nothing of the other omissions noted above. If the above be taken in as genuine, the ingenuity of man has hitherto failed to free the whole from apparent contradiction and absurdity. I must confess that where everyone else has failed, I have no hope of succeeding: I must, therefore, leave all farther attempts to justify the chronology; and refer to those who have written for and against the genuineness of this part of the common Hebrew text.” Adam Clarke
Clarke can’t make sense of the passage because it appears so oddly arranged, repetitive, and otherwise unfathomable to him. I have always taken it in exactly the opposite view, even though much of it is hard to follow. After the study (so far, meaning as of the verses we will look at today), they not only appear genuine, they are ingenious.

I feel bad for people who find that the word is in error. With a bit of study, which you will benefit from today, it is evident how beautifully laid out the word is, and how marvelously detailed it all is. Charles Ellicott agrees with this assessment –

“...the LXX. translation not un-frequently adding or subtracting from the text when anything met them which they could not readily understand. The passage, as we find it, is undoubtedly genuine.” Charles Ellicott

Text Verse: ¹⁶“No king is saved by the multitude of an army; A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.”

¹⁷ A horse is a vain hope for safety; Neither shall it deliver any by its great strength.

¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope in His mercy, ¹⁹ To deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine. ²⁰ Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield. ²¹ For our heart shall rejoice in Him, Because we have trusted in His holy name. ²² Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, Just as we hope in You.” Psalm 33:16-22

What a hopeful portion of Scripture! The Lord is our help and our shield. Do you really believe that? If so, how much do you REALLY believe that? Would you be willing to put your life on the line to find out? The fact is that all men are destined to die (well, unless the Lord comes for His church first).

As that is so, then does it really (I mean really) matter when it happens? Is there something that will make your possible death today worse than whatever way you might die tomorrow? The battle ranks of Israel apparently felt it was so, because – as we have seen in our sermon text – nobody stepped forward for forty days.

For all we know, a few of the people of the camp died from boredom, or from bad meat, or from getting bit by a snake while lying in their bed over the past forty days. They will be off to meet the same God that those who are coming later will meet. But how shameful it is to think that they had met him while lacking in faith during their time encamped in the Valley of Elah.

Think it through. “Where is your faith? It’s time for you to ask yourself what you believe.” (Yes, I stole that line from a movie, but it is true). The Lord is watching us as we live our lives. Be people of faith. Have trust in His promises. And live for Him no matter what giants you might face.

These are marvelous lessons we can learn from His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. And the Philistine Drew Near (verses 12-16)

¹² **Now David**

v'david– “And David.” David was introduced into the biblical narrative in Ruth 4. He was also seen several times in 1 Samuel 16. He is now introduced into this narrative concerning Goliath. The name David means “Beloved.”

12 (con't) **was the son of that Ephrathite**

ben ish ephrati hazeh – “son man Ephrathite the this.” The seemingly odd wording here, “that Ephrathite,” is given because David was already introduced into the narrative in the previous chapter. This then is affirming it is the same David. Therefore, the words, “that Ephrathite,” could be paraphrased as, “the person who was mentioned before.”

Saying, “that Ephrathite,” does not mean that they are descendants of Ephraim. Rather, it designates the location where they reside. In this case, it is...

12 (con't) **of Bethlehem Judah,**

mi'beitlekhem yehudah – “from Bethlehem Judah.” David is from a line of people who settled in Bethlehem in the land belonging to Judah. The ancient name of the same location, as seen in Genesis 35, was Ephrath. Depending on the root word, the name Ephrath means “Fruitful,” or maybe “Ashes” or “Exhausted.”

Bethlehem comes from *beit*, meaning “house,” and *lekhem*, meaning “bread.” Thus, it signifies “House of Bread.” However, there is a secondary meaning derived from the word *lakham*, which is the same spelling as *lekhem*. The verb *lakham* means to do battle and is identical with the verb *lakham* which means to eat or use as food. Thus, it also means “House of Battle (or war).” The secondary meaning fits marvelously into the narrative of David and Goliath. Judah means “Praise.”

12 (con't) **whose name was Jesse,**

u-shemo yishai – “and whose name Jesse.” Jesse means “My Husband.” But is also means “Yehovah Exists.” As such the name Jesse contains the weighty notion that human marriage reflects divine revelation.

