

## **DAVID AND GOLIATH THE VALLEY OF ELAH, PART I (1 SAMUEL 17:1-11)**

Before reading on, please ensure you have watched Sergio and Rhoda's video **"David and Goliath, The Valley of Elah."** It is a necessary springboard into this series, and you will be blessed by watching it. (<https://youtu.be/dVfdExb3jaA>)

*Note: This sermon can be viewed at the follow links: [YouTube](#) or [Sermon Audio](#)*

This past May, I was supposed to go to Israel to have another walk with Sergio and Yossi like we did last year. That didn't come about because of the politics of the coronavirus. The scheduled flight was cancelled, and now – almost six months later – El Al has yet to either refund the ticket or to reschedule the flight.

Because of this, when Sergio and I were talking, we mutually came to the agreement that he and Rhoda would go to the Valley of Elah which is a bit southwest of Jerusalem and do a video presentation of the place while I would type a series of sermons on the passage which makes the Valley of Elah even knowable to the people of the world.

That way, we could be doing a project together, even if it is separated by about six thousand miles. I'm not sure how much help I will be with the video, but as of this first sermon, I've already pestered Sergio several times concerning the Hebrew. By the end of the chapter, I'll probably be on his email block list.

1 Samuel 17 is one of the greatest and most memorable passages in all of Scripture. It sets the tone for the life of David who would become king in Israel, and it demonstrates the concepts of faith in the Lord and trust in His guiding hand in a way that is almost unmatched in the pages of the Bible.

But more, it deals with one of the most beautifully messianic, or Christological, passages in the Bible as well. Great themes of the redemptive narrative are contained within it, and it reveals what God would do, based on what He promised to do, in a unique and beautiful way.

The context of the passage is necessary to understand what occurs here. In Chapter 15, King Saul had disobeyed the Lord and failed to follow through with His command to

utterly destroy the Amalekites, devoting them and all their possessions to God through destruction.

Instead, it says, “But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed” (1 Samuel 15:9).

Because of this, Samuel the prophet came to Saul and said, “...you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.” Following this, in Chapter 16, the Lord said to Samuel –

“How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons.” 1 Samuel 16:1

Samuel did so, and David, the son of Jesse, was selected and anointed. After that, it notes that “the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him” (verse 14).

In order to calm the distressing spirit, David was selected to be brought before Saul to play the harp before him. That is where the chapter ends. From there we enter into Chapter 17.

**Text Verse:** *“Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, “There is a son born to Naomi.” And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.” Ruth 4:17*

David is noted more than 930 times in Scripture between Ruth 4:17 and Revelation 22:16. He won't be mentioned in the verses today, but they are necessary to set up the scenario for us to see and understand why he was considered so great throughout the rest of the Bible.

The scene is the Valley of Elah, a beautiful valley that is lined with low mountains, in the middle of which is a ravine. On my trip to Israel with mom in 2003, it was one of my most cherished stops. While there, I took out the Bible and read the passage we will be looking at for the next few weeks.

Everyone gathered around and listened – almost the whole tour group. Afterwards, many of them came up and thanked me. What astonished me is that nobody else had brought a Bible, including the tour guides who had conducted almost 70 tours by that time. To me, it seemed like a no-brainer – go to Israel, take your Bible.

Apparently, I'm in the minority, but I cannot even fathom why that would be so. The central point of faith for every true Christian on the planet is Jesus Christ. And the only way to know Him is to know your Bible. None of Scripture makes sense without Him, and all of it makes complete sense when viewed from His life.

If you don't believe this, just look at Israel. They have absolutely no idea what their own Scriptures tell them because they don't know who Jesus is in relation to what those Scriptures are saying. And the truth is that if anyone picked up the Bible, without having the New Testament, it really wouldn't make all that much sense.

But in knowing Jesus, every single story comes into clear focus. This is a certain truth which is discovered when you pick up and read His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. In the Valley of Elah (1 Samuel 17 verses 1 & 2)**

**<sup>1</sup> Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle,**

The name Philistine comes from the verb palash which signifies to roll as in an act of mourning. In this state, a person will roll in the dust or ashes because of their intense grief. Thus, the name signifies Griever, Burrower, or something akin to that.

