

I Samuel 17 - Handout

Here's where things stand after last week's study of I Samuel 16:

- Samuel anointed David king over Israel
- David went back to tending the sheep
- The Lord's Spirit departed from Saul
- An evil spirit from the Lord terrified Saul
- To soothe Saul whenever the evil spirit came upon him, David was sought after to play the harp for him

Verses 1-3

What are we told about the Philistines? _____

We are told the Israelites lined up in battle formation to fight the Philistines.

What are we told about their positions? _____



Verses 4-7

We are told that a champion came forward for the Philistines. The word champion really comes from the Hebrew word, "a *middle man*, the *man between two*." The idea is that this was a man who stood between the two armies and fought as a representative of his army.

We get a long, detailed list about this champion:

- His name was Goliath
- From Gath
- He was 6 cubits and a span (9-11 feet tall)
He is thought to be a descendant of the Anakim who had moved to Philistia after Joshua drove them out of Hebron (Josh. 11:21-22). Anakim were described as a race of giants, descended from Anak, according to the Old Testament.
- Bronze helmet on his head
- Wore scale-armor that weighed 5,000 shekels of bronze (approx. 125lbs.)
- Bronze greaves on his legs
- Bronze saber slung between his shoulders
- Shaft of spear was like weaver's beam
- Head of his spear weighed 600 shekels of iron (35lbs.)
- Shield-carrier walked in front of him

Verses 8-11

Goliath shouts at the Israelite army. How does he refer to them? _____

What does he want them to do? _____

He gives two if/then statements:

- If he is able to fight and kill Goliath, **then** the Philistines will become servants to the Israelites.
- If Goliath wins **then** the Israelites will become servants and serve the Philistines.

What does Goliath say he has done in verse 10? _____

He wants a man to come forward and take him on.

What was the reaction of Saul and all of Israel? _____

Who would have been the logical choice to go out and fight Goliath? _____

Remember he is taller than anyone from the 'shoulders up'. But even Saul was afraid. It wasn't all that long ago that Saul was this fierce and successful military leader (I Samuel 14:52). But that was before the Spirit of the Lord departed from him (I Samuel 16:14).

Verse 12-16

We were introduced to Jesse and his sons in chapter 16.

How many sons did Jesse have? _____

What else are we told about Jesse in verse 12? _____

How many sons of Jesse had followed Saul into battle? _____

What are we told about David in verse 15? _____

How long has this stand between the Philistines and the Israelites been going on?

Why do you think that the Philistines didn't just attack?

Verses 17-19

What does Jesse tell David to do? _____

What else is David supposed to do? _____

Verses 20-21

Notice what David does before he leaves. What does he do?

What are we told the army is doing at the end of verse 20?

It seems that these two armies are just standing facing each other and shouting, but there is not any action being taken.

Verses 22-25

We see David reach the army and greet his brothers.

What happens while David is talking with them? _____

What do the men of Israel do when they see Goliath? _____

The men of Israel say, "Have you seen this man? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel."

What do we find out that Saul has offered to the man who kills Goliath?

- He will be wealthy
- Marry his daughter
- Father's house will be free in Israel

Verses 26-27

Notice the difference in perspective:

- When the men of Israel said "*This man*," David said, "*This uncircumcised Philistine*."
- When the men of Israel said, "*Surely he has come up to defy Israel*," David said, "*That he should defy the armies of the living God*."
- When the men of Israel said, "*The man who kills him*," David said, "*The man who kills this Philistine and rids Israel of the disgrace*."

Can you see the different perspectives here? David sees things from the Lord's perspective while the men of Israel see things only from man's perspective. David sees the problem in spiritual terms, not in material or fleshly terms.

Verse 28-30

How does Eliab react to David? _____

He questions him on whom he left the sheep with. He goes on to say how he knows David's insolence and wickedness of his heart and he's come down to see the battle.

Why do you think Eliab got so angry with David?

How does David react in the face of Eliab's anger? _____

David's concern was for God's cause more than anything else. This included his own hurt at what his brother just said, his pride, his safety. David had a passionate concern for God's cause.

Verses 31-33

Saul hears about David's words and sends for him.

What does David say to Saul? _____

"May no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight this Philistine!"

Now, pretend you are one of the men in Saul's army. How do you think you would have taken David's words up to this point?

