

Dr. Robert Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 11

1 Samuel 17

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This is Dr. Bob Chisholm in his teaching on 1 and 2 Samuel. This is session 11, 1 Samuel 17, David's Faith Ignites a Victory.

In this lesson, we're going to be working on 1 Samuel 17.

It's a long chapter, 58 verses, and I've entitled it David's faith ignites a victory. You'll recall that we had an earlier passage which we entitled Jonathan's faith ignites a victory back in chapter 14. Here, David's faith is going to ignite an Israelite victory over the Philistines.

But let's recall what's going on in the context. In 1 Samuel chapter 13, Saul forfeited his dynasty. That was unfortunate because then we see Jonathan in action.

Jonathan would have made, I think, a good king, but he will never occupy the throne of Israel because Saul has forfeited his dynasty. Then in chapter 15, Saul actually forfeits his throne. Samuel says to Saul, because you have rejected the word of the Lord, you'll recall that Saul did not obey the Lord with regard to the Amalekite problem.

He killed many Amalekites, but he left the king alive as well as some of the livestock. And so, Samuel said to him, because you have rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected you. And Samuel sealed that with a statement that the Lord does not change his mind once he has decreed something, in this case, the end of Saul's kingship.

And so, we're waiting for the new king. We've been told earlier that the Lord has chosen someone after his own heart to replace Saul. And then in 1 Samuel 15, Samuel refers to this one as one who is better than Saul.

So, we're wondering who this is. We don't have to wait long. In 1 Samuel 16, David appears on the scene.

Samuel is sent by the Lord to Bethlehem to look at Jesse's sons, and David is the youngest one and the one who is chosen to be the new king of Israel. Samuel anoints him in private, and the Lord makes it clear that he has made this choice based on what he sees in David's heart. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon David at that point.

The Spirit has left Saul, and instead an evil spirit has come and is now tormenting Saul. One of Saul's servants gets the idea it might be nice if we had a music player

around, someone who can play the lyre to calm you down when this evil spirit torments you. And so, another servant says, I know just the man, one of Jesse's sons, David, is a fine musician, and he's also a very adept warrior.

And so, David is brought to the royal court of Saul as a servant. We discover in chapter 17 that David is not there all the time. He goes back and forth between his father's home and Saul's court.

And in chapter 17, the Philistines are at it again, and another battle is brewing. We read about this in the first few verses of chapter 17. The Philistines are gathering their forces for war.

Saul is gathering his forces. The Philistines are on one hill, the Israelites are on another, and there is a valley in between them. David is not here at this point in time.

And of course, a Philistine warrior emerges, and we know him as Goliath. In fact, 1 Samuel 17 is probably the most well-known passage in the books of Samuel, and one of the most well-known in the Bible. There's a Philistine champion named Goliath, and he is described in detail because he's a very formidable opponent.

And 1 Samuel 17.4 says that his height was six cubits and a span. Well, how tall is that? Well, a cubit literally means forearm, and so a cubit is going to be approximately 18 inches, the distance from here to here. A span is the distance between the thumb and the little finger, and so it's about 9 inches.

So, what we've got is 6 times 18 inches plus 9 inches, which gives you 117 inches, which translates into 9 feet 9 inches. So Goliath was a big, big guy. However, there are some Greek manuscripts, Josephus and the Qumran scroll from cave 4, that read 4 cubits and a span.

That would translate to 6 feet 9 inches, a good power-forward size for the NBA, but not an extraordinary figure like 9 feet 9 inches. And so, scholars debate as to what's going on here. Some prefer the taller Goliath, arguing that those other sources have toned down the story to make it a little more credible.

Others will argue, no, what's happened in the Hebrew tradition is they've exaggerated Goliath's height and he was really 6'9". There's actually an interesting debate in the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society back in 2005 and then in 2007 between Danny Hayes and Clyde Billington, where they debated the issue of how tall was Goliath. And so, if you want to go back to that journal and find those articles by Hayes and Billington, you can read all the ins and outs of that discussion.

Suffice it to say that Goliath was a big guy. He was a very foreboding figure. And then we have a description of his weaponry.

And he's really loaded down from top to bottom. He's got a bronze helmet on his head and all kinds of weapons that are available to him, a javelin, a spear. He's got a shield bearer in front of him.

