

LORD of Hosts - Part 2

STUDIES ON THE NAMES OF GOD

Dr John Piper

- ["I Am Who I Am" says the Lord - \(Exodus 3:13-15\)](#)
- ["I Will Be Gracious to Whom I Will Be Gracious - \(Exodus 33:12-19\)](#)
- ["My Name Is God Almighty \(Exodus 5:22-6:8\)](#)
- ["I Am Alpha And Omega \(Revelation 21:1-8\)](#)
- ["The Lofty One Whose Name Is Holy \(Isaiah 57:14-21\)](#)
- ["The Lord, A God Merciful And Gracious \(Exodus 34:1-10\)](#)
- ["The Lord Whose Name Is Jealous \(Exodus 34:10-16\)](#)
- ["Call Me Husband, Not Baal \(Hosea\)](#)
- ["Hallowed Be Thy Name: In All the Earth \(Matthew 6:5-15\)](#)
- ["Honor Thy Majestic Father \(Malachi 1:6-14\)](#)
- ["The Pleasure of God in His Name \(1 Samuel 12:22\)](#)

Some boast in **chariots** and some in **horses**,
but we will **boast** in the **Name** of Jehovah, our God.

-- David in Ps 20:7 ([Spurgeon's note](#))

David vs Goliath

Or perhaps more accurately...David's God 1Sa 17:45 vs Goliath's "gods" 1Sa 17:43 (see verse by verse commentary)

The familiar story of David and [Goliath](#) contains the 4th OT use of the **LORD of hosts** and teaches some wonderful, liberating truths regarding this great Name of God. Read the entire chapter (1Samuel 17) before you study the questions and notes below. Ask the Spirit to guide you (observe and interrogate with the 5W'S and H, performing your own inductive Bible study) through this very familiar story, allowing yourself to set aside preconceived impressions, and instead reading the text as if it you were reading it for the very first time (Interpretation). Focus on the obvious (**F.O.T.O**) noting especially a number of interesting **contrasts**. Try to imagine what was going through the participants mind (imagination not visualization!). **What do you learn about God and about the man who follows hard after the LORD and who trusts wholly in Jehovah Sabaoth?**

WHAT IS THE CONTEXT FOR THE EVENTS IN 1 SAMUEL 17?

1Sa 17:2,4 Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah and drew up in battle array to encounter the Philistines... Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named [Goliath](#), from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. (9.75 ft tall).

Here in one corner we have the "behemoth" Goliath, towering over 9 feet and weighing in at probably over 650 lbs, in turn clad in heavy armor, with 3 weapons (spear, sword, javelin) and one armor bearer, twice a day for 40 days bellowing like a man with a megaphone derisive taunts in the valley of Elah, threatening and frightening the army of Israel, the army of the "living God", paralyzing them with fear (**isn't this the potential effect fear can have on us all?** see study on Fear, How to Handle It cp studies on [1] Anxiety in 1Pe 5:7; [2] Anxious, be anxious in Php 4:6, 7; [3] Jesus' solution "Do not be worried" in Mt 6:25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34). The Philistine's champion (Lit "man in the middle") challenged Israel to a "winner take all" duel (although if you have read the entire story you know that the Philistines were hardly men of integrity - cf 1Sa 17:9,51). And so into this setting young David comes on the scene providentially (in God's perfect timing) bringing provisions for his older brothers.

HOW DOES SAUL'S (and HIS ARMY'S) REACTION REACTION TO GOLIATH CONTRAST WITH DAVID'S REACTION?

1Sa 17:11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

CONTRASTED WITH DAVID'S REACTION...

1Sa 17:26 "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should taunt the [armies](#) of the [living God](#)?"

Saul and all Israel were **deeply dismayed** (the word in the Greek Septuagint pictures great astonishment, even to the point of "losing one's mind"). On the other hand, David was **deeply disturbed** that an uncircumcised Philistine (therefore outside of a covenant relationship with the Lord, cf Ge 17:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27), would so blatantly "defy" and heap shame upon "the armies of the living God." Goliath's words were not just an insult directed against the Israeli forces but were also an verbal attack against the integrity and character of "the living God," since the army was composed of members of the Lord's covenant people. Why then was there such a difference in reactions? Saul was reacting in the flesh - walking by sight not faith. David was reacting in the Spirit - walking by faith and not by sight.

WHY IS THERE SUCH A DRAMATIC DIFFERENCE IN REACTION TO GOLIATH?

1Sa 16:13, 14 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah. 14 Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him.(see verse by verse commentary)

The contrasts are not only dramatic but ironic:

God had given Israel what they wanted when they rejected Him as their king (1Sa 8:7), instead asking for a human king so that they might "be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." (1Sa 8:19, 20). Yet do we see Saul going out before them and taking up Goliath's challenge? No, instead we see this man who was a head taller than all of his brethren (see diagram at left depicting Goliath versus Saul versus the normal Israelite - clearly Saul stood the greatest chance of victory in a fight against the giant Goliath, 1Sa 9:2) and who had hidden by the baggage on the day of his coronation (!) (1Sa 10:22) now trembling in dismay and fear. What had happened to Saul of whom Scripture tells us "Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you mightily... and be changed into another man." (1Sa 10:6)

How tragically ironic that Israel had "[rejected](#) (abhorred, cast away, cast off, despised, disdained, refused) (their) God, Who [delivers](#) (Heb = yasha - saves, helps, gives victory, preserves, avenges) (them) from all (their) calamities and (their) distresses" (1Sa 10:19) for a human king, who chose to sacrifice rather than obey (heed, hearken to) the voice of Jehovah (1Sa 15:22, 23) and who thereby "[rejected](#) the word of the LORD" (cp what Nathan the prophet says King David did with God and His Word in his infamous sin with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah the Hittite - 2Sa 12:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14!!! Cp Nu 32:23, Pr 15:3, Josh 7:1, 18, 19, 20, 21, Eccl 12:14, Lk 12:2) Who in turn "also [rejected](#) (Saul) from being [king](#)."

The next time we are sorely tempted to reject the Word of the LORD, let us by His Spirit's enablement be quick to recall to our mind Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians

Now these things happened to them (including Saul) as an example (tupos - word study) and they were written for our instruction (nouthesia - word study), upon whom the ends of the ages have come. (1Cor 10:6,11+, cp Ro 15:4-note).

May His Spirit write it on our hearts the truth that...

