

# It's On Him

## 1 Samuel 17

### Pierre Cannings

#### I. On Them vs. 4-8 & 16

##### a. Power Play

###### i. Champion

1. The champion, having stepped forward from the ranks, *stood and cried out to the ranks of Israel*] it was, and is, the Arab custom for the warrior to vaunt his own prowess and to satirize his enemies, as a challenge to single combat
- ii. This passage presents the longest description of military attire in the Old Testament. Goliath's physical stature, armor, weaponry, and shield bearer must have made him appear invincible. However, the reader has just been warned against paying undue attention to outward appearances. The detailed description of Goliath's external advantages here suggests that chap. 17 was intended in part to serve as an object lesson in the theology of the previous chapter (cf. 16:7).

##### b. Biggest Stature

###### i. 6 cubits and a Span

1. *six cubits and a span*—would be at the smallest computation about ten English feet

##### c. Most Protection

###### i. Bronze Helmet

1. At a time when most Israelite soldiers wore only basic clothing in battle (cf. 13:22),
2. Goliath was sheathed in metal. His head was covered with "a bronze helmet" (v. 5). In ancient Egyptian artwork Philistine soldiers are depicted wearing a feathered headdress, not a helmet; Goliath's headgear therefore was apparently atypical, designed for the special needs of representative combat

###### ii. Scale Armor

1. Weighed 5000 Shekles of Bronze..
  - a. Protecting his trunk was "a coat of scale armor weighing five thousand shekels" (= 126 pounds).
2. Bronze Greaves on legs - protect shins
  - a. He was formidable not only by his size, but also by reason of his armour. The defensive armour is all of bronze—helmet and *breastplate of scales*] like the scales of a fish, plates overlapping each other and allowing free movement like the scales of a fish, plates overlapping each

other and allowing free movement; *whose weight was five thousand shekels of bronze*] The principal object of the description is to show how impregnable the man seemed to be.

3.

d. Biggest Weapons

i. Bronze javelin

1. Shaft of spear

2. Head of the spear weighed 600 shekels of iron

a. At the head of Goliath's spear was a massive "iron point" that weighed "six hundred shekels" (= 15.1 lbs.). Iron was the preferred metal for implements of warfare because it was strong, nonmalleable, and could retain a sharp edge much better than bronze. A weapon of this massive weight, while intimidating in appearance, would have been quite awkward to use; it was apparently designed mainly to intimidate.

ii. His shield carrier walked next to him

1. Added to the enormous weight of his panoply, was his helper and squire

e. Loudest v.8

i. Stood and Shouted

ii. Taunted

1. Philistine

2. Servant of Saul

iii. Theologically: He threatens that the people of Israel will become servants to the Philistines and their gods (1 Sam 17:9).

1. Socially: He demoralizes their leader, Saul, and forces the Israelites to flee (1 Sam 17:11, 23–24).

2. Militarily: He reduces the conflict between the Israelites and the Philistines to single combat (1 Sam 17:8–10)

f. Most Repetition v.16

i. Morning and Evening

1. 40 Days

a. The standoff between the encamped armies of the Philistines and Israelites continued for at least "forty days" (v. 16), a situation that would have strained the resources of the impoverished Israelite monarchy. This lengthy standoff also would have made life difficult for individual Israelite families since this event would have occurred during the spring or summer, when adult males would have been needed for agricultural chores. At the beginning and end of each day during that time, Goliath stepped forward to taunt the Israelites.

- ii.
- iii. Took His Stand

## II. On Us vs. 11 & 24-25

- a. Everybody Afraid v.11
  - i. Saul
  - ii. All Israel- The only result in the ranks of Israel is fear, amounting almost to a panic. That the situation could not last forty days is evident
- b. Dismayed
  - i. To be broken into pieces
- c. Greatly Afraid v.11 & 24
- d. They Fled v.24
- e. Saul Tried to Solve it with... v.25
  - i. Transactional Power
    - 1. Riches
    - 2. Daughter
  - ii. Weapons

