

# CHAPTER 17

## INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 17

This chapter relates how the armies of Israel, and of the Philistines, prepared for battle, and where, (<sup><01701></sup>1 Samuel 17:1-3), describes a champion of the Philistines, who defied the armies of Israel, (<sup><01704></sup>1 Samuel 17:4-11), and while he was so doing, it informs us that David came into the camp, and he heard his words, and signified to one and another his inclination to fight with him, (<sup><01712></sup>1 Samuel 17:12-30), which being reported to Saul, David was sent for by him, and much discourse passed between them about it, (<sup><01731></sup>1 Samuel 17:31-37) when we are told the manner in which he engaged with the Philistine, and the victory he obtained over him, (<sup><01738></sup>1 Samuel 17:38-51) upon which the Philistines fled, and Israel pursued them; and on account of this action David was taken notice of by Saul, and brought to court again, as the following chapter shows, (<sup><01752></sup>1 Samuel 17:52-58).

**Ver. 1.** *Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle*, etc.] Josephus <sup>f336</sup> says this was not long after the things related in the preceding chapter were transacted; and very probably they had heard of the melancholy and distraction of Saul, and thought it a proper opportunity of avenging themselves on Israel for their last slaughter of them, and for that purpose gathered together their dispersed troops:

*and were gathered together at Shochoh*, which belongeth to Judah; a city of the tribe of Judah, (<sup><01535></sup>Joshua 15:35), which shows that, notwithstanding their last defeat, they had great footing in the land of Israel, or however had penetrated far into it in this march of theirs:

*and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah*; which were both in the same tribe, and near one another, of which (see Gill on “<sup><01010></sup>Joshua 10:10”), (see Gill on “<sup><01535></sup>Joshua 15:35”).

*in Ephesdammim*; which, by an apocope of the first letter, is called Pasdammim, (<sup><01113></sup>1 Chronicles 11:13) which the Jews <sup>f337</sup> say had this name because there blood ceased.

**Ver. 2.** *And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together*, etc.] He being cured, at least being better of his disorder, through the music of David, and alarmed and aroused by the invasion of the Philistines, which might serve to dissipate any remains of it, or prevent its return, got together his forces:

*and pitched by the valley of Elah*; which Jerom<sup>f338</sup> says Aquila and Theodotion interpret “the valley of the oak”; but the Vulgate Latin version, the valley of Terebinth; which, according to our countryman Sandys<sup>f339</sup>, was four miles from Ramaosophim, where Samuel dwelt; for he says,

“after four miles riding, we descended into the valley of Terebinth, famous, though little, for the slaughter of Goliath;”

and in the Targum this valley is called the valley of Butma, which in the Arabic language signifies a “terebinth”, or turpentine tree; though some translate it “the oak”; and, according to some modern travellers<sup>f340</sup>, to this day it bears a name similar to that; for they say it is

“now called the vale of Bitumen, very famous all over those parts for David’s victory over Goliath:”

*and set the battle in array against the Philistines*; prepared to give them battle.

**Ver. 3.** *And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side*, &c.] Before the Israelites are said to encamp in or by the valley; but here they are said to take the higher ground, and face the Philistines, who were on a mountain or hill on the other side over against them, which Kimchi reconciles thus; the whole or the grand army lay encamped in the valley, and, they that were set in array, or the first ranks, the first battalion, ascended the mountain to meet the Philistines. Vatablus takes it to be the same mountain, that on one part of it the Philistines formed their first battalion, and the rest of the army was in the valley; and on the other part of the mountain the Israelites pitched their camp:

*and there was a valley between them*; the same as in the preceding verse.

**Ver. 4.** *And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines*, etc.] Or a “middle person”, or a man “between two”<sup>f341</sup>; meaning either one that went and stood between the two armies of Israel and the

Philistines, as the Jewish writers generally interpret it: or a “dueller”<sup>f342</sup>, as others, with which our version agrees; one that proposed to fight a duel, and have the war decided by two persons, of which he would be one:

*named Goliath of Gath*; which was one of the places where the Anakims or giants were driven, and left, in the times of Joshua, and from whom this man descended, (<sup>f3412</sup>Joshua 11:22)

*whose height was six cubits and a span*; and taking a cubit after the calculation of Bishop Cumberland<sup>f343</sup> to be twenty one inches, and more, and a span to be half a cubit, the height of this man was eleven feet four inches, and somewhat more; which need not seem incredible, since the coffin of Oresteia, the son of Agamemnon, is said<sup>f344</sup> to be seven cubits long; and Eleazar, a Jew, who because of his size was called the giant, and was presented by Artabanus, king of the Parthians, to Tiberius Caesar, is said by Josephus<sup>f345</sup> to be seven cubits high; and one Gabbara of Arabia, in the times of Claudius Caesar, measured nine feet nine inches, as Pliny<sup>f346</sup> relates, and who elsewhere<sup>f347</sup> speaks of a people in Ethiopia, called Syrbotae, who were eight cubits high; the Septuagint version makes Goliath to be only four cubits and a span high, and so Josephus<sup>f348</sup>; that is, about eight feet.

**Ver. 5.** *And he had an helmet of brass upon his head*, etc.] This was a piece of armour, which covered the head in the day of battle; these were usually made of the skins of beasts, of leather, and which were covered with plates of iron, or brass; and sometimes made of all iron, or of brass<sup>f349</sup>; as this seems to have been:

*and he was armed with a coat of mail*; which reached from the neck to the middle, and consisted of various plates of brass laid on one another, like the scales of fishes<sup>f350</sup>, so close together that no dart or arrow could pierce between:

*and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass*: which made one hundred and fifty six pounds and a quarter of zygostatic or avoirdupois weight; and therefore he must be a very strong man indeed to carry such a weight. So the armour of the ancient Romans were all of brass, as this man’s; their helmets, shields, greaves, coats of mail, all of brass, as Livy says<sup>f351</sup>; and so in the age of the Grecian heroes<sup>f352</sup>.