What is Saul's reaction to David's announcement that he would fight Goliath?

Saul disqualified David because of his age, size and lack of experience.

This shows us that Saul is solely looking at this battle purely in natural, outward terms.

Verses 34-37

What credentials does David give to Saul? _____

He goes on to say how Goliath - this uncircumcised Philistine will be like the lion and bear.

Why? _____

Look at David's boldness in verse 27. What does he truly believe?

How does Saul respond in the face of David's confidence in the Lord? _____

Verses 38-39

What does Saul clothe David in? _____

Did it work for David?

Verses 40

What does David do? _____

He puts the stones in his shepherd's pouch and with his sling in his hand, he approaches Goliath.

Notice how David uses the same tools he used before as a shepherd to kill the bear and lion. What God used before, He would use again.

The sling that David would have had was an ancient offensive weapon that shepherds used to control their sheep. It was usually made out of a long, thin strip of leather and formed a pouch in the middle. Good slingers could propel small objects hundreds of feet at very high speeds with great accuracy. Pictures of stones and slings at this time show the stones typically being two to three inches in diameter. It is thought that the stones that David used were probably the size of a baseball or even larger.

Verses 41-44

We are told Goliath approaches David with his armor-bearer in front of him.

What is Goliath's reaction to seeing David? _____

Goliath is insulted that this is who they send to fight him. **What image does Goliath give us?**

What are we told Goliath does at the end of verse 43? _____

Goliath tells David to come to him and he will give his flesh to the birds and wild animals. We've got some serious trash talking going on here.

Verses 45-47

We get the best comeback ever!

Goliath may be coming at David with a sword, a spear and a saber. **But what is David coming at him with?**

We get a list in verse 46 of what is going to happen:

- The Lord will hand Goliath over to David
- David will strike him and remove his head
- The dead bodies of the army will be given to birds and wild animals

All of this will tell the earth what? _____

We are told all of this will tell the entire assembly that the battle is the Lord's and he will hand the Philistines over to them.

David grasps the role of Israel before the nations in a way that Saul never does. Israel exists as a witness to the nations of the reality of God.

Verses 48

Notice what happens when Goliath came to meet David. What does David do?

He doesn't have a sudden bout of fear and turn tail and run. He surges forward with confidence to meet the battle head on.

What does this show us? _____

Verses 49-51 READ

David takes a stone from his bag and slings it. It doesn't just hit Goliath in the head. **What are we told it does?**

Notice in verse 50 what we are told David does and does not have.

What did he have? _____

What didn't he have? _____

David runs to Goliath, takes Goliath's own sword and finishes him off. **What does David do next?** _____

What do the Philistines do at this point? _____

Verses 52-54

What do the Israelites do at this point? _____

We are told that dead Philistines lay along the way. The towns mentioned lay to the north and northwest of the battlefield.

What do the Israelites do when they return from pursuing the Philistines?

What does David do with Goliath's head? _____

What does David do with Goliath's weapons? _____

Verses 55-58

What does Saul want to know? _____

There are several suggestions on why Saul would ask this question:

- Saul needed to know the name of David's father to deliver the prize promised to the man who defeated Goliath.
- Maybe he forgot who David was. Saul's unstable mental condition may have affected his memory.
- Saul most likely didn't pay much attention to his minstrel-servant.
- David could have changed in appearance since Saul last saw him.

David is brought before Saul with Goliath's head in his hand. Saul finally gets to find out whose son David is.

What does David tell him? _____

We are going to see how David's victory over the Philistine champion that day made him a national hero. It also entitles him to marry the king's daughter. We are also going to see how this evokes jealousy in Saul which sets in motion the events that take place in the rest of I Samuel.

I want to end this study by talking about something I read while I was preparing this lesson. I want to talk about where this battle was actually won. This battle wasn't just won that day on the battlefield with Goliath. It was actually won out with the sheep. In all those hours David spent alone with the sheep he was talking with God and developing a strong relationship with the Lord. He probably did a lot of target practice with his sling as well. Remember, his encounter with both a bear and a lion that he told Saul about. God gave him what he needed with both of those encounters, and David had no doubt that God would give him what he needed to defeat the Philistine that day. God had obviously been preparing him for years ahead of time for what lay ahead.

What do you think about this? Does the thought that the battle was actually won in the pasture with the sheep make sense? What does this mean for us today?