12 (con't) **and who had eight sons.**

v'lo shmonah banim – “and who had eight sons.” These words take the reader’s mind back to Chapter 16 where David was selected from among his brothers and anointed King of Israel by the prophet Samuel. There it said –

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.” 1 Samuel 16:13

The number eight, *shmonah* in Hebrew, comes from the word *shamen*, meaning “fat” or “robust.” Bullinger defines the number 8 saying –

“In Hebrew the number eight is *Sh'moneh*, from the root *Shah'meyn*, ‘to make fat,’ ‘cover with fat,’ ‘to super-abound.’ As a participle it means ‘one who abounds in strength,’ etc. As a noun it is ‘superabundant fertility,’ ‘oil,’ etc. So that as a numeral it is the superabundant number.” EW Bullinger

Understanding this, there was a play on words found in the narrative of David’s anointing. The word in that verse, translated as “oil,” is *shemen*, coming from the same root as *shamen*, the root of *shmonah*, or eight. Thus, David was anointed with oil (*shemen*) being the one who abounds in strength, noted by his position as the *shmonah*, or eighth son of Jesse.

Not to confuse the narrative, but as an interesting point of fact, the Greek name of Jesus – IESOUS numerically equals 888 – the superabundance of the superabundant number.

¹² (con’t) **And the man was old, advanced in years, in the days of Saul.**

v'ha'ish bime shaul zaqen ba ba-anashim – “And the man in days Saul was old, went among men.” The literal Hebrew wording is odd and highly debated, but the sense is either he was too old to go to battle and thus excused, or that he is noted among men, being a man of esteem.

The latter seems less likely, but it still may be the case. He was too old to engage in battle, but he was also noted among men, as David seems to proudly proclaim in verse 57. Because of his state, the account continues with a note concerning the family. They were not opposed to serving, but instead were a part of Saul’s army...

13 The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul

v'yeleku sheloshet bene yishai ha'gedolim haleku akhare shaul – “and had gone three sons Jesse, the greats, to follow after Saul to the battle.” The verse begins with “And” which is unfortunately left out of the translation. The author is meticulously laying out his thoughts.

Again, the Hebrew is complicated, repeating the word *halak*, or “to go” in a seemingly unnecessary way. However, it is necessary to express a completed action.

Keil correctly renders what is being said as, “And then (in Jesse's old age) the three eldest sons followed, had followed, Saul.” The words are speaking of a time before the beginning of the account which began in verse 1. In this verse, the sons are noted as *ha'gedolim*, or “the greats,” signifying that they are the three eldest of Jesse. It is these three who went...

13 (con't) to the battle.

Lamilkhama – “to the battle.” Here is where the secondary meaning of Bethlehem, meaning “House of Battle,” first expresses itself in the passage. The word *milkhama*, or “battle,” comes from *lakham*, which we saw already is a root connected to *lekhem*, or bread. These three from the “House of Battle,” have gone to the battle. And...

13 (con't) The names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

The account specifically names the three. This then sets the tone for everything that follows, and it is dependent on what was seen in Chapter 16, which cannot go unquoted–

⁶ So it was, when they came, that he looked at Eliab and said, “Surely the LORD’s anointed is before Him!”

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

⁸ So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by.

And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.”¹⁰ Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.”¹¹ And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” Then he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.”¹² So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!”

-1 Samuel 16:6-12

If you noticed, the only three sons named out of all of Jesse’s sons there, are the same three who are named now in Chapter 17. David is thus being set in contrast to them. Their names mean –

Eliav – God is Father, or My God is Father

Avinabdav – My Father is Generous, or My Father is Noble

Shammah – Desolation, Astonishment, or Horror

¹⁴ **David was the youngest.**

v’david hu ha’qatan – “And David – he – the youngest.” Again, the verse begins with “And” which is left off by the translators. The word *qatan* means “youngest,” but the root *qut* gives the sense of what that means. *Qut* signifies “to feel a loathing.” Thus, the youngest is the lesser or least important.

Therefore, the words “And David – he – the youngest,” are set in complete contrast to the term, *ha’gedolim*, or “the greats,” used to describe the three eldest. To further set the contrast, the next clause is repeated from the previous verse...

