

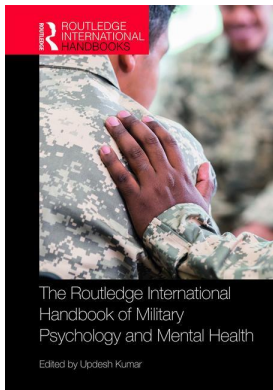
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WAR, PEACE AND THE
MILITARY IN BIBLICAL AND
ANCIENT GREEK SOCIETIES

Matthew B. Schwartz and Kalman J. Kaplan

This chapter offers a comparison and contrast as to how ancient Greek and Biblical civilizations viewed peace and war and soldiering. Wars always involve violence, suffering and death, often of innocent people. Yet Biblical and ancient Greek views on warfare differ notably. Wars in the Bible can be very violent and destructive. Good fighters were honored, as were people who were successful in other endeavors. “Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousand,” sang the women, and II Samuel 22 tells of the exploits of some of David’s best warriors. Yet war is not glorified for its own sake by the Bible. Wars are fought at best under certain guidelines and for aims that the Bible describes, largely to achieve God’s purposes for human history. On some occasions, the Bible will mandate the destruction of a culture that has deviated too far from morally acceptable behavior. Yet this seems fundamentally unlike the picture of fighting in ancient epics like the Iliad in which violence seems to be admired as an end in itself and which delight in describing in gory detail the slaughter on the battlefield, totally disconnected to any purposes of God’s.

The contrast between Biblical and ancient Greek attitudes towards heroism and violence in battle can be seen in the combats between Achilles and Hector and between David and Goliath. These two narratives seem paradigmatic of different attitudes underlying the nature of conflict in these two cultures. Goliath and the Philistines of his day, ca. 1030 BCE, appear to have been one group among the mass of so-called Sea Peoples, who moved from various points west to the Eastern Mediterranean ca. 1200 BCE. One group came close to toppling the Egyptian Empire in about 1170 BCE. Another group destroyed the Hittite Empire. Others conquered parts of the Eastern Mediterranean seaboard, including Ugarit and the Gaza area. It is almost certain that some of the Sea Peoples came from Greece and spoke Greek. By the mid-eleventh century, they were adjusted to the languages and cultures of their new homelands, but it is very possible that Goliath and his contemporaries still maintained certain ties to their Greek past, its lifestyle and traditions. Perhaps Goliath knew the story of the siege of Troy and of Achilles (approximately 1300 BCE), and perhaps aspired to be like him. If, as some ancient writers suggest, Homer was possibly Phoenician or Egyptian, it is not impossible that Homer, who composed the Iliad in the eighth century BCE, knew something of the story of David and Goliath. In any case, there

are certainly phrases in I Samuel 17, especially the description of Goliath's armor, that seemed Iliadic. Let us compare the two stories.

David and Goliath

Goliath is described as six cubits and a span tall, perhaps over nine feet. His armor alone weighed 5000 shekels. Descriptions of armor are not the norm in Scripture, and one is reminded of Homer's detailed description of Achilles's armor in the Iliad. David, in contrast, was a young shepherd with no armor, carrying a staff, a shepherd's pouch and a sling with five stones (I Samuel 17: 38–40). The description of their combat further confirms the difference between the two protagonists (I Samuel 17: 42–54). Goliath is a warrior from his youth who flaunts the Israelites with a personal challenge, which he knows no one will accept. It is all a ploy to demoralize the Israelite army, and it is highly successful. For 40 days, every morning and evening, the giant comes forth and offers the same challenge, mocking the Israelites and their God. King Saul has offered rewards of wealth plus his daughter's hand in marriage to the man who can meet the giant, but there are no takers. David now arrives at the camp. He is a ruddy, handsome youngster, but he sees immediately the growing demoralization of the Israelite soldiers. He goes to King Saul and tells him that he will fight Goliath. David has no promise of victory from God, but he feels that someone has to stand up and fight for God and for His people. The outcome will be up to God, but someone has to try. Though young, David is a person of deep faith that God will do what He wants. David goes out quickly to meet Goliath, carrying his sling with five stones and an ability to use them expertly. Goliath seems surprised and shaken. He goes through his usual pre-combat speech, threatening to give David's body to the birds of prey and the cattle, but David detects the uncertainty in Goliath's hesitating approach and also notes that Goliath threatened to give his body to the cattle (*behema*). Cattle, of course, are not normally carnivorous, and David senses that Goliath is confused. He responds that the combat will not be decided by human weapons but by God. David seizes the right moment and fires a stone into Goliath's forehead, killing him. He then completes his astonishing victory by severing Goliath's head, at which the Philistines flee in panic, and the Israelites pursue them vigorously (see Appendix).