## III. On Him vs. 26, 32,45-46

- a. Uncircumcised Philistines 26 &36
  - 1. Uncircumcised - His question alludes to Goliath's status as a pagan outside the covenant between God and the people of Israel, thus reminding the people of their covenant with God and giving them courage to face their enemies
  - 2. surgically removed this as a sign of their covenant with God (Gn 17:9-14; Ex 12:48; Lv 12:3), the term came to designate "Gentile" or "non-Jew" (Philistines, Greeks, and Romans did not circumcise, but Egyptians and many Semitic peoples did). By extension it meant metaphorically "those outside the covenant," whether because they were Gentiles or because they were Jews living in disobedience to God
  - 3. David was deeply disturbed that a Philistine, who was uncircumcised and therefore outside of a covenant relationship with the Lord, would so boldly heap shame on (NIV, "defy"; v. 26) "the armies of the living God." Goliath's words were not just an insult directed against the Israelite army; they were also an assault on "the living God," since the army was composed of members of the Lord's covenant community. Having missed out on the details of the king's response to Goliath because of his duties in Bethlehem, David asked for and received further information from "the men standing near him" (v. 26).

- ii. Taunt the Armies – jeer, mock
  - 1. Of Living God
- iii. He is no different than the lion and bear v.36
  - 1. To David’s way of thinking, “the uncircumcised Philistine” had reduced himself to the level of a brutish animal “because he ... defied the armies of the living God” (v. 36). Thus, fighting Goliath would be just another fight with a wild beast. The Lord had delivered David “from the hand [“paw”] of the lion and the hand [“paw”] of the bear,” and he would deliver him “from the hand of this Philistine” (v. 37).
- b. [Brother questioned](#)
- c. No Man’s Heart Fail v.32
  - i. Heart – seat of person’s thoughts, emotions, volitions and knowledge
  - ii. Fail – fall collapse
- d. He will deliver me
  - i. Deliver - Rescue or redemption and the agent of such a rescue. Scripture teaches that God’s ultimate goal in history is to rescue people from the curse of sin, death, Satan, and hell
- e. [Saul still tried to put armor on him](#)
  - i. [Bronze Helmet etc v.38](#)
- f. You have armor and weapons I have the Lord 45-46
  - i. Your Armor
    - 1. He was fully aware of Goliath’s arsenal—“sword, spear, and scimitar” (v. 45; “javelin”). David also proved he was aware of the greatest of his own military resources, “the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel” (cf. Ps 18:10–12)
  - ii. Lord of Host
  - iii. You have taunted
    - 1. Furthermore, David expressed an awareness that Goliath had committed a capital crime by insulting, and thus blaspheming, the God of Israel. According to the Torah, any individual guilty of blasphemy—even a non-Israelite—must be stoned (Lev 24:16). Perhaps this was an underlying reason why David chose the weapon he did in confronting the Philistine
  - iv. The Lord will deliver you in my hands
    - 1. As David viewed it, Goliath was outnumbered and would soon be overpowered, for the Lord would fight with David against the giant. In the battle that would occur “this day” (v. 46), the Lord would “hand [Goliath] over” to David; then for his part the young shepherd would “strike [Goliath] down and cut off [his] head.” David’s efforts would not be limited to slaying Goliath; he also would slaughter and humiliate the Philistine army.
  - v. All the earth will know God of Israel.

1. Yet the Philistines would not die in vain. In fact, their destruction would serve a high theological purpose; it would be a revelatory event by which “the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel” (cf. Josh 2:10–11).
2. Eyewitnesses to the ensuing battle would learn an additional truth from the Lord, “that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves, for the battle is the LORD’S” (v. 47; cf. 2:9–10; 13:22; Jer 9:23–24; Zech 4:6).
3. Only when the Lord willed it were Israelites under David’s command to engage in it (cf. 2 Sam 5:19). And when the Lord ordained battle for David’s troops, it was to be performed in accordance with divine directives (cf. 2 Sam 5:23–25). Furthermore, because soldiers were performing God’s work, only individuals who were in a state of ritual purity were to participate in military missions (cf. 1 Sam 21:5). The Lord was the one who gave victory to David and his troops in battle (cf. v. 47; 2 Sam 22:30, 36, 51), and thus the Lord alone was worthy of praise for David’s and Israel’s military successes (2 Sam 22:47–48).