*Sin will always take us farther than we want to go,
Keep us longer than we want to stay and
Cost us more than we ever intended to pay.*

Sow a thought, reap an action,
Sow an action, reap a habit
Sow a habit, reap a character
Sow a character, reap a destiny.

It all begins with a thought! ... so the upshot is...

Watch over (Heb = natsar - preserve, guard from danger, watch as a watchman over) your heart with all diligence (Heb =

mishmar - act of guarding as a guard at a post keeping watch), (**Why is watching over our heart so important?**) for from it flow the springs of life. (Pr 4:23-see in depth notes)

Anything that increases the authority of the body over the mind is an evil thing." - Susanna Wesley

Too many think lightly of sin, and therefore think lightly of the Saviour. He who has stood before his God, convicted and condemned, with the rope about his neck, is the man to weep for joy when he is pardoned, to hate the evil which has been forgiven him and to live to the honor of the Redeemer by Whose blood he has been cleansed. (Spurgeon)

I would rather pass through seven years of the most languishing sickness, than I would ever again pass through the terrible discovery of the evil of sin. (Spurgeon)

Whatever weakens your reason. Whatever impairs the tenderness of your conscious. Whatever obscures your sense of God. Whatever increases the authority of your body over your mind. Whatever takes away your relish for spiritual things, that to you is sin no matter how innocent it is in itself. (Susanna Wesley responding to Charles' question about what is sin)

Read the following illustration of what sin will do to a sinner or a saint(saved sinner):

We need a **fixed reference point**: During the 1980s five men spent 80 days orbiting the Earth. There were many adjustments to make. 1) They had no way to take baths so they had to wash with a damp towel. 2) During every 24 hour period they saw 16 sunrises and 16 sunsets. 3) Eating was always a problem because you had to keep up with your food. If you started to put a bite in your mouth and paused to say something your hand and fork would stop but the food would proceed at the same rate and splatter all over your face. 4) If you tried to turn a screw you would find your whole body turning instead. 5) What they saw as the biggest frustration was their was **no point of reference**. They were in a cylinder and there was **no way to tell which way was up**. There was **no fixed vertical**. The men came back **confused, exhausted and miserable**. (Elizabeth Elliot.)

The preceding story is probably a fairly accurate description of Saul and the Israeli army during those 40 days of intimidation by the "*consequences of their sin*".

Even as the Spirit of the LORD of hosts had departed from Saul (1Sa 10:6 contrasted with 1Sa 16:14) leaving him devoid of spiritual power (cp Samson - Jdg 14:6, 19-note, Jdg 15:14-note, one of the saddest verses in the Bible = Jdg 16:20-note) He in turn came mightily upon David from that day forward (1Sa 16:13). So when David walked into the scene of "dismay and great fear", he came as a man empowered by the Spirit of the LORD of hosts. David did not shrink back in fear from the giant because he had personal experience with the presence and power of the **LORD of hosts** ([see note below](#)) and he understood the principle that our "Commander"

has not given us a spirit of timidity (deilia), but of power (dunamis) and love)(agape) and discipline (sophronismos) (2Ti 1:7-note).

David like Paul

did not shrink from declaring... the whole purpose of God. (Acts 20:27+).

Little wonder that **David** would later write the encouraging words of Ps 27:1

"The LORD is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? (Goliath?) The LORD is the defense of my life. Whom shall I dread ?" (Spurgeon [note 1](#), [note 2](#)).

Whatever or whoever your "Goliath" is today recall to your mind the truth (cp Php 4:8-note) about the **LORD of the armies** (hosts) remembering that...

If God is for us, who is against us? (Ro 8:31 note)

and that...

greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world (1John 4:4+),

and that...

though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses"... and that...

we are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God... taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2Corinthians 10:3, 4, 5-note)

and finally that...

in all these things (What things? [Remember to always interrogate with 5W'S & H] Ro 8:35, 36-note) we **overwhelmingly conquer** (**hupernikao**- word study) **through Him** (see study on the phrase "**through Him**" = Christ) Who loved us." (Ro 8:37-note, [Spurgeon's note](#))

HOW DOES THIS TRUTH PARALLEL THE TRUTH IN ZECHARIAH 4:6-7?

Keep the **context** in mind, noting that the events in [Zechariah](#) take place after 50,000 Jews had returned from Babylonian exile and had begun rebuilding the LORD's Temple some 15 years earlier, only to cease the project because of external opposition and internal apathy toward the LORD's work. In this passage note Who is personally encouraging [Zerubbabel](#) with the truth that he has the "supplies" necessary to finish the Temple:

Zech 4:6 Then he (**Angel of the LORD** cp Zech 3:6, 4:1, 4, 5) said to me ([Zechariah](#)), "This is the word of the LORD to [Zerubbabel](#) saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the **LORD of hosts**. 7 'What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace (Hebrew = [chen](#) - [02580](#); Septuagint =LXX = Greek word **charis** - see word study) to it!"

So clearly the LORD's work will be accomplished in the LORD's power -- by His Spirit not by the arm of flesh. As we have discussed above, David had been clothed mightily with the Spirit (1Sa 16:13). Here in Zechariah 4 the LORD of hosts reminded Zerubbabel (and **all believers of all ages**) that when faced with impossible odds and intense resistance, we need to remember that the "mountain" will be made into a plain not by our MIGHT nor by our POWER, but by the Spirit of the LORD of hosts. David had come to understand this empowering truth while pasturing sheep and protecting them from predators. David recognized His source of strength - yes, David personally had killed the lion and bear (Man's Responsibility) but he understood that His deliverance was by the hand of the LORD of hosts (God's sovereignty). And we too must learn this same lesson in our private battles with predators, be they tempting thoughts or ruthless enemies. Then we will be prepared to experience victory in the public arena in the power of the Spirit of the LORD of hosts.

Spurgeon rightly reminds every believer that...

Unless the Spirit of God be upon us (cp Jn 15:5, Ep 5:18-note, Gal 5:16-note), we have no might from within and no means from without to rely upon. Wait upon the Lord (**Ed: Have you ever done a study on "waiting" on Jehovah?** - take a moment and make a list of truths associated with such a glorious wait -- Ps 25:3, 21-[notes](#), Ps 27:14-[notes](#), Ps 37:7, 8, 9, 34-[notes](#); Ps 52:9-[notes](#), Ps 62:5-[notes](#), Ps 69:6-[notes](#); of Israel redeemed from Egypt = Ps 106:13-[notes](#); Ps 119:43-[notes](#); Ps 119:74-[notes](#); Ps 119:81-[notes](#); Ps 119:114-[notes](#); Ps 119:147-[notes](#); Ps 130:5-[notes](#); Ps 147:11-[notes](#); Isa 8:17, 40:31), beloved, and seek strength from Him alone (cp Ep 3:16-note, Ep 6:10-note). There cannot come out of you what has not been put into you. You must receive and then give out.