And we discover that he wants to do single combat. Rather than have the armies engage in a battle where a lot of individuals are going to be killed, Goliath wants to just make it a single combat issue. So, Israel chooses a warrior and they send that warrior out against Goliath.

And it's a winner-take-all kind of deal. And naturally, the Israelites are somewhat intimidated. Who do we have who can match up with this Philistine champion? And he is taunting Israel and inviting them to send someone out.

Actually we have other examples of this kind of single combat in the ancient Near Eastern world. As early as 1800 BC in Middle Kingdom Egypt, there was a hero by the name of Senui. And he engages in single combat with a fellow who's called the Hero of Retinue.

This Hero of Retinue, attacks Senui with a battle axe and a bow. But Senui brings him down with an arrow and then finishes the job with the enemy's own axe which is kind of reminiscent of what's going to happen in our story.

As you know, David brings Goliath down with a slingstone, but then chops his head off with Goliath's own sword. A little bit later in the ancient Near East, in around 1250 BC, there's a Hittite king, Khatushilish, and he tells how he defeated the commander of an imposing enemy force and then routed the enemy army, despite the fact that he was outnumbered. And so following that victory, he dedicates his enemy's weapon to his goddess.

And again, this is reminiscent of David, who took Goliath's sword. Eventually, it ends up in the sanctuary at Nave. So, this is not unique in the ancient Near Eastern world.

We have at least a couple of other instances of this kind of single combat. And so, this is what Goliath wants. He's challenging the Israelites to send someone out to face him in battle.

And the Israelites admittedly are terrified. Saul and the Israelites are afraid. And so, there's just sort of a stalemate for a while.

The Israelites would prefer to fight a conventional battle, but the Philistines don't want it that way. And so, days go by when Goliath issues his challenge. We then come to chapter 17, verse 12.

Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. We have a formal introduction to David. You may be wondering, well, David's already been introduced back in chapter 16.

This makes it sound as if he's a brand-new character. But this is a formal introduction, the way it's structured. Before now, Saul and Samuel have been the primary characters in the book.

And I think this is a signal that that's going to change. We already know that David is going to replace Saul as king. He's already been anointed.

But now David is being formally introduced, literarily as it were. And this is a signal that he is going to become the focus in the story from this point on. And we're given some background on this.

And we discover that Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the battle. They're down there. David is not.

And verse 15 tells us that David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem. And so, he's back home in Bethlehem. But Jesse says, you know, we need to take some provisions to your brothers.

And so, he loads David down with some provisions and sends him to the battlefield to go and confront, or not confront, but give his brothers what they need. And so we read in verse 20, early in the morning, David left the flock in the care of a shepherd, loaded up, and set out as Jesse had directed. And he reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry.

See, Israel still wants it to be a conventional battle. And the Israelites and the Philistines are kind of drawing up their battle lines. David leaves the things that he brought with the keeper of the supplies, and then he goes out to find his brothers.

And as he's talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion, emerges from the battle lines. And he shouts his usual defiant words, his challenge. And in this particular case, he's a little more aggressive, and the Israelites kind of flee in fear.

And the Israelites had been saying this, according to verse 25, do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his family from taxes in Israel.

So, we discover here that Saul has already made a pretty good deal for whoever is willing to step up and defeat Goliath. He's going to get wealth. He's going to get to marry into the royal family.

And also, his family will become tax-exempt in Israel. Well, David asks the men who are standing there. We've just discovered what Saul has promised.

David didn't hear that. And he asked the question, what will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? That's very interesting. These are the first words out of David's mouth in the story.

He's been described, and I'm a little concerned by this. He is, the second part of it, who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? I like that. Goliath has been defying the armies of Israel.

David takes it to a theological level. He's not just defying Israel. When he defies Israel, he's defying our God, the living God, the God who is alive and active.

And that's who he's defying. But David also wants to know, by the way, what's Saul paying for this job? And so it seems as if there's a bit of self-interest here. And there's this ambiguity that swirls around David throughout the story.

I actually wrote an article on this a few years ago and published it in the seminary journal *BibSac* called *Cracks in the Foundation*, where I try to show that there are some ambiguities, there are some failures on David's part. Some people have the idea David is the man after God's own heart. Everything he does has to be good.

Well, you run into a brick wall in 2 Samuel 11, of course, when the Bathsheba incident and some people feel, well, David was such a righteous person, and then one day he just, like Humpty Dumpty, he just had this great fall. No, no, no. There are already signs.