¹⁴ (con’t) **And the three oldest followed Saul.**

u-shloshah ha’gedolim haleku akhare shaul – “And three, the greats, have gone after Saul.” Chapter 16 has already revealed the anointing of David to be king, but everything here is given to show that what is said about the Lord is true. He does not look to the externals, but to the internals.

The account is slowly leading to a coming crescendo which would be otherwise completely lacking without the methodical, step by step, fine detail that is presented.

And, although over a much wider scale, the exact same thing is done concerning Christ Jesus in Scripture. David was introduced, and yet he continues to be described in terms which make him appear being inconsequential, and yet, it does so while making him the focus of the narrative.

The Bible does the same concerning Jesus at times, such as in Isaiah 53, where it says –

¹“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. ³ He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” -Isaiah 53:1-3

The parallel between the two is not to be missed. Concerning David, the account continues with...

¹⁵ But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem.

The Hebrew begins with *v’david*, or “And David.” This then picks up the account from verse 12. There was the explanation that the three oldest followed Saul, indicating that they are men of war, remaining in the camp of war. David, however, was more of an apprentice to the ways of the camp and would come and go between his house and the camp.

This then anticipates what will be said in the next verse. The army of Israel will be there for forty days. During this extended period, David, who is not a soldier and thus not expected to enter battle, would go to his home which was nearby, tend to the sheep, and then bring supplies back to the camp for those who remained and who would engage the battle.

Many find contradictions here and throughout the narrative. For one example, it said in verse 16:21 that David became Saul’s armorbearer. That is then, supposedly, a contradiction to the account now. How could his armorbearer leave the camp? But it doesn’t say he became “the” armorbearer to Saul, only that he was Saul’s armorbearer. In 2 Samuel 18:15, Joab is seen to have ten armorbearers in the battle

with him. If so, he may have had ten more back at the camp as apprentices. The same could be true with Saul. For every supposed contradiction, there is always a valid explanation.

One other possible explanation which would resolve much of the tension between Chapters 16 and 17 is that they are not necessarily chronological. Rather, the note concerning David and Saul in 1 Samuel 16:21-23 may actually occur after the account given now.

Either way, the narrative itself is given in a precise and particular manner to highlight the contrast between David and the surrounding people and events. With all of this understood, and the parenthetical thought of verses 12-15 complete, the main discourse that ended last week resumes with...

¹⁶ And the Philistine drew near and presented himself forty days,

This follows naturally in chronology right after verse 11, and it indicates that what was presented about David in the previous four verses was an intentional parenthetical statement for emphasis and contrast concerning David.

Because of the layout of the land, having a ravine between the two, neither army was willing to be the first to attack, lest they be at a disadvantage and end in defeat. Therefore, during the period, the Philistine took advantage of the situation to mock Israel. This went on for forty days. In the Bible, the number forty is defined by Bullinger as-

“...a period of probation, trial, and chastisement ... where it relates to enlarged dominion, or to renewed or extended rule, then it does so in virtue of its factors 4 and 10, and in harmony with their signification.” EW Bullinger

A connection can be made to this temptation of Israel, and the tempting of Christ by the devil for forty days. In this, the tempting itself is not in relation to David (as the one tempted), but rather to Israel, of whom David becomes the deliverer.

In other words, Jesus is shown to be the greater and true Israel, and David's accomplishments here on behalf of Israel prefigure that in Christ. This temptings were...

16 (con't) **morning and evening.**

hashkem v'haarev – “rising early and growing dark.” They are verbs, not nouns. Goliath would go out and challenge the Israelites to a dual in the early morning and in the late afternoon.

What seems likely, because they are in a valley where voices would carry across the ravine, is that Goliath purposefully went out each day when the Israelites had their morning and evening prayers. At that time, they would recite the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4 – *sh'ma Yisrael Yehovah elohenu Yehovah ekhad* – “Hear Israel, Yehovah our God, Yehovah is one.”

