

David's Heir: David's Compositions Inspired by His Love for the Lord; Does Double Duty Making 30-Mile Round Trips between Bethlehem & Elah Guarding Jesse's Sheep & Performing Lyre Concerts for Saul, 1 Sam 17:15; Demonstrates Loyalty & Integrity; Jesse Sends David to Elah with Food for His Sons, 1 Sam 17:17-19

82. David's love and devotion to the Lord was expressed through his musical talents. But the test of his leadership qualities was expressed in his emphasis on divine subject matter.
83. David's Psalms express praise to God, thanksgiving for His provisions and protection, instructions on righteousness, leadership responsibilities, prayers of penitence, contrition, and intercession.
84. These subjects were presented in music composed by a shepherd. The music David performed before Saul was so incorporated with David's soul that it had a calming influence on the bipolar king.
85. What it reflected about David was his unwavering devotion to the Lord, but it had no lasting impact on Saul.
86. David's primary task was shepherding Jesse's sheep. The duty of soothing Saul's mercurial bouts with depression was an additional task that David had to manage.
87. It is obvious that David was not required to shepherd the sheep 24/7. There was time allotted for him to do other things. Jesse was impressed that his son had signed on to administer to the king, so David had flexibility to address both responsibilities.
88. We have recently studied the battle of the Valley of Elah where the armies of Israel and Philistia were encamped on high ground facing each other on opposite sides of the Wadi es-Sunt. (1 Samuel 17:3)
89. A standoff occurred between the two forces that continued for forty days (v. 16).
90. In this passage we learn that David's three eldest brothers – Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah – were serving in the army of Israel (v. 13).
91. We are also introduced to the behemoth Goliath from Gath which the text indicates had a "height of six cubits and a span." A cubit is estimated to have been 17.6 inches and a span 9 inches, thus Goliath was approximately 9-foot 6-inches tall. (v.4)
92. David reenters the narrative in verse 12, identified as the son of Jesse. In verse 14, he is mentioned as the youngest of Jesse's sons followed by this interesting comment in:
1 Samuel 17:15 - David went [Qal active participle of the verb הָלַךְ (*halach*)] back and forth [Qal active participle of the verb שָׁוָה (*shuv*)] from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem.
93. The two Qal participles in this verse indicate that David was running an ongoing shuttle between Bethlehem and Elah:

The Active Participle indicates a state of continued activity and therefore has extended uses.¹

¹ J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 66.

94. The distance between Bethlehem and the Israeli encampment at the Valley of Elah is around 15 miles. David is pulling double duty: When Saul gets down in the dumps,² David runs over to his headquarters and performs a lyre recital. When relieved of that duty, he runs back to Bethlehem “to tend his father’s flock.”
95. What David is demonstrating is simultaneous loyalty to two men in positions of authority over him. Even though David has been anointed as the future king of Israel, he remains humble and respectful to both men.
96. He continues to perform his obligations with the flock of his father’s sheep while also managing a second responsibility toward King Saul whom he consistently refers to as “the Lord’s anointed.”
97. Leadership qualities are most effectively developed by those who orient to authority first. David respects both men and submits to their wishes without argument.
98. David willingly performs both obligations. His mental attitude contains principles of respect toward his father and the obligation he has to protect his sheep.
99. His mental attitude toward Saul is motivated by his respect for the Lord’s anointed and therefore a willingness to serve the king in every way possible.
100. Through his efforts as a shepherd and his talents in music, David exhibits loyalty, integrity, and humility, which are essential character traits for a good leader.
101. His next challenge will test his leadership skills as an impromptu soldier in the Lord’s army at the Battle of the Valley of Elah.
- 1 Samuel 17:17** - Then Jesse said to David his son, “Take now for your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves and run [Hiphil imperative of the verb רָץ (*rus*): to be caused to run] to the camp of your brothers.
- v. 18** - Bring also these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of their thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers, and bring back news of them.
- v. 19** - “For Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.”
1. This mission led to David’s first military exercise. It is important to understand that his ability to pass this test had to be resident in his soul as he left Bethlehem.

² “Discouraged, depressed, or sad. The noun *dumps* has been used for “a state of depression” since the early 1500s” (Christine Ammer, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Idioms* [New York: Houston Mifflin Co., 1997], 172).