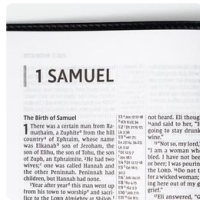


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1 Samuel 17



1 Samuel - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg shares insights on the biblical story of David and Goliath. He notes that the anointing of David took place prior to the famous battle and suggests that the question of Goliath's ancestry raised in the text is left unanswered. Gregg also comments on the height of Goliath and the contest between him and the armies of Israel. He questions Saul's courage and examines the relationship between David and his father Jesse, speculating on why Jesse did not call upon his other sons to fight in the battle.

Transcript

Okay, we come to the 17th chapter of 1 Samuel and the story of David and Goliath, of course. It sort of is a self-contained chapter and in some ways it's difficult to know how to harmonize the chronology with the previous chapter. The reason is because in this chapter there is a war with the Philistines and there were those going on throughout Saul's reign.

And then we have David at home with the sheep as he was, for example, when Samuel anointed him to be the king. And yet he goes to visit his brothers who are in the army, but David's not in the army. So he seems to be perhaps too young to be drafted.

He's certainly qualified, but maybe not of draftable age. We don't know. But all of this is strange because it sounds like David is still attached to his father's household, doing the household errands of taking care of the sheep.

Where in the previous chapter we read of Saul having called him to be a musician and armor bearer in his court because of Saul's being tormented by evil spirit. Now there is more than one way this has been suggested and some have felt that just as stories of Jesus in the Gospels are placed not always in their chronological order. We know this because different Gospels place the same multiple stories of Jesus in differing orders from each other.

It's not always the commitment of the writer to tell the story in chronological order. It may be that Samuel doesn't always follow a chronological order. That's what some think.

In which case the anointing of David that took place privately in chapter 16 was what happened before this present story of David and Goliath. But having mentioned that the spirit came on David, the author decided to point out that the evil spirit came on Saul. Which led, we might think, eventually to David being called in as a musician, but maybe not at the point where it's recorded.

It may be looking ahead at the fact that since an evil spirit replaced the spirit of God in Saul, it eventually led to David being called in as a musician. And we were told the story of that happening perhaps before its chronological occurrence. Just by way of looking ahead at that.

In which case the story of David and Goliath could have occurred before David was called in. Now I'm not saying this is necessarily the case. It would solve some problems.

Because obviously in the end of chapter 16 when David is called in to be the musician in Saul's court, it appears that he leaves his father's home essentially permanently. And yet he's back in his father's home in chapter 17. Also at the end of chapter 17 when David has killed Goliath, we have this little exchange between Saul and Abner.

In chapter 17 verses 55 and following it says, Now when Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, as your soul lives, O king, I don't know. And the king said, inquire whose son is this young man? This young man is. Then as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

And Saul said to him, whose son are you, young man? And David answered, I am the son of your servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite. Now this certainly sounds like their first meeting. And so one of the easiest ways to solve this is to say this was their first meeting.

And the interaction between David and Saul mentioned at the end of chapter 16 came later. David, after killing Goliath, went back to his father's house and did what he was supposed to do there. And then when Saul began to be tormented by the evil spirit, which we don't necessarily see him being during this time of the story of David and Goliath, when the evil spirit began to torment Saul, then David was called in.

And then we have the events of the end of chapter 16. That would be a solution. It may not be the only solution, but there is a difficulty there.

Now, another possibility, which seems much less likely to me, is that when Saul says to Abner, whose son is this young man, that he's essentially saying it more rhetorically, like, whoa, this kid's really something. Who's his dad? I mean, not really seeking information, but like when the disciples said, when Jesus stilled the storm, what kind of

man is this? They've known him, but they now are impressed with him in a new way and say, wow, I don't feel like I've known this guy. And so that is possible, but the degree to which this inquiry is drawn out at the end of chapter 17 makes me think that it really is an inquiry into the information.