They are first mentioned in Genesis 10, in the Table of Nations, and they are noted in the area of Canaan as early as Genesis 21 at the time of Abraham. They are believed to be displaced descendants of the Minoans who entered the land of Canaan and gained a foothold there.

They lived along the coastal areas, but here they are gathering their armies together for battle against Israel. As it next says...

**<sup>1 (con't)</sup> and were gathered at Sochoh, which belongs to Judah;**

The name Sochoh comes from the verb suk, meaning to hedge or fence up. Thus, it means Hedge or Fence. One commentary says it comes from the noun sek. If so, it would mean Thorn. That is less likely. This area is specifically said to belong to Judah which means "Praise." Thus, the Philistines are seeking to expand into Israelite territory. From there, the account becomes more specific...

<sup>1</sup> (con't) **they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim.**

Azekah comes from the verb azaq, a word used only once, in Isaiah 5:2. It signifies to dig about, or tilled –

"Now let me sing to my Well-beloved  
A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:  
My Well-beloved has a vineyard  
On a very fruitful hill.  
<sup>2</sup> He dug it up and cleared out its stones,  
And planted it with the choicest vine.  
He built a tower in its midst,  
And also made a winepress in it;  
So He expected it to bring forth good grapes,  
But it brought forth wild grapes." Isaiah 5:2, 3

*Ephes Dammim* comes from two words signifying "to cease" or "come to an end," and the plural of the word "blood." Thus, it means something like "The Boundary of Blood Drops." James Strong also defines it as "The Two Extremities," meaning the soles of the feet or the ankles – why, I don't know.

The name, Boundary of Blood Drops, probably refers to the fact that this is the boundary where there was constant warfare between Israel and her brutal neighbors. This is the only time the name Ephes Dammim is seen in Scripture. Elsewhere (1 Chronicles 11:13) it is known as Pas Dammim.

This area is about sixteen miles southwest of Jerusalem. It is also thirteen miles west of Bethlehem, the place from where David comes.

<sup>2</sup> **And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together,**

Saul is the king of Israel at the time, though he has already been disobedient to the word of the Lord and has been told that his time of rule will end, and the kingdom will be granted to another. Saul, or Shaul, comes from the verb shaal, meaning to inquire or ask for.

Thus, it means “Asked For.” However, it is identical in spelling to the word sheol, or the place of the dead. In this, one can imagine the grave calling out for the souls of humanity, asking for them to come and join it.

The army of Israel came together at the threat of the arrival of the Philistines. After that...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **and they encamped in the Valley of Elah,**

In order to face the Philistines, Saul and his army come to, and encamp at, emeq ha'elah, or “Valley of the Terebinth.” There are several words translated as “valley” in Scripture. This one, emeq, comes from amoq, signifying deep. Thus, it is a broad depression.

Elah comes from ayil, or a ram. Thus, it denotes strength. It signifies an oak or a terebinth, trees known for their strength. Here, there is an article before Elah. Thus, it is rightly translated as the “Valley of the Terebinth.” With both camps now properly settled into their respective locations, it next says...

<sup>2</sup> (con't) **and drew up in battle array against the Philistines.**

*vayaarku milkhama liqrat pelishtim* – “and drew up in array battle to meet Philistines.” One can feel the tension when such words are presented. There are two camps, obviously confident in their abilities. The Philistines are the aggressors, and the Israelites would have sued for peace if they thought they could not match the forces that had come against them.

Therefore, either the Philistines will realize their mistake and back out of the encounter, or there is only left the anticipation of a battle which is sure to come.

Here they come again; the Philistines are looking for war  
They have camped between Sochoh and Azekah in Ephes Dammim

They have it out for us; they are pretty sore  
They are like buzzing wasps, or so it would seem

But with Saul leading us; the many ranks of Israel  
Surely this will be a quick rout and we will be home soon  
We'll all sit around the table; our stories we will tell  
And maybe write a war song with a catchy tune

Here we are, camped on one side of the ravine  
And the ranks of the Philistines are on the other side  
But now there is someone standing in between  
By the look of him, our quick victory may be denied

## **II. The Middleman (verses 3-11)**

**<sup>3</sup> The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side,**

*u-pelshtim omedim el ha'har mizeh* – “And Philistines stood upon the mountain from this.” It is telling us that the valley is sided with mountains. On one side, the Philistines are standing on the mountainside facing Israel. Further...