Israel would worship at the time the morning and evening sacrifices were conducted at the tabernacle. At the same time, Goliath would call out his taunts to Israel. Thus, he was not merely taunting Israel, but he was defying the God of Israel – directly and openly. This then explains the meaning of David’s words in verse 45 –

“Then David said to the Philistine, ‘You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with 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 defied.’” -1 Samuel 17:45

Forty days he has derided us
He speaks out threats and spews out bile
That giant bag of wind throws a fuss
And the things he says are loathsome and vile

Morning and evening he keeps on saying
Words that are like venom from the snake
Evil words that giant bag of wind is relaying
And yet, we will sit here; his words we will take

We don’t have the strength to challenge him
Who among us could even try?
There is no hope; our chances are dour and grim
Anyone who faces him will surely die

II. See How Your Brothers Fare (verses 17-19)

17 Then Jesse said to his son David, “Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried grain and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp.

The dried grain means parched grain. It is roasted and will last well beyond the harvest season. Its amount is an ephah. According to Exodus 16:36, an ephah is comprised of ten omers. An omer is enough food for one person for one day according to Exodus 16:16.

And so, the grain alone would take care of the brothers for more than three days. With the bread added in, it would be enough for them to have a good meal for the better part of a week.

As a campaign would normally be a few days, the extended period of delay for the battle necessitated that food be brought in at regular intervals until the fighting was engaged and completed.

18 And carry these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand,

Here it says, “these ten cuts of milk.” Adam Clarke says that “they press the milk but slightly, and carry it in rush baskets. It is highly salted, and little different from curds.” This, curds, or actual cheese may be what is referred to. But the Hebrew term “cuts of milk” is a specific description for us to consider. This gift was probably to seek favor of the captain so that he would look positively on Jesse’s sons.

18 (con’t) and see how your brothers fare,

v’eth akhekha tipqod l’shalom – “and your brothers you shall number to peace.” In other words, “account for how they are doing.”

18 (con’t) and bring back news of them.”

v’eth arubatam tiqah – “and pledges bring back.” Here, the word arubah, or pledge, is introduced. It is only found here and in Proverbs -

“A man devoid of understanding shakes hands in a pledge, And becomes surety for his friend.” Proverbs 17:18

There are several ideas of what this means. One is that he is asking for something to know that they are ok, or to guarantee that David had actually taken the supplies, and this would prove he did. And so on. However, John Gill seems to have the proper take on it. He says –

“...that is, if they had been obliged for want of money to pawn any of their clothes, or what they had with them to buy food with, that he would redeem and take up the pledge, by paying the money for which they were pawned; for it is thought that soldiers at this time were not maintained at the expense of the king and government, but at their own, and the families to which they belonged.” John Gill

This is more closely what is being referred to. David is being asked to personally carry any debt of his brothers so that payment could be made. With this matter presented, Jesse continues...

¹⁹ Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

Unlike those presented by many translations, the words here are certainly Jesse’s to David, not those of the narrator. It more closely is translated, “And Saul, and they, and all men of Israel are in Valley the Terebinth fighting with the Philistines.”

David had been out with the sheep for some period of time and Jesse was alerted to the current situation of the army. Knowing that supplies would be needed by now – and maybe even the reason for telling David to bring back the pledges, meaning they were already out of supplies and selling their things just to eat – Jesse gives these final words.

Bring back news of Your brothers
Tell Me all of how it goes for them too
Let me know about the battle and all the others
Have many died, or just a few?

Carry these things to accomplish the task
Bring them good things from Your Father’s house, to sustain

Give them bread, and milk from this flask
Refresh their souls and make them new again

Go with care My Son, the mission must be done
The sheep will be watched while You are gone
The keeper will watch over every single one
Stay tonight, and begin your mission at dawn

III. He Has Come Up to Defy Israel (verses 20-27)

²⁰ So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, and took the things and went as Jesse had commanded him.

The willingness of David is seen in the words *vayashkem David ba'boqer*, or "So rose early David in the morning." Further, the care of David is seen in the words "left the sheep with a keeper." And finally, the obedience of David is seen in the words, "as Jesse had commanded him."

David was sent on a mission, he was given a new charge in the process, and he was given specifics about that mission. In this he exactly fulfilled his duties without complaint or delay. As such, he makes a marvelous type of the coming Messiah.

²⁰ (con't) And he came to the camp

v'yavo ha'magalah – "and came to the circular." It is a new word, *magalah*. It comes from the same root as *egel*, or calf. Both come from *agol*, or "round." Therefore, it is an entrenchment, probably encompassed about by the wagons of the army, and thus providing protection for the camp within.