A number of points should be noted in this story. First, violence is not glorified, nor is brute strength. Goliath is experienced, well-armed and huge. David moves swiftly. More important, Goliath has no purpose higher than just fighting, while David feels he is fighting for a higher purpose. David prevails, and cuts off the head of Goliath, not as a show of valor but to intimidate the Philistines.

Achilles and Hector

Let us compare this to the Iliad's narrative of the combat of the Greek Achilles and the Trojan Hector (Homer, 1860). Hector is described as family man, very human and aware of his obligations to his family and to society; he has serious doubts about the behavior of his brother Paris in abducting Helen from her husband King Menelaus of Sparta, thus instigating the war, but Hector does nothing about it. Unlike David, Hector is terrified of his much stronger adversary.

Achilles is described almost in Goliath-like terms. While not as huge, he is super-human and invulnerable except for his heel. He is moody and ferocious as a warrior and seems to express himself through violence. When the mortally wounded Hector proposes that the victor treat the vanquished's body with respect, Achilles angrily refuses, saying that he only wishes he could bring himself to eat Hector's body. The Achaean soldiers stab and mock Hector's corpse. Then

Achilles ties the body to his chariot and drags it around the walls of Troy, where the Trojans can see it (see Appendix).

The Greeks and the Philistines seem addicted to violence, while the Israelites are not.

War and peace in the Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew Bible considers peace one of the greatest virtues, whether it be between friends, husband and wife or nations. Zevin (1946) cites several important ideas (*Le'or HaHalacha ch 1*). God tells a man as great as King David that he should not build the Jerusalem Temple because he has fought many wars and has shed blood. Nor can the Israelites use iron to build the altar to the Jerusalem Temple because the altar is created to lengthen life, while iron shortens life. Do not bring the sacred Temple and war together. Only the wars commanded by God to Moses and later to Joshua, particularly those against Amalek and the Canaanites, do not require the consent of the High Court. All other wars do. The king must also be consulted, and during the First Temple, the *Urim Vetumim*, the prophetic breastplate of the High Priest would also be consulted. Wars of self-defense also do not require consultation.

As Ecclesiastes says, there is a time for peace and a time for war. Despite the desire for peace, there have always been wars and likely there always will be, some justified and others unjust. Biblical Israel was in a “tough neighborhood,” constantly at odds with aggressive Philistines, Amorites, Aramaeans, Canaanites, Amalekites, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites and others. Egypt was on the southern border and the Assyrians to the east, and war was a part of life.

This is the basic view of the Hebrew Scriptures to war. However, each of the many wars has its own story and its own lessons to teach. We shall use several wars as case studies, and shall open with a look at Deuteronomy 20, a general view of how a monotheistic Israel prepared for battle.

Deuteronomy 20 presents a number of rules for Israelite armies to follow in conducting a war. Do not fear the enemy's advantage in numbers or weapons, for God is with you, that same God Who brought you up miraculously out of Egypt. It is God Who will determine the outcome of the battle, “He does not desire a horse's strength, nor does He takes delight in a man's musculature” (Ps 147), and the Israelites must approach the battle as God's soldiers. This is not to imply that they are fanatical “holy warriors” or like Viking berserkers, but that war, like peace, must be understood and treated as part of God's plan for history. Soldiers should be aware that when they fight, it is not for pillage or glory, but to sanctify God's name (Roter, 1998–1996, 679c).

On their approaching the fighting, a priest specially designated for this duty will address the men. Ancient history recounts many speeches given by generals to their men as they faced battle. Robert Burns immortalized the speech given by Robert the Bruce of Scotland to his men before the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. “Scots wha hae wi Wallace bled, Scots wham Bruce has often led, Welcome to your gory bed or to victory...”

The words of the Israelite priest focus on preparing the soldiers morally and spiritually. “Hear O Israel...” he begins, in words deliberately reminiscent of the great prayer expressing Israel's faith in one God, and he goes on to recall the miraculous saving of the Israelites at the Red Sea (Deut 20.3). They must not fear before their enemy, for God will fight for them.

Officers will then address the men, telling them that anyone who had recently built a new house and not yet dedicated it, let him go home lest he be overly concerned that he will die and someone else will live in it. Similarly, one who has planted a new vineyard but not consecrated it, or become engaged to a woman but has not married her, let him return home. Commentaries offer several reasons. The soldier may be so preoccupied with these matters that he will not be able to fight at his best. Or he may be afraid of what he will lose if he never

returns home. This is not only in a physical sense but more in not having fulfilled needs that are of great importance and meaning in human life. In addition, a soldier who hesitates in battle may rouse fear in his fellows and cause them to fight less well. If he has sinned in some way and has lost confidence, the officer's announcement gives him a cover to return home without undue embarrassment. And indeed, the officer ends by saying, "Any man who is afraid and weak-hearted, let him go and return home and not weaken his brothers' hearts as his own" (Deut 20.5–8). His fellows will not know if he is leaving because of fear or because of his sins.

