

1st Samuel 17

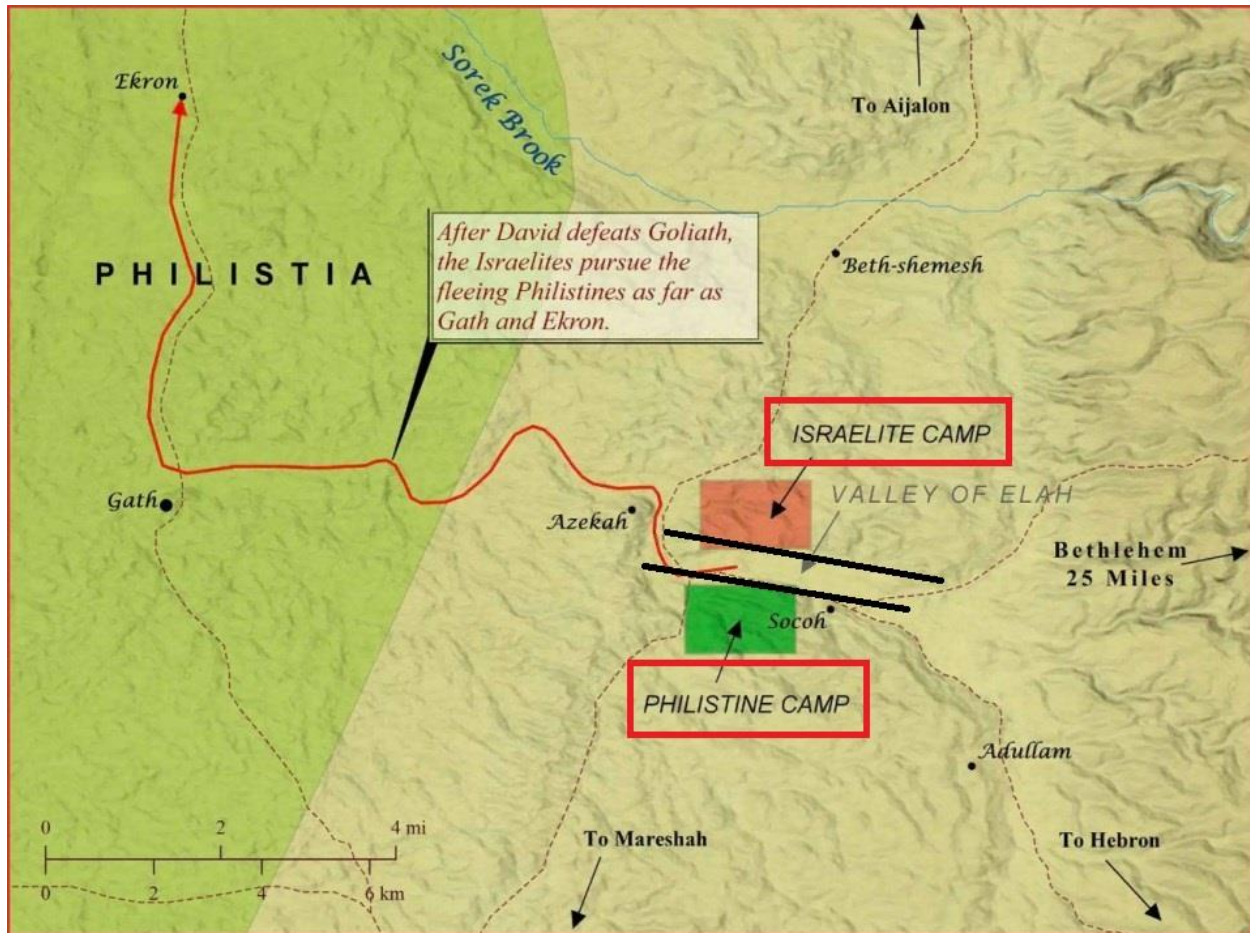
Verses 1 – 11

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. ² Saul and the men of Israel were assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah, and they drew up in battle formation to confront the Philistines. ³ The Philistines were standing on the mountain on one side, while Israel was standing on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them. ⁴ Then a champion came forward from the army encampment of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath. His height was six cubits and a span. ⁵ And *he had* a bronze helmet on his head, and he wore scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze. ⁶ *He also had* bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze saber *slung* between his shoulders. ⁷ The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron; and his shield-carrier walked in front of him. ⁸ He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle formation? Am I not the Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man as your representative and have him come down to me. ⁹ If he is able to fight me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us." ¹⁰ Then the Philistine said, "I have defied the ranks of Israel this day! Give me a man, so that we may fight together." ¹¹ When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and very fearful.

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. ² Saul and the men of Israel were assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah, and they drew up in battle formation to confront the Philistines. ³ The Philistines were standing on the mountain on one side, while Israel was standing on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them.

In the map below one can see the valley between the two mountain ridges. The battle between David & Goliath will take place in that valley. Both armies could see all that was taking place in the valley below.

See map 1705



⁴ Then a champion came forward from the army encampment of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath. **His height was six cubits and a span.** ⁵ And *he had* a bronze helmet on his head, and he wore **scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze.** ⁶ He also *had* bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze saber *slung* between his shoulders. ⁷ The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and **the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron;** and his shield-carrier walked in front of him.

The cubit was the distance between a man's elbow and the tip of his middle finger (about 18 inches) and a span was the distance between the tips of the thumb and little finger (about 9 inches).

This means that Goliath was nearly 10 feet tall.

As a comparison, Andre the Giant was only 7'4" tall and weighed 520 lbs.

See pic 1710



Look at the hands on Andre compared to Mohammed Ali. Goliath would have towered over Andre by 2 ½ feet and probably outweighed him by 200 lbs.

