

## Description

*God is always defying the odds. The story goes that a certain archaeologist was digging in the Negev Desert in Israel and came upon a sarcophagus containing a mummy. After examining it, he called the curator of a prestigious natural-history museum. "I've just discovered the 3,000-year-old mummy of a man who died of heart failure!" the excited archaeologist exclaimed. The curator replied, "Bring him in. We'll check it out." A week later, the amazed curator called the archaeologist. "You were right about the mummy's age and cause of death. How in the world did you know?" he asked. The archaeologist replied, "Easy. There was a piece of paper in his hand that read, '10,000 shekels on Goliath.'"*

*The David and Goliath passage is a classic (true) tale of the underdog winning over the big guy, but if we don't read it right, we might find ourselves betting on the wrong guy. Yesterday, Vanderbilt Coach Derek Mason was phyching up his team against an epic battle with Alabama and said, "David didn't run away from Goliath, he ran to Goliath. Today we're going to run to the giant". However, Nick Saban's dynasty at Alabama is a Goliath unlike any other seen in recent memory. And, on Sunday, the headline was "59 – 0 Tide delivers meanest beat down in school history"*

*If David v. Goliath is simply a story about picking the right stones, spinning up enough courage, and running straight at trouble... then I'm afraid we will miss something quite significant. In chapter 16 we hear, "...the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Ultimately, we realize in chapter 17 that the Lord doesn't provide the best weapons... he provides the best Savior... 1) The gods of the age can't save ... 2) the servants of Saul are sunk... but 3) the Living God will save.*

## See Sermon Series Booklet (linked under "Resources")

- **Daily Readings – Page**
- **Family Devotional – Page**
- **Life Group Study - Page**

## Sermon and Notes

### God always defies the odds

- A certain archaeologist was digging in the Negev Desert in Israel and came upon a sarcophagus containing a mummy. After examining it, he called the curator of a prestigious natural-history museum. "I've just discovered the 3,000-year-old mummy of a man who died of heart failure!" the excited archaeologist exclaimed. The curator replied, "Bring him in. We'll check it out." A week later, the amazed curator called the archaeologist. "You were right about the mummy's age and cause of death. How in the world did you know?" he asked. The archaeologist replied, "Easy. There was a piece of paper in his hand that read, '10,000 shekels on Goliath.'"

***The David and Goliath passage is a classic (true) tale of the underdog winning over the big guy... just look at the news headlines...***

- Firm faces "David and Goliath" battle against bigger company
- Lawyer takes on "David" client against "Goliath" oppressor
- Common man takes on long-standing politician in David and Goliath fight for senate seat
- Vanderbilt may be David, "However, Nick Saban's dynasty at Alabama is a Goliath unlike any other seen in recent memory"
  - (Yesterday) Vanderbilt Coach Derek Mason, "David didn't run away from Goliath, he ran to Goliath. Today we're going to run to the giant".
  - (Today) 59 - 0 "Tide delivers meanest beatdown in school history"

***If the David v. Goliath is simply a story about picking the right stones, spinning up enough courage, and running straight at trouble... then I'm afraid we will miss something quite significant...***

- We're in the middle of a series titled, "David: His Story / Our Story"
- Week 1 we heard, "God is looking for a man after his own heart" ... it's a reminder that God's main interest is the heart... (as Herbert says: "Powering upon it, as if thou hadst nothing else to do")
- Week 2 the theme of the heart continues... in c. 16 we hear, "Take no notice of his appearance or his tall stature" ((( The outside isn't what matters ))) ... God looks at the heart

***16:7 For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.***

- Week 3 is all about the heart... it's an example of people who's hearts are fearful because they're looking at appearances rather than the heart...

- What we'll see is that this viewing of the heart... applies not only to our finest choices... but to our formidable foes...
- But ultimately, we need to see "Who's heart" is in view? Is it ours? Is it Goliath's? Is it David's? Is it God's?
- The Lord doesn't provide the best weapons... he provides the best Savior... 1) The gods of the age can't save ... 2) the servants of Saul... but 3) the Living God can

***The Lord doesn't provide the best weapons... he provides the best Savior... 1) The gods of the age can't save ... 2) the servants of Saul... but 3) the Living God can***

### **1 The God's of the age have misplaced faith**

- Goliath the Giant of Gath challenges the Servants of Saul (1-16)
- The Philistines and Saul gather for battle (1-3)

***1 Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. ... 2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered... 3 And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.***

- Tension is mounting as we see the two sides at a standstill...
- But there's more going on... After Saul's anointing he wins a large battle... Now the new king will be going into battle.
- The differences between the two kings will become strikingly clear
- Goliath of Gath is the picture of the newest battle tech (4-7)

***4 And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits (9 feet) and (5) had a helmet of bronze on his head, and ... a coat of mail (five thousand shekels of bronze -- 120lbs) . 6 ...armor on his legs, and a javelin ...7 ... his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron (40lbs). And his shield-bearer went before him.***

- Goliath is huge... 9 foot tall... but not uncommon ...
  - This is what the Israelite spies report before going into Canaanite land back in the book of Joshua
  - Egyptian letters talk about wars with the Philistines and their huge warriors
  - Archeology...two female skeletons about seven feet tall from the twelfth century have been found in Transjordan. (IVPBBC)
- This is no imaginative fiction writing... this guy is huge!
- And he's armed with the latest battle tech!
  - 125 pounds of body armor
  - Top to toe he looks like a tank!
- He's the vision of the new Iron Age warrior coming against the old Bronze Age Israelites...
- But despite his bravado... he's still scared.
- Tim Keller calls this, "Counterfeit Courage"... his trust is in his Skill, Tech, Appearance... they look on him and lose heart...

***The Lord doesn't provide the best weapons... he provides the best Savior... 1) The gods of the age can't save ... 2) the servants of Saul... but 3) the Living God can***

### **2 The servants of Saul look for a King to save them**

- The people wanted a "head and shoulders above the rest King"... a weapon of the bronze age... but he's no match for the talent and technology of the new Iron Age Warrior
- Goliath calls out the Servants of Saul for 40 days challenging their weak god (8-16)

***8 He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. 9 If he is able to ... kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail ... you shall be our servants ... 10 And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. ... 11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. ... 16 For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.***

- 17:8-10. champion warfare.
  - Goliath is challenging them with Champion warfare... 1 on 1 battle... Saves time and men... kind of like mediation or arm wrestling
    - No one is quite sure if the final result will actually hold!
    - But, in theory, it saves bloodshed...
    - And, it's usually offered by the one who's the most confident... Goliath is sure of himself!
  - And Goliath is making a theological statement... He's fighting the "Ranks of Israel" or the "Host of Israel"... Think "HEAVENLY HOST"
  - He's saying, "You say you fight on the side of the angels... prove it"
  - Goliath wasn't just championing his people... he was championing his god, Dagon...