This is, of course, a best guess, but it appears most likely from the words and from the concept of both warfare and defense. Elsewhere, the word is translated as "tracks," or "paths," or even figuratively as the "ways" of a person's conduct.

²⁰ (con't) as the army was going out to the fight

v'ha'khayil ha'yotse el ha'maarakah – “and the army, the going out to the ranks.” The way the Hebrew reads, this is an independent clause. As David was arriving, the troops were lining up in their ranks for the battle.

We need to understand some background information, much of which is speculation, but appropriate. It is about a 13-mile walk from Bethlehem to the Valley of Elah. It is most likely spring. In 2 Samuel 11:1 it says, “in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle.”

In Israel it is way too hot to battle in the summer, and way too cold and/or wet to battle in the autumn or winter. The sun rises in Israel during the spring on either side of 6am. Rising early in the morning then can mean 4 or 5am. Whenever the predawn light is enough, off he would go.

It takes 3+ hours to walk 13 miles and David, being young and energetic – even carrying the supplies – would have no problem with this. Therefore, David would have arrived sometime around the morning prayers. In fact, knowing the battle lines would be excitedly reciting the Sh'ma at that time, which is about 9am, he would probably specifically want to see that.

With this in mind, his arrival would have been at this soul-stirring moment. It says...

²⁰ (con't) **and shouting for the battle.**

V'hereu bamilkhamah – “and shouting in the battle.” It is a pregnant construction saying, “in the battle.” They weren't actually fighting, but were rather on both sides of the ravine facing one another and raising a war cry against the opposing forces.

David's arrival was at the time of the daily show of bravado by both sides. Although speculation, one can imagine the flow of events. The camps are getting ready for the day. At the hour of sacrifice, incense, and prayer, Israel calls out the Shema.

During this time, while the forces are engaged in their calls out to their God/gods, Goliath steps forward to defy the armies, and indeed the God, of Israel. But... despite all the displays of great bravado, no one steps out of the ranks to fight the champion, and neither side rushes forward to take on the enemy. This is the scene that continued on for forty days in the Valley of Elah.

The entire scene is raised to the highest levels of human emotion and pride, and yet the entire scene is given to contrast what lies ahead concerning the shepherd boy named David.

²¹ For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array, army against army.

Rather than “army against army,” the word used should be translated as “rank against rank,” or “battle array against battle array.” It is the fighting men of the encampment that went out to fight. Others in the camp, also part of the army, would remain behind.

Again, it is the bravest, most prepared, and most battle-hardened that have gone out to face the foe. The scene continues to be elevated in intensity, preparing the reader to stop and contemplate the enormity of what lies ahead when it is put into its proper perspective.

With all of this crying out, flashing of spears and swords, and clashing of shields, another figure comes into the scene...

²² And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper, ran to the army,

The things given to him by Jesse, possibly including the payment for pledges, or replacements for what they had pawned off, and any other supplies David brought along for himself, were given to the care of the keeper of the supplies.

As soon as that was taken care of, it says he “ran” to the ranks, meaning the men of battle lined up for war. It shows complete bravery on his part to enter into what could at any moment turn into an actual engagement of battle. As he had just arrived, he would not know that an actual battle wasn’t moments away.

Rather than staying in the camp until the war lines had withdrawn, he exposed himself directly into the midst of the fray on Israel’s side. As soon as he arrived it next notes...

²² (con’t) and came and greeted his brothers.

vayishal l’ekhav l’shalom – “and inquired to his brother’s to peace.” In other words, he immediately asked about the welfare of his brothers. The main concern of David, even at the risk of exposing himself to danger, was the welfare of them.

One might think he would ask, “How’s the battle going?” or something similar. But instead, his desire is the status of his brothers. It shows the heart of David for his family, and it is a heart that will be seen many times in his lifetime towards his close family.

²³ Then as he talked with them, there was the champion,

v’hinneh ish ha’benayim – “and behold, man, the middleman.” Here is the second and last use of *benayim*, or “champion,” in the Bible. If you remember, it signifies a middleman. The two armies had shown lots of outward bravado, but nothing more. And so, to once again spite Israel, the middleman is called to the focus of the narrative...