Goliath had scale armor of bronze that weighed 125 pounds. He had a bronze javelin and the shaft of his spear weighed 17 pounds. In all, his armor probably weighed in the neighborhood of 200 pounds!

See video 1715

<https://www.levickfamily.com/8.32.html>

⁸ He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, “Why do you come out to draw up in battle formation? Am I not the Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man as your representative and have him come down to me.

⁹ If he is able to fight me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us.”

This was a novel approach to fighting a war but it didn't turn out to well for Goliath or the Philistines. It seems that God delights in bringing down the arrogant and lifting up the humble.

¹⁰ Then the Philistine said, “I have defied the ranks of Israel this day! Give me a man, so that we may fight together.” ¹¹ When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and very fearful.

It seems that Saul and the people of Israel couldn't imagine how God might destroy this one man so David's faith stands out in bold contrast to their fear.

Verses 12 – 23

¹² Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, *the man* whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced *in years* among men. ¹³ The three older sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who had gone into the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and second to him, Abinadab, and the third, Shammah. ¹⁴ So David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul, ¹⁵ but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem. ¹⁶ And the Philistine came forward morning and evening, and took his stand for forty days. ¹⁷ Then Jesse said to his son David, “Take now for your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to your brothers. ¹⁸ Bring also these ten slices of cheese to the commander of *their* thousand, and look into the well-being of your brothers and bring back confirmation from them. ¹⁹ For Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the Valley of Elah, fighting the Philistines.” ²⁰ So David got up early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper, and took *the supplies* and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the entrenchment encircling the camp while the army was going out in battle formation, shouting the war cry. ²¹ Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle formation, army against army. ²² Then David left the baggage in the care of the baggage keeper and ran to the battle line. And he entered and greeted his brothers. ²³ As he was speaking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard *him*.

¹⁴ So David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul, ¹⁵ but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem.

The 3 oldest sons of Jesse followed Saul, meaning they were soldiers in Saul's army. David was in charge of watching his father's sheep but he was also called upon to take supplies to his older brothers who were in the army.