- Dagon was the fish god... and fertility god
- You had no power if you didn't have this god...
- And you'd be childless... without heritage if you didn't serve Dagon.
- Now, the children of YHWH ... the true God are up against Goliath's god
- And, he goes one step further... he calls them "Servants of Saul"
  - This is the most theological statement of all...
  - They had been servants of God... but they wanted a different king
  - Remember, God says to Samuel, "Don't be upset... they've not rejected you... they've rejected me."
  - In our fears we trust in many things... and are slow to run to God!
  - We become servants of the gods of this age... rather than "The people of God"
- So, where's Saul?
  - When the call comes out for a champion... Israel's head and shoulder's above the rest "king"... is "dismayed"...
  - Fear has paralyzed him...
  - There's Plenty to be afraid of
    - Fear can be paralyzing, causing much anxiety. However, some fears and worries are misplaced and not based on fact. Newsweek magazine compared the reality of "threats" to our perceived fears:
      - Murders: 14,180 (2008)—Suicides: 33,289 (2006)
      - Shark attacks: 28 (2009)—Dog bites: 4.5 million (estimate)
      - Americans killed in terrorist attacks worldwide: 33 (2008)—Americans who die from seasonal flu: 36,171 (est.)
      - Deaths by allergic reaction to peanuts: 50-100 (est.)—Deaths by unintentional poisoning: 27,531 (2006)
      - Fatalities in airline accidents: 321 (2005)—Fatalities in car crashes: 34,017 (2008)
      - Claudia Kalb and E. White, "What Should You Really Be Afraid Of?" Newsweek magazine (5-24-2010)
  - But what is Saul really afraid of??
  - He's afraid he won't have what it takes to win the battle... because his trust is in his own hands... not the hands of God.
    - Fear reveals what we've been putting our trust in... Money (loss) Power (weak) Family (loss)... every strength in this world is actually quite vulnerable!
  - Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
    - The funny thing about fear... is that if you fear God you fear nothing... but if you don't fear God... you fear everything...
- 17:12–30 David comes to the battlefield
  - chapter 17 describes David's transformation from being a shepherd of flocks to becoming a leader of people. (EBC)
    - Jesse's command ("Hurry," v.17; cf. 20:6; lit., "run," as in vv.22, 48, 51—in each case stressing the youthful eagerness and energy that characterized David in this chapter) underscores his concern for his sons' well-being and safety (EBC)
    - He "left" his father's flock with a "shepherd" (EBC)
    - he "left" his "things" with the "keeper" of the "supplies" (EBC)
      - Then I read, "Now David was a son of a man, this Ephrathite, from Bethlehem-judah ..." (v. 12). What a literary relief! A little family history never sounded so good. (FOBC)
  - v. 12 "No David was a son of a man from Bethlehem
  - ... a little family history never sounded so good...
  - David is young... Saul is old... the tension is built... a new champion arrives
- Even when we become the servants of this world... God still sends a champion for his people! (BRAZOS)
 

***The Lord doesn't provide the best weapons... he provides the best Savior... 1) The gods of the age can't save ... 2) the servants of Saul... but 3) the Living God can***

**3 David's faith is in the Living God (There's plenty to be afraid of!) (But God is Faithful!!)**

  - David hears the challenge and wonders who dares defy the Living God? (20-30)
    - v. 20-25 David brings supplies to his brothers and hear Goliath's taunts

**20 And David rose ... and took the provisions ... 22.. and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. 23 As he talked with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, came up out of the ranks of the Philistines and spoke the same words as before. And David heard him... Apparently the defiant challenge is loud enough to interrupt David talking with his brothers... v. 24... and all the men were afraid...**

- This is the first time, in the Bible, David talks— (FOBC)

**26 And David said to the men who stood by him, “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?”**

- v. 26 “Who does he think he is? ... defy the Living God??”
- strong contrast between “the soldiers’ words of resignation” (v.25) and “David’s words of indignation” (v.26) (EBC)
  - The men of Israel call Goliath “this man,”
    - David calls him “this uncircumcised Philistine” (EBC)
  - they say that Goliath has come out to “defy Israel,”
    - David says that he has come out to “defy the armies of the living God” (EBC)
  - the men of Israel “see an insuperable, fearsome giant who is reproaching Israel;
    - David sees merely an uncircumcised Philistine who has the audacity to reproach the armies of the living God\*\* (EBC)
  - their god Dagon is a destroyed, dead idol (5:3–4). By contrast “the LORD is the true God;/ he is the living God, the eternal King” (Jer 10:10; cf. also Deut 5:26; 2 Sam 22:47; Jer 23:36). (EBC)
- David’s confidence, though he’s able physically to do some harm, isn’t in himself... it’s in God
  - David imagines the circumstance theologically rather than materially, and this enables him to see the empirical facts better than those who look at the facts on the ground. (BRAZOS)
- Remember the message of chapter 16: “The LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).
  - The author’s description of the Philistine champion is the single most detailed description of any warrior in the Bible. The point was how fearful he appeared, and the question was whether or not God’s people would look on him through faith in God. (REC)
- David encourages Saul and volunteers to fight as the champion (33-40)
  - Saul says it’s not possible (33)

**31... Saul, [sent for David]. 32 And David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” 33 And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth.”**

- Saul trusts military experience, size, and might... He’s just like Goliath
- David doesn’t look like a champion... so he must not be one
- David is confident in God’s ability (34-37)

**34 But David said ... 36 Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.” 37 And David said, “The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the Lord be with you!”**

- I’ve been fighting wild animals my entire life... this guy is just a wild animal...
- Circumstances vary, but Yahweh is the same whether among the sheep or in front of the Philistines (FOBC)
- In David’s mind, Goliath isn’t an “Advanced Weaponized Battle Bot”... he’s just someone defying the Living God
- David had learned to trust in the Lord...
- And, if God’s sheep (four legged or two legged) are in trouble... then any shepherd who trusts in God is adequate for the task!
- David refuses to be “little Saul” (38-40)

**38 Then Saul clothed David with his armor. ... 39... Then David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.” So David put them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd’s pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine.**

- Saul was hoping for David to represent him... but that wasn’t the testing that David had gone through...
- His testing was to trust God with whatever God had given him... and that was a sling
- Now... don’t think that a sling is a toy... it’s an advanced weapon that is in some ways more deadly than an arrow or sword...