Martin Luther said it well...

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing;

Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

([Play hymn - A Mighty Fortress is Our God](#))

HOW DOES DAVID RESPOND TO GOLIATH'S CHALLENGE?

1Sa 17:32 ... "Let no man's heart fail on account of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

WHAT OPPOSITION DOES DAVID ENCOUNTER? WHERE DOES OPPOSITION EMANATE FROM MOST OFTEN?

1Sa 17:28 Now **Eliab** his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle."

1Sa 17:33 Then **Saul** said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth."

While David is trying to encourage the army, his own brother Eliab (who incidentally had been passed over by God for anointing by Samuel in 1Sa16:6, 7) slandered his character and wrongly judged his motives, trying to discourage him (1Sa 17:28). Note that David proves himself to be a **man after God's own heart** (1Sa 13:14, Acts 13:22), bearing the rebuke meekly.

Whenever you step out by faith, others will often put obstacles in your way. Our adversary the devil, always has somebody to tell us "it can't be done." Saul also tried to dissuade David saying "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth." (1Sa17:33). In a sense Saul (unknowingly) was correct for David, in himself, was not able, but in the power of the Spirit of the LORD of Sabaoth he was equipped to overcome even the most formidable foe. (Phil 4:13-note; Eph 3:20, 21-note). David unlike his brother Eliab and his king Saul was walking "by faith, not by sight" (2Cor 5:7)

David believed what could not be proven at that moment, a beautiful OT example of "the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1-note) as he walked by faith, not sight (2Co 5:7). He may have sounded foolish to the skeptics (those who manifested attitudes of doubt or dispositions toward incredulity to David's words) around him, but he knew that the LORD of Hosts Whom he served would show Himself to be the true and living God, the mighty Warrior on behalf of His covenant people. (Ex 15:3, cp Ps 20:7-note)

Some boast in chariots, and some in horses; but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God (Ps 20:7-note; cp Dt 17:16, 20:1, speaking of Sennacherib of mighty Assyria = 2Chr 32:8, 21, 22, 23; 2Chr 20:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24; Ps 33:16, 17; 20, 21-note; Ps 147:10, 11-note; Pr 21:31; Eccl 9:11, Isa 31:1, Jer 17:5, 6, 7, 8)

Where do you run for help? When you are in trouble, what is your first instinct? Do you run to others or to God? Is it usually the counsel of another rather than the counsel found in waiting upon God in prayer? Why is this? Why do we run to man before we run to our all sufficient God (Isa 50:2, 59:1)? Could it be because we don't really KNOW our God? Could it be said of most believers in the America today "I boast in the Name of the Lord my God and not in chariots or horses (or my 401K, or my advanced learning degree, or my excellent job, etc)"?

To boast in something ultimately reflects our confidence in that in which we boast. It is the idea of placing one's trust in another, in this case in Jehovah of the Armies! To boast in God's name then means to have confidence in His name. Remember that in Biblical times a name represented a person's character. Thus God's name represents His character, His attributes, His ways. And to know His name is to know Him. To boast in His name is to have confidence in Who He says He is and what He promises to do on behalf of those who by grace through faith are in His family (Jn 1:12, 13). In the day of trouble (Ps 20:1-note, Ps 27:5-note, Ps 41:1-note, Ps 50:15-note, Nahum 1:7) or need, we are to run to our God, to put our trust in Him. In the day of trouble or need, we are to run into the strong tower of the Name of our God, putting our trust in Him (Pr 18:10-note). Is your heart troubled right now? Is fear lurking in the shadows of your consciousness? Do you feel insecure about anything in this turbulent, tumultuous world? Take these thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ, specifically to the Name of the LORD of hosts, your God Who Alone is the One who is able to set you securely on high. Then boast in His name. David had a great name, but the name of the Lord is much greater. Some people have names that cannot be trusted, but God's name has never failed one of His saints. Your days of trouble can become days of triumph if you trust in the name of the Lord.

Spurgeon writes:

Immediately before the encounter with the Philistine (David) fought a battle which cost him far more thought, prudence, and patience. The word-battle in which he had to engage with his brothers and with king Saul, was a more trying ordeal to him than going forth in the strength of the Lord to smite the uncircumcised boaster. Many a man meets with more trouble from his friends than from his enemies; and when he has learned to overcome the depressing influence of prudent friends, he makes short work of the opposition of avowed adversaries.

David Guzik echoes Spurgeon's thoughts:

When David was misunderstood and rebuked, publicly, by his own brother, probably amid the laughs of the other soldiers, he could have blown it. But he showed the strength of the armor of God in his life, and replied rightly. He didn't care about his glory or success, but only for the glory and success of the Lord's cause. Goliath was a dead man right then! This is where the battle was won! If Eliab's hurtful words can get David in the flesh, and out of the flow of the Spirit of the Lord, then David's strength is gone. But when David ruled his spirit (see Pr 16:32, 25:28, 1Co 9:24, 25, 26, 27) and answered softly, he was more in step with the

Spirit of the Lord than ever. You could start digging Goliath's grave right then!

HOW DID DAVID CONVINCED SAUL THAT HE WAS WILLING and ABLE TO FIGHT GOLIATH?

1Sa 17:36, 37 "Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God." 37 and David said, "THE LORD WHO DELIVERED ME from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, HE WILL DELIVER ME from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go and may the LORD be with you."

Saul tried to fit David with armor, but since he had not tested it, David refused (1Sa 17:38, 39). Saul reasoned that if David was going to beat Goliath who was massively armed and defended (1Sa 17:5, 6, 7), he would need the best armor in Israel - the armor of the king. Saul saw the battle with eyes of flesh while David saw the battle with eyes of faith. David did not face Goliath unarmed. To the natural man (1Co 2:14, 2Co 4:18) it of course looked that way. However to those enabled to see with eyes of faith (2Co 5:7, Ep 1:18, 19-note) David had much better armor than the king of Israel for he possessed the supernatural armor of the King of kings (Re 17:14-note, Re 19:16-note) available to every child of the King! Saul had a bronze helmet, but David had "the helmet of salvation" (Eph 6:17-note). Saul had armor, but David had a "breastplate of righteousness" (Eph 6:14-note). Saul had a spear, but David had the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph 6:17-note). Indeed, David had the "full armor" of God! (Eph 6:11-note). That same armor was available to Saul and at one time he had it. But now, Saul only trusted in man's armor and that is why David is going out to face Goliath, and Saul is on the sideline.