There are tensions in the story. And if you're paying attention to those, it's not as surprising what happens with David. We mentioned in chapter 16, the narrator points out that David is a very attractive young man.

That could create problems for him in some way, even though he does have a pure heart that God looks at, and that's the basis for God's decision. So we see that ambiguity here. David is expressing some self-interest, but at the same time, he's very theologically astute, and he's on the right track.

This Philistine shouldn't be doing this. He's defying our God, and something needs to be done about it. By the way, this is going to continue throughout David's life, and even on his deathbed, when he's talking to Solomon, Shlomo, his son, whose name means peace.

David says some really good things about how Solomon should follow the Lord, but then he also says, by the way, I've got some unfinished business. There are some characters that need to be killed. Joab, Shime, we'll get to all of that as we read through the story, and he tells Solomon, whose name means peace, to bloody his hands a little bit and take care of these matters, and it makes you wonder, David, why didn't you take care of those matters, especially with Joab earlier when you could have done so? So, this ambiguity never really goes away with David, but he asks this question, and they repeat to him what we had read earlier.

They say, well, here's what's going to be done. Here's what Saul will provide. David's oldest brother, Eliab, who remembers Samuel, saw him and thought, surely this must be the one the Lord has chosen as king.

He wasn't, and you wonder if maybe there was a little sibling jealousy there as he, the oldest, stood by and watched his youngest brother get anointed as king in chapter 16. He burns with anger when he sees David here, and he says, why have you come down here, and with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is. You came down only to watch the battle, and so he falsely accuses David, I think, but some people would say, well, we can't totally dismiss Eliab's words.

Maybe there were some things about David's character that were a little disturbing, but nevertheless, perhaps we can write it off as sibling jealousy, but David answers back, what have I done, said David? Now what have I done? Can't I even speak? He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before. Well, David is creating quite a stir down here. His brother is ticked off at him.

David is defending himself. David is talking about, how does this Philistine gets away with this, and what's Saul paying for the job, and that sort of thing. Well, it gets overheard and reported to Saul, and so Saul sends for David, and in chapter 17, verse 32, David says to Saul, let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine. Your servant will go and fight him.

So, David is ready to do the job, and Saul replies, you're not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him. You're only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth. This is a seasoned warrior.

Forget about his size for a moment, for the moment, and all of his weaponry. This guy's been fighting forever, and you're just a kid. You can't go out and fight him.

But then David's answer is interesting. David said to Saul, your servant has been keeping his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, 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.

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. And it's interesting, the grammar that's used in these verses indicates that this wasn't a one-time thing or a two-time thing.

David uses grammatical constructions that seem to indicate this was something that happened maybe on a regular basis. It was sort of typical whenever a lion or a bear came along. David has been doing this kind of thing as a shepherd, protecting the sheep, confronting these wild beasts, and he's saying that I'm going to do the same thing to the Philistine that I did to the lion and the bear.

And it may sound like boasting because I think six times he uses verbs in the first person. I did this. I did that.

But notice in verse 37, we get the theological perspective. I mean, he's replying to Saul. Saul has questioned his ability to do this, so naturally, he's going to focus on what he has done.

But the real key is in verse 37, 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. So, in those earlier verses, David was saying, I did this, I did that, in response to Saul's challenge about his capabilities. But then he stops and he says, it was really the Lord.

And so, he brings it back to that theological level. The Goliath is not just defying Israel. He's not just taunting the armies of Israel.

In taunting Israel, he is taunting the living God. And David is not just a strong shepherd who has been able to defeat wild animals. David is an instrument of the Lord, and the Lord rescued him from these beasts.

And he's confident that the Lord will do the same with this Philistine. So, it's important to see that David is viewing this at a very theological level. It's not an issue of the Philistines versus Israelites.

It's an issue of a pagan champion versus Yahweh, the God of Israel. And so, Saul said to David, go and the Lord be with you. Actually, we could maybe translate that, the Lord will be with you.

Saul is confident of that. Nevertheless, he decides that he needs to give David some weaponry. And so, Saul dressed David in his own tunic.

Now remember, Saul's pretty tall. David is, I think, an attractive fellow, but there was no indication that he was unusually tall. So, he put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head, a bronze helmet, just like Goliath has.