- Used correctly it could hurl a rock at more than 100 mph...
- David was going to hurl a stone into that giant's mouth and out the back of his skull ... to shut him up!
- Dagon v. Yhwh (41-47)
- v. 42 ... he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance /// Goliath makes the same mistake as everyone else... He looks on the outside

**41 And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. 42 And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. 43 And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field."**

- Goliath is on perilous ground: To defy "the armies of Israel" (v.45) is to defy "the armies of the living God" (v.36; cf. comment on v.10) and is tantamount to defying God himself (EBC)
- v. 47... the battle is the Lord's... he will give you into our hands

**45 Then 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 the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. ... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand."**

- David has stated why the fight is his to win: "The battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands" (17:47) (BRAZOS)
- The contrast would then be between dead idols—like the Philistine god Dagon—and the living God (EBC)
- An unequal contest... David's God is in control!

- The Battle (48-49) David ran to meet the Philistine... the stone sank in... he fell on his face...

**48 When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.**

- With a volley of verbs—thirty-six in seven verses—17:48–54 suddenly accelerates the action. The Philistine arose, came, drew nigh; David hasted, ran, put, took, slang, smote; the stone sunk; Goliath fell; so David prevailed, smote and slew, ran and stood over his felled opponent, took the other man's sword, drew it, slew Goliath, and cut off his head; the Philistine army saw and fled; in counterpoint, the Israelite armies arose, shouted, pursued; and as the Philistines fell their conquerors spoiled their supplies; and David took Goliath's head and put his enemy's valuable bronze armor aside for himself. The living God of whom David spoke has brought the Israelites to life in David. (BRAZOS)
- One sling stone sufficed; it felled the Philistine, who—like the idol of his god Dagon in an earlier episode—toppled to the ground facedown (v.49; cf. 5:4). (EBC)
  - But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him. - 1 Samuel 5:4 (EBC)
  - v. 7 the hand of the Lord was heavy against the people... NOW... the Philistines are delivered into the hands of God's people... (EBC)
  - It seems that there is only one God who sees the heart of Kings and has hands with witch to do battle! (GMS)
  - SO what do we trust in other gods? Fear exposes the gods we worship and serve... See Keller Psalm 27 (GMS)
- David's surprising means of victory is a symbol of what God is like. This is the God who brings the dead to life. This is the God whose might is his mercy, the Father of Jesus Christ. (BRAZOS)
  - God wins! (50-54) ... no sword... cut off his head... Philistines fled... David took the head to Jerusalem...

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**Who do you trust? How do you develop courage?**

- Maya Angelo on developing Courage
  - I would say she encouraged me to develop courage. And she taught me by being courageous herself. And after years of leaving her and, I think, becoming courageous, I realized that one isn't born with courage. One develops it. And you develop it by doing small, courageous things, in the same way that one wouldn't set out to pick up 100 pound bag of rice. If that was one's aim, the person would be advised to pick up a five pound bag, and then a ten pound, and then a 20 pound, and so forth, until one

builds up enough muscle to actually pick up 100 pounds. And that's the same way with courage. You develop courage by doing courageous things, small things, but things that cost you some exertion- mental and, I suppose, spiritual exertion. HBR IdeaCast, "Maya Angelou on Courage and Creativity," Harvard Business Review (5-29-13)

- (Example of imputation - Lawyer's success or failure is your success or failure)
- The challenge is to read the story right... The courage that we can take from this story is that God is our champion!!
  - When we do Life Groups there are four important questions... What is God doing? What are the people doing? What's the good advice... and what's the Good News? And... finally... Who will you share this with?
    - When you ask those questions... it clarifies what the point is... and helps you see more clearly.
    - You see People >>> Scared and hiding OR defiant (the word is used six times of Goliath)
    - Who's he defying? God
    - You see God >>> What's he doing? Showing David
- David's slaying of Goliath is like Christ's slaying of our most feared foe... Death...
  - Death, be not proud, though some have called thee Mighty and dreadful, for thou are not so; For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
  - Death... thou shalt die!
- Jesus is the unlikely champion ... and like David people doubted
  - Pilate "Are you the king of the Jews"
- So we can have ultimate confidence... and trust in the Lord through our battles
  - like David, Jesus conquered Satan, sin, and death with resources that are not of this world. Peter explained, "You were ransomed ... not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19). (REC)
  - This is not a call to the couch... this is a call to walk boldly wherever God calls us to go
  - All the believer's life and all the church's life requires theocentric thinking. The tragedy is that were someone to hear our thoughts and words in our dangers and troubles they would never guess that we had a living God. (FOBC)
  - With him alone as our champion... fighting not with spear or javelin... but with the Lord alone as our champion!

