

David's Heir: Goliath Verbally Assaults David, Curses Him "by his gods," Underestimates Him, & Predicts His Death, 1 Sam 17:42–44; David Counters with One of the Most Eloquent Rebuttals in Literature Evangelizing Both Armies, vv. 45–47; the Battle of Champions: David Sprints toward Goliath, Slings His Stone, & Knocks Him to the Ground, vv. 48–49; David Decapitates the Giant, vv. 50–51; David Takes Goliath's Head to Jerusalem and His Weapons to Bethlehem, v. 54; David Passes the Leader Test

17. Ignorant of his distinct disadvantage, Goliath continues his verbal assault:  
**1 Samuel 17:42** - When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome [יָפֵה] (*yapheh*) appearance.  
**v. 43** - The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.
18. Why does Goliath disdain David? The word is the Qal imperfect of the verb בָּזָה (*bazah*): "to continuously hold in contempt; to disrespect."
19. Once David was close enough for Goliath to give him a visual inspection it made the giant furious. He has been waiting for six weeks for Saul to send out a worthy opponent.
20. What does he think he's gotten? A red-headed rookie with a stick. His youthful countenance—*yapheh*—conceals the fact that he is in superior physical condition; his consistent thirty-mile round trips from Bethlehem to Elah and back would have made him a top contender for a gold medal were the Olympic Games in existence.
21. Even more unknown to Goliath is the superior spiritual condition of David. His soul is stocked with all the attributes that would define a mature believer in the dispensation of Israel.
22. Goliath was so disgusted with the idea of taking on whom he considered an inferior opponent that he arrogantly started talking trash:  
**1 Samuel 17:44** - The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field."
23. Unintimidated, David responds with one of the most eloquent rebuttals in literature:  
**1 Samuel 17:45** - Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.<sup>1</sup>  
**1 Samuel 17:46** - "This day the Lord will deliver [ Piel imperfect of the verb סָגַר (*saghar*): intensive for great ongoing force ] you up into my hands, and I will strike you down [ Hiphil perfect of the verb נָכַח (*nachah*): to be caused to strike down ] and remove your head [ Hiphil perfect of the verb סָר (*sur*) ] from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,

<sup>1</sup> Battle of Champions: Single combat was practiced based upon the belief that the gods of each army actually fought and decided the battle. Both David and Goliath called upon their gods. David's victory proved that "the battle is the Lords." See 1 Samuel 17:4, 23 בְּנִים (*benaim*), and 51 גִּבּוֹר (*gibbor*).

**v. 47** - and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands."

24. Who does David inform Goliath that will win the victory on "This day?" The Lord. David has the mentality, the courage, and the motivation to go do the Lord's business.
25. What are the objectives of this exercise? (1) So that both armies assembled may know that there is a God in Israel, (2) that the battle is the Lord's, and (3) that He will deliver Goliath into David's hand.
26. These uncircumcised idol worshipers are going to see a demonstration of divine power concentrated in the soul of a young man who is the most prepared combatant on both sides of the Wadi es-Sunt.
27. The Philistine army is about to witness a demonstration of the power of Israel's God and the ineffectiveness of Philistia's gods. Based on David's exhortations the outcome will be clear: God wins; our idols lose.
28. The gods whom Gabriel referenced to curse David in verse 43 did not show up for the contest. They are nothing but stocks and stones. Jesus Christ is on hand and He is intensively active in winning the victory.
29. Goliath is unconvinced. Rather than responding to the clear message of impending defeat, he instead advanced toward David with his shield bearer leading the way.
30. Picture this if you can: A nine-foot, six-inch giant in full panoply plus sword, spear, and javelin, following a man holding a shield, moving toward a twenty-something shepherd minus any visible panoply while wielding a slingshot.

**1 Samuel 17:48** - Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly [ Piel imperfect of the verb מָהַר (*mahar*): intensive indicating a sprint ] toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.

31. "This day" has turned to right now! David is a track star with no encumbrances. As he sprints toward his target he loads his sling:

**1 Samuel 17:49** - And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sunk into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground.

Sling, implement for propelling missiles, one of the first missile weapons used in warfare. It consisted of a small strap or socket of leather to which two cords were attached. The warrior, or slinger, held the ends of the cords in one hand, placed the missile in the strap, and whirled the socket and missile rapidly around his head; releasing one cord at the right moment allowed the slinger to let the missile fly with great speed.<sup>2</sup>

32. The question arises as to whether the stone did or did not cause the death of Goliath. Verses 50 and 51 seemingly contradict each other:

**1 Samuel 17:50** - Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand.

<sup>2</sup> *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Micropaedia* (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010), 10:880.