²⁰ So David got up early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper, and took *the supplies* and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the entrenchment encircling the camp while the army was going out in battle formation, shouting the war cry.

We know the 3 older brothers are part of Saul's army and David being the youngest is in charge of his father's sheep but when he leaves to take the supplies he left the flock with a keeper. Shouldn't one of the other 4 brothers be helping to watch the flock or take the supplies to their older brothers?

²² Then David left the baggage in the care of the baggage keeper and ran to the battle line. And he entered and greeted his brothers. ²³ As he was speaking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard *him*.

We don't know how often David would take supplies to his 3 older brothers but Goliath had been making sport of Israel for 40 days now and this was the first time that David had heard his taunt .

Verses 24 – 30

²⁴ When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were very fearful. ²⁵ And the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will make the man who kills him wealthy with great riches, and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel." ²⁶ Then David said to the men who were standing by him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and rids Israel of the disgrace? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he has *dared to defy the armies of the living God?*" ²⁷ The people answered him in agreement with this statement, saying, "This is what will be done for the man who kills him." ²⁸ Now Eliab his oldest brother heard *him* when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why is it that you have come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I myself know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle." ²⁹ But David said, "What have I done now? Was it not *just a question?*" ³⁰ Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing; and the people replied with the same words as before.

And it will be that the king will make the man who kills him wealthy with great riches, and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel."

David was obviously impressed with the potential rewards. He asked someone that was nearby him to verify what the people had been saying about the rewards and then asked another person after his brother insulted him.

For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he has *dared* to defy the armies of the living God?"

David was young but he wasn't foolish. He had a great faith in God and God had given him some prior experience at fighting against powerful enemies (a bear and a lion). Also, as a shepherd he had experience with a sling which was a lethal weapon. Remember what the bible said about the 700 men from the tribe of Benjamin.

See Judges 20:14 - 16

¹⁴ Instead, the sons of Benjamin gathered from the cities to Gibeah, to go out to battle against the sons of Israel. ¹⁵ From the cities on that day the sons of Benjamin were counted, twenty-six thousand men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah who were counted, seven hundred choice men. ¹⁶ Out of all these people seven hundred choice men were left-handed; each one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

It's true that David had to hit Goliath with a stone in the one place that wasn't protected and had the potential to kill him quickly. For David this was not a 1 in a million shot but more like firing a 22 rifle with a scope.

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

David's brother Eliab observed his interest and proceeded to rebuke and belittle him.

See Mark 6:4

⁴ Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not dishonored except in his hometown and among his own relatives, and in his own household."

Verses 31 – 40

³¹ When the words that David spoke were heard, they informed Saul, and he sent for him. ³² And David said to Saul, “May no one’s heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight this Philistine!” ³³ But Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight him; for you are *only* a youth, while he has been a warrior since his youth.” ³⁴ But David said to Saul, “Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a sheep from the flock, ³⁵ I went out after it and attacked it, and rescued *the sheep* from its mouth; and when it rose up against me, I grabbed *it* by its mane and struck it and killed it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has defied the armies of the living God.” ³⁷ And David said, “The Lord who saved me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, He will save me from the hand of this Philistine.” So Saul said to David, “Go, and may the Lord be with you.” ³⁸ Then Saul clothed David with his military attire and put a bronze helmet on his head, and outfitted him with armor. ³⁹ And David strapped on his sword over his military attire and struggled at walking, for he had not trained *with the armor*. So David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, because I have not trained *with them*.” And David took them off. ⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd’s bag which he had, that is, in *his* shepherd’s pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.

³² And David said to Saul, “May no one’s heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight this Philistine!” ³³ But Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight him; for you are *only* a youth, while he has been a warrior since his youth.

While all of Israel was in fear of this giant man David was not because he trusted in the God of Israel that had prepared him for this moment. Saul's reluctance to let David fight was about his age and assumed inexperience. David was about 16 years old at this time.

³⁷ And David said, “The Lord who saved me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, He will save me from the hand of this Philistine.”