And so we don't have to solve it, but that is one way that it might be possibly solved. In which case we come in chapter 17 to perhaps, if the chronology of the end of chapter 16 is, like I said, mentioned by way of anticipation rather than mentioned in its chronological place, then chapter 17, the beginning of it, may be the next chronological thing after Samuel anointing David. If one wishes to take a different approach to solving the problem, that would not bother me.

It seems to me not an impossible way to resolve it. Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle and were gathered together at Succoth, which belongs to Judah. They encamped between Succoth and Azica in Ephes-damim.

And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together and they encamped in the valley of Elah and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side with the valley between them. And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines named Goliath from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

Now Goliath was from Gath and he might have been a Philistine, at least he had come to be associated with the Philistines, a citizen of the Philistine city. And he could be called a Philistine even if his ancestry earlier times was Anakim. We don't know, but we do read earlier in the time of Joshua that Joshua and the armies of Israel killed off the Anakim except for those that fled and remained in Gath and a few other Philistine cities.

So we know that the survivors of the Anakim, who were the giants in the earlier part of the history, that these Anakim apparently only survived in these Philistine cities. And now we find one of these cities, Gath, has a giant living there. Goliath is referred to as a Philistine by David, but he might be a Philistine in the same sense that Samuel was a man of Ephraim.

Well, he lived in Ephraim, but he was really a Levite. So it may be that Gath was a survivor of the Anakim or not. He was a genetic giant.

There can be genetic giants of any race. They're rare, but they occur. And when, you know, an army has one of those guys, then they exploit him as much as they can.

Now, Goliath was apparently a skilled warrior as well as a large man. He was a hero, a champion among the Philistines. His height is given as six cubits and a span.

A cubit is usually believed to be about 18 inches. It was measured in those days by extending the fingers out straight and measuring from the elbow to the tip of the longest

finger. That was a cubit, but obviously different people have different lengths of arms, so it was not an exact measurement.

When somewhat standardized later on, it was something like a foot and a half. And so six of those would be nine feet. And then a span is the distance between the tip of the thumb and the tip of the little finger of an outstretched hand.

That's a span. That was also how they measured things, but of course not all hands are the same size. So it's not an exact measure, but a span is generally considered something like six or eight inches.

So Goliath was apparently about nine and a half feet tall, give or take some inches. He had a bronze helmet on his head. He was armed with a coat of mail.

The weight of the coat was 5,000 shekels of bronze. As I recall, I think I read that's 125 pounds by our measure. That's a heavy garment to be wearing, a heavy bit of armor for a man to wear.

And he had bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam. And his iron spearhead weighed 600 shekels.

And a shield bearer went before him. By the way, 600 shekels, I believe is 15 pounds. So about the weight of about a gallon of milk, I think.

It would be about a gallon of milk would be about 16 pounds, 15, 16 pounds. So if you can picture that. Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel and said to them, why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me.

If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us. And the Philistine said, I will defy or I defy the armies of Israel this day.

Give me a man that we may fight together. And when Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. And thus it was a stalemate for a long time.

The giant came out every day and made this challenge to see if there was anyone manning up to come out and face him. And no one was. So he'd go back and wait.

Now the Philistines could have just attacked and they wanted to. And there would have been an ordinary war. But apparently either for the sake of making it more sporting or maybe just for the sake of having less bloodshed, they decided why don't we just have representative warfare instead of the whole armies fighting.

If the whole armies fight, no matter who wins or loses, it's going to be a whole bunch of people. It's going to be a lot of dead people seemingly unnecessarily. Let's just say you take your strongest man, we'll take our strongest man and let them fight it out as representatives for us.

It's really not a bad suggestion. I mean, if nations have to fight, they might as well just let one man fight one man and see how that comes out and have an agreement that we're not going to shed the blood of any other soldiers. Just this is enough.

And whoever loses surrenders. You could even do it with some other kind of contest. You could do it with a chess game, a tennis match or something like that.

It would be nice if people, if nations resolve their differences that way. Let's just have a tennis match. You send your best tennis player, we'll send our best tennis player.

Whoever loses surrenders. The whole nation surrenders. Well, it's kind of the same thing, only they wanted to see a little bit of blood at least.