David had been tested and prepared for this task by God with his private victories over the lion and bear while caring for his sheep and these made possible the public victories (1Sa 17:34, 35, 36, 37) to the glory of God. If we are faithful in our private battles, God will see us through the public testing. Too often we faint at the smallest test that comes our way, little realizing that the "little tests" are but preparation for the bigger battles that are sure to come (see Jer 12:5). In 1Samuel 17 we see that a seemingly trivial errand to provide provision for his brothers led to a challenging situation that brought glory to God and recognition to David. The point is that all believers should adhere to the Boy Scout motto -- BE PREPARED.

As Paul exhorted young Timothy

Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work." (2Ti 2:21-note).

We never know when our opportunity might come. If God has called you to a task, He'll equip you for the completion. Use what He has given you, and you'll see what He can do with little things. The Lord uses small tools to perform large tasks.

Use now what God has given you,
Count not its worth as small;
God does not ask of you great things,
Just faithfulness--that's all! -- Bosch

WHERE WAS DAVID'S CONFIDENCE?

David focused on the LORD of hosts (cp He 12:2-note), Who had delivered him in the past and Who he confidently affirms "**will deliver me.**" **Do we really believe that the LORD of hosts will deliver us when "Goliath-like" adversity or adversaries confront us?** (see 1Co 10:13-notes) God will deliver us. He has promised to bring us to our destination because

He who began a good work in you will perfect (accomplish, complete) it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Php 1:6-note). cp Ro 8:28-note, Ro 8:29 - note = notice the ultimate purpose = conformity to the image of His Son)

God may choose to deliver us **FROM** our trial or to deliver us **IN** the midst of trial, but He will deliver us! (cp the testimony of Shadrach, et al, when faced with fiery trial Daniel 3:14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19-note)

The LORD of hosts to Whom David entrusted himself in his hour of great need is the same yesterday, today and yes tomorrow (Heb 13:8-note). Let us run confidently into the immutable (see God's Attribute = unchangeable) **Strong Tower of Jehovah Sabaoth** and we will be safe (Pr 18:10-note)

HOW WOULD YOU CONTRAST SAUL'S SOLUTION TO THE GIANT WITH DAVID'S SOLUTION?

1Samuel 17:38 Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor. 39 David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. So David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not **tested** (Heb = nacah - "assayed", proved) them." And David took them off. 40 He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.

Did you notice that even after giving David a blessing (or prayer) in the Name of the LORD, Saul still had to rely on human wisdom, reasoning that if David were adequately equipped, he would have a better chance for victory. David however as discussed above had already been clothed with the Spirit and thus he had the full armor of the LORD. All David needed was the 5 "**S's**" - Stick, Stones, Shepherd's bag, Sling and Spirit, for he was looking not at what could be seen but what was unseen (cf 2 Co 4:18 note), the LORD of hosts. As an aside, it is interesting to note that Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe specifically mentioned in (Judges 20:16-note)

Out of all these people 700 choice men (Benjaminites) were left-handed each one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss. (Hebrew for "**miss**" = chata translated elsewhere in Scripture as "**sin**" meaning to "miss the mark"!)

This fact adds a touch of irony to David's use of the slingshot as his weapon of choice to fell Goliath. Had Saul, a Benjaminite, been trained to use this weapon?

HOW DID GOLIATH DISDAIN DAVID?

1Samuel 17:41 Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer, in front of him. 42 When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained (Heb = bazah - regarded w/ contempt, despised, consider worthless) him for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. 43 The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field."

In essence Goliath was not just cursing David but David's God, emphasizing that although this was a battle between two men, in another sense it was clearly a spiritual battle "for our struggle (Gk = pale - wrestling - a contest between two in which each endeavors to throw the other and which is decided when the victor is able to hold his opponent down w/ his hand upon his neck) is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph 6:12-note) and we too like David need to daily "therefore **take up** (Gk = aorist imperative = command to do this now, signifying the necessity and urgency of the action commanded) the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist (Gk - anthistemi - set one's self against, oppose, withstand, cf Jas 4:7) in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." (Eph 6:13-note)

WHAT WAS DAVID'S STRATEGY? DAVID'S PROPHECY? DAVID'S ULTIMATE PURPOSE?

1Samuel 17:45, 46, 47 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the Name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. 46 "This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, (cf Dt 20:1, 2, 3, 4) and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S and He will give you into our hands."

The terms of conflict were not at all as they appeared. David perceived the battle to be between blasphemous mortal man on one side and the power of the Lord of hosts on the other. Goliath was outclassed but being a natural man, he did "not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they (were) foolishness to him and he (could not) understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (1Co 2:14).

David's ultimate purpose was to bring glory to God throughout "all the world". To give glory means to give a proper opinion of God and throughout the ages all the world has heard about David's improbable victory because of his Almighty God. Not only would the world know about God but Israel would also understand that God's ways are **transcendent** and are not like man's ways. God's deliverance is never by the "arm of flesh" ("sword or spear") but by the arm of the LORD of hosts, a mighty Warrior Who is over all the armies of heaven and earth. The Battle belongs to the LORD.

F. B. Meyer in his devotional exposition on David lists characteristics of those who do battle in the Name of the LORD:

- (1) **Their motives are pure** -- Though David was accused of having evil motives, his motives were in fact pure. He was motivated by a true love for the LORD, and for the glory and honor of the Lord.
- (2) **They are willing to let the Lord lead the battle.** David did this at the prompting of God, not his own flesh.
- (3) **They place no confidence in the flesh.** David would not wear Saul's armor.
- (4) **They are willing to stand alone.** David was willing to fight all alone.

When the soldiers of Israel saw Goliath, they thought to themselves, "He is so big that we can never kill him." When David saw Goliath, he thought to himself, "He is so big that I cannot miss him." David maintained a proper perspective because he focused on the Person of His trustworthy covenant keeping LORD rather than upon the "problem" of the taunting Philistine. Though Goliath was naturally equipped with impressive size to which was added military attire, David was supernaturally armed with **"the name of the LORD of Hosts"**. As we have seen so often in the Names of God series, the name of a person represents the totality of that individual's being. And so it was clear to David, that the LORD over all the armies of heaven and earth dwarfed the giant of flesh on earth (1Sa 17:26, 36). By walking out in faith that the Lord of Hosts was his strength and sufficiency, David was clarifying that Goliath was not just confronting David but the Living God Himself (1Sa 17:47).

LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD: APPLICATION

We need to ask God to search our heart...

- How big is the giant in my life? How big is God in my life?
- Whose arm am I trusting in?... the arm of flesh? ... or the arm of the LORD of hosts
- Where is my focus in the battle? ... on the "giants" or on the LORD of hosts?
- What is my perspective on the "giants" in my life?
- Am I like Saul? ... It's too big - there is no hope of victory.
- Am I like David? ... It's too big - I can't miss!
- Am I remaining faithful in the private struggles that I might be fruitful in the public battles?... that all may know there is a God?

Both Hannah and David called upon the Lord of hosts and found deliverance through His marvelous Name, Jehovah Sabaoth.. Deliverance is there for us as well - whatever our extremity. Every extremity is another opportunity to practice living in the light of the truth that sets us free and sets us apart, making us more like Jesus. But note that this name (or any of the other "Strong Towers" in this study) cannot be used as an amulet or talisman around one's neck and it cannot be spoken out as if it were a magical incantation. It is absolutely crucial to remember that it is the RIGHTEOUS who run into this Name and are kept safe (Proverbs 18:10).

Study the other occurrence of the LORD of hosts in [1 Samuel 4](#) below for insights into who can expect deliverance in the Strong Tower of the LORD of hosts. This is crucial for every saint to understand if we would truly bask in the experiential truth that we are "more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (Ro 8:37-note, [Spurgeon's note](#)).

By whom was David taught,
To aim the dreadful blow,
When he Goliath fought,
And laid the Gittite low?
No sword nor spear the stripling took,
But chose a pebble from the brook.

'Twas Israel's God and king,
Who sent him to the fight;
Who gave him strength to fling,
And skill to aim aright.
**Ye feeble saints your strength endures,
Because young David's God is yours.**

--From Jehovah Nissi, the LORD My Banner --by William Cowper

HOW NOT TO DEFEAT THE PHILISTINES

This episode is the third use of "LORD of hosts" in 1 Samuel and teaches truths that amplify those we have seen in Hannah's story

in 1 Samuel 1 and in David against Goliath in 1 Samuel 17. Specifically we learn who can "run into the strong tower of the Name of the LORD of hosts" and expect God's help. The principle applies to all of the Name of God.

WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT SAMUEL'S "CREDENTIALS" IN ISRAEL? (1Sa 3:19-4:1a)

1 Samuel 3:19 Thus Samuel grew (Heb = gadal - grow physically but also be magnified, become great) and the LORD was with him and **let none of his words fail** (literally = "fall to the ground" - which would confirm Samuel as a true prophet, cp Dt 18:22, cp Dt 13:1, 2, 3, 4, 5). 20 All Israel from [Dan](#) even to [Beer Sheba](#) knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD 21 And the LORD appeared again at [Shiloh](#), because the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at [Shiloh](#) by the **word of the LORD**.

It is quite clear that Samuel's stature as a prophet increased and whatever he said came to pass because Jehovah was with him, thus everyone in Israel knew he spoke for the LORD. In fact notice that a poorly chosen chapter break separates 2 parallel phrases: "**the word of the LORD**" (1Samuel 3:21) and "**the word of Samuel**" (1Samuel 4:1), so that clearly "*the word of the Lord*" (1Sa 3:21) has become equivalent to "*the word of Samuel.*" It is also interesting that the chapter begins with the phrase "*word from the LORD was rare in those days*" (1Samuel 3:1) and ends with revelation of the "*word of the LORD*".

Click on the map below and note that [Dan](#) is far north and [Beer Sheba](#) is 150 miles south, thus the phrase "*Dan to Beersheba*" was a common idiom stating that the entire country of Israel. Clearly Samuel is making the point that he was God's man in Israel and that everyone knew it.

WHAT WAS ISRAEL'S PROBLEM? HOW DID THE ELDERS RESPOND -- THEIR QUESTION?

1 Samuel 4:1 Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to meet the [Philistines](#) in battle and camped beside [Ebenezer](#) ("stone of help" - see also [Eben-ezer](#)) while the [Philistines](#) camped in [Aphek](#) (Heb = "fortress"). 2 The Philistines drew up in battle array to meet Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield. 3a When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? (**See study of 'ezer = "help."**)

From the period of the judges through the end of David's reign, the Philistines were an persistent problem for Israel. [Ebenezer](#) ("stone of help" - see also [Eben-ezer](#)) is about 2-3 miles from [Aphek](#) and the site of a virtual carnage of Israeli soldiers at the hands of the [Philistines](#). From their question ("*why has the LORD defeated us*") the elders clearly understood that Jehovah was in control of the events that resulted in their defeat. And yet they seem to have only partial understanding of why they had been defeated. What should the elders have known? From (Dt 28:1,7, 15, 26) the elders should have known that obedience brings blessing and disobedience brings cursing. So in a sense they blamed the LORD for a defeat which they had brought on themselves by their rebellion and disobedience. Even more surprising is where they did not go for counsel. Whose credentials had clearly been established in all of Israel? Obviously God's prophet, none of whose words fell to the ground. And yet they did not seek Samuel's counsel but leaned on their own understanding. Remember that we are still in the last of the days of the Judges, so it is not surprising to see a continuation of the the behavioral pattern where "every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Jdg 21:25-note).

Ark of
the
Covenant

Map of
Shiloh @
right
Click to
enlarge

WHAT SOLUTION DID THE ELDERS PROPOSE TO AVERT FURTHER LOSSES TO THE PHILISTINES?

1Samuel 4:3 Let us take to ourselves from [Shiloh](#) ("tranquil") the [Ark of the Covenant](#) of the LORD, that IT may come among us and deliver (Heb = yasha - save, give victory to, preserve, avenge, defend) us from the **power** (literally "the hand of" - see related phrase "hand of the LORD" - sometimes for good, sometimes for bad - Ex 9:3; Dt 2:15; Jos. 4:24; 22:31; Jdg 2:15; Ru 1:13; 1Sa 5:6, 9; 7:13; 12:15; 2Sa 24:14; 1 Ki. 18:46; 2 Ki 3:15; 1Chr 21:13; Ezra 7:6, 28; Job 12:9; Ps 75:8; 118:15, 16; Pr 21:1; Is 19:16; 25:10; 41:20; 62:3; 66:14; Je 51:7; Ezek 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1; Lk 1:66; Ac 11:21; 13:11) of our enemies." **4** So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts who sits above the [cherubim](#); and the two sons of [Eli](#), Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the [Ark of the Covenant](#) of God. **5** As the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth resounded.