David had a strong faith in God but he had also been anointed King and “the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward”.

³⁸ Then Saul clothed David with his military attire and put a bronze helmet on his head, and outfitted him with armor. ³⁹ And David strapped on his sword over his military attire and struggled at walking, for he had not trained *with the armor*. So David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, because I have not trained *with them*.

David had the wisdom to know that he needed to fight Goliath with the weapon (sling) that he had depended on for many years. This was no time to use new equipment.

Since David tried on the king's armor, this would indicate that he was close in height and size to Saul. And we know Saul stood head & shoulders above the rest of Israel.

Then he took his staff in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, that is, in *his* shepherd's pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.

David's rifle with a scope had a clip that held 5 smooth bullets. ☺

Verses 41 – 47

⁴¹ Then the Philistine came and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. ⁴² When the Philistine looked and saw David, he was contemptuous of him; for he was *only* a youth, and reddish, with a handsome appearance. ⁴³ So 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 wild animals.” ⁴⁵ But David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a saber, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of armies, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I will strike you and remove your head from you. Then I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and that this entire assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will hand you over to us!”

⁴³ So the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

Apparently, Goliath didn't know the sling was such a potent weapon.

⁴⁵ But David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a saber, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of armies, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

This was a conflict between two very skilled men, but David had an advantage that only the God of heaven can provide.

so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and that this entire assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord’s, and He will hand you over to us!”

This victory would bring glory to God in the same way that all of Canaan had heard about the victory of Israel over Egypt.

Men use swords and spears but God often uses weapons of a different kind.

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| 1. Men walking around a wall for 7 days at Jericho | Joshua 6 |
| 2. A Hail storm kills more than were killed by the sword | Joshua 10 |
| 3. The sun standing still | Joshua 10 |
| 4. God had Gideon use 300 jars and trumpets | Judges 7 |
| 5. Samson used the jaw bone of a donkey | Judges 15 |
| 6. Samson pulling the pillars of a temple down | Judges 16 |

Verses 48 – 49

⁴⁸ Then it happened, when the Philistine came closer to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. ⁴⁹ And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung *it*, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone penetrated his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

God gave David the victory in a matter of seconds using a sling and a stone.

People who have visited Israel have seen shepherds sling a stone at a tree from 50 feet away and bury a stone in the center of a knot that they were aiming for.