And so they had their champion challenge any champion that Israel might be able to field that Israel was not able to field one. Now, Israel didn't have anyone as tall as Goliath. They had a man who was taller than anybody else.

That was the king. And he was a bit cowardly. We don't really see Saul being very courageous most of the time.

In the early days, when he first became king, he did lead one heroic battle. But once he had kind of fallen out of favor with God, we see nothing but fear, nothing but paranoia, nothing but insecurity in him. And here also we read of him fearing.

He was afraid and so were the armies. He was the tallest man in Israel, but he wasn't going to go out there. Everyone else was shorter than him by a head and shoulders.

And even he was a head and shoulders shorter than Goliath. So the tallest man in Israel apart from the king would be very small compared to this challenger. Probably smaller still was the man who actually went out to face him.

And we read that side of the story in verse 12. Now David was the son of that Ephrathite. Ephrathite is a man from Ephrath.

And that's someone from Bethlehem. Bethlehem is Ephrath. So David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem, Judah, whose name was Jesse, and who had eight sons.

And the man was old, advanced in years, in the days of Saul. That is Jesse was old. The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul in the battle.

The names of the three sons who were, who went to battle were Eliab, the firstborn, next

him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. These were the three that we had named that God said, this one's not the one. This is not the one.

This is not the one when Samuel was looking for the right one to anoint as king. David was the youngest. And the three oldest followed Saul.

Now it's possible that the middle four, between David and the three oldest, were possibly too young for battle or not fit for battle. David was certainly fit for battle, but was apparently excluded because of his age at this point. But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

Now, okay, this raises questions about the solution I mentioned earlier, because this suggests that he already had met Saul. And he returned from Saul to feed the sheep from time to time. So that, of course, is perhaps the one thing that is a fly in the ointment of saying that chapter 16 is talking about something later.

So we have an unsolved problem, it seems to me. But anyway, apart from the chronology, which apparently needs to be worked out by data that is not on the table before us, it says, The Philistine drew near and presented himself 40 days, morning and evening. 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, and carry these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand, and see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them.

Now, apparently, the army couldn't provide a lot of food for all their men, at least not special foods. And so the families would supply some of their rations for them and take a gift to their officers as well. And so Jesse is sending David on that errand and to bring back news of how things are going.

Now, David knows nothing about Goliath at this point. Apparently. Because he seems surprised when he encounters him.

So David has been away for whatever length of time Goliath has been making this challenge. And Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the valley of Elah fighting with the Philistines. So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with the keeper, and took the things and went as Jesse had commanded him.

And he came to the camp as the army was going out to fight and shouting for the battle. Now, it sounds like maybe there was some fighting going on, some skirmishes or something. Because they were shouting for the battle, or maybe they're just shouting insults across the valley, you know, trying to egg on their enemies to the battle.

I don't know. For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array, army against army. They weren't fighting, but they were facing each other.

And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper and 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, 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. So the men of Israel said, 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 and will give him his daughter and give his father's house exemption in Israel. Probably tax exemption. So there was a lot to be said for this.

If you could kill the giant, you'd be a rich man. You'd be the king's son-in-law. And your family would also be tax exempt.

So that was attractive. But David was motivated really by something else. It's a good thing too, because although he killed Goliath, he didn't get any of those things.

Maybe the exemption to his father, but he didn't get to marry Saul's daughter. And he didn't get great riches. So it was possible that although David met the conditions for receiving this reward, that maybe he was too young to marry the daughter.

Mirab was the oldest daughter of Saul. And she was the one that the winner of this contest should have married, but he didn't marry her. Eventually he decided to marry Michael because they fell in love with each other.

But that required that he do a different contest that Saul assigned for him. So he didn't win anything by winning this particular battle, although there had been an offer made. Perhaps there was some reason why he was not able to collect on it because too young to marry or something.

Then David spoke to the men who stood by 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? And the people answered him in this manner saying, so shall it be done for the man who kills him. That is, they told him what we heard earlier. Now Eliab, his oldest brother, heard when he spoke to the men and Eliab's anger was aroused against David.

