

Know Your Enemy

1 Samuel 17

I. Intro

- A. In his book *Knowable Word*, Peter Krol stated, “The greatest enemy of observation is familiarity.”
 - 1. So familiar we assume and miss the details or they cease to matter
 - 2. Christmas and Easter → Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Incarnation
 - 3. Today: David and Goliath
 - 4. To combat this, we are going to slow down intentionally.
- B. Another common problem in Bible interpretation is Hyper-Spiritualizing & Over-Personalizing the text (not exegesis, or eisegesis, narcigesis)
 - 1. “What are the giants in your life...”
 - 2. “What are YOUR five smooth stones...”
 - 3. “Do you fit in Saul’s armor?”
 - 4. “What’s in YOUR shepherd’s pouch...”
 - 5. Basically, this skips the author’s intention for the story and jumps to YOU.
- C. A narrative story is placed in a chapter, in a book, and in the Bible at large
 - 1. It has an immediate purpose, a purpose for the argument of the book, and a place in the body of the Bible at large
 - 2. Don’t just read yourself into the story without understanding it first
 - 3. God’s intention for the text is beautiful & meaningful
- D. *“The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces,
Against them, he will thunder in heaven.
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;
He will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed.” (1 Samuel 2:10, Hannah’s Prayer)*
- E. I am going to take a few weeks to go through this chapter rather than rushing it, and I think you will be glad we did

II. 1 Samuel 17:1–11, [1] *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.*

- A. Deja Vu - not the first time we have seen this situation develop.
- B. The Philistine threat has been/will be in the background of the entire book.
- C. In Chapter 4, the Philistines defeated Israel, captured the Ark, and killed Eli’s sons (and then Eli died too)
- D. If you recall, God fought his own battle, waging war against god Dagon and the Philistines until they sent the ark back to Israel, not wanting God around!
- E. In Chapter 7, God once again fought on behalf of the Israelites. They repented, sought him, and the Lord thundered, confusing the army of their enemies.
- F. The threat didn’t go away, and in chapter 8, we see that the Philistines were one reason the Israelites demanded a king.

1. They wanted a champion, someone to fight their battles and lead them into war → They got Saul. TALLEST GUY AROUND
- G. God said of Saul, “He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines” (1 Samuel 9:16).
- H. As King, it was Saul’s job to save Israel from the Philistines, lead the army
- I. In chapter 13, Saul had a chance to get it done, but it was anticlimactic, with Saul almost killing his son and a bunch of other stuff too.
- J. So Chapter 17 begins w/ a familiar scenario: drums of war
- K. As one commentary notes, “These opening words vividly remind us of the failure of Saul to accomplish his mission as king. Israel’s enemy was alive and well and threatening once again.”
- L. The Philistines were about as far west as they had ever been while still remaining in Judah
- III. *[2] “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.”*
- A. Notice the difference:
 1. The Philistines “gathered” (v. 1, active voice);
 2. Saul and the men of Israel “were gathered” (v. 2, passive voice).
 - B. There is no sign of active leadership among the Israelites. Saul is just among those who “were gathered.” // The king is along for the ride
- IV. *[3] “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.”*
- A. Two mountains, a valley in between
 - B. Philistines on one side, Israelites on the other;
 - C. A natural amphitheater to watch the drama that was about to unfold
- V. *[4] And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. [5] 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. [6] And he had bronze armor on his legs and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. [7] 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.*
- A. Saul’s not so tall anymore, is he...
 - B. Stepping out from the camp comes a giant, literally. He’s 9’9”
 1. “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature” (1 Samuel 16:7) → Hard to ignore this
 - C. He’s coated in glistening bronze (head, his chest, his legs)
 - D. His coat of mail weighed 125#
 - E. The head of his spear weighed 15#
 - F. His shield was so large it had its own Uber driver
 1. He is impenetrable
 2. Nothing is getting near between his reach, exp, and armor
 - G. The word translated “champion” literally means “the man of the between,”

1. A way of describing “anyone who comes forward from the front line [and] becomes a ‘man between the battle lines’ and is thus a sort of ‘challenger’ or ‘champion.’”
 2. It was common in those days to have a representative from both sides. They would do battle so that the rest of the army didn’t have to do
 3. So both sides have their “tallest man” set apart for the job, but Saul doesn’t seem too interested in hustling down to the battle lines
- H. All of the detail given to describe Goliath is meant to fill you with dread. Here is a close-up look at the one who is going to crush you to smithereens
- VI. *[8] 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. [9] 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.” [10] And the Philistine said, “I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.”*
- A. “Why are you here?” They are probably all wondering the same thing
 - B. The psychological warfare has already begun. One commentary explained:
 1. Literally, he said, “Am I not the Philistine?” The pronoun “I” is strongly emphasized. “Am I — the one you see before you — the nine-and-a-half-foot- tall, metal-clad hulk, this powerful and violent figure — am I not the embodiment of the Philistine?”
 2. And you [again, the pronoun is emphasized] are Saul’s slaves.” Why would you slaves fight for him? You don’t all need to die...Just send out a champion.”
 - C. “Choose a man for yourselves”! Where have we heard those words before?
 1. Sound familiar?
 - a) Samuel spoke to the people of “your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves” (1 Samuel 8:18, cf. 1 Samuel 12:13).
 - b) The Israelites had already “chosen a man for themselves.” His name was Saul!
 - c) Saul doesn’t seem interested, even though they describe him in chapter 10 as “There is none like him among all the people.”
 2. So the Israelites had chosen their champion chapters ago, and he is found... lacking.
- VII. *[11] “When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.”*
- A. This is a terrifying ordeal. And this taunt went on for 40 days
- VIII. SUMMARY:
- A. So, what do we see in these verses? An enemy and no solution
 - B. An enemy larger than life, seemingly indestructible
 - C. When we read the entire OT, we see that Goliath is just one enemy of many
 - D. But these enemies aren’t even the real enemy
 1. They are foot soldiers, pawns
 - E. Goliath might be the champion of this battle, but he’s not the Champion of Evil.

