

Introduction: Much of what we need to know about fear is found in the story of what Peter did after Jesus was arrested (Mark 14:43-72). *** Up to Jesus' arrest, Peter was sure He was the all-powerful Messiah who would deliver Israel from all they had suffered under other nations for fifteen hundred years, and now, especially Rome. He was not sure when or how Jesus would deliver Israel; but, he was sure Jesus was the Messiah, Son of the living God (Matthew 16:13-17). Peter declared his loyalty to Jesus even if he had to die for Him (Matthew 26:31-35). Then, as Jesus was arrested, Peter cut off the ear of a servant of a priest who was part of a party seeking to arrest his Messiah (John 18:2-11). *** When Jesus allowed Himself to be arrested, something happened to Peter's soul. He could not fathom that the Messiah would submit Himself to human beings, especially those He had challenged, confronted, and corrected for more than two years. Maybe Jesus is not who Peter thought He was? Why would the Son of God submit to mere mortals? *** Soon after this Peter was intimidated by a servant girl, an official, and a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off as they all warmed themselves around a fire in the Temple courts (John 18:15-18, 25-27). What happened to make Peter fear people? *** Whoever has great reverential fear of the almighty God who created the vast universe and rules the whole earth receives from God's Holy Spirit strength to fear nothing in this life. But when anyone, Peter included, does not fear God, then that person will, be afraid of anything and everyone. Since the fear of God is everything, all who do not have a proper fear of God will live in the 'fear of man'. *** This universal truth about the fear of God and the 'fear of man' is demonstrated in today's Bible story about Saul and Israel.

I. A giant Philistine warrior challenges Israel to choose one man to fight him to determine the victorious side and Israel is greatly afraid; meanwhile, Jesse sends David to take food to his brothers on the fortieth day of the challenge. (1 Samuel 17:1-16)

- A. A Philistine giant calls Israel to choose a man to fight him one-on-one to settle the battle and all Israel is greatly afraid. (*Verses 1-11*)
1. The Philistines gathered their armies for war at Socoh in Judah and encamped ... in Ephes-dammim. (*Verse 1*)
Philistines: They were about fifteen miles west of Bethlehem, just east of the lands they controlled along the Mediterranean.
 2. Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah and drew up a battle-line to meet the Philistines. (*Verse 2*)
Saul and Israel: Socoh was on the west side of the valley of Elah, so Saul led his men to meet the Philistine army.
 3. The Philistines were standing on the mountain on one side and Israel standing on the mountain on the other: valley between them. (*Verse 3*)
Positions established: The positions of both armies are now firmly established, each holding the foothills of the mountains on either side of the valley.
 4. Then a man came out from the Philistine camp named Goliath from Gath, nine feet tall; a bronze helmet on his head, being clothed with bronze scale-like armor weighing over one hundred pounds, and bronze shin armor on his legs; the shaft of his spear as a weaver's beam, its head of iron weighed fifteen pounds; his shield-bearer going before him. (*Verses 4-7*)
A giant presents himself: His name is from the word displayed and means conspicuous, an appropriate name for a nine footer. He was descended from the Rephaim (giants) and had four brothers all with six fingers and toes, all killed by David and his men (1 Chronicles 20:4-8)
 5. He stood and shouted to the battle-line of Israel: why come out to battle? Am I not a Philistine, and all of you servants of Saul? You all must choose a man and he will come down to me. If he is able to fight me and kill me, we are your servants, and if I will be able to kill him, you all will be our servants. (*Verses 8-9*)
Man-to-man: He challenges Israel to choose a man to fight him one-on-one! Logically it would be Saul because he was the strongest man in Israel (1 Samuel 9:2) but God's Spirit had left him (16:14).
 6. The Philistine [continued] I strongly defy the ranks of Israel today: You all must give me a man and we will fight together; when Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine they were dismayed and greatly afraid. (*Verses 10-11*)
Defied: This humanly imposing giant warrior, heavily armed, is defying Israel, God's chosen people.
Greatly afraid: Not just Saul, but all Israel had lost faith in the awesome, greatly to be feared Covenant God of Israel: Yahweh. As I said in the introduction they will fear a humanly formidable opponent.

Continual fear of man is a sin

- B. Jesse sends David to visit his three oldest brothers on the front line with food, and he hears the giant man repeat his challenge on the fortieth day. (*Verses 12-16*)
1. David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah named Jesse who had eight sons, and in the days of Saul he was old among men. (*Verse 12*)
David: David was from Bethlehem in Ephrathah where Rachel died (Genesis 35:16-19), the home of Naomi (Ruth 1:1-2), and the place where the eternal ruler of Israel would come (Micah 5:2).
 2. The eldest three sons of Jesse went and followed after Saul, to battle; their names: Eliab, the oldest, then Abinadab and Shammah; David, the youngest; and, the three eldest followed Saul. (*Verses 13-14*)
Older brothers: So, half (three of six) of David's older brothers had gone to battle the Philistines.
 3. David was going and coming from Saul to feed the sheep of his father at Bethlehem. (*Verse 15*)
Youngest-shepherd: Saul had asked Jesse to allow David to serve him by plucking music on a hand harp to make an evil tormenting spirit depart, then Saul made him armor bearer (1 Samuel 16:14-23); and he was still Jesse's shepherd.
 4. And the Philistine came forward (in) early morning and (when) it grew dark to take his stand [and defy Israel] for forty days. (*Verse 16*)
Forty days: For more than a month, Goliath came forward challenging Saul and Israel twice a day for forty days and nothing changed. Israel continued to have paralyzing fear of the giant human warrior.