- If we don't listen to this text, then we'll end up bringing in all the junk about being courageous in the face of "your Goliaths," whether the bully down the street (for primary Sunday-school kids) or—everyone's preoccupation—one's poor self-image (FOBC)
  - where a narrative talks about Yahweh—that is liable to be where the accent falls (FOBC)
    - Sometimes there is also a key word or term that provides the main theme. The latter is the case in 1 Samuel 17, for some form of the root *hārap* (to reproach, defy, mock, deride) appears six times (vv. 10, 25, 26 [twice], 36, 45). The use of this term in connection with the brute from Gath helps us to view him properly. Goliath is not merely the big goon from Philistia; Goliath's blabbering dishonors Israel's God (FOBC)
    - The reader just coming from Ch. 16, however, realizes that the impressive appearance provokes a thought rather on the lines of "Take no notice of his appearance or his tall stature!" [16:7] A prophetic criticism of this kind would not only have heartened the men of Israel but even given them a radically new view of the Philistine champion. (FOBC)
    - We must see that 16:7 applies both to our finest choices and to our most formidable enemies (FOBC)
- 17:1. Philistines.
  - 17:1–11 The Philistine challenge. The scene switches from the peaceful royal court to a new battlefield, near Socoh in Judah—in other words there was a fresh invasion by Philistine troops, which Saul had to counter. NBC
    - Just as Samuel's anointing of Saul (10:1) was followed by Saul's defeat of Nahash and the Ammonites (11:1–11), so also Samuel's anointing of David (16:13) was followed by David's defeat of Goliath and the Philistines (ch. 17). Although lacking time frames, the impression in both instances is that the Israelite victory occurred fairly soon after the anointing and thus demonstrated the courage, determination, and military expertise of the newly anointed leader. (EBC)
  - The group of Philistines that are known through the narratives of 1 and 2 Samuel came into the Palestine area with the migration from the Aegean region of the Sea Peoples about 1200 B.C. (IVPBBC)
    - They had overrun Israelite territory in the battle in which the ark was taken (1 Sam 4) and again will do so in the battle in which Saul and his sons are killed (chap. 31). During the reign of Saul there is continual conflict as Saul tries to rid the land of their presence and prevent further incursions (IVPBBC)
    - 17:1. location of Philistine camp. Socoh (modern Khirbet Abbad) was a town in the Shephelah Valley about fourteen miles west of Bethlehem near Philistine territory (IVPBBC)
  - It is not the uneven conquest of a Philistine champion by an anonymous boy that it looks like on the surface. Few are taken in. It is not about a habiru, a socially marginal migrant, taking on a terrifying tyrant, and anyone who has read the preceding chapters of 1 Samuel knows that. (BRAZOS)
    - A Martian who had thus far read only from Joshua to 1 Sam. 16 could grasp that David is a prince-in-waiting and the Philistine a booby. The Israelites are in danger from the Philistines from Joshua to the end of 1 Samuel, where Saul dies at their hands, but the supremacy of God's chosen heroes over these enemies of God is an edge-of-the-seat affair in a way similar to that of Jason Bourne over his amoral assailants in *The Bourne Identity* and its sequels: thrilling, but not unanticipated. (BRAZOS)
- 17:2. Israelite camp.
  - The Valley of Elah ("Terebinth") was the broad north-south plain that had an opening where the Wadi es-Sant started its rise into the hill country of Judah, about two miles east of Socoh. (IVPBBC)
- 17:4. Gath and Goliath
  - Gath has been tentatively identified as Tell es-Safi, five miles south of Tell Miqne/Ekron. Of the five major cities of the Philistines it was the closest to Judah (IVPBBC)
  - 17:4. Goliath's size.
    - Champions of this size are not simply a figment of Israel (IVPBBC)
    - The Egyptian letter on Papyrus Anastasi I (thirteenth century B.C.) describes fierce warriors in Canaan who are seven to nine feet tall. Additionally, two female skeletons about seven feet tall from the twelfth century have been found at Tell es-Sa'ideyeh in Transjordan. (IVPBBC)
    - Goliath's height is given in the text as about nine and a half feet. It is suspected that he is of the same stock as the Anakim, the giant inhabitants of the land that the Israelite armies were

able to defeat in the conquest. The descendants of Anak are generally considered “giants,” though the description “gigantic” may be a more appropriate line of thinking (IVPBBC)

- They put forward a champion (4) and demanded that an Israelite champion should come forward and fight him in single combat. The theory behind such individual combat was the belief that either the gods or the stronger god would grant victory to whichever man they chose. NBC
  - Even when we become the servants of this world... God still sends a champion for his people! (BRAZOS)
- 17:5–7. Goliath’s armor
  - On strides Goliath, clanking in his armor. We are made to see him from top to toe, before we hear him: “six cubits and a span” tall, “a helmet of brass upon his head,” “a coat of mail” weighing “five thousand shekels of brass,” “greaves of brass upon his legs,” “a target [body shield] of brass between his shoulders.” Every inch the new Iron Age warrior, Goliath carries a “spear ... like a weaver’s beam,” weighing in at “six hundred shekels of iron.” He has need of a “shield” carrier, leaving both arms free to wield his ton weight of spear (17:4–7). It’s a lesson in how to look invincible. (BRAZOS)
    - bronze scale armor that covered the entire body, weighing over 125 pounds (IVPBBC)
    - from seven hundred to over one thousand scales of varying sizes. These scales were sewn onto a jerkin of leather or cloth. The front and back were sewn together at the shoulders (with a space for the head) and probably reached to the knees (IVPBBC)
    - The weight of Goliath’s armor is thus all the more impressive (NIV mg., “about 125 pounds”). David, however, scorned both helmet and armor, finding his ultimate protection in God himself (vv.38–39, 45) (EBC)
- 17:8–10. champion warfare.
  - a contest of champions. The purpose of such contests was “to obviate the necessity of a general engagement of troops which would spill more blood than necessary to resolve the dispute” (Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., “A Hittite Analogue to the David and Goliath Contest of Champions?” CBQ 30 [1968]: 220). (EBC)
    - Whether this kind of radical limitation on warfare is ever sincerely accepted by either side remains in itself a matter of dispute (EBC)
    - At times individual combat was used, with the individuals viewed as representatives of their respective armies, so that the divine will could be expressed. Examples of individual combat are known in Egypt on the Beni Hasan wall painting (early second millennium) and in the Egyptian Tale of Sinuhe. It is likewise depicted on a Canaanite vase from the first half of the second millennium. Nearer in time, parallels can be found in the Iliad (Hector against Ajax, Paris against Menelaus) and the Hittite Apology of Hattusilis III. A relief from the tenth century found at Tell Halaf depicts two combatants grabbing at one another’s heads and thrusting with short swords. (IVPBBC)
  - 8–11 Goliath hurls the challenge of representative combat into the teeth of the Israelite army (vv.8–10). Priding himself on his Philistine heritage, he addresses the Israelites as Saul’s “servants” (v.8), an ambiguous term that can mean either “officials” or “slaves” (EBC)
    - Goliath came forward twice a day (v.16) for forty days (a month and then some; cf. Segal, “Numerals,” pp. 10–11) in continuing, taunting defiance. He “took his stand,” like the kings of the earth in Psalm 2:2 (same Heb. verb), “against the LORD and against his anointed one” (Ps 2:2 NIV mg.). (EBC)
    - Goliath means to “defy the ranks of Israel” (v.10; cf. v.25), David sees him as defying “the armies of the living God” (vv.26, 36)—yea, even God himself (EBC)
    - Saul and his troops (v.11) were “dismayed and terrified” (EBC)
  - The proposed single combat does not so much replace the battle between the two forces as it symbolizes its outcome: the victory of either man will be a sign to one army that their gods prevail. And Israel has been designated, not as “the people of Yahweh,” but as the “servants to Saul.” (BRAZOS)
    - Goliath was a “champion” (1 Sam. 17:4): the Hebrew expression literally means a “man between the two.” He was trained, equipped, and naturally endowed to step forth between competing armies and challenge an opponent to single combat. This strategy had the virtue of sparing the vast bloodshed of armies locked in battle, and it reflected the commonly held idea that the battle was a contest between the gods of the two nations, since single combat could prove a god’s supremacy just as well as a full battle. (REC)
  - what were once the tribes of Yahweh, all “servants to Saul.” (BRAZOS)
    - The Israelites have just made their first gesture toward advancing beyond an acephalous Late Bronze Age culture. Our author uses anaphorics, the ventriloquism of Israel’s theology by