**Ver. 6.** *And he had greaves of brass upon his legs*, etc.] Which were a sort of boots, or leg harnesses, which covered the thighs and legs down to the

heels; such as Iolau<sup>f353</sup> and the Grecians usually wore, as described by Homer; which are supposed to be double the weight of the helmet, reckoned at fifteen pounds, so that these must weigh thirty pounds of avoirdupois weight:

*and a target of brass between his shoulders*; the Targum is,

“a spear or shield of brass, which came out of the helmet, and a weight of brass upon his shoulders.”

Jarchi says the same, and that it was in the form of a spear to defend the neck from the sword; it seems to be a corslet of brass, worn between the helmet and the coat of mail for the defence of the neck, supposed to weigh thirty pounds<sup>f354</sup>

**Ver. 7.** *And the staff of his spear was like a weaver’s beam*, etc.] The wooden part of it, held in the hand; this for thickness was like the beam in the weaver’s loom, about which the warp, or else the web, is rolled; and it is conjectured that, in proportion to the stature of Goliath, his spear must be twenty six feet long, since Hector’s in Homer<sup>f355</sup> was eleven cubits, or sixteen feet and a half:

*and his spear’s head weighed six hundred shekels of iron*; the iron part of the spear, the point of it, which has its name in Hebrew from a flame of fire, because when brandished it looks shining and flaming; and being the weight of six hundred shekels, amounted to eighteen pounds and three quarters of avoirdupois weight, and the whole spear is supposed to weigh thirty seven pounds and a half; and the whole of this man’s armour is thought to weigh two hundred and seventy two pounds, thirteen ounces<sup>f356</sup>; which was a prodigious weight for a man to carry, and go into battle with; and one may well wonder how he could be able with such a weight about him to move and lay about in an engagement; though this is nothing in comparison of the weight some men have carried. Pliny<sup>f357</sup> tells us that he saw one Athanatus come into the theatre clothed with a leaden breastplate of five hundred pounds weight, and shod with buskins of the same weight:

*and one bearing a shield went before him*; which when engaged in battle he held in his own hand, and his sword in the other; the former was reckoned at thirty pounds, and the latter at four pounds, one ounce; though one would think he had no occasion for a shield, being so well covered with armour all over; so that the carrying of it before him might be only a

matter of form and state. His spear is the only piece of armour that was of iron, all the rest were of brass; and Hesiod<sup>f358</sup>, writing of the brazen age, says, their arms and their houses were all of brass, for then there was no iron; and so Lucretius<sup>f359</sup> affirms that the use of brass was before iron; but both are mentioned together, (see Gill on “~~0002~~Genesis 4:22”), hence Mars is called *χαλκεος αρης*<sup>f360</sup>.

**Ver. 8.** *And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel*, etc.] He stood in the valley between the two armies, and cried with a loud voice that he might be heard; and as he was of such a monstrous stature, no doubt his voice was very strong and sonorous; and as the battalions of Israel designed by armies were posted on the mountain or hill, his voice would ascend, and be the more easily heard:

*and said unto them, why are ye come out to set your battle in array?* either as wondering at their boldness, to set themselves in battle array against the Philistines; or rather suggesting that it was needless, since the dispute between them might be issued by a single combat:

*am not I a Philistine, and you servants to Saul?* a common Philistine, according to Jarchi; not a captain of a hundred, or of a thousand; and yet would fight anyone of them, their general officers, or be they who they would; or rather, as Abarbinel, he was a prince among the Philistines, and king of Gath; and though he was, and it was usual with great persons to engage with their equals, yet he did not insist on that; but would engage with any man, though of an inferior rank, even with any of Saul’s servants; and by calling the Israelites the servants of Saul, he might have some respect to Saul’s arbitrary government over them; and since they must be servants and slaves, it was as well to be servants to the Philistines as to him:

*choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me;* according to Jarchi and the Targumist, the challenge first respects Saul their king; that if he was a man of fortitude and courage, let him come and engage with him; if not, choose another, and send him down into the valley to fight with him. These same writers represent him as blustering and bragging that he killed the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, took the ark captive, and carried it into the temple of Dagon; that he had been used to go out with the armies of the Philistines, and had obtained victories, and slain many, and yet had never been made captain of a thousand among them; all which is

improbable, and some of it notoriously false; for in every battle after the taking of the ark the Philistines had been beaten.

**Ver. 9.** *If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants*, etc.] For which it does not appear he had any commission or authority to say; nor did the Philistines think themselves obliged to abide by what he said, since, when he was slain, they did not yield themselves servants to the Israelites:

*but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us*; to which terms also the Israelites did not consent; nor did David, who engaged with him, enter the fray on such conditions.

**Ver. 10.** *And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day*, etc.] Or “reproach”<sup>f361</sup> them; that is, should they not accept his challenge, and send down a man to fight with them, he should then upbraid them with cowardice; and now he disdained them, as if there was not a man among them that dared to encounter with him:

*give me a man that we may fight together*; and so decide the controversy between us; such as were those duels fought between Paris and Menelaus in the Trojan war, and between the Lacedemonians and the Argives in the times of Orthryades, and between the Athenians and Romans by the Horatii and Curiatii, as Grotius observes.

**Ver. 11.** *When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine*, etc.] For they were delivered with such a tone and strength of voice, as to be heard very generally, at least by many, and which soon was reported through the whole army:

*they were dismayed, and greatly afraid*; which may seem strange, when there were so many valiant men among them, as Saul himself, who had behaved with so much courage against the Ammonites, Philistines, and Amalekites; but now the Spirit of God was departed from him, and he was become timorous and fearful; and though he was much better than he had been, yet still he was not the man of spirit and resolution as before: there was also Abner, the general of his army, a very valiant man, a great man in Israel, and yet appears not on this occasion; and, what is more wonderful, Jonathan the son of Saul was present, as appears from (~~1~~1 Samuel 18:1) who had not only smitten a garrison of the Philistines, but with one man more only had attacked another garrison, and routed the whole army of the Philistines, and yet now shows not his head against a single man: so it is

when God cuts off the spirits of princes, or takes away their courage; victory over this man, and the glory of it, were reserved for David; and all this fear and dread throughout the armies of Israel were suffered, that he might appear the more glorious.

