

7. David is Anointed and Goliath Defeated

(1 Samuel 16:1–18:5)

2.6 Samuel Anoints David (1 Samuel 16:1–13)

- The killing of a heifer could refer Deuteronomy 21:1-19 where elders and judges were investigating an unsolved murder. This may be why the elders of Bethlehem are suspicious of Samuel's arrival.
- 16:7 - The LORD doesn't look on the outward appearance but on the heart.
- 16:11-12 - youngest or smallest? "ruddy" - red hair or bronze skin? David is handsome, but his outward appearance is irrelevant.

"When David, the youngest of the sons in Jesse's family (cf. 1 Chr 2:13–15), was selected as the Lord's anointed, he joined a venerable crowd of Torah patriarchs selected by God in a way that confounded social norms. Other men who were not firstborn but who were selected by the Lord over their more socially powerful older brothers include Seth, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, Moses, and perhaps Abraham. **It seems that the biblical record deliberately creates the impression that Yahweh prefers to use disenfranchised members of society—earlier in 1 Samuel the barren woman Hannah and the child Samuel—to do his most significant work** (cf. Mark 10:31; 1 Cor 1:27)." [Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 180]

- 16:13 - **the Spirit of YHWH** remained with David from his anointing onward - *this is a direct contrast to Saul.*

3 The Drama of Saul and David (1 Samuel 16:14–31:13)

“The subplot revolving around the person of Saul also supports and enhances the story of David. His primary function is that of a foil, providing a vivid contrast between his own life and that of David. Saul is first portrayed as a bad shepherd; David, as a faithful shepherd; Saul is a king such as the nations have; David is a king after Yahweh's heart; Saul disobeys the Lord repeatedly throughout his career; David, only once. When confronted, Saul confesses his sin only begrudgingly; David, without hesitation.”
[Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 34]

3.1 **The Spirit Departs from Saul and David Serves Him**

(1 Samuel 16:14–23)

- 16:14 - “the Spirit of YHWH” vs “an evil/harmful/troubling spirit”

* this is the only time in the Hebrew Scriptures that some is plagued by an “evil spirit.”

By rejecting the “way of Life/Blessing” in the LORD’s instruction, Saul had chosen the “way of death/curse” (see Deuteronomy 30:15-20)
- 16:18 - “**the LORD is with him [David]**” is a key theme in this section (16:18; 18:12, 14, 28) and sets David alongside Isaac, Joseph, Joshua, and Samuel (cf. Gen 26:28; 39:2–3, 21, 23; Josh 6:27; 1 Sam 3:19).

3.2 **Goliath Taunts Israel and David Kills Him** (1 Samuel 17:1–18:5)

“... the biblical narrative is not primarily a story about human courage and effort; instead, it is about the awesome power of a life built around bold faith in the Lord. Like the story of Jonathan earlier (cf. 14:1–23), this account demonstrates the power of a single faith-filled life to inspire an entire army to victory and the vulnerability of all who “defy the armies of the living God” (vv. 26, 36) when confronted by individuals who possess courageous faith in the Lord. As McCarter states, “It is Yahweh who gives victory, and he may give it to the weak (Israel) in order that his power might be known to all.” [Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 187]

- The narrative of “David and Goliath” is the longest account in the David story with more quotes and details than any other. Clearly the writer sees this as the central episode of David’s early career.

3.2.1 **Goliath taunts Israel so that Saul and his army fear (17:1-11)**

- 17:4 - “champion” literally “a man between the two” - the Philistines may have practiced representative combat where two soldiers would fight to the death in place of the two armies.

“six cubits and a span” = 9 feet 9 inches tall.

Goliath is fully armored, with his coat of mail weighing 126 lbs, the head of his spear weighing 15 lbs.

**this the longest description of military attire in the Hebrew Scriptures!*

3.2.2 **Jesse sends David to his brothers in Saul's army (17:12-23)**

- 17:13 - "three oldest sons" - Numbers 1:3, 19 made the minimum age for military service 20 years old. It may be that David and his other brothers were not yet old enough to serve.
- 17:16 - the **40 day** standoff would have put a strain on both the soldiers and the families back home.

3.2.3 **David questions the army about Goliath (17:24-30)**

- 17:26 - "*For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?*" shows David's heart for the LORD's reputation represented in His people.
- 17:28 - Eliab's anger at David shows that his misperception of the situation may be a subtle hint at the reason for the Lord's rejection of him as King. Like Saul, he lacked insight into the heart of things.

3.2.4 **Saul summons David and he prepares for battle (17:31-40)**

- 17:33 - "you are a youth" - another indication that David was not yet 20 years old.
- 17:34-36 - David's "evidence" as a skilled and powerful shepherd also implies that he sees Goliath as nothing more than an animal!
- 17:37 - David's confidence was not in himself, but in the sure deliverance of the LORD.
- 17:38-40 - David in Saul's Armor:
"The writer's inclusion of the clothing incident probably was meant to serve two functions: first, to preserve an unusual but interesting occurrence in the background of the Goliath event, indicating the greater value of divine enablement over human devices; second and more importantly, to symbolize David's rejection of Saul's approach to kingship. Saul chose to dress in royal clothing "such as all the other nations have"; David would wear none of it. Instead, he would identify with the great shepherd-leaders of the Torah—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and especially Moses—and live by faith in the promises of God (cf. Heb 11)." [Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 194]

- 17:40 - David's Weapons - Staff, Stones, Sling. Whereas Goliath's weapons were forged by human ingenuity, David's were taken from nature forged by YHWH. *Ancient Near Eastern sling-stones, like the ones from Lachish on exhibit in the British Museum, could be as large as tennis balls!!!*

3.2.5 **David confronts and kills Goliath (17:41-54)**

- 17:41-44 - Goliath's honor is offended by being challenged by such an unworthy opponent like the boy David. Goliath's curses may be presented in light of Genesis 12:3 and the LORD's word to Abraham and be extension his family: "those who dishonor/curse you, I will curse..."
- 17:45 - David implies that Goliath's great weapons are no match against the LORD. He also accuses Goliath of blasphemy which was punishable by death for both Israelite and non-Israelite in the Torah by *stoning!!!* (Leviticus 24:16)
- 17:46 - the death of Goliath would also show the reality of the LORD to all the earth.
- 17:47 - "that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves... (see also 1 Sam 2:9-10; 13:22; Jer 9:23-24; Zech 4:6).
- 17:54 - **Jerusalem** - first mention of the city in Samuel. This is probably a foreshadowing of David's conquest of the city.

3.2.6 **Saul puts David over his forces and Jonathan is bound to David (17:55-18:5)**

- 17:55-58 is a flashback that leads back to the main storyline. The fact that Saul does not know important details about David may indicated his "blindness" after the LORD's spirit had departed.
- 18:2 - David is "adopted" into Saul's royal household.
- 18:3-5 - **David and Jonathan** have much in common in their courage and faithfulness. Jonathan - as Saul's heir apparent - clothing David in his own attire is symbolic/prophetic of things to come.
- 18:5 - David prospers just as the Torah had promised to the Faithful (See Deuteronomy 29:9)