It's humorous. It's almost as if Saul is trying to dress David up as a little Goliath here. And David fastened down his sword over the tunic, and he tried walking around because he was not used to them.

And David says, I can't go in these. I'm not used to them. So, he took them off.

So, Saul has tried to give David, I think, well-meaning, but he's trying to give David what he thinks he'll need for the battle. And David, it's just not working. David has another plan.

And that plan involves using his sling. Everything suggests here, as you read through the story, that everyone was expecting a close-quarters, maybe hand-to-hand type battle. If you look at Goliath's weaponry, if you look at David talking about how he defeated the lion and the bear, he would grab them.

And so, everything seems to be pointing to Goliath and the Israelite champion are going to engage at a very close level. They're going to get in the ring, as it were, and they're going to fight it out. David's got a different idea.

He's going to fight from outside the ring, as it were. They're expecting him to show up with the same kind of weapons that Goliath has. David's going to show up with a machine gun.

It's sort of like in Indiana Jones. Remember when the black-robed swordsman comes and he's doing all this, and Indiana is sort of tired, just worn out, and he just kind of pulls out his gun and, boom, shoots the black swordsman down. And it's really what the Connecticut Yankee does in King Arthur's Court if you've read Mark Twain's story there.

So, David takes his staff in his hand, and then he chooses five smooth stones from the stream and puts them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag, and with his sling in his hand, approaches the Philistine. There's been a lot of discussion about the five

smooth stones. Why does David pick five? One popular tradition is that, well, Goliath had brothers.

We do find out later in Samuel that there was kind of a family of big guys down there, and that there were other large Philistines, but they're not mentioned in this story. And I think what David is doing, he's just making sure he's got enough ammunition. He's trusting the Lord, but at the same time, he is doing what we should all do.

We trust the Lord, but we also do what we feel we should do, and act in a wise manner. And so, David is making sure he's got enough ammunition. In this particular case, he gets Goliath with the first shot, but you can't always be sure, especially when you're choosing stones from the stream.

We have actually found sling stones at Israelite sites from the Assyrians when they invaded the land, and there are some sling stones from Lachish, and they're a little smaller than, they're round, made out of flint, they're a little smaller than a baseball, but they weigh more than a baseball. And Lawrence Steger, Harvard Semitic Museum, suggests that you could probably get a sling stone going anywhere from 100 to 150 miles an hour. When Tiger Woods and his prime hit a golf ball off the tee, it came off the tee around 120, 125 miles an hour.

That's fast. And so, this is going to be able to do some damage. Actually, baseballs, weigh less than these sling stones, and can be propelled, well, these days, close to 100 miles an hour by a lot of pitchers.

Baseballs can do a lot of damage if they hit a batter in the head. In fact, in the early days of the major leagues, Ray Chapman was killed by a pitched ball by Carl Mays. So, by the way, this is not a pea shooter.

The sling that David is using is not a pea shooter like you may have used in elementary school to shoot spit wads at Susie or something like that. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about this kind of thing.

Sometimes we believe that they may have done this and hurled them up vertically, at least when they were besieging a city, but probably this kind of movement. We know from the Book of Judges, which talks about Benjaminite slingers, who were left-handed, interestingly enough, and they could hit the smallest target these slingers could. Ancient Near Eastern armies typically had slingers in them.

So, it's a deadly weapon that David has here. And he's approaching the Philistine. And the Philistine, with his shield-bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David.

So, they're approaching each other because, I think, as everyone anticipated, they thought this was going to be hand-to-hand. And he looks David over and he sees that he's little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome. And he despised him as a seasoned warrior would.

And he, what are you sending out to me here? A child model? Yeah, he wouldn't have said that, but I'm just trying to contemporize it a little bit. He just despised him because of his youth. Cute little kid.

What's he doing out here? And he said to David, am I a dog that you come at me with sticks? Maybe because he sees the staff there. And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And cursing is not just shouting obscenities here.

What the Philistine is doing, he's elevating it now to a theological level. He is appealing to his gods, one of whom was Dagon, to give him victory over David. Come here, he said, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals.

And David said to the Philistine, you come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you, and you might think he'd say, with sling. But no, David is again seeing this as theological in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 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 in the whole world. Or maybe the whole land will know that there is a God in Israel. And so, this is trash-talking, ancient Near Eastern style.