**Ver. 12.** *Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah,* whose name was Jesse, etc.] Before made mention of, (<sup><1361></sup>1 Chronicles 16:1)

*and he had eight sons;* seven only are mentioned, (<sup><1321></sup>1 Chronicles 2:13-15) one of them being, as is thought by some, a grandson, perhaps Jonadab the son of Shammah; or was a son by another woman, or died without children, as Jarchi, and therefore not mentioned:

*and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul;* the phrase, “among men”, either signifies that he was ranked among old men, infirm and unfit for war, and so excused, and his sons went in his room, so Kimchi; or he was reckoned among men of the first rank, men of esteem, credit, and reputation, so Jarchi and R. Isaiah, with which agrees the Targum; or whenever he went abroad, he was attended by many men, had a large retinue, which sense Abarbinel mentions, and is that of Ben Gersom, and agrees with the Talmud<sup>f362</sup>; but the Syriac and Arabic versions read “stricken in years”, which seems most agreeable.

**Ver. 13.** *And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle,* etc.] Either of their own accord, or rather at their father’s motion, or however with his knowledge and consent, who because he could not go himself, willed them to go; and these were forward, and some of the foremost that followed Saul to the battle, being zealous and well disposed to defend their king and country:

*and the names of the three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah;* who are the three mentioned by name that passed before Samuel, when he came to anoint one of Jesse’s sons to be king, (<sup><1366></sup>1 Samuel 16:6,8,9).

**Ver. 14.** *And David was the youngest,* etc.] For the sake of whom this account is given of Jesse and his family, and who after this makes a considerable figure in the camp and court of Saul:

*and the three eldest followed Saul;* as before related, and which is repeated, that it might be observed that they only of Jesse’s sons followed

Saul; not David particularly, but who was providentially sent to the army at the time the Philistine was defying it.

**Ver. 15.** *But David went, and returned from Saul,* etc.] Or “from above Saul”; Josephus<sup>f363</sup> says, the physicians of Saul advised to get a man to stand *υπερ κεφαλης*, “over his head”, and sing psalms and hymns to him; and Saul being recovered from his frenzy and melancholy, by means of David’s music, he was dismissed from him, or had leave to go home, or he returned upon Saul’s taking the field; though one would think, if he was now his armourbearer, he would have gone with him, (see ~~<0962>~~ 1 Samuel 16:21). It seems that when he was called to the court of Saul, that he did not continue there, but was going and coming, was there at certain times when Saul wanted him; and so when in the camp he might go and return as there was occasion for it:

*to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem*; for though he was anointed king, and was called to court, yet such was his humility, that he condescended to attend this employment of keeping sheep; and though Jesse knew all this, yet he kept him at home to this business, when it might be more reasonably thought he would have lain in the way of preferment, had he followed Saul to the camp, and appeared in the army; but he chose to leave things to the providence of God to work the way for him, and by which he was directed to take the following step, though perhaps without any design to his son’s future promotion.

**Ver. 16.** *And the Philistine drew near morning and evening,* etc.] Twice a day he came near the camp, within the hearing of it. The Jews<sup>f364</sup> say, he took those seasons on purpose to disturb them in reading their “Shema”, or “hear, O Israel”, etc. and saying their prayers morning and evening:

*and presented himself forty days*; Successively, before the armies of Israel, daring them to send down a man to fight with him, and reproaching them for their cowardice in not doing it.

**Ver. 17.** *And Jesse said unto David his son,* etc.] His youngest son, that was at home with him keeping sheep; he had three more at home, and who were elder than David, and yet he is directed by the providence of God to pick and send him on the following errand, there being work for him to do Jesse knew nothing of:

*take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched [corn]*; pointing to a quantity of it in a certain place; this was wheat or barley dried in a furnace

or oven, and ground into meal, and being mixed with water, or milk, or butter, or honey, or oil, was eaten, and reckoned very delicious; and besides this, there was another sort of “kali”, the word here used, which was parched pulse, as beans, peas, etc. parched, and which to this day is by the Arabs called by this name <sup>f365</sup>; of both which mention is made, (<sup><10728></sup>2 Samuel 17:28). Now an “ephah” was as much as ten men could eat in a day, it consisted of ten omers, (<sup><10166></sup>Exodus 16:16,36), and the number ten is after used of loaves and cheese:

*and these ten loaves of bread*; or cakes of bread, as Kimchi interprets it; pieces or morsels of bread, as the Targum; which seems not so agreeable as loaves or cakes, which are not in the text, but to be supplied:

*and run to the camp to thy brethren*; which, according to Bunting <sup>f366</sup>, was four miles from Bethlehem; and whither it seems he went on foot, and is bid to make haste, and even to run, as his brethren might be in want of provision; and Jesse was very desirous of relieving them, and hearing from them as soon as possible; it is very likely he had a servant or servants to attend him, and assist in carrying this load of provision, which, with what follows, was too much for one man to run with.

**Ver. 18.** *And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand*, etc.] Their chiliarch or colonel, who had the command of 1000 men, and under whom Jesse’s sons fought; Jarchi thinks this was Jonathan, who had 1000 men with him at Gibeah, and so now, (<sup><10132></sup>1 Samuel 13:2), these cheeses were sent by Jesse to the captain, to be distributed among his men, or a present to himself, that he might use his sons well who were under his command:

*and look how thy brethren fare*; whether in good health, in good spirits, and in safety:

*and take their pledge*; that is, if they had been obliged for want of money to pawn any of their clothes, or what they had with them to buy food with, that he would redeem and take up the pledge, by paying the money for which they were pawned; for it is thought that soldiers at this time were not maintained at the expense of the king and government, but at their own, and the families to which they belonged: though some are of opinion that this was some token which they had sent by a messenger to their father, by which he might know he came from them, so Ben Gersom; and which David was now to take with him, and return it; or a token that he

was to bring from them, whereby he might be assured of their welfare; and so the Targum, “and bring their goodness”, a token of their being in good health. The Jews<sup>f367</sup> understand it of bills of divorce to be given to their wives, that if they should die in battle, or be taken captive, that their wives might marry after three years.

**Ver. 19.** *Now Saul, and they*, etc.] That is, the sons of Jesse, and brethren of David:

*and all the men of Israel*; the soldiers in the army:

*were in the valley Elah*; or “by” it, near unto it; for they were set in array on the mountain on the side of it:

*fighting with the Philistines*; not actually engaged in battle, but drawn up for it; prepared and in readiness to engage whenever it was necessary, or they were obliged to it; and perhaps there might be now and then some skirmishes in the outer parts of the camp.

