

## Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 17:32-58

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### 1 Samuel 17:32-58

(Israel was again at war with the Philistines. The armies of both nations were drawn up to do battle (see 17:1-11). A champion, Goliath, had defied God and Israel and challenged Israel to a one-on-one fight. The winner of the battle would settle the war. But there was no one in Israel who was willing to fight Goliath. Israel was without hope. Jesse, the father of David, had sent David to bring supplies to his brothers who were with Saul at the battle (see 17:12-31). David heard Goliath's challenge to Israel. David had been anointed by Samuel, Israel's Spiritual Leader, to succeed Saul as Israel's king (see 16:9-13). But, as yet, David's anointing was not public.)

#### Verses 32-37

<sup>32</sup> *David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."*

<sup>33</sup> *Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth."*

<sup>34</sup> *But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. <sup>36</sup> Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. <sup>37</sup> The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine."*

*Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."*

- On hearing Goliath's challenge and seeing how Israel's army and even King Saul were dismayed and terrified by him, David told king Saul that Israel should not lose hope for he would fight Goliath on Israel's behalf.

- Saul rejected David's offer because David was too young and had no military experience. Saul told David that David had no hope against Goliath.
- David told Saul about his experience as the shepherd of his father's sheep. He told Saul how he had had to face lions and bears who attacked the sheep. He had successfully confronted these predators and killed them with his bare hands. He contended that Goliath would be no harder to kill than were the lion and the bear because Goliath was defying God and God's chosen people. David's argument was that God himself would oppose Goliath, so Goliath was the one without hope.

### **Verses 38-40**

***<sup>38</sup> Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. <sup>39</sup> David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.***

***"I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. <sup>40</sup> Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.***

- Saul then dressed David in his own clothing and armor. Saul's clothing and armor were much too much for David. He told Saul that he could not fight in those things and took them off. David's trust was not in the armor or in the weapons.
- David took his shepherd's staff and chose five smooth stones from the creek. With his sling, a tool a shepherd would use, David went out to face the giant, Goliath.

### **Verses 41-44**

***<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. <sup>42</sup> He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. <sup>43</sup> He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. <sup>44</sup> "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!"***

- When Goliath realized that Israel's Champion was a boy, he was offended. He despised David and cursed David by his gods. Goliath swore to his gods that he would kill David.

### Verses 45-47

**<sup>45</sup> David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. <sup>46</sup> This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup> All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”**

- David told the Philistine that he had offended YHWH Almighty, the God of Israel. He told Goliath that YHWH would give him victory and that he would defeat Goliath, not because he was strong or had superior weapons but because YHWH alone was Israel’s hope. David said that the battle belonged to YHWH and that YHWH would save Israel.

### Verses 48-50

**<sup>48</sup> As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. <sup>49</sup> Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.**

**<sup>50</sup> So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.**

- As David and Goliath began to advance into the fight, David ran at Goliath. As he did, he put one of the stones into his sling and threw it at Goliath. The stone hit Goliath on his forehead with such force that it killed the giant.

### Verses 51-53

**<sup>51</sup> David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine’s sword and drew it from the sheath. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. <sup>52</sup> Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron. <sup>53</sup> When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp.**

- David took Goliath’s sword and cut off Goliath’s head.
- When the Philistines saw that Goliath was dead, they retreated in disorder. The Israelites pursued them.

- When the rout was over, Israel plundered the Philistine encampment.

### **Verses 54-58**

***<sup>54</sup> David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem; he put the Philistine's weapons in his own tent.***

***<sup>55</sup> As Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is that young man?" Abner replied, "As surely as you live, Your Majesty, I don't know."***

***<sup>56</sup> The king said, "Find out whose son this young man is."***

***<sup>57</sup> As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with David still holding the Philistine's head.***

***<sup>58</sup> "Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him.***

***David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."***

- It is clear that Saul did not know who David was. But after David had defeated Goliath, Saul wanted to know who David was. He ordered Abner, the Commander of Israel's army to find out who David was.
- David was brought before the king still holding Goliath's severed head.
- David told Saul who he was.
- David, Jesse's youngest son, the keeper of his father's sheep, Saul's harpist, is thrust upon the stage of national prominence.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon based on 1 Samuel 17:32-58. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. All rights are reserved by Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)