And he said, why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and your insolence of your heart for you have come down to see the battle. Well, it's not entirely clear what, you know, this objection meant. I mean, he had been sent by his father.

He hadn't come down on his own volition. He brought gifts to his brothers and yet his

brothers were angry at him to hear him asking these questions. Apparently, the way David was asking them, it was clear to his brother that David was considering going out and fighting Goliath.

Now, this made Eliab angry, but not very rationally. So even David indicates that the objection is kind of irrational. He says, what have I done now? Is there not a cause? You know, didn't I have a cause to come down here? I came here because Dad said to bring you some food.

How can you indicate that I came down for any other reason than that? Now, Eliab's anger toward him could have been provoked by the fact that David was anointed and Eliab was passed by, by Samuel. Though, whether the meaning of that anointing was known or not, it's clear that David was favored in a way that the older brother was not. It's also possible that David was young enough that his brother just thought, you know, you're too young to be concerned with things of war.

You should be taking care of the sheep and don't be getting messed up, mixed up with this war stuff. After all, if David had gone out to fight Goliath, no doubt Eliab would assume that he'd be killed. And if David was killed, it wouldn't just be bad for the family to lose David.

It would also be bad for the nation because then the Philistines would be the rulers of Israel. Whoever, that's the agreement. Whoever was killed in that contest would lose for his whole nation, not just for himself.

Anyway, Eliab's anger against him is not clear, but Eliab does seem to be maybe jealous of him or something like that. Now, David's status in his family is sometimes questioned by some Bible scholars. Some feel that he might not have been a legitimate son of Jesse.

He was a son, but perhaps not of his wife, possibly of a concubine or even a prostitute. Now, is there any reason to believe that? Nothing extremely solid, but maybe some hints that could point that direction. I'll tell you what the case is based upon.

In chapter 51 of the Psalms, Psalm 51, in verse 5, this is when David has repented of his sin with Bathsheba, and he's now writing a psalm expressing that repentance. But in the course of doing so, in Psalm 51, 5, David says, Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. Now, most Bible scholars assume he's talking about the subject of original sin, that I was born a sinner, even from conception we were all sinners, and that David is only saying something that is true of all people.

Though, in that psalm, he's not speaking generically about all people, he's talking about his own particular sinfulness and his own particular shame, and it is only assumed by many that this is talking about original sin. It's not at all clear that it means that. The most natural meaning of the words was, In sin my mother conceived me.

At least one very natural meaning would be, My mother and father were sinning when I was conceived. It was in an act of sin that I was conceived. Now, it doesn't have to mean that, and like most Bible scholars don't see it that way, and so perhaps that's not what David means.

But there are some who've looked at that verse and said, You know, there is maybe a hint here that David was maybe an illegitimate child, and notice in Psalm 27, which David also wrote, in Psalm 27, verse 10, David said, When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me. Now, is he speaking hypothetically? Like, if they would, then I could trust in God? Or is he talking about something that is really his experience? When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord takes care of me. Was he rejected by his father? Was he maybe an object of some shame to his father? Is that why Jesse didn't call him in when Samuel said, Bring all your sons in here? All of them except David was brought in? Because maybe Jesse was a bit embarrassed or ashamed of him? And David felt like he was rejected by his parents, but the Lord hadn't rejected him? That would be a possibility, and the way that his older brother treats him, and you know, any older brother might treat his younger brother this way, so this is not definitive, but we do recognize a similarity in this to the way that Jephthah's brothers treated him.

Jephthah was the son of a concubine of his father's and not the son of the wife, and the older brothers of Jephthah rejected him because he was not a full brother of theirs and drove him out of town, actually. That's how Jephthah became an outcast because he was, in his family, not a legitimate child in the same sense as the others, and therefore his brothers rejected him. It may be that there was this kind of animosity between David and his other brothers, too, and a bit of embarrassment on his father's part so that he didn't bring him in among the other sons when he was supposed to bring in his sons.