**<sup>3 (con't)</sup> and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side,**

*v'yisrael omedim el ha'har mizeh* – “and Israel stood upon the mountain from this.” On the opposite side of the valley is another mountain with Israel standing on its slope facing the Philistines. But between them there is a natural border...

**<sup>3 (con't)</sup> with a valley between them.**

*v'ha'gai benehem* – “and a ravine between them.” Here, the word which is also unfortunately translated as “valley” is completely different than that of verse 2. The emeq, or valley, is a broad and deep valley between the mountains. Here, the gai, or ravine, is narrow and precipitous.

Thus, we have a natural border between the two forces which is, at times, running with water. It is a ravine within a valley, and it explains how these two armies could stand against one another for an extended period of time without actually engaging in battle.

First, crossing any distance to the ravine would leave them exposed to archers. Once at the ravine, those crossing would, under normal circumstances, be at a continued disadvantage. While they crossed through it, the opposing forces would station themselves on the other side and easily destroy them as they struggled down one side and up the other.

The word for “valley” here is *gai*. It comes from *gevah*, meaning exaltation. Figuratively, at times, it speaks of arrogance or pride. That comes from *gaah*, exaltation or triumph.

It is with this ravine between the two that the Philistines begin to make the first move in the battle...

**<sup>4</sup> And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines,**

*vayetse ish ha'benayim mimakhanoth pelishtim* – “And went out man, the middleman, from camps (it is plural) Philistines.” The use of the plural “camps” signifies various divisions of camps which formed the entire camped army.

From these camps, one comes forward. To describe him, the word *benayim*, or “champion,” is introduced into the Bible. It will only be seen here and in verse 23.

The word is the plural of *bayin* – a space or interval – which was just used in verse 1 and translated as “between.” This word then signifies a double space or double interval.

What is conveyed here is that he is the one to step forward, thus leaving a space between himself and his own army, and between himself and the opposing army. Therefore, he is the middleman, and thus the champion of the armies allied against Israel. In this capacity, he is the one to challenge the opposing army to a single combat to decide the entire battle. He is...

**<sup>4 (con't)</sup> named Goliath,**

*galeyat shemo* – “Goliath named.” His name comes from *galah* meaning to uncover or remove, but it also means to lead away into exile. The word was first used in Genesis 9:6, where it says of Noah, “Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent.”

It is used often in Leviticus and Deuteronomy when speaking of uncovering the nakedness of another. At times, it speaks of the Lord revealing himself. Thus, in the case of Goliath, his name means the Uncoveror, and thus “Exposer.”

But the secondary meaning of “exile” is tied in with this because when one is exiled, he is left open and exposed in that state. To call him “Exiler,” then, is not inappropriate. But the primary meaning of “Exposer” carries the weight of the meaning of his name. He is the one who intends to expose the weakness of Israel. He is...

<sup>4 (con't)</sup> **from Gath,**

Gath comes from the noun, gath, meaning “winepress.”

<sup>4 (con't)</sup> **whose height was six cubits and a span.**

Here is a new word in Scripture, govah, or height. The word signifies excellency, elation, grandeur and so on. It can also be figuratively used to signify haughty. In this case, it speaks of his literal height – six cubits and a span.

EW Bullinger defines the meaning of the number six –

“Six is either 4 plus 2, i.e., man’s world (4) with man's enmity to God (2) brought in: or it is 5 plus 1, the grace of God made of none effect by man’s addition to it, or perversion, or corruption of it: or it is 7 minus 1, i.e., man's coming short of spiritual perfection. In any case, therefore, it has to do with man; it is the number of imperfection; the human number; the number of MAN as destitute of God, without God, without Christ.” EW Bullinger

A cubit, or ammah, is a unit of measurement which is the length of the forearm below the elbow. It comes from em which means “mother” and thus it is the mother measurement. It is debated what the exact length of a cubit is, but it is about 16-18 inches.