**Ver. 20.** *And David rose up early in the morning*, etc.] Being very ready and eager to obey his father’s orders, and visit his brethren:

*and left the sheep with a keeper*; which showed his care and faithfulness in the discharge of his office; he was not unmindful of his father’s sheep, any more than of his commands:

*and took*; the ephah of parched corn, the ten loaves, and the ten cheeses:

*and went, as Jesse had commanded him*; went and carried them to the camp, according to his orders:

*and he came to the trench*; foss or ditch, which was cast up all around the army, partly to prevent the enemy falling on them before, and partly to prevent deserters from them behind; or the word signifying a wagon or carriage, which is here used, this might be a fence around the camp made of wagons fastened to each other; though it may only signify, the camp itself, which lay in a circular form, with proper guards about it to watch the enemy. Now David came up to it just

*as the host was going forth to the fight*; preparing and getting every thing ready to the battle, and in motion, and upon the march to meet the enemy:

*and shouted for the battle*; which was usually done when about to make the onset, to animate the soldiers, and strike the greater terror into the

enemy; and this noise was sometimes made with the voice in a hideous and howling way, and was called “barritus”<sup>f368</sup> by the Romans; with the Trojans it was like the noise of cranes in the air<sup>f369</sup>; it was also attended with the clashing of shields and spears<sup>f370</sup>; with the Persians, it was a rough, boisterous, and confused noise<sup>f371</sup>.

**Ver. 21.** *For Israel and all the Philistines had put the battle in array*, etc.] Both sides prepared for it, and drew up in line of battle:

*army against army*; rank against rank, battalion against battalion, the right wing of the one against the left of the other, etc.

**Ver. 22.** *And David left his carriage in the hand the keeper of the carriage*, etc.] That is, he left load of provisions he brought with him in the hand of the keeper of the bag and baggage of the army, their clothes, and such like things; not having an opportunity to deliver them to his brethren, who were just going to engage in battle:

*and ran into the army*; which showed the valour and courage of David, who chose rather to expose himself in battle, than to abide with the keeper of the carriages:

*and came and saluted his brethren*; asked them of their welfare, in his father’s name and his own.

**Ver. 23.** *And as he talked with them*, etc.] About their health, and the errand he came upon, and the message of his father to them, and how it was with him, who sent them his best wishes:

*behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name*: of whom (see <sup><0708></sup>1 Samuel 17:4); he came out of the valley, and drew near to the mountain the Israelites were descending:

*out of the armies of the Philistines*: from the plains where they were encamped, as Kimchi, though they seem to have been encamped on a mountain as the Israelites were; or from the ranks of the Philistines; according to the marginal reading, he came out of one of the battalions that were set in array:

*and spake according to the same words*; which he had spoken time after time forty days successively, namely, what is expressed (<sup><0708></sup>1 Samuel 17:8-10);

*and David heard [them];* and observed them.

**Ver. 24.** *And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man,* etc.] Even as it should seem before they heard him; knowing who he was, and what he was about to say, having seen and heard him forty days running:

*fled from him, and were sore afraid;* it is pretty much a whole army should be afraid of one man, and flee from him; they must be greatly forsaken of God, and given up by him, (see <sup><653></sup>Deuteronomy 32:30); but perhaps they were not so much afraid of personal danger from him, as that they could not bear to hear his blasphemy.

**Ver. 25.** *And the men of Israel said,* etc.] To one another:

*have ye seen this man that is come up?* taken notice of him, and observed him?

*surely to defy Israel is he come up;* to challenge them to fight with him, and upbraid them with cowardice that they did not:

*and it shall be [that] the man who killeth him;* this, and what follows, they said to encourage any person to engage with him, though none of them cared to encounter him themselves:

*the king will enrich him with great riches;* give him a large gratuity, make a present of a great sum of money to him:

*and will give him his daughter to be his wife,* in like manner as Caleb promised to give his daughter in marriage to the person that should take Kirjathsepher, (<sup><1012></sup>Judges 1:12);

*and make his father's house free in Israel;* from all tributes, taxes, levies, impositions, king's service, and duty; or, as the Targum,

“make his father's house freemen, nobles;”

raise it to the rank of nobility.

**Ver. 26.** *And David spake to the men that stood by him,* etc.] Who were next to him, looking upon the Philistine, and hearing what he said,

*saying, what shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel?* which he asked not for the sake of the reward, but to observe the necessity there was of some man's engaging

with him, and killing him, or otherwise it would be a reproach to Israel, and to signify that he had an inclination to attempt it:

*for who [is] this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?* there were two things which provoked David, and raised indignation in him against this man; the one was, the character of the person that reproached, a Philistine, an uncircumcised person, a profane man, that had no true religion in him, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenants of promise; and the other was the persons whom he reproached, the armies of the living God, of the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and which in effect was reproaching the Lord himself, and which David, filled with zeal for God, and for his people, could not bear; and the consideration of these things animated him to engage with him, not doubting of success.

**Ver. 27.** *And the people answered him after this manner,* etc.] Told him what was proposed to be done in honour to the man that should attempt to kill him, and succeed:

*saying, so shall it be done to the man that killeth him;* as before related, that he should be enriched, marry the king's daughter, and his family be ennobled, (<sup>49175</sup>1 Samuel 17:25).

**Ver. 28.** *And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men,* etc.] Heard the questions he put to them, by which he perceived his inclination:

*and Eliab's anger was kindled against David;* because what he had said carried in it a tacit reproach of him, and others, that they had not the courage, and did not attempt to encounter with the Philistine; or the displeasure he expressed was either out of affection to him, fearing, or being assured almost he would perish in the enterprise; or rather out of envy to him, lest succeeding in so bold an action, he should gain superior glory to him, and the rest of his brethren, who yet was the youngest of them:

*and he said, why comest thou down hither?* for though David had talked with his brethren, or had begun to talk with them, yet he had not sufficiently explained the reasons of his coming:

*and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?* the wilderness of Judea, or some wilderness near Bethlehem; by this he would

not only insinuate a charge of unfaithfulness, in not taking care of his father's flock committed to him; but his view was to make him look little and mean in the eyes of the people, that in the family he belonged to he was thought to be fit for nothing but to keep sheep, and those but a small flock, and in doing this was negligent and careless:

*I know thy pride, and the haughtiness of thine heart;* that he was too proud to keep sheep, and wanted to advance himself in the army, and make a figure there, and thereby gratify his vanity and ambition, which was the reverse of David's character; for, such was his humility, that, though he was anointed king, and had been preferred in Saul's court, yet condescended with all readiness to keep his father's sheep; and what he now proposed was not from any bad principle in his heart, but purely for the glory of God, and the honour of the people of Israel, who were both reproached:

*for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle:* out of curiosity, and to take every advantage and opportunity of signaling and making himself famous.

