

1st Samuel

Lesson 38

(iii) What David Learned (17:24-25)

Hearing the words of Goliath, David was surprised by what he saw. We come to what David learned. Verse 24.

"When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid.²⁵ The men of Israel said, 'Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel.' (17:24-25)

David learned that King Saul had offered a three-fold reward to the man who could kill Goliath. We have to remember; it was a one-shot deal. Israel only had one chance to defeat Goliath. If Goliath won, Israel would become the servant of the Philistines. If the Israelite won, the Philistines would become Israel's servants.

What were the three parts of the reward offered by King Saul to Israel's new champion? First, Saul would gift the man great wealth. Second, Saul would give the man his daughter as a wife. Third, Saul would decree the man's *"father's house free in Israel."* The first two are easy to understand. The third part needs explanation. We start with a question. Were the patriarchal fathers and those in their houses not free in Israel? No, they were not, but not in a slave sense. Once Saul became king, he did exactly what the LORD told the people he would do. He required a tax from every household every year to pay for the government needs. The promise was that the *"father's house"* would be free. Why the father's house? The patriarchal father was the oldest living man in the family. He owned everything in the family. If he had five sons, who had five wives, and thirty grandchildren, and fifteen great-grand-children, none of his descendants who lived on the family plot, assigned in the days of Joshua, paid taxes to the king. Only the oldest man in the family, the patriarchal father, paid the taxes for all the family. In order to free David from taxes, Saul had to free Jesse from taxes. But not only taxes. If you will remember, in the LORD's warning to the people about having a king, the king would also force men over twenty years of age to serve in the army. In addition, he would force people in Israel into his service as servants, etc. With the promise to the man of his daughter as a wife if he killed Goliath, that promise elevated the man to royal status in the nation. In doing so, that man's older family members would also be considered royal and that included the patriarchal father. Therefore, if David killed Goliath, he would marry the king's daughter, instantly transform his father's household and all his father's descendants into royals, and they would never pay taxes again, or do anything required of the common people such as serve in the army or be servants in the government palaces, or forced to do labor for the government. Jesse's family would forever be free from all that. All of the reward had been told to the men at the front line. David had not heard it yet.

(iv) What David Asked (17:26-27)

We come to what David asked. Verse 26.

*"Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, 'What will 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 taunt the armies of the living God?'*²⁷ The people answered him in accord with this word, saying, *"Thus it will be done for the man who kills him."* (17:26-27)

At the front line, David saw and heard the Philistine giant taunt the Israelites. He asked the question about the reward. The men repeated the reward to David as they had heard it previously.

(v) What David Endured (17:28-30)

But David's brothers were not impressed with David's question. We come to what David endured. Verse 28.

"Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, 'Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle.'"²⁹ But David said, 'What have I done now? Was it not just a question?'"³⁰ Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing; and the people answered the same thing as before." (17:28-30)

If you will remember, Eliab was there when David was chosen and anointed to be the next king. He knew the secret. From this passage we can tell that Eliab was not happy with David. A favorite friend of mine who is now with the LORD had a wonderful saying. His name was Dixon Murrah and he was the head of the counseling ministry where I was a member and served for more than thirty years. About the stories he would hear from people in his office he would say, "the problem is never the problem." In other words, the problem the people were complaining about in his office was never the real problem. The problem was always something else that the person did not want exposed in the meeting. When we were out eating Chinese food, as we did regularly, his saying would come up in almost every outing. When he said, "the problem is never the problem," I would say, in your office that might be the case, but in my office, it would be better said, "the reason is never the reason." Both fit in this passage. Eliab's anger was not because David had come to the front line. Eliab's problem was because David had been chosen over him. The reason Eliab gave for the anger, was not the real reason for the anger. The reason for the anger was because he thought David thought he was better than all the other brothers and could shirk his duties at home, leave the few sheep without a keeper so they could wander off, just to see the excitement at the battle line. If this reasoning had been found in the book of Job, in the end, when the LORD showed up, Eliab would have been chastised by the LORD, just as Job's so-called three friends were chastised. David answered Eliab with two questions. Then, David turned to ask the other men two questions. What did David hear from the rest of the men? He heard the promises of the reward of the king repeated to him.

(e) David's Encounter with Saul

(i) David's Offer (17:31-32)

It was time for David to speak with Saul. After all, he was Saul's armor bearer and musician. He had every right to draw near to the king. It was his place. David's encounter with Saul was next. We hear David's offer. Verse 31.

"When the words which David spoke were heard, they told them to Saul, and he sent for him.³² David said to Saul, 'Let no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.'" (17:31-32)

David knew that this army was the "army of the living God." He said that in verse 26. David must have been somewhat incensed that no warrior of the army of the living God had stepped forward. Therefore, he volunteers to his boss, the king.

(ii) David's Rejection (17:33)

But we next hear David's rejection as a volunteer by the king. Verse 33.

"Then Saul said to David, 'You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth.'" (17:33)

What was Saul's reason for rejecting David as the nation's challenger to Goliath? He was "but a youth." David was under twenty years of age. He could not be in the army. That was Saul's decision and reasoning. When the writer goes on to say, "while he has been a warrior from his youth." What does that mean? It means that the writer is recording this story long after this story occurred, probably after the death of Saul and while David was king. When David defeats Goliath, as we all know he

will, more than thirteen years later, when David is king, the writer can say, David was a warrior from his youth. Such is all that the phrase means.