The zereth, or span, is a rare word seen just seven times in the Bible. It comes from zarah which means “to scatter,” or “winnow.” Thus, it is the distance between the tip of the little finger to the end of the outstretched thumb, as if the fingers are scattered.



If you take your hand in that fashion and place it on your arm at the tip of your middle finger, and then do the same where your hand ended, you will see that it will end at your elbow. In other words, a span is one half a cubit.

Assuming the cubit is 16 inches, multiplied times 6, plus 8 inches, one will come to 104 inches. Divide that by 12, and this guy is almost 8' 7" tall. He would be a descendant of Anak. Very few of them remained, but this is stated in Joshua 11 –

“And at that time Joshua came and cut off the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. 22 None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod.” Joshua 11:21

These Anakim lived among the Philistines, and are thus regarded as Philistines. The account now continues to describe this champion...

**<sup>5</sup> He had a bronze helmet on his head,**

*v'kova nekhoshet al rosho* – “And helmet bronze upon his head.” Here, the kova, or helmet is introduced into the Bible. It comes from an unused root meaning to be high or rounded (as in arched). It is a variant of qova, or helmet, which will be used in verse 38 of this same chapter.

Bronze in the Bible mainly symbolizes judgment, but also endurance. This judgment can be positive or negative. If positive, it results in purification and justification. If negative, it results in punishment or even death.

However, there is the truth that in order for there to be positive judgment for a sinful person, then there must be the death of an innocent in his place. Therefore, the positive judgment still carries with it a negative aspect.

**<sup>5 (con't)</sup> and he was armed with a coat of mail,**

*v'shiryon qasqasim hu lavus* – “and breastplate scales he clothed.” The word qasqeseth means scales. It is only seen elsewhere in the dietary laws of Leviticus and Deuteronomy

and Ezekiel 29:4 – all referring to scales, thus some translations rightly call it “scale armor.” Of this, Charles Ellicott says –

“This armour has been sometimes understood as “chain armour,” but it is more probable that the Philistine armour was made of metal scales, like those of a fish, whose defensive coat was, no doubt, imitated at a very early date by this warlike race, who dwelt on the sea-shore, and whose life and worship were so closely connected with the great sea. This coat of mail, or corselet, was flexible, and covered the back and sides of the wearer.” Charles Ellicott

Next, we read...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.**

One thousand shekels would weigh a bit more than 25 pounds. Therefore, five thousand shekels would be a bit more than 125 pounds.

<sup>6</sup> **And he had bronze armor on his legs**

*u-mitskhat nekhoshet al raglav* – “And frontlet brass upon feet.” This is a word used only here in the Bible *mitskhah*. It comes from an unused root meaning to be conspicuous. Thus, it is bronze armor which covered the feet, but probably extended over his shins, as the greaves of a knight would. Further...

<sup>6</sup> (con't) **and a bronze javelin between his shoulders.**

*v'kidon nekhoshet ben kethephav* – “And bronze javelin between shoulders.” The word translated as “javelin” is *kidon*. It comes from the word *kid*, meaning calamity or misfortune. It is used elsewhere and translated as a spear or a javelin, such as in Joshua 8-

“Then the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Stretch out the spear that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand.’ And Joshua stretched out the spear that was in his hand toward the city.” Joshua 8:18

As it is kept between his shoulders as a quiver would be, it is a smaller weapon than the sword he also carried (which will be noted in verse 45).

But it could have been either on his back, or on the front. If it was long enough, it would be kept on his back. If it was shorter, for really close in fighting, it might be on the front.

**<sup>7</sup> Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam,**

*v'khats khanito kimnor oregim* – “And arrow his spear like beam weavers.” There is a variation between the written and the spoken text here concerning the word “staff.” The spoken uses the word *khets*, signifying an arrow. The written uses the word *ets*, or “wood.”