**Ver. 29.** *And David said, what have I now done?* etc.] That is criminal and blameworthy; as if he should say, I have only expressed an indignation against this uncircumcised Philistine, and a concern for the glory of God, and the honour of the people of Israel:

*[is there] not a cause?* either for his coming to the camp, being sent by his father; or of his expressing himself with indignation at the Philistine's defiance of the armies of Israel. Some take the sense to be, that he had done nothing, he had not committed any fact; it was mere words what he had said, he had attempted nothing, and therefore there was no reason to bear so hard upon him; to this purpose is the Targum,

“what have I done as yet? is it not a word “only” which I have spoken?”

but the former sense seems best.

**Ver. 30.** *And he turned from him towards another,* etc.] From his brother Eliab, to another person right against him, and directed his discourse to him:

*and spake after the same manner*: as in (<sup><0172></sup>1 Samuel 17:26); inquiring what encouragement would he given to a man that should attempt to kill the Philistine, and expressing his concern to hear the armies of the living God defied by such a wretch:

*and the people answered him again after the former manner*; telling him what gratuities and honours would be conferred on such a person, as in (<sup><0175></sup>1 Samuel 17:25); and the design of his talking to one, and to another, was, that what he had said might spread and reach to the ears of Saul, to whom in modesty he did not choose to apply himself.

**Ver. 31.** *And when the words were heard which David spake*, etc.] To one, and to another, and these reported to other persons, and so they went from one to another through many hands:

*they rehearsed [them] before Saul*; coming to the ears of some of his courtiers and counsellors, or officers about him, they told him what such an one had said:

*and he sent for him*; to his tent or pavilion where he was, to talk with him on this subject. The whole of (<sup><0171></sup>1 Samuel 17:11-31) is wanting in the Septuagint version, according to the Vatican exemplar; and these “twenty” verses are thought, by some <sup>f372</sup>, to be an interpolation; and it must be owned there are difficulties in them, and that the connection of (<sup><0171></sup>1 Samuel 17:11) with the following is very clear and consistent, as also is (<sup><0170></sup>1 Samuel 17:50) left out in the same version; and likewise the last four of the chapter, (<sup><0175></sup>1 Samuel 17:55-58), and five with which the next begins, (<sup><0181></sup>1 Samuel 18:1-5).

**Ver. 32.** *And David said to Saul, let no man’s heart fail because of him*, etc.] The Philistine, though so gigantic, mighty, and blustering: this he said within himself, so Kimchi; as David perceived the hearts of most, if not all, did, since none dared to go out and fight him, but on the contrary fled from him:

*thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine*; and therefore there need be no thought, care, or concern to look out for another man.

**Ver. 33.** *And Saul said to David, thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him*, etc.] Had neither strength of body, nor skill in military affairs, to encounter with a man of his stature, and warlike genius and practice:

*for thou [art but] a youth*; some say about fourteen or sixteen years of age, but very probably about twenty, and not more, and so not only weak, but inexpert in the art of fighting:

*and he a man of war from his youth*; a gigantic man, trained up in, inured to, and expert in the affairs of war; so that David could not, on any account, be a competitor with him, and a match for him.

**Ver. 34.** *And David said unto Saul*, etc.] In answer to his objection of inability to encounter with one so superior to him; and this answer is founded on experience and facts, and shows that he was not so weak and inexpert as Saul took him to be:

*thy servant kept his father's sheep*; which he was not ashamed to own, and especially as it furnished him with an stance of his courage, bravery, and success, and which would be convincing to Saul:

*and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock*; not that they came together; though Kimchi so interprets it, “a lion with a bear”; but these are creatures that do not use to go together; and besides, both could not be said with propriety to take one and the same lamb out of the flock: to which may be added, that David in (<sup>4975</sup>1 Samuel 17:35) speaks only of one, out of whose mouth he took the lamb; wherefore the words may be rendered, “a lion or a bear”<sup>f373</sup>; and if the copulative “and” is retained, the meaning can only be, that at different times they would come and take a lamb, a lion at one time, and a bear at another.

**Ver. 35.** *And I went out after him*, etc.] Whether a lion or a bear; but mention after being made of his beard, a lion rather is meant:

*and smote him*; with his fist, or rather with his shepherd's staff:

*and delivered [it] out of his mouth*; snatched it out from thence, or obliged him to drop it, by beating him:

*and when he arose against me*; after he had let go the lamb, threatening to tear him in pieces for attempting to disturb him in his prey, and take it away from him;

*I caught [him] by his beard*; such as lions have; hence a lion is often called in Homer<sup>f374</sup> *λις ηευγενειος*, the well-bearded lion. Kimchi thinks the beard with the nether jaw is meant, which David caught hold on:

*and smote him, and slew him*; tore him to pieces, as Samson did, (<sup>4745</sup>Judges 14:5,6), or slew him with some weapon in his hand.

**Ver. 36.** *Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear*, etc.] At different times, and several of them at one time or another; whenever any of them came into the flock, he used to lay hold on them and kill them, with all the ease imaginable. The Jews suppose this phrase denotes many of them <sup>f375</sup>.

*And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them*; as he was like them in nature, savage, cruel and unclean, so he would be in his end, killed as they; of this David was fully persuaded and assured in mind having an impulse from the Spirit of God, by which he was certified of it:

*seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God*; so that as he justly deserved to die, he made no doubt of it it would be his case.