These hints don't prove anything, even cumulatively they don't prove anything, but it has been suggested that that is a possible scenario that would fit all of those particular little hints, and it may explain why Eliab is so unfair to David and just basically picking on him. Anyway, David turned from him to another and said the same thing, and these people answered him as the first ones did. So either despite his brother Eliab, who's telling him, stop inquiring about this thing, he just turns to him and keeps inquiring, even though he knows the answer, he's just doing it to make his brother angry, or else maybe he's just trying to get some confirmation about this.

Is this really the way it is? I heard it from this guy. Is that what you've heard? Anyway, David gets some confirmation on what the arrangement is, what Saul is offering, and when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported them to Saul and he sent for him. Then David said to Saul, let no man's heart fail because of this giant.

Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, you're not able

to go against this Philistine to fight with him for you're but a youth and he's a man of war from his youth. You're not a man of war, you're only a child, and this man's been a man of war since he was smaller than you.

He's experienced, you're not experienced. He's big, you're small. This just is not a good suggestion.

But David said to Saul, your servant used to keep his father's sheep. And when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of my flock, I went out after it and struck it and delivered the lamb from its mouth. And when it arose against me, I caught it by the beard and struck and killed it.

Your servant has killed both a lion and a bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God. Moreover, David said, Yahweh 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. So Saul said to David, go and Yahweh be with you.

Now this is an amazing thing, and amazing that Saul said go and do it because Saul's whole kingdom was going to stand or fall with whoever went out and faced Goliath. And David must have impressed him incredibly. You know, here's this young guy, not an experienced warrior.

None of the soldiers are willing to face Goliath because everyone knows what's going to happen. They're going to die. Saul himself won't do it.

And here's this kid, probably a teenager. He says, I can do it. And Saul knows that he can't.

I mean, that's his first impression. You can't do it. You're young.

You're not qualified. But by the time David's finished speaking, he says, okay, go ahead. You know, we'll put all the fate of Israel on your shoulders.

I think you can pull it off. Now, David must have really impressed Saul with his strong faith and his, you know, his confidence. I mean, somehow that just wore off on Saul.

And Saul thought, yeah, I think he can do it. You know, that's amazing. But David did have a good case.

Killing a bear and killing a lion are not too incomparable with killing a giant. A man cannot generally kill a bear or a lion with his bare hands. Now, David struck the bear or the lion in one of those cases, and it rose up against him again.

Apparently he knocked it with his stone, with his sling, kind of knocked it silly or knocked it out. But then as he was examining it, it came up against him and he grabbed it by his

hands and grabbed the lion by the beard and killed it with his hands. Maybe with a knife, we don't know.

But still, a man against a lion, it doesn't usually go well for the man. And same thing with a bear. And here's a young man who's killed both, and he gives the credit to God.

He says, Yahweh gave me this victory. It's Yahweh who delivered me from the paw of the bear and the lion, so he'll deliver me from this. Philistine also.

Now, that is really what faith is, or at least what faith is based upon. Faith is based upon God's ability to deliver you, based upon God's having performed similarly before. I mean, we believe in him because he has raised Jesus from the dead.

We believe he can raise us from the dead. We believe that God can handle any situation because he's handled every kind of situation we'll ever face in other cases that we read about in the Bible, or even in our own life now. We've seen how God has provided for us in times when we need provision now.

How do we trust God to provide for us now? Well, we remember that there were other times like this, and God came through. In fact, he always has done so. We are still here because God has always faithfully come through in every situation before, and this situation we're facing now is not different.

The same God who took care of all these other situations is the one we're trusting to take care of this one. That's what faith is based upon. God's demonstrated, you know, faithfulness and competence to handle everything, and David had never faced a giant before, but he'd had similar situations.

He'd seen God give him the strength to pull it off, and so he figured, well, that's the same God I'm going to trust to do this too, and apparently Saul was amazingly, his resistance was overwhelmed by David's confidence. He says, okay, go ahead. So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head.

He also clothed him with a coat of mail, and David fastened his sword to his armor, and he tried to walk, for he had not tested them. Now, it does not actually say that the armor was too big for him, but we can assume that is true. Saul was much larger than David, and the armor was no doubt custom-made for Saul.