This shaft is described as *kimnor oregim*, or “beam, weavers.” The size of a weaver's beam, both in thickness and in length is unknown as they vary greatly. However, the fact that it is described as such tells us that it was certainly very thick, or there would have been no point in conveying this.

Further, it would have been rather long. One commentator notes that “it is conjectured that, in proportion to the stature of Goliath, his spear must be twenty six feet long” (John Gill). If this is so, it would have to be thick enough to stay straight, even with a great weight at the end of it, as is next noted...

**<sup>7 (con't)</sup> and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels;**

*v'lahevet khanito shes meot sheqalim barzel* – “and the flame his spear six hundred shekels iron.” The word “flame” signifies the part of the spear that flashes like a flame, thus its head. In this, it is made of *barzel*, or iron which in the Bible represents strength, be it in binding together, in government, in hard service, in bondage, etc.

Six hundred shekels would be about 15 pounds. With the added weight of the wood, the spear would be extremely heavy to carry along with the sword, javelin, and all of the body armor. And yet this is how he was arrayed.

The point of all of this detail is to show that Goliath was not only a huge man, but that he was extremely strong, being able to wear an immense amount of weight in armor and weapons. And more, he was not only strong, but the armor and weapons mean that he was both heavily defended and exceptionally well-armed.

This has all been given to make a complete contrast to the one he will eventually have to face in battle. In addition to all of his own armament, we also read of one more item that accompanied him...

**7 (con't) and a shield-bearer went before him.**

*v'nose ha'tsinah holek lephana* – “and lifter of the shield went before him.” Here, the *tsinah*, or shield is introduced into the Bible. It comes from the word *tсен*, meaning a thorn or barb. It is a guard against that which pierces. Cambridge, citing the scholar Layard, says –

“The archers, whether on foot or in chariots, were accompanied by shield-bearers, whose office it was to protect them from the shafts of the enemy. The king was always attended in his wars by this officer; and even in peace, one of his eunuchs usually carried a circular shield for his use. This shield-bearer was probably a person of high rank as in Egypt.” Layard

With all of his strength, protection, offensive weapons, and secondary assistance, Goliath, the Exposer, is ready to challenge the enemy to battle. What will he uncover concerning the state of Israel?...

**8 Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel,**

*vayaamod vayiqra el maarkot Yisrael* – “And he stood, and he cried out unto the ranks of Israel.” The word *maarakah* signifies an arrangement, thus its plural, used here, signifies ranks or battle lines. This one man has stepped forward and has called out to the entire army of Israel who are formed on the other side of the ravine, readied for battle...

**8 (con't) and said to them, “Why have you come out to line up for battle?”**

The translation is spot on. His words are a taunt. “I have stepped forward and you are all arranged for battle. But why would you enter into battle against us? I am one man who represents all of the people behind me. One of you come out and fight me. So far none of you have stepped out of your ranks.” The very fact that he had to call out shows that nobody was yet willing to come forward. And so, he taunts a bit more...

## 8 (con't) Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul?

The words are much more expressive – *halo anokhi ha'pelishti, v'atem abadim l'shaul* – “Not I the Philistine, and you (plural) servants of Saul?” The idea here is that of both national pride and of faith in a leader. He has declared himself “the Philistine,” while they are Israel.

Further, he is not a king, but Saul who leads them is. If Saul hasn't stepped forward, then who else is likely to? His words are chosen to dishonor the nation, the king, and also each individual who fails to step forward and meet his challenge.

But what is more important, and which has as yet been left unstated, is that it is an attack against the God of Israel. The very name Israel means, He strives with God. Who will strive with his God to defend the name that he bears? Is there even one who will come forward to meet the champion of the Philistines?

8 (con't) **Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me.**

*Beru lakem ish v'yered elay* – “Eat (you all) for yourselves man and come down to me.” The word, *barah*, “choose,” or “select,” is most perplexing. It means “to eat,” and it is always translated that way except here. The context is obvious, even if the word's meaning isn't – choose.

It comes from a word *barar*, to purify, polish, choose, and so on. The connection between the two is found in Ecclesiastes 3:18 where this root is used –

“I said in my heart, ‘Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like animals.’”