**Ver. 37.** *And David said moreover*, etc.] For the further confirmation of it, and as more strongly expressing his faith of it; not as owing to any natural strength or skill of his, but to the power of God, of whose assistance he made no question:

*the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear*; for to him he ascribes his deliverance from those savage creatures, and his victory over them, and on him he relied for help and salvation in the present case:

*he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine*; David did not go forth in his own name and strength, but in the name and strength of the Lord of hosts:

*and Saul*; seeing him so positive, and fully assured of victory:

*said unto David, go, and the Lord be with thee*; to help and assist him, to deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine, and give him victory over him; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord be for thy help.”

**Ver. 38.** *And Saul armed David with his armour*, etc.] Not with what he wore himself; for it cannot be thought he would strip himself of his armour in the field of battle, and when just going to it; and besides what suited the one would not be fit for the other, their bulk and stature being different i

but this was some armour Saul had brought with him, besides what he himself wore, to furnish any with that might want it:

*and he put an helmet of brass upon his head*; such an one, though not so large as Goliath had, these being usually made of brass; (see Gill on “<sup>4975</sup>1 Samuel 17:5”);

*also he armed him with a coat of mail*; which probably was of brass also, and like that of Goliath’s too, only lesser, (<sup>4975</sup>1 Samuel 17:5).

**Ver. 39.** *And David girded his, sword upon his armour*, etc.] Which Saul also perhaps furnished him with:

*and he assayed to go*; made an attempt, and had a mind to go thus accoutred; he at first showed an inclination to go in such an habit, but afterwards would not:

*for he had not proved [it]*; as warriors were wont to do; so Achilles did <sup>f376</sup>; he never made trial of such armour before, he had not been used to it, and knew not how to behave in it, or walk with it on him; it was an encumbrance to him: Abarbinel renders it, “but he had not proved [it]”; he would have gone with it but for that reason; the Targum is,

“because there was no miracle in them;”

because if he had made use of this, there would have been no appearance of a miracle in getting the victory over the Philistine, as was by using only a sling and stones:

*and David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not proved [them]*; he thought fit to acquaint Saul with it that he could not go thus accoutred, and his reason for it, lest he should be offended with him:

*and David put them off him*; took off the helmet from his head, ungirt the sword upon his armour, and stripped himself of his coat of mail, and went forth entirely unarmed.

**Ver. 40.** *And he took his staff in his hand*, etc.] His shepherd’s staff, which he used in keeping his father’s sheep, and chose rather to appear in the habit of a shepherd than of a soldier:

*and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook*; which ran in the valley, which became smooth by lying in the water running over them; and which being smooth were fitter for his purpose, being the more easily cast out of

the sling; though De Dieu is of opinion that these were parts or pieces of stones, cleft ones, which were rough and rugged, and which would more easily and firmly be fixed in the forehead of the Philistine:

*and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip*; in which he had been wont to put things he needed for the good of the flock, and was such as travellers put their food in; and this might also be the use of it with shepherds; but, according to the Ethiopic interpreters<sup>f377</sup>, it was that piece of the leather in the midst of the sling, in which the slingers used to put the stones, that they might stick the more firmly:

*and his sling [was] in his hand*; which he intended to use in slinging the stone or stones he had in his scrip; and which was an exercise he had been accustomed to in all likelihood, and for which the Benjaminites his neighbours, of the next tribe, were very famous:

*and he drew near to the Philistine*; marched towards him, thereby signifying that he accepted his challenge, and would enter the list with him.

**Ver. 41.** *And the Philistine came on, and drew near unto David*, etc.] By slow paces, because of the weight of his armour, and bulk of his body, yet with a haughty air, and a proud gait:

*and the man that bare the shield [went] before him*; (see Gill on "<sup>4917b</sup>1 Samuel 17:7").

**Ver. 42.** *And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdain'd him*, etc.] He looked about for his antagonist, to take a view of him, what sort of a man he was, expecting to see one much like himself; but observing a puny young man, he despised him in his heart, and perhaps looked upon it as an affront to him to send such a man to fight with him:

*for he was [but] a youth*; his age was one reason why he despised him, being, as before observed, about twenty years of age, and not come to his full strength, a stripling, as he is called, (<sup>4917c</sup>1 Samuel 17:56), another reason follows,

*and ruddy, and of a fair countenance*; looked effeminate, had not the appearance of a soldier, of a weather beaten veteran, exposed to heat and cold, and inured to hardships.

**Ver. 43.** *And the Philistine said unto David, [am] I a dog?* etc.] Truly David did not think him much better, because of his impudence, impurity,

and barking blasphemy against God, and the armies of Israel; the Targum is,

“am I a despised dog?”

verily he was by David:

*that thou comest to me with staves?* or with a staff, the plural for the singular, to beat him with it as a dog is beaten, and as David used to beat his dog with, while keeping his father’s sheep, when the dog he had with him did not do his business as he should; he says nothing of his sling and stones, they being out of sight:

*and the Philistine cursed David by his gods:* by Dagon and others; he made an imprecation by them, and wished the greatest evils might befall him from them; he devoted him to them, and doubted not to make a sacrifice of him.

**Ver. 44.** *And the Philistine said to David, come to me,* etc.] He seems to have stood still, disdainingly: to take another step towards such a pitiful combatant, and therefore bids him come up to him, and he would soon dispatch him; unless he said this, because David was light and nimble, and he heavy and unwieldy because of his bigness, and the burden of armour on him, and therefore could not make such haste as he wished to destroy his adversary, of which he made no doubt:

*and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field;* the wild beasts he means; though Jarchi thinks he spoke improperly, since it is not the way of the beasts of the field, as sheep, oxen, etc. to devour a man, or even to eat any flesh; and therefore he observes, when David comes, he uses another word, which signifies the wild beasts of the earth, and so we render it, (<sup>1746</sup>1 Samuel 17:46); but Kimchi shows that even these are comprehended in the word here used, (see <sup>2886</sup>Isaiah 18:6).