pagan speakers. You are “servants to Saul” (17:8), Goliath says, sounding like Samuel at his most sarcastic; designating himself as a “Philistine,” Goliath identifies his antagonists not as “Israelites” but “Saul’s people.” (BRAZOS)

- 17:11. role of king.
  - The text undoubtedly wants to display Saul’s incompetence. The people had sought a king to lead their armies into battle. It was not odd, however, for a king to send out a champion rather than going himself. (IVPBBC)
  - This is also evident in the Iliad, where Patroclus dons the armor of Achilles in order to go out and challenge Hector. Nevertheless, given the amount of time that had gone by, Saul should by now have been willing to take up the challenge himself. (IVPBBC)
  - not even Saul, whose height has been emphasized earlier in the story (9:2, 10:23), had the courage to accept the challenge; he too was dismayed and terrified (11). Saul thus displayed his lack of leadership: Israel needed a new soldier to lead them into battle NBC
  - a lot of tension from verses 4–11. There I see this armored superman from Philistia (vv. 4–7), hear his superwords (vv. 8– 10), and watch Saul and Israel frantically searching for the panic button (v. 11). (FOBC)
- 17:12–30 David comes to the battlefield
  - chapter 17 describes David’s transformation from being a shepherd of flocks to becoming a leader of people. (EBC)
    - Jesse’s command (“Hurry,” v.17; cf. 20:6; lit., “run,” as in vv.22, 48, 51—in each case stressing the youthful eagerness and energy that characterized David in this chapter) underscores his concern for his sons’ well-being and safety (EBC)
    - He “left” his father’s flock with a “shepherd” (EBC)
    - he “left” his “things” with the “keeper” of the “supplies” (EBC)
  - Then I read, “Now David was a son of a man, this Ephrathite, from Bethlehem-judah ...” (v. 12). What a literary relief! A little family history never sounded so good. (FOBC)
- 17:17–18. food supplies.
  - David came to the camp with about half a bushel of roasted grain (either wheat or barley), loaves of bread and cuts of cheese, all of which were favorites for common people (IVPBBC)
- 17:18. what David is getting from them.
  - David was told to ask how his brothers were doing and to “pick up their assurance.” This was likely some sort of token returned with David to confirm that the goods had been provided. This would be proof that Jesse had met his obligations to supply the army and would be the brothers’ way of collecting their rations. (IVPBBC)
- 17:19. distance between Bethlehem and Elah (IVPBBC)
  - Bethlehem was about fifteen miles from the Valley of Elah, which took most of the day for David to walk (IVPBBC)
- 17:23-26 David hears the taunt
  - Even from a distance Goliath’s defiant challenge appears to have been loud enough to interrupt David’s conversation with his brothers (v.23). (EBC)
  - terrified” in v.11 is translated “in great fear” in v.24. (EBC)
    - strong contrast between “the soldiers’ words of resignation” (v.25) and “David’s words of indignation” (v.26) (EBC)
      - The men of Israel call Goliath “this man,” David calls him “this uncircumcised Philistine” (EBC)
      - they say that Goliath has come out to “defy Israel,” David says that he has come out to “defy the armies of the living God” (EBC)
      - they refer to Goliath’s potential victor as “the man who kills him,” (EBC)
      - David refers to him as “the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel.” (EBC)
      - the men of Israel “see an insuperable, fearsome giant who is reproaching Israel; David sees merely an uncircumcised Philistine who has the audacity to reproach the armies of the living God (EBC)
      - The Hebrew root for “disgrace” in v.26 is the same for “defy” later in the verse: Goliath is disgracing/defying Israel, and David—with God’s help—intends to remove that disgrace/defiance. Since “defy” in v.26 answers to “defy” in v.25 (Boogaart, “The Story of David and Goliath,” p. 208), the last sentence in v.26—especially in light of kī introducing a clause after an interrogative clause—should doubtless be translated as

follows: “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine? Why should he defy the armies of the living God?” (cf. comment on 11:5). (EBC)