Continual fear of man is a sin

II. Then David runs to his brothers he hears the giant's challenge and Israel sees and flees in fear; Yahweh says those knowing His salvation will overcome the fear of man. (1 Samuel 17:17-24; Isaiah 51:7-13)

- A. David obeys his father, runs to his brothers and hears the giant's challenge as the men of Israel flee in fear. (1 Samuel 17:17-24)
1. Jesse said to David: Thou must take an ephah [large amount] of parched [common] grain, and these ten loaves, and thou must run to the camp to thy brothers, and these ten slices of cheese to the captain of a thousand, thou will pay attention to their welfare and bring me their status; (for) Saul and all Israel are in the valley of Elah, battling the Philistines. (*Verses 17-19*)

Take and run: Jesse wanted to bless his sons and discover how they were holding up while besieged.

- David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, and went and bore what Jesse commanded him; he came to the camp as the host (of Israel) was going to the battle-line, shouting a war cry. (*Verse 20*)

Obeded: David obeyed his father, making sure the sheep were adequately watched. Having left early, he arrived as the Israelites went out to face the Philistines again.

- Then drew up to battle, Israel and the Philistines: battalion from battalion. (*Verse 21*)

Army summoned to army: The army battalions were arrayed against each other across the valley.

- Then David left the supplies with the supply-keeper and ran to the battalion and enquired of his brothers welfare. (*Verse 22*)

David runs to his brothers: After making sure Jesse's gift was safe, David ran to greet his brothers and obey his father's second command.

- [David] talking with them, behold! Goliath, the Philistine (is) coming from the Philistines, and he spoke the same words as before and David heard him. (*Verse 23*)

Representative man: David now hears Goliath's defiant challenge of God's chosen people.

The importance of this will become clear in what happens after this!

- All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, they fled from him, greatly afraid. (*Verse 24*)

Men see and flee: For more than forty days, the men of Israel were greatly afraid of this giant of a man, because they had lost faith in Yahweh. Their continual unbelief is sin!

Continual fear of man is a sin

- Yahweh says those with His teaching in their heart will not fear men because of His salvation; and, they will have joy as He comforts them. (*Isaiah 51:7-13*)

- You all must listen to Me, [those] knowing righteousness / people in (whose) heart My instruction (Torah) // you all will not fear the reproach of men / and not be dismayed (at) their revilings // For as a garment will be eaten (by a) moth / and as wool will be eaten (by a) worm // My righteousness will be forever / and My salvation from generation to generation. (*Verses 7-8*)

Yahweh to His people: Yahweh commands His people to positively know His righteousness and to have His Word of instruction in their hearts; then, He says they will not fear the reproach of men, nor be dismayed by their contemptuous talk.

Yahweh's righteousness and salvation: But, they will always know His righteousness and salvation.

Application: We must all fully know the righteousness of Yahweh in our heart through the instruction of His Word so we will not fear man; and, we must pray and seek to bring Jesus' salvation to our neighbors.

- Thou must awake! Thou must awake! Thou must put on strength, arm of Yahweh / Thou must awake as in days of old, generations long ago // Was it not Thou who cut Rahab [sea monster – Job 9:13] in pieces / and pierced the dragon? // Was it not Thou, causing the sea to dry / the waters of the great deep // making the depths of the sea a path / so [they] passed over the redeemed? // And the ransomed of Yahweh will return / they come to Zion with singing // and everlasting joy on their heads / they will obtain gladness and joy / and sorrow and sighing will flee. (*Verses 9-11*)

Pleas of people: Yahweh's people implore Him to wake up as He did when their ancestors were delivered from oppression in Egypt through the Red Sea.

Redeemed: Yahweh purchased His people's freedom by plaguing the king of Egypt and with the sacrificial blood of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:1-13) a type of Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:6-8). Redemption and ransom are synonyms for purchasing freedom for people from slavery to sin, which is salvation into a new life IN Jesus filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Joy and gladness: For those saved and redeemed IN Jesus the fruit of the Holy Spirit includes great joy (Galatians 5:22-25). And part of this joy comes from only fearing God!

Application: We must learn to live so we experience the joy and gladness that comes from knowing we are saved IN Messiah Jesus so we no longer need to fear any man.

The salvation of the Covenant God overcomes the fear of man

- I, indeed I, am (he) comforting you all / Who are thou, afraid of man who will die / and the son of (a) man who will be given (to) grass? // Thou have forgotten Yahweh, thy Maker / Who stretched out the heavens / laying the foundations of the earth // Thou have feared continually all day from before the violence of the oppressor / as he has set himself to destroy / and where is the violence of the oppressor? (*Verses 12-13*)

Yahweh's last word: Yahweh comforts all He saves and by rhetorical questions says they no longer need to fear any mortal man! They are redeemed from **continual fear of man (which) is a sin**.

Do not forget Yahweh: God's people must never forget the awesome God who made everything in heaven and earth and rules everything according to His good and perfect will (Romans 12:1-3).

He will destroy our oppressors: Finally, with another rhetorical question Yahweh says He will take care of violent oppressors in His time, so do not fear them!

Application: We must pray for the faith needed to always take heart in our trials because Yahweh has spoken and He will ultimately destroy every oppressor of His people when Jesus returns.

Conclusion: A giant Philistine warrior, Goliath, challenges Saul and Israel to choose one man to fight him man-to-man, and the nation of the loser will serve the nation of the winner, and all Israel fears greatly. Then, David's father sends him to take food to his brothers on the front line on the fortieth day of challenging and fearing. When David runs to his brothers, he hears the giant's challenge and sees Israel flee in fear. Through His prophet, Yahweh says those who know His salvation deep in their heart will overcome the fear of man.

Continual fear of man is a sin