**Ver. 45.** *Then said David to the Philistine,* etc.] In answer to the contempt he held him in, and to the threatening words he gave him:

*thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield;* the word for “shield” is not the same with that so rendered, (<sup>1741</sup>1 Samuel 17:41); which his armourbearer carried before him, but with that translated a “target”, which was between his shoulders, (<sup>1776</sup>1 Samuel 17:6); however, they were all weapons of war, either defensive or offensive:

*but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied*; the Lord of all hosts, in heaven and in earth in general, and in particular the God of the armies of Israel; which he was at the head of, led on, protected and defended, having a kind and merciful regard unto them, and which this Philistine had defied, reproached, and blasphemed; and now David was come, by a commission from this great Jehovah, to vindicate his honour, and to avenge his people on him: he had asked for a man, and now the Lord of hosts, as the Jews<sup>f378</sup> observe, comes forth as a man of war, for the battle was his, as in (<sup><0174></sup>1 Samuel 17:47); and David was his messenger, and came in his name, and was the man into whose hands he should be given.

**Ver. 46.** *This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hands*, etc.] Of which he was assured by divine inspiration, by the impulse of the Spirit of God upon him; or otherwise he could not have expressed himself with such certainty, and have given the particulars of what he should do, as in the following clauses:

*and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee*; and yet he had no weapon in his hand to do it with, (<sup><0173></sup>1 Samuel 17:50), but it was revealed to him that he should do it, and he believed it; though the Philistine no doubt looked upon all this as romantic:

*and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth*; not only this man's carcass, which should fall and become a prey to fowls and wild beasts, but the carcasses of the Philistine army, which fleeing upon the fall of their champion, and pursued by the Israelites as they were, would be cut off, and become the food of wild creatures, (see <sup><0172></sup>1 Samuel 17:52); though some think the plural is put for the singular, and that it only means his carcass, who was a Philistine; but the host of the Philistines, carries it to the other sense: and this would be done,

*that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel*; not only the land of Canaan or Palestine, but the whole earth, and all the inhabitants of it, who should hear of the fall of this giant by such means, and of the rout of the Philistine army upon it; the report of which no doubt was spread far, and near.

**Ver. 47.** *And all this assembly shall know*, etc.] The congregation of Israel, and church of the living God, great part of which were now gathered together, and were spectators of this wonderful event:

*that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear*; that is, by outward means and instruments, by arms and armed men; he does not save by them only, or by them always; he can save as well without them as with them:

*for the battle [is] the Lord's*; it is under his direction; the issue and event of it depend on his will, and are owing to him; or, as the Targum,

“from the Lord is the victory of wars,”

it is he that gives it to whom he pleases:

*and he will give you into our hands*; not only this Philistine into the hands of David, but the army of them into the hands of the Israelites; David knew, and was assured of this by the Lord, and it was on this he relied, and was what animated him to engage with this champion in the manner he did.

**Ver. 48.** *And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose*, etc.] Or prepared for the encounter, and was in all probability in great wrath and fury at hearing what David said, and which hastened him to it:

*and came and drew nigh to meet David*; as fast as his unwieldy body, and heavy load of armour on him, would admit of:

*that David hasted and ran toward the army*; the army of the Philistines, from whence this champion came:

*to meet the Philistine*; to get up to him before he could draw his sword, or put himself in a posture to make use of any weapon to strike at David with.

**Ver. 49.** *And David put his hand in his bag*, etc.] The shepherd's scrip, in which he had put the five stones he took out of the brook:

*and took thence a stone*; and put it into his sling he had in his hand:

*and slang [it], and smote the Philistine in his forehead*; it is made a difficulty of how he should smite him on his forehead, when he had a helmet of brass upon his head, (<sup>1</sup>1 Samuel 17:5); in answer to this Kimchi observes, that some say, that when David said he would give his flesh to the fowls of the air, at the mention of that he looked upwards, and what was upon his forehead fell backwards, and then David slung and

smote him; or he might put back his helmet to talk with David, and hear and be heard the better; and having nothing to fear from an unarmed man, might neglect to put it forward again; or there might be some open space left in the helmet for him to look through, in at which the stone might pass; so the Targum renders it, he smote him in the house of his eyes, so the stone passed through the eye hole into his brain: but after all, supposing his forehead ever so well covered, as the stone slung by David was under a divine direction, so as to hit a person in motion, it came with a divine power, which nothing could resist; and supposing this, of which there need no doubt, it could as easily pass through the helmet of brass, as pierce into his forehead and sink there; nor can this be thought the least incredible, if what Diodorus Siculus<sup>f379</sup> relates of the Baleares be true, that they were so dexterous at slinging, that they not only would sling stones bigger than others could, and were so directed, that they seldom missed their mark, being inured to it from their youth, but would even in battle break in pieces shields, helmets, and all kinds of armour, with which bodies were covered:

*that the stone sunk into his forehead*; and so into his brain, as a stone is immersed and sinks in water, when thrown into it; with such force did it go, and with so much ease did it make its way, through the direction and power of God:

*and he fell upon his face to the earth*; Jarchi observes, that it was most natural for him to have fallen backwards, being struck upon his forehead; but so it was, that David might have no trouble to cut off his head, for by this means he fell nearer to him.

**Ver. 50.** *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone*, etc.] And with them only, without any other warlike weapon:

*and smote the Philistine, and slew him*; smote him with the stone, which brought him to the ground, and then slew him with his own sword, as afterwards related:

*but [there was] no sword in the hand of David*; when he engaged with the Philistine, and smote him, for he had put off all his armour, (<sup>(4073)</sup>1 Samuel 17:39).

**Ver. 51.** *Therefore David ran and stood upon the Philistine*, etc.] Upon his carcass, as it lay prostrate on the ground, and trampled on him, in just contempt of him who had defied, reproached, and despised the armies of Israel:

*and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof*; which no doubt was a very large one, and required a good deal of strength to unsheathe it, and use it; and therefore either David, though so very young, was naturally very strong, or he had at this time a more than ordinary measure of strength given him:

*and slew him*; for it seems that by the blow of the stone he was only stunned, and fell to the ground, but still had life in him, which David soon put an end to by his own sword:

*and cut off his head therewith*; by which it would appear to both armies looking on that his business was done, and he was thoroughly dispatched:

*and when the Philistines saw their champion was dead*; of which the cutting off his head was a demonstrative proof, and which they could discern at a distance:

*they fled*; being struck with a panic at this unexpected event, and no doubt by the Lord; for otherwise, had they given themselves the least time to reflect on their own numbers and strength, they had no just occasion to flee; their safety not depending on a single man, though ever so strong: upon this occasion David penned the ninth psalm; (see <sup><300></sup>Psalm 9:1-20).