**v. 51** - Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. (NASB)

33. These two verses are explained for us by this excerpt from Keil and Delitzsch:
- Verse 50 contains a remark by the historian [the writer of the Books of Samuel] with reference to the result of the conflict. And then in verse 51 the details are given, namely, that David cut off the head of the fallen giant with his own sword.<sup>3</sup>**
34. Due to this sudden turn of events, the Philistines retreated toward Philistia while the emboldened Israelites pursued to Ekron leaving slain Philistine soldiers along the routes to Shaaraim \shā-ā-rā'-īm\, Gath and Ekron.
35. After the pursuit is called off, the Jewish army returned to claim booty from the Philistines' camp. David's booty was Goliath's head which he took to Jerusalem.
36. There is controversy about this statement recorded in:
- 1 Samuel 17:54** - Then David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but put his weapons in his tent. (NASB)
37. Noting the second half of the verse first, David had the right to Goliath's weaponry according to the custom of the day regarding the collection of booty. His tent, or residence, was in Bethlehem so that is where he took Goliath's weapons including his sword.
38. He then took his head to Jerusalem which has also caused controversy. The reasons are noted and then resolved by this excerpt, again from Keil and Delitzsch:
- There is no anachronism in these statements; for the assertion made by some, that Jerusalem was not yet in the possession of the Israelites, rests upon a confusion between the citadel of Jebus \jē'-būs\ upon Zion, which was still in the hands of the Jebusites, and the city of Jerusalem, in which Israelites had dwelt for a long time (Joshua 15:63, and Judges 1:8).<sup>4</sup>**
39. The Jebusite section of Jerusalem was different from the rest of the city:
- Jebus, the name of Jerusalem under Jebusite control. Jebusite Jerusalem, which David captured (2 Samuel 5:8), has been shown by archaeological excavation to have been the southwest hill, and to have been fortified by stout walls, which have been uncovered. The Jebusite city was south of the Temple area on Mount Moriah.<sup>5</sup>**
40. At some point David took the head of Goliath to Jerusalem, not the Jebusite controlled section of Jebus. It can be further demonstrated that David took Goliath's sword to the tabernacle in Nob:
- Nor is there any contradiction between this statement [in 1 Samuel 17:54] and 1 Samuel 21:9, where Goliath's sword is said to have been preserved in the tabernacle at Nob: for it is not affirmed that David kept Goliath's armour in his own home, but only that he took it thither; and the supposition that Goliath's sword was afterwards deposited by him in the sanctuary in honour of the Lord, is easily reconcilable with this.<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), 184.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 184–85.

<sup>5</sup> Merrill F. Unger, "Jebus," in *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 3d ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 557.

<sup>6</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *The Books of Samuel*, 185.



41. 1 Samuel 17:50-54, provides a summary of events that transpired following David's execution of Goliath. Verses 55-58 refer to Saul's comments before and after the one-on-one between the two men.
42. The NET Bible indicates that these verses are doubtfully found in the original autographs with this footnote at 1 Samuel 17:55:  
**Most LXX [Septuagint] manuscripts lack 17:55-18:5.<sup>7</sup>**
43. In our study, we have seen David pass a number of tests demonstrating his capacity to lead Israel as "the Lord's anointed."
44. He was a loyal and dedicated keeper of his father's sheep to the point of personally defending them against the attack of predators. His authority orientation and devotion to duty was developed as a teenager.
45. During this time he became interested in music and capitalized on his innate musical skills to compose music and become a virtuoso performer on the twelve-string lyre.
46. His compositions were inspired by a daily relationship with God. His performances were so accomplished that they were able to bring Saul out of states of depression.
47. His unfailing willingness to entertain the king while continuing to perform his duties with the sheep indicates a work ethic unhindered by the efforts required for each.
48. He was willing to run a thirty-mile route in mountainous terrain to fulfill his obligations to both his father, Jesse, and King Saul.
49. He demonstrated his unquestioned dependence on God's protection and power when he unhesitatingly and singlehandedly advanced on Goliath, defeating him with a precisely aimed stone and lethal decapitation with the Giant's own sword.
50. David made clear to the Israelite army and to the defeated Philistines that he was a man of honor, courage, moxie, and skill – one not to be taken lightly and one completely qualified to be the future leader of Israel.
51. Therefore, what we have studied in 1 Samuel 16-17 reveals why David was chosen by God to be His anointed.

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<sup>7</sup> NET Bible, (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 2001), 537n13.