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# The New King's Victory

1 Samuel 17<sup>16</sup>

*Russ Kennedy*

There is only one, true God.

The pagan panoply of gods and goddesses in India.

The public panoply of gods and goddesses in our culture.

The false god of Islam and the false worship of modern Judaism.

The one true God saves and delivers His people.

He saves them from their sin.

He delivers them from their enemy.

He does so, not through human power but through an anointed servant.

This story is a story inside a larger story. It is a true story in God's big story.

What has happened before this text?

Saul, the people's demand and God's choice is a king after the kinds in the world. He has been anointed and appointed to serve in Israel.

This king has defeated many of his enemies and consolidated his rule.

This king has rejected God's Word, disobeyed God and has been rejected as king. God is afflicting him with an (evil) spirit and a young musician lad is comforting him with his presence and his music.

A new king has been selected and anointed. But he has not yet ascended to the throne. He is the young musician lad who is serving in the halls of the dark, troubled, rejected king.

And now, there is a resurgence of the war with the Philistines. We know David is the anointed King yet he faces:

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## The Threat to his Unbelieving Nation

**(v. 1-11)**

<sup>1</sup> Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. And they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. <sup>2</sup> And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. <sup>5</sup> He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. <sup>6</sup> And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. <sup>7</sup> The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us." <sup>10</sup> And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together." <sup>11</sup> When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

### The Enemy Nation

**(v. 1-3)**

The Philistines have been the long and hateful enemy of Israel. Now they gather to destroy Israel once again. Both armies are encamped on the opposite hillsides of the valley of Elah.

### The Mighty Champion

**(v. 4-7)**

The Philistines put forward their champion. He is a massive giant of a man. He is over 9 feet tall. His armor is massive and unimaginably heavy. His spear a weaver's beam. His sword long and deadly is strapped to his side and a soldier carried his shield. Their warrior is mighty and fearsome.

### The Haughty Challenge

**(v. 8-11)**

His challenge roars across the valley and runs in w fear encrusted wave up the backs of Israel's army and king. It is an all or nothing defiance. Come and fight. Winner take all.

## The Task by his Loving Father

(v. 12-18)

The scene now shifts to a lowly home in Bethlehem.

<sup>12</sup> Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. <sup>13</sup> The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. <sup>14</sup> David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, <sup>15</sup> but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem. <sup>16</sup> For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.

<sup>17</sup> And Jesse said to David his son, "Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. <sup>18</sup> Also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well, and bring some token from them."

### A Supporting Family

(v. 12-16)

The father is older and so his three older sons join the army to battle the nation's enemies. David is going back and forth in the service of his father and his king. He plays for his afflicted king. He shepherds his father's flock. Each son is in his place doing his duty.

### A Providing Father

(v. 17-18)

Jesse is a concerned father and generous Israelite. So he sends supplies for his sons and the soldiers. David is to take them when he goes. And in the background is the morning and evening noise of Goliath's vile voice.

## The Trivializing of his Overcoming Abilities

(v. 19-49)

We come to heart of the story. Here is a terrifying giant. Here is a valiant young man, anointed to be the future king. He is not accepted, acclaimed or even acknowledged.

### Being Derided by his Brothers

(v. 19-30)

<sup>19</sup> Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. <sup>20</sup> And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host was going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry. <sup>21</sup> And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. <sup>22</sup> And David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage and ran to the ranks and went and greeted his brothers. <sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were much afraid. <sup>25</sup> And the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up?

Surely he has come up to defy Israel. And 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." <sup>26</sup> 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?" <sup>27</sup> And the people answered him in the same way, "So shall it be done to the man who kills him."

<sup>28</sup> Now Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spoke to the men. And Eliab's anger was kindled 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 presumption and the evil of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle." <sup>29</sup> And David said, "What have I done now? Was it not but a word?" <sup>30</sup> And he turned away from him toward another, and spoke in the same way, and the people answered him again as before.

David is in the camp when the thundering challenge rings out. All the men of Israel are afraid. They tremble in fear. Where is courage? Who will stand? How can this unholy, unwashed, unclean Gentile defy the armies of the Living God?

But listen to the derision of his eldest brother. "What are you doing here? Who is doing your job back home? You are not here to serve. You are an evil little boy. You were curious to see the battle. How dare you call us cowards?"

It is evident that David is used to hearing words like this. "What have I done now?" He has simply asked a question? Why is his brother upset? Why won't anyone go out and kill this giant? But all are fearful and no one will step forward.

### **Being Disbelieved by Saul**

**(v. 31-40)**

<sup>31</sup> When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him. <sup>32</sup> And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." <sup>33</sup> 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." <sup>34</sup> But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. <sup>36</sup> 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." <sup>37</sup> 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!"

<sup>38</sup> Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, <sup>39</sup> and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." So David put them off.

<sup>40</sup> 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.

So, none of Saul's mighty men of valor including Saul himself will go out to fight for God and His Name against the Gentile giant. So, David volunteers. He will go.

It is hard to detect the level of disbelief by Saul. David is inexperienced in war; Goliath is a trained soldier. Hey, what about the size differential?