The Philistine curses David by his gods and threatens to leave him a carcass on the battlefield. And David is countering in the same way. And all those gathered here, David says, 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. A lot of similarities here between David's attitude and that of Jonathan back in chapter 14. And that's why they are going to become very, very close friends in the aftermath of this because I think Jonathan sees in David some of himself.

And they're two peas in a pod, as it were, in terms of their trust in the Lord and the courage that that generates within them. Well, the Philistine moves closer to attack David. David runs quickly toward the battle line to meet him.

So, David is not afraid. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and it struck the Philistine in the forehead. And it sinks into his forehead.

And you may be thinking, well, how could that be? Remember, 100 to 150 miles per hour. And he fell face down on the ground. So, the slingstone brings Goliath to the ground.

And then there's kind of a summary statement here. 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.

But there's a little more to it than that. 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, as he said he would do. Some who want to see contradictions within this chapter will actually say there's confusion in terms of how David killed the Philistine. In one account, he does it with the sling.

In the other, he does it with the sword. That is off base. There's no need to be seeing confusion here.

If you look closely at the discourse clausal structure of the passage, and I've outlined this in my commentary on Samuel if you'd like to see it in detail. But also, there's a clue in the Hebrew text. In verse 51, when it says that David killed him, it uses a form of the verb to kill that's different from the form that was used earlier.

And this second form of the verb, it's actually in Hebrew the polel stem, for those of you who are familiar with Hebrew. It's used in Judges Samuel for finishing someone off who's already been dealt a mortal wound. It's used, for example, in Judges 9, after the lady throws the millstone on Abimelech's head and basically deals him a mortal blow.

He's finished off, and this verb is used. And it's used elsewhere for finishing someone off. In fact, the passage we looked at earlier when Jonathan attacks the Philistines with his armor bearer.

Jonathan goes through striking down the Philistines. The armor bearer comes along and kills them. The same form of the verb is used here, and then in another passage as well.

So, David is finishing Goliath off. He brings him down with the slingstone, and then he's going to finish him off with Goliath's own sword. This is very similar to what we see in that Egyptian parallel from 1800 BC, where Senuhi brings down the enemy with his bow, with an arrow, and then he goes over, takes the hero of Retinue's battle axe, and finishes him off.

And so, David is doing the same thing here. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran, as you might expect. And the men of Israel and Judah surge forward with a shout, and they pursue the Philistines all the way to the entrance of Gath, to where Goliath is from, and to the gates of Ekron.

Debtors strewn all along, and the Israelites win a great victory. David took the Philistines' head and brought it to Jerusalem, eventually, and he put the Philistines' weapons in his own tent. And then in verse 54, it kind of takes us forward.

Eventually, David does this with the Philistine's head and weapons, but then we come back to the battle scene in verse 55. There's a flashback, actually, to the beginning of the battle, and it says that Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine. And he said to Abner, commander of the army, remember Abner is Saul's general, Abner, whose son is that young man? And Abner replied, as surely as you live, Your Majesty, I don't know.

And the king said, find out whose son this young man is. 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. And whose son are you, young man? Saul asked him, and David said, I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem.

Now this creates a problem here because in 1 Samuel 17, we actually have two versions of the story. A longer version, which is in the Hebrew text, is the basis for our English translations, but there's a much shorter version in the Greek Septuagint that leaves out verses 12 through 31 and leaves this section out. And so some scholars will argue that there are two competing stories of how David met Saul.

One story is in chapter 16, where David is called to the royal court. And the assumption then is that he would have been an armor bearer with Saul on the occasion of this battle. But of course, in chapter 17, we read how David was over with his father and had to come back, but that's not in the Septuagint version.

So, you can have David right there on-site if you eliminate those verses. And in this other competing version, David just shows up for the battle, and Saul doesn't even know who he is yet. And so, what he's doing here, he's asking David, who are you? Well, if he's asking David, who are you? We clearly have a problem because Saul has already met David.

David has been serving in his court. Some people will argue, well, chapter 16 is not in chronological order, it's referring to something that occurs later, but it looks as if we're working in chronological order. And chapter 17, verse 15, acknowledges this because it tells us that David would go back to Jesse and then return to Saul.

So, we seem to have a problem here, and some writers have made a big deal out of this. One writer says that the Deuteronomistic historian, in other words, the author of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, seems to have used older sources that sometimes contradicted one another. A good example is found in, he says, 2 Samuel 16 and 17, that's a mistake.