So this little man inside this big man's armor would be very much constrained. Now, why didn't he give him armor his own size? Well, maybe armor was hard to come by. The Philistines didn't let them have metal workers.

Maybe actual armor didn't exist in the armies there of Israel because they didn't have the metal to build it with. So Saul, we know Saul and Jonathan were the only two soldiers who had swords. They may have been the only ones who had armor as well.

Seems like he should have called him Jonathan's armor. Jonathan later gave David his armor, but maybe Jonathan wasn't around at this time. So David needs to have armor, so he puts on Saul's, but that obviously is going to be worse than nothing at all because it's going to be constraining.

He can't work with that. All it says here is he had not tested them, meaning he had never really practiced moving in that kind of equipment and stuff. It was just not what he was accustomed to.

So David said to Saul, I can't walk in these for I've not tested them. So David took them off. Not that armor would have done him much good anyway.

I mean, Goliath's spear could have pierced any kind of armor they had in those days. A spear, that shaft was like a weaver's beam and its head was 15 pounds of, you know, iron or whatever it was. That would pierce any armor available.

So he's going to count more on being agile than being armored. Then he took his staff in his hand, which was his shepherd's stick, and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook and put them in a shepherd's bag in a pouch, which he had and his sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine. Now, it specifies he took five stones.

I don't know if that's significant or it's just, you know, he grabbed up a few stones. There happened to be five, and that's the number we're told because that's the number they were, or if he selected five because he wanted five. Like, you know, if I miss, I give myself five chances here.

And yet, I don't think David expected to miss even the first time. Why didn't he just take one stone? That would have been enough. But of course, the Bible says elsewhere that Goliath had four brothers.

And so maybe he was getting ready for them. Maybe he figured, I'll take Goliath down first, and if the others come to avenge him, I'll take them too one at a time, you know. He was pretty sure that he was going to be able to handle all the adversaries that would come his way, but he just had to have enough stones just in case maybe.

So he drew near to the Philistine. So the Philistine came and began drawing near to David, and the man who bore his shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he despised him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and good-looking.

He's a pretty boy, not a tough Spartan kind of a warrior. So the Philistine said to David, am I a dog that you come with me with sticks? And he was carrying his little shepherd's staff, so that was the only weapon apparently that Goliath spotted, didn't notice the sling. Am I a dog that you come after me with a stick? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

And the Philistine said to David, come to me and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. Now that's kind of intimidating talk, you know. I mean, David could have been shaken by that.

And by the way, we know the story so well that we just think, well, there's nothing to fear, David's going to win. But, I mean, that was still undetermined at this point. I mean, we're still talking about a little guy going out to face a really monstrous adversary who's hurling insults and cursing him in the name of his gods.

I mean, the guy himself was intimidating by his very size, and now he's saying very intimidating things. So David, of course, we might think would be a little bit intimidated, but we don't find it to be so. David said to the Philistine, you come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defied.

This day Yahweh will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Well, that's pretty tough talk.

He says, well, you can threaten me all you want with feeding my body to the birds, but actually here's how it's going to turn out. I'm going to cut your head off and I'm going to take your armies, I'm going to strew their bodies all over and their corpses are going to be eaten by birds and by wild animals. And you know, this is because you've defied the God of Israel.

You can curse me by your gods all you want to. There's no power in those curses, but you'll see soon. And so will all the world.

But my God can do. And by the way, it's interesting. David predicted that all the world would know that there's a God in Israel as a result of him killing Goliath.

This story is known all over the world. He happened to be right on this. So probably the most famous story in the Old Testament.

And so David killing Goliath did become a witness to the whole world for many centuries thereafter that there's a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with the sword and spear for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you in our hand. So he says, you think I only have a stick and I'm not well armed.

Well, God doesn't care what I'm armed with. God doesn't save with swords and spears particularly. He saves the way he wants to save.

And it's he who's going to fight this battle, not me. He'll give you into our hands. And it was so when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David that David

hastened and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

I mean, this guy is not intimidated. Goliath was no doubt very much provoked by what David said and must have had an extremely angry countenance as he advanced menacingly toward David. David doesn't draw back to give himself a little space.