Notice the impetuosity of the leaders - they had just ask a question but now they seem unwilling to wait for an answer. The elders thought that all they needed was the physical presence of the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts. They assumed that since the ARK had gone before the people at the miraculous drying up of the Jordan (Josh 3:14, 15, 16) (they were even instructed to make a stone memorial Josh 4:5, 6, 7) and led the procession around Jericho prior to its fall (Josh 6), that surely once again deliverance would come about from the physical presence of the ARK. Or perhaps they remembered Moses words in (Nu 10:35)

Then it came about when the ark set out that Moses said, "Rise up, O LORD! And let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You.

But they were wrong. They superstitiously sought the ark as if it were a magical charm or talisman, when they should have been solemnly supplicating the Savior, Jehovah Sabaoth. They fell prey to self deception (cf Israel's attitude in Jer 7:8, 9, 10, 11) and failed to distinguish between ritual religion and right (and righteous) relationship. They focused on the symbol and missed the Substance. They were "holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power" (2Ti 3:5-note) They were like the wicked generation Jeremiah later castigated for a similar trusting in deceptive words saying almost like a mantra or magical incantation "The temple of the LORD. The temple of the LORD" (Jer 7:4, 5, 6, 7) and to whom he had these scathing words

But go now to My place which was in [Shiloh](#), where I made My name dwell at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. "And now, because you have done all these things" declares the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear and I called you but you did not answer therefore, I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust and to the place which I gave you and your fathers as I did to SHILOH.

And so here we see them sending to [Shiloh](#) for the [Ark of the Covenant](#) of the LORD of hosts, the LORD of Israel armies. But their hearts were not right before Him. (Jer 7:4, 5, 6,7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15) And the fact that they failed to run to God's "mouthpiece", Samuel, strongly suggests the elders and the people were in wrong relationship and in need of repentance. The ARK was not the first physical object Israel had turned into an object of superstitious worship. When the children who had sinned in the wilderness wanderings and were being destroyed by fiery serpents, God had provided a bronze (Heb = nechosheth) serpent to look upon and live, picturing the judgment of sin and the provision of life (Nu 21:5, 6, 7, 8, 9).

Tragically Israel had turned the **bronze serpent** (which Jesus later referred to as a type of His death on the cross - Jn 3:14) into an idol (see [Serpent Worship](#)). And finally after over 700 years of idolatrous worship, [Hezekiah](#)

removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it and it was called [Nehushtan](#) (2Ki 18:4) where "[Nehushtan](#)" can be translated as "a thing of brass" or even somewhat contemptuously as a "(worthless) piece of brass".

As Paul had warned the church at Colossae years later these are

things which are a mere shadow of what is to come but the substance belongs to Christ. (Col 2:17note).

Is there anything in my life right now I am trusting in for deliverance other than Jesus, my Jehovah Sabaoth? Perhaps I'm trusting in my religious observance of my quiet time or the fact that I've memorized all of Romans or the fact that I teach Sunday School. We all have this natural tendency from Adam to put on our own "fig leaves", forgetting that to obey is better than sacrifice. Religion never delivers -- only righteousness delivers. And so we see in the following verses the tragic consequences of trusting in "shadows" rather than the "substance" - the **LORD of hosts** that the shadow represented. "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." (Pr 14:12)

WHAT WERE THE CONSEQUENCES OF ISRAEL LEANING ON ITS OWN UNDERSTANDING? (Pr 3:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)

1Samuel 4:6 When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What does the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" Then they understood that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp. 7 The Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp." And they said, "Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. 8 "Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. 9 "Take courage and be men, O Philistines, or you will become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you; therefore, be men and fight." 10 So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent; and the slaughter was very great, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. 11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

Eli's sons were "[worthless men](#)" who did not "did not [know](#) the [LORD](#)" (1Sa 2:12 "*sons of belial*" noting that "belial" is a word used by Paul for Satan in 2Cor 6:15 see [EBD article](#), [Belial - Naves](#), [Belial - Fausset's](#), [Belial - ISBE](#), [Greek - belial Hebrew - belial](#)), and "the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for the men [despised](#) (spurned, rejected) the offering of the LORD " (1Sa 2:17) and even went so far as to "lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting." (1Sa 2:22). And these were the men commissioned to watch over and carry the holy ark of the covenant, which should have conveyed a sense of fear and reverential awe instead of an attitude of contempt! Little wonder that God's presence and power were not manifestly present in the face of such wanton, flagrant sin (a lesson for all of us by the way). "The fear of the LORD prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened." (Pr 10:27) Leaning on human reasoning instead of casting their burden on the LORD (Ps 55:22) cost Israel 30,000 lives and loss of the ark of the covenant, the symbol of the LORD of Sabaoth's presence in their midst.

WHAT WERE THE IMMEDIATE REPERCUSSIONS FROM LOSS OF THE ARK? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GLORY OF THE LORD?

1Samuel 4:17 Then the one who brought the news replied, "Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken." 18 When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. Thus he judged Israel forty years. 19 Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was pregnant and about to give birth; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she kneeled down and gave birth, for her pains came upon her. 20 And about the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer or pay attention (cp Ps 77:2-[note](#)). 21 And she called the boy [Ichabod](#), (from Hebrew = 'iy = not + kabod = glory, to be heavy, to be honored - literally "no glory" or "inglorious" and so "the glory has departed" or "where is the glory?" or "the glory is not") saying,

The **glory has departed** from Israel

because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband. (For more in depth discussion of the glory of the LORD, the Shekinah, see [Overview of The Glory of the LORD](#))

She did not answer or pay attention - Literally she did not set her heart (the "control center" of our being, that entity which determines what we are, what we think and feel, what we decide, etc). **Spurgeon** commenting on a similar to the last part of Ps 77:2 said of the psalmist (similar to the reaction of Phinehas' wife)...