He means 1 Samuel 16 and 17. According to this text, David appears to meet Saul twice for the first time. In the first instance, David was a warrior musician who soothed Saul's evil spirit with harp music and subsequently became the king's armor bearer.

In the following chapter, however, David appears on the scene again, this time as a shepherd boy unaccustomed to war. When he unexpectedly defeats Goliath in mortal combat, Saul inquired of David, whose son are you, young man? Now, how is it that in this second instance, Saul failed to recognize his favorite musician and chief armor bearer? Is it our modern and critical imagination, or does Saul really meet David twice for the first time? One thing that is certain is that it is not our modern imagination. And so, this author believes that the Septuagint, the shorter version, has deftly corrected the problem by deleting the problematic verses.

So, unless Saul was suffering from a serious case of amnesia or senility, he says, it seems that both of these stories cannot be historical. This is kind of a standard view of this passage, and it all hinges on how you understand those questions in verses 55 through 58. But I think that the critical consensus here makes a bad blunder.

They misunderstand what's going on with the Hebrew grammar. And Saul is not asking for David's name. I think he knows who David is.

He's asking for the identity of David's father. And you may be wondering, why would he do that? Remember verse 25. Saul had promised the victor tax-exempt status for his family.

And so it's natural that Saul would be thinking ahead as he sees David going out, and he just asks Abner, by the way, what's his father? Who's his father? Because he's thinking in terms of that promise that he made. And the question that he asks, ben me, the son of whom are you? It occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible. The closest parallel to it is in Genesis 24, 23, and 24, where the question, bat me, the daughter of whom appears.

And in that story, remember what the servant is doing. The servant is seeking a bride for Isaac. His main concern, he can't just choose anyone, his main concern is the identity of the father of Isaac's future bride.

He has to find a bride within the extended family of Abraham. And that's quite clear from Genesis 24, 4. So his question to Rebekah means precisely what it says. Who is your father? And notice how she answers.

She doesn't say, I'm Rebekah. This isn't a roundabout way of asking for identity. She says I'm the daughter of Betuel.

And that's good because Betuel's a relative. So, in the same way, Saul's question means, who is your father? And David's answer is precisely what we expect. I am the son of your servant, Jesse.

So, in neither case is the question equivalent to what is your name or who are you? If that had been Saul's intention, he could have just said, what is your name? This happens in Genesis 32, 27, Jacob's supernatural adversary, the angel, the Lord, actually, maybe through the angel. There's some debate on what that means. We won't get into it here.

He asks Jacob, what is your name? And Jacob says, Jacob. Another option, if you want to know somebody's name, is just to say, Miata, who are you? And Isaac asked Jacob that in Genesis 27, 18. Now Jacob is pretending he's Esau at that point.

But when the question comes his way, who are you? He says, deceptively, I'm Esau. He knows how the question is supposed to be answered. Here are some other examples.

In 2 Samuel 1, 8, the Amalekite, who claims that he killed dying Saul, says that Saul asked him, who are you? And he said I'm an Amalekite. Jehu asked some of Ahaziah's relatives in 2 Kings 10, who are you? And they replied we are relatives of Ahaziah. Naomi asked Ruth in Ruth 3, 9 when she came back from the threshing floor, who are you, my daughter? And Ruth said, I'm Ruth.

So, if Saul wanted to know David's identity, if it were that simple, he would have said, what's your name? Or, who are you? And David would have replied, I'm David. But like Rebekah, David stated his father's name because that's what the question called for. And with good reason, because we know from verse 25 of chapter 17 that Saul had promised tax-exempt status for the family.

So, it's not the kind of contradiction that some feel that it is. Now, there are still some issues because you may be thinking, well, okay, fair enough, but Saul and Abner had heard Jesse's name before in chapter 16. The servant had said, I have seen one of Jesse's sons, and Saul had actually sent messages to him.

But let's face it, Jesse in their minds is probably a relatively unimportant figure, and it would have been easy for them to have forgotten the name of David's father. This happened to me one time. One of my good friends, I went to his father's funeral.

Two weeks later, I was referring to his father, and I couldn't remember his name for the life of me. I knew my friend's name, but I couldn't remember his father's name even though I'd been to his funeral because it wasn't a name that was in my mind all the time. And Saul probably would have sent these messages through scribes anyway.