- F. All of this narrative reinforces David's reign as king, but it also parallels a far greater battle that David's greater Son, Jesus, will fight as our champion.
 - 1. We all face an enemy, an army of enemies, as real, powerful, and more terrifying than Goliath.
 - 2. Death wields its terrible sword and mocks us all.
 - 3. Sin threatens to bring us down.
 - 4. Satan himself seeks whom he may devour like a lion
 - G. Friends, you couldn't defeat Goliath if he were here today any more than you can defeat old age, and neither of those is the true enemy
- IX. What do we get out of this? I want you to know three things.

A. Know your enemy.

- 1. The enemy isn't Iran, Hamas, Trump, Biden, Cholesterol or Gluten.
- 2. The enemy is Satan
- 3. He is the champion of evil and is ready to fight against you for the eternal resting place of your soul.
- 4. He comes from his fortress of sin, death, and lies to kill and destroy
- 5. He stands between you and eternal life
- 6. He is itching to make you bleed. Don't be flippant.
- 7. Satan's Goals
 - a) To Oppose God's Will and Kingdom (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:7-12)
 - b) To Deceive and Lead People Astray (2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 11:14; Revelation 20:3)
 - c) To Steal, Kill, and Destroy (John 10:10)
 - d) To Accuse Believers Before God (Revelation 12:10; Zechariah 3:1-2)
 - e) To Tempt and Cause Sin (Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 3:5)
- 8. Satan's Character
 - a) A Liar and the Father of Lies (John 8:44)
 - b) A Deceiver (Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 11:3)
 - c) An Accuser (Revelation 12:10; Job 1:9-11)
 - d) A Murderer (John 8:44)
 - e) A Roaring Lion Seeking to Devour (1 Peter 5:8)
 - f) A Tempter (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5)
- 9. Satan's Tactics
 - a) Deception and Lies (Genesis 3:1-5; 2 Cor. 11:3; Revelation 12:9)
 - b) Accusation in the Unseen Realm (Rev. 12:10; Zechariah 3:1-2)
 - c) Temptation in the Unseen Realm (Matt. 4:1-11; 1 Thess. 3:5)
 - d) Opposition to God's People (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7; 1 Peter 5:8)
 - e) Division and Confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33; 2 Corinthians 2:11)
 - f) Exploiting the World Order (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Corinthians 4:4)
- 10. What are YOU gonna do? What can you do? Nothing

B. Know your need.

1. Just as you can't go toe to toe with Goliath, you can't go toe to toe with Satan.
2. Of course, we try because we are arrogant, foolish, and ignorant
3. We act like we are in control of our own flesh
4. This is why people love self-help books; they still think they can rescue themselves from the tower that the dragon guards.
5. Let me tell you some truths this Father's Day: → You're not the hero. You're not the knight. You're the damsel in distress, crying in the tower.
6. Do you know what you bring to the gospel and God's kingdom? Your sin.
7. But let's not beat you up too much b/c I have good news

C. Know your champion.

1. 1 John 3:8, "...when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil."
 2. How did he do it?
 - a) By resisting temptation where you can't
 - b) By declaring judgment on powers, you can't see
 - c) By teaching truths that you wouldn't know if he didn't reveal them
 - d) By dying on the cross for your sin
 - e) By swallowing up your death in his resurrection
 - f) By guaranteeing your future with His Holy Spirit
 3. You can't do any of that → you needed a champion to defeat your enemy
 4. Jude: even Michael knew we needed a champion
- D. The author of Samuel wants us to know the enemy—to get a clear picture of Goliath so that David's victory is even more glorious; that's why he slows down so much in this description.
- E. As we will see, just like with Goliath, Satan is our enemy, but it's not your job to fight him. You need a champion to fight on your behalf, and that champion is Jesus Christ.
- F. Let HIM fight the battle and trust in HIS finished work. So what do WE do?
- G. We are going to unpack this more in the coming weeks, but for today consider 1 Peter 5:8–9, [8] *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* [9] *Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.*
1. Be sober-minded → well balanced and self-disciplined.
 2. Be watchful → be alert and cautious at all times
 3. Resist him
 4. Be firm in your faith → against his attack, rooted, established, immovable