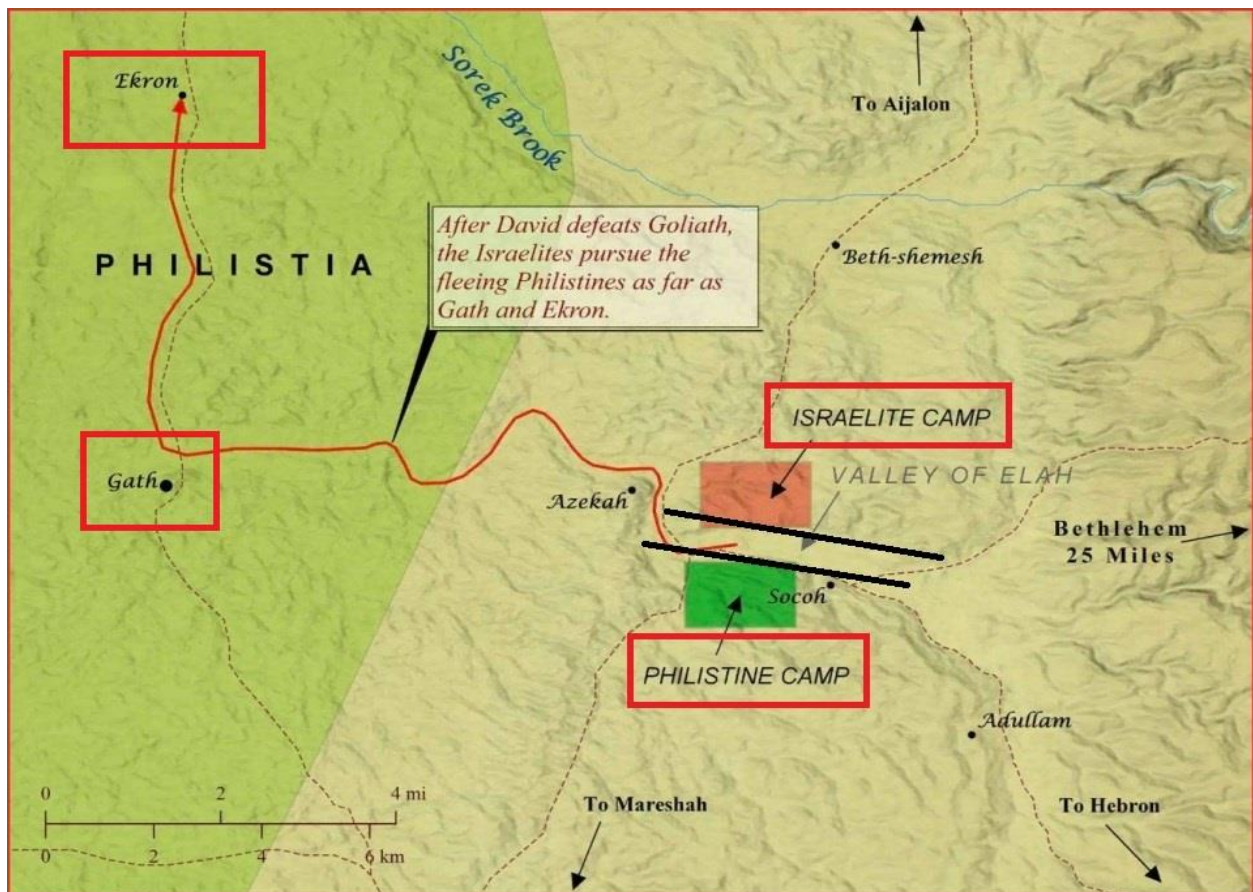
God had promised David that he would be the new King of Israel which had to give him a peace of mind even in this most dangerous situation.

Verses 50 -54

⁵⁰ So David prevailed over the Philistine with the sling and the stone: he struck the Philistine and killed him, and there was no sword in David's hand. ⁵¹ Then David ran and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and finished him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. ⁵² Then the men of Israel and Judah rose up and shouted, and they pursued the Philistines as far as the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the Philistine dead lay along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron. ⁵³ Then the sons of Israel returned from their close pursuit of the Philistines, and plundered their camps. ⁵⁴ And David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent.

⁵² Then the men of Israel and Judah rose up and shouted, and they pursued the Philistines as far as the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the Philistine dead lay along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron.

See pic 1720



⁵⁴ And David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent.

It's unclear why David would take the Philistines head to Jerusalem, therefore some commentators think this verse is a summary statement about future events.

In chapter 21 the sword of Goliath is in the tabernacle but this is 4 years after David had killed him.

See 1 Samuel 21:8-9

⁸ David said to Ahimelech, "Now is there no spear or sword on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's matter was urgent." ⁹ Then the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you would take it for yourself, take it. For there is no other except it here." And David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."

We can assume from these two statements that he initially put the sword in his tent but later moved it to Nob.

Verses 55 -58

⁵⁵ Now when Saul had seen David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?" And Abner said, "By your life, O king, I do not know." ⁵⁶ And the king said, "You *then*, ask whose son the youth is." ⁵⁷ So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine's head in his hand. ⁵⁸ Then Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

⁵⁵ Now when Saul had seen David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?" And Abner said, "By your life, O king, I do not know

Since neither Saul nor Abner know whose son David is, it is safe to assume that this is their first meeting with David and the scene in chapter 16:14-23 was indeed a future event yet to take place. Why the author included a future event at that point in time is not clear.