He runs toward the enemy. He runs toward the giant. Doesn't want to miss.

Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and he slung it and he struck the Philistine in his forehead so that the stone sank into his forehead and he fell on his face to the earth. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone and struck the Philistine and killed him. But there was no sword in the hand of David.

Struck the Philistine and killed him is with the sword. He prevailed with the sling and the stone, but he struck him with the sword, as we shall see. But there wasn't a sword in David's hand, so we're told how that happened.

David ran and stood over the Philistine, whom he had apparently knocked unconscious with the stone, and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. I mean, this stone, like I say, a sling was the closest thing to a bullet that they had in ancient times.

They didn't have gunpowder to propel solid projectiles, but a stone, a good, solid, hard stone can do a lot of harm to skulls and to flesh and so forth if it hits with tremendous impact. And a sling, man, that thing can shoot those things really, really, really fast. And not as fast as a gun, of course, but pretty close to it.

I mean, close enough to be lethal. And so he whacked the guy and the guy fell down dead, or not dead, but he fell down. And David took the sword of Goliath, not having one of his own, and killed him with it and displayed his head.

The Philistines then were scared to death. Now, it doesn't seem like Goliath's death would necessarily make the Philistines a weaker army than they were before. And if they had not been afraid of the armies of Israel before, there's not necessarily any reason why they should be afraid of the armies of Israel now.

Except, when they saw what David could do, they no doubt thought, wow, if this guy can kill a giant, what can these other guys do? You know, these armies are tougher than we thought they were. And they ran. Now, the reason they ran is because they were now servants of Israel, and they didn't want to be.

The death of Goliath meant that the Philistines were now the servants of Israel. But they did not volunteer for that duty. And so, instead, they fled, hoping to avoid that.

But when the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the entrance of the valley and the gates of Ekron, the wounded of the Philistines fell among the road to Shearim, even as far as Gath and Ekron. Then the children of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their tents. And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.

That is, Goliath's armor. In his tent. Apparently David's tent.

Now, taking the head to Jerusalem seems a bit premature, because Jerusalem was not David's city yet. It was not even a Jewish city yet. Jerusalem was a Canaanite city at this time.

The Jebusites controlled it. It wasn't until many years after this that David conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital. But he had to conquer it from the Jebusites, who controlled it at this time.

So, it seems strange that he took the head of Goliath to Jerusalem. But, my opinion is, he took it there to display to the people of Jerusalem, as sort of a token of what was going to happen to them when he got a chance to come after them, too. They were there in defiance of God, too.

God had given the land to Israel, and the Canaanites, some of them, had stubbornly resisted leaving the Jebusites among them. David had grown up six miles from Jerusalem in Bethlehem. Six miles is not very far, and taking the sheep out, he may have been able to see Jerusalem in the distance at times, the walls.

And if he was zealous for the cause of Israel and for the God of Israel, it may have just irked him to see this fortress of the Canaanites still there, after all these centuries, after God had given the land to Israel. And I wouldn't be surprised if he had decided that, someday I'm going to conquer that city. Someday I'm going to take that reproach away from Israel and conquer that defiant city.

I'm guessing this, but it's not an unreasonable suggestion. If that was so, if David had always thought he'd want to defy and conquer Jerusalem someday, then his defeat of the Philistine might well have been seen as a token of that. He might have gone and just held the head up outside the walls of Jerusalem and waved around for them to see.

He took the head to Jerusalem, but we don't know what he did with it. It doesn't say he made a museum piece of it. Now some people think, well, this just means that later, when he conquered Jerusalem, that he took the head of Jerusalem to his home in Jerusalem to display it.

But that would be like years later. The head of Goliath would be just a skull then. He could have done it.

I'm thinking he did it to, in a sense, threaten the Jebusites there with, you know, see, this is what I've done to the Philistine, you're next. That's kind of maybe what he was trying to say. Now, the death of the giant is a type and a shadow that applies to Christ's spiritual warfare.