- their god Dagon is a destroyed, dead idol (5:3–4). By contrast “the LORD is the true God;/ he is the living God, the eternal King” (Jer 10:10; cf. also Deut 5:26; 2 Sam 22:47; Jer 23:36). (EBC)
- His confident statement, “Let no one lose heart,” is made all the more specific by the overly eager LXX (and some OL MSS): “Let not the king lose heart.” But Saul, unimpressed, (EBC)
  - This is the first time David talks—in the Bible, (FOBC)
    - David’s words in verse 26b are as heavy as Goliath. David has never spoken before in our story. Now the silence is broken. David brings a whole new world view. To this point the narrative has been “godless” (much like our own stewing over some insoluble dilemma), but now David injects the godly question into the episode. Doesn’t having a living God make a difference in all this? (FOBC)
    - Five times he specifically mentions the Philistine. “The Philistine” went, looked, said, cursed, and said again. Five times the writer specifies the subject with each verb—the Philistine this, the Philistine that, as if the text itself trembles under Goliath’s tread! (FOBC)
    - David has already been referred to as a “warrior” (same Heb. phrase) earlier in the text (16:18). The odds are therefore much more even than either Saul or Goliath might imagine, (EBC)
    - David imagines the circumstance theologically rather than materially, and this enables him to see the empirical facts better than those who look at the facts on the ground. (BRAZOS)
- 17:25. reward for killing Goliath
  - Marriage agreements in the ancient Near East would often function as political or social alliances between families and thus benefit both parties. Thus the champion’s family would receive important recognition from being connected to the crown, while the king would be allied to the renowned hero who had killed Goliath (IVPBBC)
  - David’s motives were not his own wealth and honour, but the wish to honour God and to remove disgrace from Israel. David showed himself a suitable leader for Israel, in contrast to the frightened Saul NBC
- Remember the message of chapter 16: “The LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7).
  - In this light, we might view the saga of Goliath as an extended illustration of the 1 Samuel 16:7 principle. The author’s description of the Philistine champion is the single most detailed description of any warrior in the Bible. The point was how fearful he appeared, and the question was whether or not God’s people would look on him through faith in God. (REC)
  - before going forth to fight the giant Philistine, David first had to overcome his own lethargic and unbelieving king. Saul was, after all, Israel’s Goliath: the tall and impressive champion, the one whose prowess would gain the nation victory (REC)
  - The giant relied on his appearance to frighten his enemies into submission. Saul looked on David’s appearance, seeing anything except a warrior champion. “David does not look the part of a hero, and so he must not be one.” (REC)
- 17:31–40 Saul interviews David.
  - one might say David has to fight three Goliaths in this chapter, for in Eliab he faces the contempt of Goliath and in Saul he meets the mind of Goliath (i.e., it’s only the experienced [v. 33] and equipped [vv. 38–39] warrior who carries the odds of winning). All that before he faces the carcass of Goliath himself (vv. 41–50). (FOBC)
  - David is not just boasting. He is showing us—and Saul—that he can see this challenge, get the measure of it, by analogy to his brawls with wild animals. Wisdom thinking is about learning to see reality truly. To see reality with one’s imagination is to see the hidden thread connecting things (BRAZOS)
  - Saul is shown to put his faith in military experience and in strong armour, so that his attitude was not really very different from that of Goliath. The storyteller would not have denied, of course, that experience and armour are usually important in battle; but the truth was that only God could give David the victory NBC
- 34–35 I’ve been fighting wild animals all my life
  - Though others may flee from lions and bears (Amos 5:19), David does not. It would not be at all inappropriate to compare Goliath with “a roaring lion or a charging bear” (EBC)

- As a shepherd “keeping his father’s sheep” (v.34; cf. 16:11), David often rescued them from the mouths of dangerous animals (v.35; cf. also Amos 3:12). When they turned to attack him, he “struck ... and killed” (v.35) them. As a newly established leader of his Father’s people, David soon “struck ... and killed” the dangerous Goliath (v.50). (EBC)
- Circumstances vary, but Yahweh is the same whether among the sheep or in front of the Philistines (FOBC)
- 17:36. lions and bears
  - around Bethlehem. Recent excavations in Palestine have uncovered both the lion and the bear in Iron Age levels (IVPBBC)
  - To David’s imagination, Goliath is not a representative of an advanced culture, but just like a hostile wild beast. David explicitly parallels the two: “Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God” (1 Sam. 17:36). (BRAZOS)
  - David might have come away from his experiences with an arrogant overconfidence in himself. At first it may seem that he is speaking this way, saying, “Goliath is no different from the lions and bears I have fought. I can whip him just as I slew them.” But that was not David’s attitude: he had learned to trust not in himself but in the Lord. (REC)
    - So it is with us. If we ever think that we are capable, in and of ourselves, to fight the Lord’s battle, we lose the battle altogether. The Lord uses the weak in the world to shame the strong: he uses the simple to confound the strong and mighty. He does that, as Paul reminds us, so that no one will have occasion to boast. (1 Corinthians 1:27–29) (REC)
    - David was qualified to fight by his faith, not by his stature (REC)
    - Martyn Lloyd-Jones said: The whole purpose of your salvation and mine is that we should glorify the Father.... People come and talk to me, and it is generally put in that way: “What will salvation do for me?” they ask. And the answer that is given so often in our evangelism is, “Believe the gospel, and it will do some marvelous things for you.” I say, thank God that that is true, but, my dear friends, we should not put that first. The ultimate aim and object of our salvation is that we may glorify God.... The essence of salvation is to bring us into the state in which we do glorify God. (REC)
- 17:37. expectation of divine intervention.
  - The idea that God fought as a partner in battle was a common theme in the ancient Near East. (IVPBBC)
    - In Egypt regiments were named after the god under whose standard they fought. In Canaan the divine warrior was identified as one who devastated nature. However, it was recognized by these societies that the gods also participated through the use of individual agents who had been commissioned to do the god’s bidding in battle. (IVPBBC)
    - David essentially says to Israel and to us: “Yahweh’s reputation is at stake; that matters to me; that matters enough to risk my life for it.” (FOBC)
  - This theme of “weakness” has been building throughout the chapter. All the important people regard David as weak. If we might colloquialize, Eliab tells him, “You’re a pain” (v. 28), Saul warns, “You’re green” (v. 33), and Goliath sneers, “You’re puny” (v. 42). But he is the one Yahweh uses (FOBC)
  - The focus of the chapter is not on David’s courage but on Yahweh’s adequacy in David’s weakness. (FOBC)
    - Can we say that? Is that our vision, our point of view? What situations are there in our own day, in our own various worlds, where we can clearly see God’s honor is at stake? Can we say that that matters to us more than our advantage or reputation or security? (FOBC)
- 17:38–39. Saul’s armor.
  - The king’s tunic and armor would have been very distinctive. If David went out dressed in them, many would have thought that the king himself was going out. Perhaps such a misidentification would have seemed attractive to Saul, who had been sought out by the Israelites to lead them forth in battle. (IVPBBC)
    - it was believed that to wear the clothing of another was to be imbued with his essence and to share his very being (cf. Johs. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture. I–II* [London: Oxford, 1926], pp. 302–3), these latter acts were probably calculated to so bind Saul to David that Saul would be able to take credit for, or at least to share in, David’s victory over the Philistine giant. (EBC)
    - Saul puts his own armor on David, an eminently practical but also a symbolic gesture. David is to go as Saul’s representative, and Saul is making him an extension of himself. (BRAZOS)