He refused some comforts as too weak for his case, others as untrue, others as unhallowed; but chiefly because of distraction, he declined even those grounds of consolation which ought to have been effectual with him. As a sick man turns away even from the most nourishing food, so did he. **It is impossible to comfort those who refuse to be comforted** You may bring them to the waters of the promise, but who shall make them drink if they will not do so? Many a **daughter of despondency** has pushed aside the cup of gladness, and many a **son of sorrow** has hugged his chains. There are times when we are suspicious of good news, and are not to be persuaded into peace, though the happy truth should be as plain before us as the King's highway. (See also Spurgeon's sermon - [A Sermon for the Most Miserable of Men](#))

(**Spurgeon** quotes **Thomas Brooks**) - Poor I, that am but of yesterday, have known some that have been so deeply plunged in the gulf of despair, that they would throw all the spiritual cordials that have been tendered to them against the walls. They were strong in reasoning against their own souls, and resolved against everything that might be a comfort and support unto them. They have been much set against all ordinances and religious services; they have cast off holy duties themselves, and peremptorily refused to join with others in them; yea, they have, out of a sense of sin and wrath, which hath laid hard upon them, refused the necessary comforts of this life, even to the overthrow of natural life, and yet out of this horrible pit, this hell upon earth, hath God delivered their souls, and given them such manifestations of his grace and favour, that they would not exchange them for a thousand worlds. O despairing souls, you see that others, whose conditions have been as bad if not worse than yours, have obtained mercy. God hath turned their hell into a heaven; he hath remembered them in their low estate; he hath pacified their

raging consciences, and quieted their distracted souls; he hath wiped all tears from their eyes; and he hath been a well spring of life unto their hearts. Therefore be not discouraged, O despairing souls, but look up to the mercyseat. Thomas Brooks.

Glorious departed - Henry Morris (Defender's Study Bible) "The presence of the Lord the "Shekinah glory" (Exodus 13:21) dwelled in the tabernacle, over the ark "between the cherubims" (1Samuel 4:4), and neither the ark nor the tabernacle were ever to be moved unless the glory cloud itself, representing the Lord's presence, moved first. The presumptuous act of the elders, with Hophni and Phinehas, in taking the ark out of the tabernacle into the army camp resulted in the tragic loss of the "glory" itself, along with the divine presence."

In this brief but tragic "staccato like" scene we encounter one of the darkest days in Israel's history. Shiloh would forevermore by a name associated with the LORD's righteous judgment instead of His majestic glory (cf Jer 7:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15) As the psalmist later wrote "Some boast in chariots and some in horses, (or superstitiously in the physical presence of the ARK) but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God. They have bowed down and fallen, (34,000 +4) but we have risen and stood upright." (Ps 20:7, 8) The Hebrew word for "**boast**" is "zakar" and means to bring to one's remembrance, to call to mind, to remember, to make a memorial. Oh, had Israel only "boasted" in the LORD of hosts instead of the ARK of the LORD.

C. H. Spurgeon commenting on **Psalm 20:7** said

We will **remember** the Name of the Lord our God. "Our God" in covenant, Who has chosen us and Whom we have chosen; this God is our God. The Name of our God is JEHOVAH, and this should never be forgotten; the self existent, independent, immutable, ever present, all filling I AM. Let us adore that matchless Name, and never dishonor It by distrust or creature confidence. Reader, you must know It before you can remember It. May the blessed Spirit reveal It graciously to your soul!

Yes, **God's Name is a Strong Tower (Strong Tower)** for us to call on, but we can't misuse it. If we would seek deliverance, we must first seek Him in righteousness, righteousness that He Alone provides and which is manifest by obedience that genuine faith produces. Then we will be safe in the Strong Tower of His Name.

THE RIGHT WAY TO DEFEAT THE PHILISTINES

Click to enlarge

Fortunately the story of the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts doesn't end in 1 Samuel 4, and carries over into the next 3 chapters forming in essence a literary "unit", the **Ark** being mentioned some 39 times in these 4 chapters (1Sa 4-7). For the travels of the ark we refer you to the interesting "itinerary" found in [1 Samuel 5](#) and [1 Samuel 6](#). In 1 Samuel 7 we come full circle to **Ebenezer**, the stone of help, where Israel had camped in (1Sa 4:2) but at this second **Ebenezer** we learn the "right way" to defeat the Philistines (including the "Philistines" in your life).

HOW DID ISRAEL DEFEAT THE PHILISTINES IN 1SAMUEL 7? HOW WAS THE EVENT MEMORIALIZED?

1 Samuel 7:1 And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. 2 From the day that the ark remained at Kiriath-jearim, the time was long, for it was twenty years; and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." 4 So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone. Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah and I will pray to the LORD for you." 6 They gathered to Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at [Mizpah](#). (Although there are several distinct geographical uses of Mizpah, the meaning in all is "watchtower" and was first used in association with the cutting of a covenant between Jacob and Laban, suggesting the idea of mutual accountability Ge 31:49).

7 Now when the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel had gathered to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the sons of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 Then the sons of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines." 9 Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a whole burnt offering to the LORD; and Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel and the LORD answered him. 10 Now Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, and the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and confused them, so that they were routed before Israel. 11 The men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as below Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and named it [Ebenezer](#), saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us." 13 So the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

Notice Samuel calls Israel to repent in their hearts and not just their minds and to demonstrate that their repentance is a genuine change of heart by the removal of the abominable Baals and Ashtaroth (in Scripture **idolatry** is often closely associated with **immorality**... see word study of **porneia** = immorality).

In 1 Samuel 7:4 we read of the people's sincere response

"So the sons of Israel [removed](#) (Hebrew = cuwr = departed from, abolished, kept away from, stripped away, took away, turned aside from, forsook, removed, cut off - a vivid picture of Israel's response to Samuel's call to repent) the Baals and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone."

This description seems to be a picture of national REVIVAL, but if so the effects begin to dissipate by the time of (1 Samuel 8:1-22). But at least now with renewed hearts and minds able to see clearly, Israel asks the LORD's prophet Samuel to pray for them, the very thing they should have done at [Ebenezer](#) ("stone of help" - **See study of 'ezer** = "help." See also discussion of name [Eben-ezer](#)) in (1Sa 4:2) but were unable and unwilling to do because they would rather do what was right in their own eyes. And as is often the case when seeking the LORD, the enemy attacks. Israel, totally unprepared for physical warfare, wisely resorts to spiritual warfare, and for a second time beseech Samuel to intercede and to

cry out to the LORD our God for us that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines.

What a contrast with Israel's earlier humanistic solution to retrieve the ark of the covenant in vain hopes that "it" might deliver them. "**Revival**" had led to "**renewal**" of their spiritual reason and righteous behavior. Now that they were standing firm against the schemes of the enemy, they were enabled to run into the Strong Tower of the LORD of hosts and we see His miraculous intervention in answer to Samuel's cries for His help.