In this, man discerns something. Goliath is asking them, using a word in a very odd way, to discern who is capable of coming against him. But, in the use of this word, he could be making a pun.

If so, it would be, “Do you all have enough confidence to eat one of yours for strength? If so, let him come down to me.” In essence, “If whoever is sent is enough to feed all of you as an army, fine, but I assure you, it is he who will be my meal.”

Again, it is an attack against Saul. If the king won't come out to battle, then they should choose someone more fit than he is and come out to fight, making the decision for him.

Saul had fought against, and driven back, the Philistines in the recent past, and yet now he must be tiring. Surely someone competent could come take his place. And so, Goliath petitions for someone capable to come down and face him...

**<sup>9</sup> If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants.**

The words of Goliath are obviously taunts intended to embarrass Israel. If either side felt they could win the battle, they would have engaged in battle. But the layout of the land made it impossible to say who would win, or how many dead there would be in the process. And, whichever side went first, they would be the ones at a disadvantage.

Therefore, it was Goliath's day to shine. Nobody was moving forward, and no opposing individual would come forward. He knew this. And so, to first embarrass them by showing that none could kill him, he begins with these words. "I'm just one man. If one of you kills me, we will be your servants!"

The temptation is given first, knowing that it would not be met with a response. After the temptation, then comes the warning...

**<sup>9 (con't)</sup> But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us."**

In what would be a certain defeat in the clash between the two, the army of Israel would be thus be defeated. The only option left to either side is to wait it out while Israel endured the tauntings of Goliath. If they picked up and left, the Philistines would move forward and gain ground. And so, the stalemate would, for now, remain. But not without continued tauntings...

**10 And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day;**

*ani kheraphti eth maarkot Yisrael ha'yom ha'zeh* – "I strip bare the ranks of Israel the day the this." The verb kharaph means to taunt, to reproach, defy, and so on. However, it comes from the noun khoreph. That means harvest time, or autumn.

Thus, his words are as if he has stripped the ranks of Israel as a plowman would strip the fields at harvest, laying them bare. Such a taunt as this is intended to show that he knows nobody will come forward. They are as the sheaves in the field that are easily cut down.

**10 (con't) give me a man, that we may fight together."**

*tenu li ish v'nilakhamah yakhad* – "give (you all) me man and we may fight together." Ignoring Saul, who will certainly refuse to come, or even choose a person, he is asking "all of you" (it is plural) to give him a man.

In essence, he is taunting everyone, he is taunting all together, and he is pitting them one against another. Nobody will even be willing to say, "Hey, I might not be able to beat you, but this guy can!" Nobody is confident enough in himself, or in anyone else.

**11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine,**

*v'yishma shaul v'kal Yisrael eth divre ha'pelishti* – "And heard Saul, and all Israel, the words the Philistine." The battle was obviously unwinnable by either side when pitting army against army, and because of the ravine which ran between them.

Therefore, the only option to see an end to it would be a solitary battle between the two forces' best. The champion of the Philistines had come forward, and he had defied the king of Israel, every soldier of Israel, and indeed he had also implicitly defied the God of Israel because His name is upon them.

However, instead of trusting in the Lord, we see a sad conclusion to our verses for today...

**11 (fin) they were dismayed and greatly afraid.**

*vayekhatu vayiru meod* – "and they were discouraged and afraid greatly." The word *khathath*, or discouraged, was introduced into the Bible in Deuteronomy 1:21. It signifies to be shattered, dismayed, beaten down, affrighted, and so on. It has been used five times since it was introduced.

1. “Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.” Deuteronomy 1:21 (Moses speaking to the people when they originally stood at the door to Canaan)
2. “And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.” Deuteronomy 31:8 (Moses speaking to Joshua just prior to him taking over the leadership of Israel)
3. “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9 (The Lord speaking to Joshua after the death of Moses)
4. “Now the Lord said to Joshua: ‘Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land.’” Joshua 8:1 (The Lord speaking to Joshua after Israel resolved the matter of Achan)
5. “Then Joshua said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies against whom you fight.’” Joshua 10:25 (Joshua encouraging Israel after the defeat of the five kings).