- David will not sally forth as a replica of Saul, but as himself. (BRAZOS)
- Saul's added expression of encouragement ("the LORD be with you") echoes the original description of David given by Saul's servant (16:18) and unwittingly calls attention to the tragically disparate spiritual conditions of Saul and David (16:13–14). (EBC)
- Remember why Saul was so impressive to Israel, and why they wanted him as king to go before them into battle? Saul's chief feature was his tall stature. Now Israel, and Saul, would learn the problem with relying on worldly sources of strength. If you are counting on money, there is always someone richer. If you are trusting to brains, there is someone smarter. And if you are relying on size, there is always someone bigger. Goliath was a lot bigger than Saul or anyone else in Israel's army! In situations like this, it would certainly be good to be able to call upon the Lord! But this was a privilege that Saul no longer enjoyed or apparently even sought. (REC)
  - for the Bible, the deceptiveness of appearance is weighted to winning: it launches the heart to triumph over the appearance. It is because we yearn to believe that "strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9) that the inspired authority of scripture is humanly gripping. That weakness is deceptive is what launches the underdog to victory. This is why David is a great comic hero, and the biblical vision is ultimately a comedy (BRAZOS)
- David's faith knew how to say "Yes" to a daunting challenge: it was equally important that his faith knew how to say "No" to worldly compromise and unbelieving help. Divested of Saul's armor (REC)
  - The Sauls of today urge Christians of the need to seize political power, so that believers can install godly laws with the same worldly power used by unbelievers to advance their secular agenda. Godly laws are greatly to be desired, yet the kingdom of Christ does not advance through secular legislation. Others would insist that preachers must embrace the advertising prowess of Madison Avenue, creating celebrity speakers whose messages are crafted with data from surveys designed to tickle the ear. Other Sauls will turn to the electricity of Hollywood entertainment, urging the church to recast sacred worship as worldly entertainment and to replace the preaching of God's Word with video clips and skits. (REC)
  - If the battle is the Lord's, what are the weapons with which God would have his people step forward into battle? The apostle Paul answered, pointing to the Word of God: "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor. 10:3–5). Coupled with God's Word is the power of prayer. Paul writes of spiritual warfare: "Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication" (Eph. 6:17–18). (REC)
- 17:40. sling.
  - Although described simply as a shepherd's weapon here, the sling was also used in organized warfare, and Goliath would have been well aware of its deadly potential. (IVPBBC)
  - The Benjaminites were known to be deadly accurate with their slings (Judg 20:16), and it is estimated that a skilled slinger could hurl the rocks at more than one hundred miles per hour. (IVPBBC)
  - David steps forth with no iron spear or sword not because he is going weaponless, but because God wills to activate the ancient tradition in him. God activates the tradition, and David lives the tradition. Memory comes to life in his actions, and perhaps in those of one or two of his heirs. David's use of an antiquated sling against a modern man with contemporary iron weapons symbolizes God's bringing the tradition to life. With its repetitions, sometimes discounted as interpolations but integral to its literary texture, the Hebrew narrative works by doing the same thing over, with a little difference. (BRAZOS)
- 17:41–58 David's victory.
  - it really was an unequal contest, since David's God was in control. Both combatants made their speeches, as was appropriate in a battle between champions, and both named their gods. Goliath could only utter curses by his gods, but David's God was no tribal deity but the God who would become known in the whole world. The LORD saves (47) is the motto of the whole Bible NBC
  - David's exploit resulted in a wide-ranging victory, and the Philistines were driven back to their own cities of Gath and Ekron. David had driven them away from Israel NBC
- 17:43–47. prebattle insults.
  - Goliath's insults and curses against David and his God reflect a common rhetoric in these types of confrontations that is found throughout the Near East and eastern Mediterranean. Insulting bravado was intended to demoralize and intimidate the opponent. (IVPBBC)
  - 45–47 David's responding taunt begins and ends with reference to the ineffectiveness and irrelevance of "sword and spear" (vv.45, 47; in short supply in Israel in any case; cf. 13:19, 22) when the God of Israel is involved in the battle (EBC)

- Goliath is on perilous ground: To defy “the armies of Israel” (v.45) is to defy “the armies of the living God” (v.36; cf. comment on v.10) and is tantamount to defying God himself (EBC)
  - The Lord, says David to Goliath, will “hand you over to me” (lit., “deliver you into my hand”); (EBC)
    - Ugaritic Baal epic in which Anath threshes the death-god, Mot. We are there told (a) that Mot’s body will be food for the birds of the air, and, subsequently, (b) that El receives a sign that Baal “lives” and “exists.” Thus the narrative of the combat between David and Goliath may be a polemical allusion to these features: David’s victory will leave the foe slain on the battlefield as food for the birds, and thus “all the earth may know that God exists [yēš] for Israel,” which is how the final words in the quotation may also be translated (EBC)
  - The contrast would then be between dead idols—like the Philistine god Dagon—and the living God (EBC)
    - He concludes by warning that God would give “you” (pl.) into “our” (pl.) hands (v.47), (EBC)
- 17:43. names of Goliath’s gods.
  - Although Goliath’s gods are not named, one of the primary deities of the Philistines mentioned in the Bible is Dagon, the patron deity of many West Semitic peoples from the Middle Euphrates region to the Mediterranean coast. (IVPBBC)
- 17:45–47. foundation of David’s boast.
  - David’s claim would have been acknowledged within the broad theological framework of the ancient world. There are two concepts in tension here (IVPBBC)
  - The first is that the stronger, better-equipped warrior is a more effective agent for the gods who are battling. This would be the basis for Goliath’s presumed superiority. (IVPBBC)
  - If the gods are, in actuality, doing battle with one another through the human agents, then the strength and weapons of the human combatants are irrelevant. Thus Yahweh is described as Yahweh of Hosts, paraphrased with a military description, “the God of the battle ranks of Israel” (author’s translation), and David’s boast is based on Yahweh’s abilities, not his own. (IVPBBC)
- Goliath sees the absence of soldier’s gear and sees no man of war before him. He picks up exactly what David needs him to notice, the unarmed pretty boy. If he had looked anything like Michelangelo’s David, Goliath might have taken a second look (BRAZOS)
- David has stated why the fight is his to win: “The battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hands” (17:47) (BRAZOS)
- notice how much press is given to David’s speech (vv. 45–47) as compared with the combat itself (vv. 48–49). In the Hebrew text David’s speech takes some sixtythree words while the combat report needs only thirty-six (FOBC)
- if one listens to David, he will understand the meaning of the event: You are coming to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I am coming to you in the name of Yahweh of hosts, the God of the ranks of Israel, whom you have mocked. This very day Yahweh will close you up in my hand, and I shall strike you down and take your head off you and give the corpse of Philistia’s army this very day to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth—that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel; and that all this assembly may know that it’s not with sword or spear that Yahweh saves; for the battle is Yahweh’s, and he shall give you [plural] into our hand. (FOBC)
- David especially stresses that Yahweh saves not by the instruments of human power but through the weakness of his servants. Goliath comes with sword, spear, and javelin (v. 45), but before the day is over everyone in the Valley of Elah is going to know that Yahweh does not save by sword or by spear (v. 47). (FOBC)
- 17:49. David’s shot.
  - The text offers no information concerning the range between David and Goliath when David took his shot. (IVPBBC)
  - 48–49 Undeterred, Goliath moved closer to “attack” (v.48) David, who in turn wasted no time in running (cf. also vv.22, 51) forward to “meet” him (EBC)
  - One sling stone sufficed; it felled the Philistine, who—like the idol of his god Dagon in an earlier episode—toppled to the ground facedown (v.49; cf. 5:4). (EBC)
    - But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him. - 1 Samuel 5:4 (EBC)