But David responds with his history of courageous exploits against lions and bears. If he can slay a gigantic bear by grabbing its beard and striking it then he will do the same to Goliath. God had delivered David from the paw of a bear and lion then God will deliver him from the hand of Goliath.

But David understands that this is not just a battle between Israel and the Philistines. It is a battle between God and God's enemies. To defy the armies of God's people is to defy God Himself. This is the true king speaking. It is God's name and reputation that is at stake.

Saul seems to give in. What is he going to say now? And just to highlight that Saul does not understand what is at stake, he tries to put his own armor in David. Of course it is too big, too unwieldy, too unfamiliar. He sheds them and takes up the weapons he knows and skilled with. His sling and five smooth deadly stones.

He makes his way down the hillside and into the valley. The true king advancing against the enemy of God and God's people.

## Being Despised by Goliath

(v. 41-49)

<sup>41</sup> And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. <sup>42</sup> And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. <sup>43</sup> 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. <sup>44</sup> 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." <sup>45</sup> 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." <sup>46</sup> This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that **all the earth may know** that there is a God in Israel, <sup>47</sup> 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."

<sup>48</sup> When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. <sup>49</sup> 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.

Ah the mighty Goliath is insulted that they sent a boy with sticks and stones to fight him. Goliath is going to turn David into bird and dog feed. He hurls down vile curses by his pagan gods. Truly the battle has begun.

Here is how the true king fights. He does not depend on the might of his weapons or the skill of his arm. He comes to do battle in the Name and for the fame of one true God. That is what this about. It is not about our weakness in the face of life's giants. This is about the great eternal battle between the forces of evil and the God of the universe. This is about God's true king taking the field of battle and waging war in power of the Spirit and in the Name of the Lord.

Here are the purposes of this story:

...that **all the earth may know** that there is a God in Israel, <sup>47</sup> 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.

### **This happens as a witness.**

This story is told so that all the earth may know there is only one true God. Tell this story. Tell it all over the world and in all the people groups. Tell it Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Russian and Eastern Orthodox. Tell it to secularist, communists, fascists, socialists, conservatives. Tell it to all who do not believe. There is one and only one God. He is the God of the Bible. He is the Lord Jesus Christ, the savior and the sovereign. David is His shadow, His picture, His type. Have courage. Stand up. Say it. All the idols and false images and vain imaginations and empty paradises and political powers are all false gods. Bow to the One God. Humble yourself before Him. Seek His mercy. He is God alone.

### **This happens as a correction.**

This story is told so that God's people will stop relying on flesh and will put their trust in the God who battles for them. Tell this story. Tell it God's people who bank on their wealth, their jobs their station in life. Tell it to church's who depend on programs, on technology, on smart, sharp beautiful people. Tell it here in America, and in the West and even in the East. Tell it to young and old. The battle is huge. The enemy is fearsome. The world and the devil rages. But God, Oh God, our God, battles for us. Live in the power and pursuit of God's resurrection victory.

Goliath is a fool. Big, strong, skilled, experienced but he doesn't put his helmet on. Why would he need it against this boy, this cricket? And so David runs toward Goliath his sling swinging and a deadly circle. With God guided surety, he sends a stone into the forehead of Goliath. And down he goes, long, collapsing fall to his knees and then to his face.

## The Triumph over his People's Enemy (v. 50-54)

<sup>50</sup> So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David. <sup>51</sup> 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. <sup>52</sup> And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. <sup>53</sup> And the people of Israel came back from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. <sup>54</sup> And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent

The true king stands in triumph over the enemy of God and God's people. He beheads Goliath with his own sword. He strips off the armor and takes his spoil to Jerusalem. This young, unassuming young man is a valiant warrior and victorious king.

Israel is emboldened and the Philistines are dismayed. The flight begins. The enemy is destroyed. They are pursued all the way back to their main cities. It is a total rout.

## The Trouble from his Earthly King (v. 55-58)

<sup>55</sup> As soon as Saul saw David go out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?" And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know." <sup>56</sup> And the king said, "Inquire whose son the boy is." <sup>57</sup> And as soon as David returned from the striking down of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. <sup>58</sup> And Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

Now comes an interesting question: whose son is this?

Saul is not asking "Who is this?" He knows who David is. David has been in his court. David has often calmed the troubled Saul with his music. This is a different kind of question. It reflects a knowledge that he is no longer the legitimate king. His question is very different. He asks it first of Abner, who does not know (or doesn't want to say). And then he asks it directly of David.

Whose *son* are you? This is asking what family, what tribe David is in. In Genesis 49:10, Jacob, on his death bed in Egypt, spoke of the fact that the scepter would never depart from Judah. Saul is from Benjamin. But David is from Judah. David's father is Jesse. David's town is Bethlehem.

**All this, because He appears weak, lowly and unassuming...**

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## So, what is this story about?

The little boy David facing the Philistine giant. Here is the newly and secretly anointed King beginning to fight for God and Israel. This is not about you and your giant problems. This is about God's King who triumphs over the pagan nations and Satan. It is about all the world knowing who the true God is and God's people knowing how God's victory comes. How do we know that? Because of verse 45-47...

... that **all the earth may know** that there is a God in Israel,<sup>47</sup> 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."

The victory of God's Servant-King  
is a witness to the world  
and a correction to His people.