In all five examples, the Lord is the One who is shown to provide the victory if the people will simply trust Him and follow His lead. All five instances were recorded in Israel’s history. And all five times that word was used, it was joined to the thought of being fearful – Do not be afraid and do not be discouraged.

Here, exactly the opposite is seen. The people are not only discouraged, they are said to be greatly afraid. The key point that we are to see as we close out today is that all of Israel failed. They failed to remember the Scriptures which were given for their admonishment and thus they failed to trust the Lord who gave them that word and who assured them that they would prevail if they trusted him.

It is a somewhat sad note to end on, but it is only the beginning of the story that we will see as the two armies sit across from one another in the Valley of Elah.



For today, we have gotten some background information into the story, we've learned some of the mechanical information needed to determine what is going on, and we have been set up for the introduction of a very special figure into the narrative as soon as we begin our journey through the chapter next week.

For now, the main lesson that I can impart to you from today's verses is that God wants us to trust Him. He is there with us even if the enemy we face is large, well-defended, and well-armed. In comparison to the Lord, he is nothing.

But in order for us to trust Him as we should, we have to know Him as He is. Muslims certainly trust their false god Allah. Anyone willing to blow himself, and a bunch of other people, up in order to supposedly be granted entrance into paradise has trust in what he thinks is true.

The Japanese were told the same thing in WWII as they flew airplanes into the side of warships. People all over the world trust in one "god" or another. The problem isn't trust. Rather, it is properly directed trust.

The God of the Bible, the one true God, isn't like those other false gods. Instead of asking us to do something for Him, He promises to accomplish the work for us instead. All He asks of us is to know who He is, and in knowing Him, to then trust Him.

The problem is sin, and sin came through the lies of the devil. In order to correct that, God promised to destroy the works of the devil, and – indeed – to destroy the power of the devil. Eventually, the devil will even be cast out of our presence forever – an eternal swim in the Lake of Fire is to be his final state.

The way that God has accomplished, and continues to accomplish, all of this is through the Person and work of Jesus Christ. As we continue through this chapter, keep remembering this. Keep asking, How does this point to Jesus? In the end, the story of David is a part of the story of the coming Messiah – our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is He who will, indeed, get us to those fair shores of the better land which God has prepared for us. Let us trust Him to do so. In this, God will be pleased to call us His children.

**Closing Verse:** *“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” Revelation 22:16*

**Next Week:** 1 Samuel 17:12-27 They will shout out arooo and arahhh, that is what they will do... (David and Goliath, The Valley of Elah, Part II)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. And, He has promised to fight the battles you face for you. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **The Valley of Elah, Part I (I Defy the Armies of Israel This Day)**

Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle  
And were gathered at Sochoh, which to Judah it belongs  
They encamped between Sochoh and Azekah  
In Ephes Dammim; a place now famous in songs

And Saul and the men of Israel  
Were gathered together, all of Israelite genes  
And they encamped in the Valley of Elah  
And drew up in battle array against the Philistines

The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side  
-----ready for the battle’s mayhem  
And Israel stood on a mountain on the other side  
-----with a valley between them

And a champion went out  
From the camp of the Philistines; one solitary man  
Named Goliath, from Gath  
Whose height was six cubits and a span

He had a bronze helmet on his head  
And he was armed with a coat of mail; cooler than the Fonz  
And the weight of the coat  
Was five thousand shekels of bronze

And he had bronze armor on his legs to protect bone and skin  
And between his shoulders, a bronze javelin

Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam  
And his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels  
And a shield-bearer went before him  
From the other side, there were certainly no heckles

Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel  
And said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle?  
-----Why? Tell me plainly  
Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul?  
Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me

If he is able to fight with me and kill me  
Then we will be your servants; we will make no fuss  
But if I prevail against him and kill him  
Then you shall be our servants and serve us

And the Philistine said  
"I defy the armies of Israel this day  
Give me a man, that we may fight together  
Listen to what I say!

When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine  
They were dismayed and greatly afraid  
-----because that giant guy was pretty mean

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word  
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You  
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard  
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone  
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise  
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown  
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days....Hallelujah and Amen...