²³ (con’t) the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines;

The Hebrew is more expressive, “Goliath the Philistine, his name, from Gath.” He stepped out of his ranks in order to get momentum into the battle, rising up from among the Philistines and forward toward Israel...

²³ (con’t) and he spoke according to the same words.

The “same words” means what he has called out repeatedly from verse 10 for forty days, “I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.” There is a difference this day, however. Unlike the previous days, another person is there...

²³ (con’t) So David heard them.

Vayishma David – “and heard David.” The narrative is beautifully succinct. And yet, it leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader that a complete contrast has been set forth between all of the fighting ranks of Israel, and a shepherd boy on a mission from his father to feed his hungry brothers, make payment for their outstanding debts, and return with word about their condition to him...

²⁴ And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid.

The Hebrew says, “And all man Israel.” Man is singular. Even if it is intended collectively, each man contrasted himself against the giant and, as it says, “fled from his face.” A spirit of cowardice had filled every man in the ranks so that when Goliath spoke, it was as if each man felt he was being spoken to all by himself.

In this, he did not want to be the one to step forward, nor did he want to be the last standing alone when everyone else fled, and so they fled (it is plural) from him and were afraid (it is plural) exceedingly. The very words call out for the most complete and clear contrast that could be made between Israel, each man in Israel, and the shepherd boy who had come into the camp of Israel.

²⁵ **So the men of Israel said,**

vayomer ish Yisrael – “And said man of Israel.” It is singular. One person is speaking to David and conveys the following words...

²⁵ (con’t) **“Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be that the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father’s house exemption from taxes in Israel.”**

The first point to note concerning these words is that God is not mentioned in them. The king has promised great things to the man who kills the Philistine. Saul’s expectation is that the battle will be won by men and that a man in the battle will kill Goliath.

In order to spur them on to taking the challenge, he promises to enrich him, to give him his own daughter – an offering of great noteworthiness – and that the house of his father, meaning the father and all sons, would be free in Israel. The exact meaning of this is debated. It could mean free from being drafted to war, free from taxes, and/or free from personal services to the king.

Whatever the final benefit is, there would be great honor from the king for the one who would slay his great enemy.

²⁶ **Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying,**

The question here seems completely out of place. He was just told what would be done for the man who kills the Philistine, and yet now he asks what will be done for the man who kills the Philistine.

The reason it seems out of place is because the translation of the previous verse was faulty – “So the men of Israel said.” As we learned, it was a single person who said that. David has taken the words of one man and asked them to be confirmed by many men.

But even more, it is a direct challenge to all who hear. One must put himself into the time and place of the event. David hears of the rewards that will be granted for meeting the challenge. Then, certainly with a voice elevated – and maybe even accusatory – he calls out to all standing by him, probably heavily stressing the words “the man.”

26 (con't) “What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel?”

Even if he understands that all these things will be his if he wins, he is not looking for self-enrichment at all. He is not looking for the king’s daughter. And, he is not looking for exemption in Israel. Instead, he is looking much higher. Remember the words of our text verse –

“No king is saved by the multitude of an army;
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.” Psalm 33:16

David heard the supposedly exciting, but otherwise boring, news about the king’s offer and he is almost mocking it. He has set the bounds by contrasting the two parties – “this Philistine” and “Israel.” David’s care was not bound up in earthly riches. It was bound up in the honor of the Lord his God. As he next says...

26 (con't) For who is this uncircumcised Philistine,

ki mi ha'pelishti hearel hazzeh – “For who the Philistine uncircumcised the this?” David is not looking to fight Goliath. He is not looking for glory. He is not looking to deprive his brothers of their chance to lead the family. Rather, his words are wholly intended to inspire those of Israel to do what was promised to them all along – trust in the Lord and He will fight the battles for you. Just trust and have confidence in Him.

By calling him “the uncircumcised,” he is saying that there is no covenant relationship to God. Because of this, not only can he be defeated, he will be defeated. If the Lord is God, and David had every confidence He is, then the battle cannot be lost. And to boost that to an even higher note, he next says...