The text might say he sent a message, but that doesn't mean it's like a personal letter. He's just having someone else take care of this. So, it seems as if it's reasonable that Saul and Abner could have forgotten the name of Jesse's father.

It may just be that Saul thinks he knows, and he wants to just verify it. Abner, as a military guy, is this really something that's going to be that vital to him? He could have easily forgotten this name. But there's also a literary reason for this.

They seem to be kind of clueless. God is doing great things through David. He is starting to do great things through David, and they don't even really know who the kid is and much about him at this point.

And so, they're kind of presented as being outside the loop a little bit. Servants know about David, but Saul and Abner, they're not paying attention as they should. Now, another problem is if Saul does know David's name, how come he refers to him as this young man in verse 55, and this boy in verse 66? Why doesn't he just say, David? Well, we've already seen back in chapter 17, verse 33, Saul's focus is on the contrast between David as an inexperienced young man and the seasoned warrior Goliath.

And so, Saul is calling him young man and young boy because that's his focus here. David's youth is something that's very obvious in all of this, and so naturally he would be referring to David in that descriptive kind of way rather than just using his name. So, I think these issues can be resolved once you understand that the question was not asking for David's name.

David is not meeting Saul for the first time here. And so, I believe that we can resolve this problem. I don't think that there are two competing accounts.

Nevertheless, the reality is we do have a shorter version in the Septuagint that doesn't have some of the tensions that we have in the longer story. I think what we simply have in the Septuagint, I don't think it's an intentionally shortened version to try to get rid of some of the problems. I think what we have is just one of the sources that was used.

In the Hebrew version, we have the longer final canonical form of the story, and we discover from the Septuagint that's one of the sources that was used, but it was supplemented with other material, giving us the long version of the story. Because that will come up in commentaries that you read, I thought we needed to take a little time and talk about that issue. But let's wrap this up.

I think what we see in this particular account where David's faith ignites a victory, is some of the same themes that we saw, as I said before, in the account of Jonathan's victory over the Philistines. What we see is that faith in the Lord's power to save can be the catalyst for victory. We also see here, if we kind of remember how Saul and the Israelites are responding, they're not responding with the kind of faith that David has.

And what they're doing is they're focusing on the outward appearances. They're kind of buying into Goliath's line. Goliath is taunting Israel.

Goliath, initially at least, is making it a Philistine versus Israel thing, and a champion, a battle of champions issue. And when you focus on outward appearances, that can obscure reality. You have to walk by faith, not by sight.

And it can stifle faith, and it can produce paralyzing fear. But Israel can be thankful that David stepped onto the battlefield with full trust in the Lord and confidence that no matter how big this Philistine was, no matter how well-armed he was, he could bring him down. And he did it with his sling.

A little bit of deception. Everybody was expecting him to get into the ring. David says, not doing it that way.

And he pulls out his machine gun and brings him down. So it wasn't that David was under armed or something like that, that he had inferior weaponry. In many ways, his weapon was superior.

I think what we really need to see here is that when David goes out there in faith and confidence in the Lord, the Lord allows him to execute the skill that he already had. I'm sure David was a very accomplished slinger. He'd come in handy as a shepherd.

And the Lord allowed him, he didn't choke, in other words, if you're familiar with sports terminology. Sometimes very adept athletes will choke under pressure. They just can't execute the way they can execute in practice when the pressure isn't on.

David was standing there and he needed to make the shot, and he did. And I find it significant, it looks like he did it with the first shot. He didn't need the other stones, but just in case he had them.

But he brought the Philistine down. The Lord enabled David to exercise his gifts in an effective way. In our next lesson, we're going to see in the aftermath of all of this, you would think that Israel would be celebrating David's great success, but that's not what's going to happen.

Saul is going to view David as a threat, and David's success is really going to have just the opposite effect. Saul gets more and more suspicious of him. He sees David's popularity growing.

I'm sure he remembers what Samuel said, you've lost your dynasty. The Lord has rejected you. He has chosen one after his own heart.

He has chosen one who is better than you. And Saul is going to begin a pursuit of David in an attempt to murder him. And that's going to go on for many, many chapters.

And we'll begin that story in our next lesson.

This is Dr. Bob Chisholm in his teaching on 1 and 2 Samuel. This is session 11, 1 Samuel 17, David's Faith Ignites a Victory.