David is a picture of Christ. Goliath is of the devil. Two kingdoms.

Representatives of two kingdoms. The fortunes of the two kingdoms rest on the two individuals. All of God's people's fate hung on David's performance.

All of the devil's people, the devil's kingdom, its fate hung on Goliath's performance. At the cross, the devil and Jesus confronted one another and Jesus was crucified, which most people would have interpreted as a triumph for the enemies of Christ. But, of course, we understand that Jesus conquered Satan at the cross.

He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a show of them openly at the cross. He destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, at the cross. That's what the Bible says.

So, the cross was the place where Satan was defeated. And that means that Satan's kingdom was defeated, just like the Philistines were. And, in a sense, the war is now over.

And yet, we are like the armies of Israel who, after David won the battle, they went and mopped up because the Philistines didn't just come and volunteer to surrender. So, the children of Israel had to pursue. But they didn't pursue with any question as to how things were going to end up.

It was already decided. The battle was already, in a sense, over. The victory was already assigned to one side.

All that Israel was doing was going in and enforcing that which was already determined. And the enemy knew it. That's why the enemy fled.

Now, the spiritual warfare of Christians is just like that. Christ has already defeated Satan at the cross. That's what we base everything upon.

That's the whole basis of our assurance in battle. That's the reason we can go out and preach the kingdom of God and confront the powers of darkness. It's in the power of the cross, the death and the resurrection of Jesus, that we'll confront demonic powers with certainty that we can defeat them.

We don't go out wondering who's going to win. That's already been determined. All that has remained to be undetermined at this point is how long it'll take to enforce what is already true.

Because the enemy does not willingly just come and lie down and bare his neck. The enemy is fleeing. The Bible says, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

The Philistines fled from the pursuing Israelites. Anyone who thinks that we have to be afraid of the devil does not quite understand the state of things here. The devil is the one who's afraid.

The demons tremble. The demons believe and tremble, it says in James. So Christians don't have to be afraid of the demons or of the devil.

Now, if we give them place, then they'll take whatever place we give them, just like the Philistines would. If the Israelites had not pressed the advantage, if the Israelites had just gone home to their tents, the Philistines would have stayed where they were or maybe even pursued the Israelites. Who knows? But because the Israelites decided to enforce that victory that David had accomplished, the Philistines had no choice but to flee and hope not to be caught.

But they were plundered. And what the church does ever since Jesus has died and risen again is go out to the world to plunder what was the enemy's territory. And his side knows they have lost.

And that's why they are in retreat and we are advancing. At least that's the way it is as God sees it. That's the way it is the enemy sees it.

But it's not always the way Christians see it. Christians are often very ill-informed. And often they're more intimidated by the devil than they have any reason to be.

There's no reason to even be the slightest intimidated by Satan. He's the one afraid of you. If you're afraid of him, then he's not afraid of you.

Why should he be? If he's got you intimidated, then there's no reason for him to be afraid of you. But if you understand what the Bible says about these things, then clearly the devil has much to fear. I think it was Dana today was saying that she read something somewhere that someone said, I want to be the kind of woman that when she gets up in the morning and puts her feet on the floor, the devil says, Oh no, she's awake.

You know, that's... Every Christian should have that ambition to be the kind of person that when you wake up, the devil says, Oh no, they woke up. And so that's what it's supposed to be like. That's the way it is in reality.

Now when Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of his army, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As your soul lives, O king, I do not know. And the king said, Inquire whose son the young man is. Then as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand, so he didn't leave it at Jerusalem.

And Saul said to him, Whose son are you, young man? And David answered, I am the son of your servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite. So remember that at tax time. So after all, my father's house is supposed to be tax exempt now, right? And I'm supposed to marry your daughter.

Once I get a little bit of hair under my arms and grow a little facial hair, then I'll know I can marry your daughter. Well, that didn't happen. That daughter actually married somebody else.

But David did marry a daughter of Saul, a different daughter, different occasion, and as a result, a reward for a different conquest. But we'll continue the story of David next time.