- v. 7 the hand of the Lord was heavy against the people... NOW... the Philistines are delivered into the hands of God's people... (EBC)
- It seems that there is only one God who sees the heart of Kings and has hands with which to do battle! (GMS)
- SO what do we trust in other gods? Fear exposes the gods we worship and serve... See Keller Psalm 27 (GMS)
- With a volley of verbs—thirty-six in seven verses—17:48–54 suddenly accelerates the action. The Philistine arose, came, drew nigh; David hasted, ran, put, took, slang, smote; the stone sunk; Goliath fell; so David prevailed, smote and slew, ran and stood over his felled opponent, took the other man's sword, drew it, slew Goliath, and cut off his head; the Philistine army saw and fled; in counterpoint, the Israelite armies arose, shouted, pursued; and as the Philistines fell their conquerors spoiled their supplies; and David took Goliath's head and put his enemy's valuable bronze armor aside for himself. The living God of whom David spoke has brought the Israelites to life in David. (BRAZOS)
- David's surprising means of victory is a symbol of what God is like. This is the God who brings the dead to life. This is the God whose might is his mercy, the Father of Jesus Christ. (BRAZOS)
- The living God of whom David spoke has brought the Israelites to life in David. (BRAZOS)
- What matters is not whether you have the best weapons but whether you have the real God (FOBC)
- 17:51. cutting off the enemy's head
  - It can be assumed that Goliath's head was a trophy that was to be put on display. (IVPBBC)
  - David did not kill Goliath with an Israelite sword (v.50); irony of ironies, he did it with Goliath's own sword (v.51; (EBC)
  - The fact that David "ran" (v.51a) to the Philistine after felling him indicates that he wanted to kill Goliath before he regained consciousness. (EBC)
  - he cut off the Philistine's head (v.51; cf. similarly 31:9; 2 Sam 20:22), reminiscent of the earlier decapitation of the statue of the Philistine god Dagon (5:4). (EBC)
  - David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent" (1 Sam. 17:54). We are so accustomed to the name of Jerusalem that we may not realize that this fortress city was not yet in Israel's hands. It had been given by Joshua for both the tribes of Benjamin and Judah (between which it lay) to conquer and drive out the entrenched Jebusites there. The lingering presence of this Canaanite fortress was an embarrassment to Israel and a sign of the unfulfilled legacy of the original conquest of the Promised Land. David, plainly realizing this, took advantage of his victory over the giant to declare future triumphs that would follow in due time, as Israel once more took up the mantle given by the Lord in earlier days (REC)
- 17:52-54 Israel pursues the Philistines to Gath
  - The men of "Israel" and "Judah" (by now a traditional distinction made by the narrator; cf. comment on 11:8), with a shout of triumph (v.52; cf. God's exultation in Ps 60:8 = 108:9), set out in hot pursuit, chasing the Philistines all the way to Gath (Goliath's hometown, v.4) (EBC)
- vs 55–58
  - On the evidence of ch. 17 alone, we know that the two men were in conversation before David's encounter with Goliath, so Saul must have known David's name at the very least. The questions Saul put to Abner were not so much about David, in fact, as about his family, presumably because Saul was now under obligation to give David his daughter in marriage, in fulfillment of his vow (17:25). It was, therefore, important for him to find out all he could about the background of the man who would now be a court figure. NBC
- Doesn't having a living God make a difference in all this? (FOBC)
  - All the believer's life and all the church's life requires theocentric thinking. The tragedy is that were someone to hear our thoughts and words in our dangers and troubles they would never guess that we had a living God. (FOBC)
- Like David, Jesus had his readiness to serve as Messiah doubted by those who noted his lack of earthly stature or worldly power. Pontius Pilate spoke for many when he incredulously asked, "Are you the king of the Jews?" (John 18:33) (REC)
  - Like David, Jesus had a reason for battle that the world did not understand. Jesus prayed, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him" (John 17:1–2). (REC)
  - like David, Jesus conquered Satan, sin, and death with resources that are not of this world. Peter explained, "You were ransomed ... not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:18–19). (REC)

- David's slaying of Goliath was intended to have a message for Israel as well: "that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand" (1 Sam. 17:47). Despite his youth, David understood his times. He knew that the people of Israel had sought for Saul to be king (REC)
  - because they were seeking after tangible, worldly sources of salvation. Israel had wanted "a king ... like all the nations" because Israel itself wanted to be like the nations—at least when it came to salvation. The Israelites wanted to hold sharp iron in their own hands and look up to see their own tall king before them. These idols had failed Israel miserably in the Valley of Elah, as idols must always fail (REC)
  - The Lord wanted his people to rely not on having the best of weaponry, but on having the best of Saviors (REC)
  - What matters is not whether you have the best weapons but whether you have the real God." (REC)
- we should live with the same confidence that emboldened David in his approach to the Philistine champion, declaring to every foe and temptation: "You come to me with a sword and 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 Sam. 17:45). Through saving faith, the benediction of God now rests on us, and he has promised to keep us from all harm. David's triumph calls for us to know the same power of God available to us in Christ, so that through this same faith we may be strong against our foes. (REC)
  - David sought "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (1 Sam. 17:46). We likewise should seek that through our holy lives, joy amid trials, love among believers, and fidelity to truth, the world may know that the cross of Christ is no mere relic of history. We should endeavor to prove to our neighbors and other onlookers that the Christian faith continues to give life, that the spiritual power unleashed in the early church continues to win converts today, and that David's spirit of conquering faith lives on among God's people (REC)
  - there is a God in our churches (REC)
  - we have a living Savior, Jesus Christ (REC)
  - we may go forth into every battle confident in the power of the name of the Lord of hosts (REC)
  - this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4). (REC)