(iii) David's Explanation (17:34-37a)

David did not accept Saul's rejection. We come to David's explanation. Verse 34.

"But David said to Saul, 'Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, ³⁵I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. ³⁶Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.' ³⁷And David said, 'The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.'" (17:34-37a)

As a youth, David had fought and won the battle with two fierce animals – the lion and a bear. In his mind, Goliath was no challenge for him. Perhaps even Goliath would have been afraid of a lion or a bear. Who knows? But in this case, David is fearless because he will be fighting for the living God and the living God will deliver him. Now we have to wonder about David's thinking. David knows Samuel's reputation. When Samuel speaks, everyone listens. When Samuel speaks, things happen. Surely Samuel would not have anointed David to be the next king if David was going to die at the hands of this Goliath. David must have had some assurance in his heart and mind that the LORD had chosen him to be the deliverer of Israel against this giant. After all, David was there when the LORD told Samuel that David was the chosen one to be the next king. With that, David did have an inside track with the LORD.

(iv) David's Acceptance (17:37b)

David's explanation turned into David's acceptance. Verse 37b.

"And Saul said to David, 'Go, and may the LORD be with you.'" (17:37b)

A statement like that by Saul meant that Saul was at the end of his rope and needed a deliverer for Israel. Perhaps he thought that if David killed a lion and a bear, he could kill the giant. We must remember that telling David to fight the giant took all the destiny of Israel out of Saul's hands and put the destiny in the hands of David. However, Saul did hit on the real answer. *"May the LORD be with you."* Without knowing, Saul spoke exactly what would happen with David. The LORD would be with David.

(v) David's Dress (17:38-39a)

But being in a battle, Saul, for some reason, thought that he had to make David look like a warrior of Israel. We come to David's dress. Verse 38.

"Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor. ³⁹David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them." (17:38-39a)

Even though David was Saul's armor bearer, David had never tried the armor on. In addition, Saul was the tallest man in Israel, head, and shoulders above every other Israelite man. Saul's armor could not fit David. David was too small. In addition, as the verse says, David had never attempted to fight in armor. He did not have the training to manage the armor and the task of fighting.

(vi) David's Concern (17:39b)

So, we come to David's concern that he spoke to Saul. Verse 39b.

"So David said to Saul, 'I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.' And David took them off." (17:39b)

David simply told Saul that he did not have time to practice in the armor. He took it off.

(vii) David's Weapons (17:40)

And so, David left Saul and gathered his own weapons of choice. David's weapons, Verse 40.

“He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd’s bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.”
(17:40)

A stick, five stones, and a sling! Those were the weapons of choice selected by David. David chose to fight with the weapons he had used all his life. These were the weapons he used in the field with the flocks. He had his stick, meaning his staff that he used to prod the animals along. He had his sling that he used to ward off animals of prey. It was with him in his bag. Like his staff, he must have carried this weapon with him at all times. And in his pouch, his man purse, we might rightly call it for the clothing of that time did not have pockets, David placed five smooth stones, carefully selected from the stream that separated the army of Israel from the army of the Philistines.

Everyone saw David stoop down to select the stones. He selected five. He only needed one, as we will see.

We cannot escape one important point here. David was a godly youth who had a relationship with the LORD. Before he went to meet Goliath, he spent time with the LORD. We know what he said to the LORD in his worship.

¹The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. ³He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. ⁴Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. ⁶Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will ^bdwell in the house of the LORD forever. (Psalm 23)

(f) David’s Encounter with Goliath

(i) Goliath’s Words (17:41-44)

David’s encounter with Goliath was as expected. Goliath’s words were expected too. Verse 41.

“Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. ⁴²When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. ⁴³The Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴The 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.” (17:41-44)

Goliath was insulted, to say the least. The great army of Israel’s God sent a youth with nothing but a stick, or staff, to fight this giant. Evidently, Goliath had not seen the sling at that time. Even if he had, Goliath probably would not have been concerned at all. He had a plan for David. If Goliath won, no doubt David’s flesh would have been fed to the birds and the beasts.

(ii) David’s Words (17:45-47)

David heard Goliath’s words, and then Goliath heard David’s words. Verse 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. ⁴⁶This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head 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, ⁴⁷and 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.” (17:45-47)

David took the words of Goliath and spun them back at Goliath in great detail. In addition, David’s words were not pointed only at Goliath, they were pointed at the Philistine warriors behind Goliath. Once Goliath head was off his body, the Philistine army behind him would be defeated and their bodies would suffer the same fate as what Goliath promised David for his body.

(iii) David's Action (17:48-49)

The battle between David and Goliath began with Goliath moving first. But it really was no battle at all. We see David's action. Verse 48.

"Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 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 sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground." (17:48-49)

Goliath did not even swing one of his weapons at David. David caught him with one blow between the eyes. It must have cracked his skull and damaged the giant's brain, for Goliath fell on his face.

(iv) Goliath's Death (17:50)

Even though Goliath was dead, Goliath's death would be capped with his own weapon in the hands of David. Verse 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. 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." (17:50)

Goliath was face down. The Philistine army must have seen David raise Goliath's great sword and drop it on the neck of the giant. Then David must have picked up Goliath's head by the hair and held it for all to see. The wager was over. Man against man. Israel had won. What would the Philistines do? They would run in fear. Why? They had heard the words of David. Surely, they knew they were about to become the food for bird and beast.