To commemorate this victory by the LORD of hosts, Samuel set up a "STONE OF REMEMBRANCE" (cf Josh 4:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) and called it **EBENEZER** or "**Stone of Help**" signifying that "*thus far the LORD had helped them*". Note that this "**Ebenezer**" is a stone memorial and appears to be at a different location than the Israelite's encampment at Ebenezer in (1Sa 4:2).

Have you ever set up a "stone of remembrance"?

Setting up "stones of remembrance" is an excellent way to remind yourself and your family of the LORD's faithfulness.

Ebenezer is from two Hebrew words "**eben**" meaning stone and "**ha'ezer**" meaning help or helper (first used of Eve in Ge 2:18). In translating the Hebrew into Greek (the Septuagint) the verse reads

Abenezar, stone of the Helper. And he said, Hitherto has the Lord helped us.

The Greek words for "**Helper**" (clearly referring to the LORD) and "**helped**" are the same root word **Boetheo** (the verb).

By now you are saying so what? What is exciting is that the verb **Boetheo** is derived from 2 Greek words **boe** meaning **to cry out** and **theo** meaning **to run**, the composite picture being to run to the aid or rescue of one who cries out for help. The LORD "runs" to our rescue when we cry out. The same Greek verb is found in Hebrews 2:18 (see notes) where the writer encourages his readers...

since He Himself (Jesus Christ) was tempted (**peirazo- word study**) in that which He has suffered, He is (**present tense** indicating that Jesus is **continually able**) able to come to the aid (boetheo) of those who are (continuously being) tempted. (see devotional by [Spurgeon](#))

Beloved, Christ Jesus our Lord is ever able (cp He 7:25-note, 2Ti 1:12-note), upon hearing our cry in the midst of our tempting and/or testing circumstance, to run to our aid, to succor us in our distress.

Jehovah Sabaoth inclines His ear to hear and to run to the cry of His righteous ones, who cry out from a sense of powerlessness and inability in their own strength to defeat the "*Philistines*". Even the act of crying out is a humbling of oneself and expression of dependence upon God's adequacy to lift us securely on high. There in His Strong Tower we are safe, whether the storm subsides or whether it does not and whether we live or whether we die, for in either case we are still the LORD's (Ro 14:8-note) (See [Spurgeon devotional](#))

Related Resources

- The LORD my Helper
- Psalm 121 Commentary
- Greek Word Studies on Help
- Hebrew Word Studies on Help

WHERE DID HEZEKIAH RUN WHEN FACED WITH A FORMIDABLE FOE?

In Isaiah 36-37 (virtually identical parallel passage in 2 Kings 18:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19) King Hezekiah (southern kingdom, Judah) was faced with sure defeat at the hands of the fierce and powerful Assyrian forces and King Sennacherib. Read the following description and note the pattern of a godly man when faced with a humanly speaking hopeless, impossible situation.

For the Context read [Isaiah 36-37](#) for full context)

Isaiah 36:1 Now in the fourteenth year of [King Hezekiah](#), [Sennacherib](#) king of [Assyria](#) came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and seized them... 20 "Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the LORD would deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

The Assyria commander Rabshakeh then sent a letter to Hezekiah attempting to demoralize and discourage him from trusting in God to bring about deliverance from the Assyrians... here is Hezekiah's response:

Isaiah 37:14 Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. 15 Hezekiah prayed to the LORD saying 16 "O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 17 "Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and listen to all the words of Sennacherib, who sent them to reproach the living God. 18 "Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have devastated all the countries and their lands, 19 and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. 20 "Now, O LORD our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, LORD, are God." 21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent word to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of Assyria... (LORD of hosts responds to Hezekiah's prayer) 35 'For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake" 36 Then the **Angel of the LORD** (click exposition) went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead *. 37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh.

In 1 Samuel 4 the elders of Israel were faced with a dilemma similar to Hezekiah's, yet they refused to seek the godly counsel of the prophet Samuel (contrast Hezekiah's seeking Isaiah's counsel in Isa 37:1, 2, 4, 5, 6f) or the help of the LORD of hosts, instead opting to place their trust in an object they could see and touch - the ark of the covenant covered by the cherubim, regarding it as a veritable spiritual "rabbit's foot" or lucky charm. In contrast Hezekiah, a godly king, looked with eyes of faith to the **LORD of hosts enthroned above the cherubim** and cried out to Him for deliverance. Hezekiah illustrates once again as we have seen with David versus Goliath, that the battle is the LORD of hosts and He must win the victory. So run to the Strong Tower of the LORD of hosts when faced with formidable foes and no human hope of escape or victory.

Have you doubted your faith especially how you would persevere in the face of persecution?

We all have had these type of doubts. It might be because you have never had come to the end of your strength and needed deliverance. But if that has occurred or possibly will occur in the future you can rest assured that you have a strong tower to run to and His name is Jehovah-Sabaoth, the Lord of hosts. As we have seen from the examples in Hannah and David's life, when there seemed to be no possibility of deliverance, they both came to know God as Jehovah-Sabaoth, the LORD of hosts.

It is notable then that there are no uses of **LORD of hosts** in Ezekiel which Kay Arthur explains may be...

because this name belongs to a certain stage in the experience of God's people. It is God's name for man's extremity. Not until we, as God's chosen people, find ourselves failing and powerless do we realize our need to run to our Jehovah-Sabaoth. This is a name for those who, in the midst of a struggle, find their resources inadequate. It is not a name for those who have ceased to fight. Therefore, you won't find it in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel's day God's people were to settle down for seventy years of captivity. This is our name to run to when, from our perspective, there is no other help. From God's perspective, it is a name that reminds His people of exactly Who He is, the Lord of hosts. Not only the one Who delivers, but also the one Who judges. Thus, we see God in the book of Malachi reminding His people over and over again of His name Jehovah-Sabaoth: "'I am not pleased with you,' says the LORD of hosts . . . 'I am a great King,' says the LORD of hosts, and My name is feared among the nations'" (Malachi 1:10,14). In Malachi, 22 of 24 usages of this name appear in the phrase "saith the Lord of hosts," indicating a direct word from God. Malachi was written to a people who honored God with their lips but not with their lives. Therefore, once again, we see man's failures. God wanted them to see Him as Lord of hosts and bow the knee. This is His name to meet failure and offer deliverance." (Arthur, Kay: **Lord I Want to Know You** - recommended for individual devotional or group study)