**Ver. 52.** *And the men of Israel and of Judah arose*, etc.] From their encampment and entrenchment, or they prepared for a pursuit:

*and shouted, and pursued the Philistines*; shouted when they first set out, and continued shouting as they pursued, to animate their own troops, and terrify the enemy:

*until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron*; which was one of the five principalities of the Philistines; so that they pursued them to their own cities, and to the very gates of them:

*and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim*; a city in the tribe of Judah, and seems to be the same with Sharaim, (see Gill on <sup><656></sup>Joshua 15:36"). Josephus says <sup>f380</sup>, there were killed of the Philistines thirty thousand, and twice as many wounded:

*even unto Gath, and unto Ekron*; Josephus <sup>f381</sup> has it, to the borders of Gath, and to the gates of Ashkelon, which were two other principalities of the Philistines; according to Bunting <sup>f382</sup>, the whole chase was this, to the valley and river Sorek four miles; from thence to Ekron eight miles; to

Ashkelon twenty miles, and to Gath twenty four miles; that is, from the place where Goliath was killed.

**Ver. 53.** *And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines*, etc.] The remainder that escaped having got into their fortified cities:

*and they spoiled their tents*; which they left in their camp, all their armour, goods, money, and provisions, they found there, they seized upon as their prey and booty; these they did not stay to meddle with as soon as the Philistines fled, but first pursued them, and slew as many of them as they could, and then returned to the spoil; which was wisely done.

**Ver. 54.** *And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem*, etc.] After he had been introduced with it to Saul, and when he had passed through various cities in Israel, carrying the head in triumph; where he was congratulated by the women, who came out singing and dancing, and speaking highly in his commendation and praise: why he carried it to Jerusalem is not easy to say, this not being a royal city, nor was it wholly in the hands of the Israelites; part of it indeed was in the possession of Judah and Benjamin, but the stronghold of Zion was possessed by the Jebusites; and it is generally thought that it was to the terror of them that the head of Goliath was carried there. R. Joseph Kimchi thinks, that Nob, where the tabernacle was at this time, was surnamed Jerusalem, but for what reason cannot be said:

*but he put his armour in his tent*; not where the army was encamped before the engagement; for David had not his tent there, and beside the camp broke up upon this victory obtained; but rather in his tent or apartment at Bethlehem, when he returned thither, and where he laid up the armour he took from Goliath; though Abarbinel thinks, and so other Jews <sup>f383</sup>, that by his tent is meant the tabernacle of the Lord, called David's, because of his attachment to it; and certain it is that the sword of Goliath was either now, or at least hereafter, laid up there, (see <sup>12219</sup>1 Samuel 21:9); where all that went to sacrifice might see it, and call to mind this wonderful instance of the power and goodness of God, and praise him for it.

**Ver. 55.** *And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine*, etc.] Set out to meet him, and engage with him, as he might from the side of the mountain, where he was encamped:

*he said unto Abner, the captain of the host*; his own cousin, whom he had raised to this high post in the army, (<sup><0143></sup>1 Samuel 14:50);

*Abner, whose son [is] this youth?* it is thought strange by many that Saul should not know who he was, when he had been often at his court, and served him as a musician, and had been very useful to him, and he loved him, and made him his armourbearer, and even had just now conversed with him about encountering with the Philistine, and had clothed him with his own armour: to get rid of the former part of the objection, some have supposed that this event happened before David was his musician and armourbearer, and is by anticipation spoken of in (<sup><0164></sup>1 Samuel 16:14-23), but that the connection with this and the following chapter will not admit of; and besides, before this event, David is said to return home from Saul, (<sup><0175></sup>1 Samuel 17:15); so that it is certain he had been at Saul's court, and in his presence before: but to remove this seeming difficulty it may be observed, that Saul, having laboured under a disorder of body and mind, might easily forget David, and his serving him in the above capacity; and to which the multiplicity of business, and of persons in a court, might greatly contribute; and what with the distance of time, and the different habits in which David appeared, sometimes as a musician, and sometimes as a shepherd, and at other times as a soldier, and always as a servant, it is no wonder the king should not know him again; though after all it is not about his person that he inquires, but whose son he was, what was his father's name, and from what family he sprung; for though Saul was made acquainted with this in the time of his disorder, and therefore sent to his father Jesse for him, and afterwards desired leave for his continuance; yet this might slip out of his memory in a course of time, he having had no personal knowledge of Jesse, nor any correspondence with him, but just at that time; and it behoved him to know the pedigree of David, since, if he was victorious, he was not only to be enriched by him, but to have his daughter for wife, and his family ennobled:

*and Abner said, [as] thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell*; he swore by the life of Saul, as Joseph by the life of Pharaoh, that he knew nothing of him; which need not at all seem strange, that a general of an army, always employed in military affairs, and often abroad, should know nothing of a domestic servant of Saul's, under the character of a musician, and not always at court either; and still less that he should be ignorant of his family, and know nothing of his father, who lived in obscurity in Bethlehem, and was an old man in those days.

**Ver. 56.** *And the king said, inquire thou whose son the stripling [is].*] Still the question is the same, being very desirous of knowing of what family he was, for the reason before given, (see Gill on “~~17:55~~ 1 Samuel 17:55”).

**Ver. 57.** *And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, etc.]* Carrying his head in triumph, and no doubt accompanied with the acclamations of the people:

*Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand;* to give an answer to the king’s question concerning him, who could best do it himself; and that Saul might have the opportunity of rewarding him, according to his merit, for so great a piece of service he had done for Israel, of which the head in his hand was a sufficient proof.

**Ver. 58.** *And Saul said unto him, whose son [art] thou, [thou] young man? etc.]* Still the question was such as did not necessarily imply ignorance of his person, but of his family:

*and David answered, I [am] the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite;* which doubtless refreshed the memory of Saul, and he quickly called to mind who he was. This interview was very probably at Gibeah of Saul, which was the place of his birth and residence, (~~10:26~~ 1 Samuel 10:26), and where he kept his court, and to which he returned after the above victory was obtained.