²⁶ (con't) **that he should defy the armies of the living God?”**

ki khereph maarkot Elohim khayim – “For he should defy ranks GOD LIVING.” David is speaking to the soldiers, not about his challenge, but of the challenge they are to make. He is not a soldier; he has no commission. But they do, and they represent the living God – each of them circumcised in the flesh as a sign of the covenant between them and Him.

“Our God is alive, not a dead idol. Our God stands with Israel, not this Philistine. Our God is Yehovah, the LIVING GOD.” David is giving a motivational speech, hoping that his representatives on the battlefield will respond...

²⁷ (fin) **And the people answered him in this manner, saying, “So shall it be done for the man who kills him.”**

The verses today end on an almost hopeless note. All of the people turn right back to that which is temporary, fleeting, and of no true value. “See what Saul has promised! It’s just as was said by that guy. Riches, a daughter of the king, and exemption in Israel.”

But that is not worth dying over. A dead man cannot enjoy the riches of life. Not a man had accepted the challenge, even for forty days. Not a man was yet willing to accept the challenge. Not a man stood worthy of the honor of killing the Philistine, because not a man among them cared about the honor of the Lord, nor did they have faith in His assurances.

Where will Israel get such man? From where will their own hero arise? Not from the warring ranks of Israel apparently.

Despite the almost depressing tone of where we leave off today, it is a marvelous point to do so, nonetheless. We have a great and awesome challenge set before us, and it must be met. Until then, we can think on the supposed greatness of the things we are

tempted with in life, and we can then put them in contrast to the greater things that the Lord offers us.

And all he asks us to do is to simply trust in His covenant promises. That is what David attempted to do for those of the ranks of Israel, but they would not. They lacked the faith of the proverbial mustard seed, and they could neither slay giants nor move mountains.

But by faith in Christ, we can not only destroy the works of the devil in our lives, but in doing so we become children of God. And all that He asks us for in order for this to happen is to simply receive by faith what He has done.

Today, this is what I would ask of you. Think on your life, put the things you cherish here into their proper perspective, and then determine to conduct your life with the long-term view of life in Christ. Trust the Lord God, live for Him, and be pleasing to the One who sent His Son on a mission to bring us back to Himself through the glorious work accomplished by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Closing Verse: *“Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven With the saving strength of His right hand. 7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.” Psalm 20:6, 7*

Next Week: 1 Samuel 17:28-40 Can he fight the battle in all that armor? I’m thinking, “Nah.” But we shall see... (David and Goliath, The Valley of Elah, Part III)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. And, He has promised to fight the battles you face for you. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

David and Goliath The Valley of Elah, Part II

Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah
Whose name was Jesse, and who had eight sons
-----to make his heart sing
And the man was old, advanced in years
In the days of Saul; when Saul reigned as king

The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle
The names who went to battle of his three sons
Were Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab
And the third Shammah. Those who went were these ones

David was the youngest of them all
And the three oldest followed Saul

But David occasionally went and returned from Saul
To feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem, until his next call

And the Philistine drew near
And presented himself forty days, morning and evening
-----showing no fear

Then Jesse said to his son David
"Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried grain
And these ten loaves
And run to your brothers at the camp again

And carry these ten cheeses to their thousand's captain
And see how your brothers fare, and bring news back of them again

Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel
Were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines
-----as the account does tell

So David rose early in the morning
Left the sheep with a keeper, as the situation demanded
And took the things and went
As Jesse had him commanded

And he came to the camp as the army was going out
To the fight and with the battle's shout

For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array
Army against army was the situation that day

And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper
-----according to his druthers
Ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers

Then as he talked with them, there was the champion
The Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, causing his regular mayhem
Coming up from the armies of the Philistines
And he spoke according to the same words. So David heard them

And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man
Fled from him and were dreadfully afraid
-----they were sorely lacking a game plan

So the men of Israel said, (for sure and yup)
“Have you seen this man who has come up?

Surely he has come up to defy Israel
And it shall be that the man who kills him, listen to what I tell...

The king will enrich with great riches
Will give him his daughter as well
And give his father’s house exemption
From taxes in Israel

Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying
“What shall 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 defy the armies of the living God with a shout and a yell?

And the people answered him in this manner, saying
“So shall it be done for the man who kills him
-----for the one who does the slaying

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard

Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...