Biblical Scripture goes on. Before attacking or besieging a city, the Israelites must offer peace. Only if the city does not choose peace, then they may make war against it. They shall kill the men and spare women and children. The people of Canaan must be killed if they choose to fight, women and children as well, as these people are inveterate enemies of the Israelites, vulgar idolaters, practicing temple prostitution and child sacrifice and the like. If they live, they will constantly be a thorn in Israel's side and will seek to attract them to their evil practices – "So that they will not teach you to do like all their abominations..." (Deut 20.18). When the Israelites prepared to invade Canaan, Joshua offered the above choices to the inhabitants. The Girgashites left the country, the Jebusites made peace, the others all fought and were conquered over a period of time.

When besieging a city, the army should not wantonly destroy. It may eat of the local fruit trees but must not destroy them. (This may remind us that when the Spartans were besieging Athens early in the Peloponnesian War, they tried to destroy Athens's olive trees, although they in fact found that olive trees are difficult to ruin permanently.)

There are further lessons. It is dangerous to be too merciful with a bitter enemy. I Kings tells of Ahab, a powerful king of Israel, who had it within his grasp to destroy the power of a constant and bitter enemy, King Ben Hadad of Aram. Ahab foolishly decided to disregard the prophet's instruction and spared Ben Hadad. The war was renewed, and Ahab was killed in battle. (There is an opposite concern – lest Israel's young men should begin to become like killers. For this reason, Scripture next raises the matter of how to treat a dead body found near a city in time of peace.)

Sometimes it can become necessary to destroy a plant, root and branch, rather than to let it grow and damage other plants around it. So God instructed Moses, who tried to reason with the rebellious Korah and his allies Dathan and Abiram (Num 16–17), who would not even talk to Moses about their supposed grievances other than in insulting, personal attacks. This was not a matter of simply bringing peace or attending to someone who had a legitimate need. These were people bent on the destruction of Moses and of what God had planned and commanded for his chosen people. God responded by splitting open the ground and having them fall through the crevices all the way down to Sheol, they along with their wives and some of their children. God could see that these children would carry on being perverse, argumentative and rebellious as their fathers were. Indeed, history has shown over and over the futility of trying to appease evil people and the need often to destroy them before they can do terrible harm. (Think Neville Chamberlain.)

A first Biblical war

The first war recounted in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 14) tells of four powerful Mesopotamian kings, including Amrafel (probably the famous Hammurabi), who conquered much of Canaan and ruled over it for a dozen years. At that point, five local kings rebelled and refused to pay the regular tribute, and the four kings returned in force to teach the rebels a lesson. The four overran Canaan, winning a series of victories over local peoples – the Refaim in Ashterot Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiryataim, the Hurrians in Mt. Seir to Eil Paran, the entire field of the Amalekites and the Amorites in Hatsatson Tamar. Then the King of Sodom and his four allies were soundly beaten in the Valley of Sidim. The Kings of Sodom and Gomorra fled

and hid in slime pits. The four winners thoroughly looted their cities and took many captives, including Abraham's nephew, Lot, who had settled in Sodom after parting ways with Abraham.

A refugee brought the news to Abraham that Lot had been carried away. Abraham was living quietly in the Plains of Mamre, but now he did not hesitate. He did not dwell on the fact that Lot's parting from him had not been entirely harmonious. He did not plead for time to gather further details and to check out the information. He quickly armed 318 men and called on his three friends to gather their retainers and join him in pursuit of the powerful enemy force to rescue Lot. Moving very quickly (in a manner used so successfully millennia later by Nathan Bedford Forrest), Abraham divided his force and attacked the Mesopotamians by night near Damascus, a long way from his home. The surprise attack was highly successful, and Abraham's victorious force pursued the enemy to some distance. The captives, Lot among them, were rescued, and the booty retaken.

Abraham did not slowly contemplate the dangers involved or his chances of victory vs. defeat. It does not seem that he consulted any authority as to the righteousness or wisdom of his decisions. He knew what was right, and he had to move quickly to rescue Lot.

As Abraham was returning, he was greeted by Melchizedek, the righteous King of Salem, who properly welcomed the army with food and wine. Melchizedek blessed Abraham in the name of the "Most High God" and thanked God for giving Abraham's enemy into his hand. Abraham recognized Melchizedek as a true priest and gave him a tithe of all he had.

Now that Abraham had driven off the Four Kings and had restored order and safety, the King of Sodom emerged from his hiding place to gain what he could and also to in some way minimize Abraham. Instead of thanking and praising Abraham and certainly not thanking G-d, and instead of bringing food for Abraham's tired warriors and allies, the king demanded the return of his townsmen who had been carried off. He suggested that Abraham could keep the spoils he had taken, which by the usual customs of war were Abraham's anyway.

Abraham saw through the wicked king, and his response was blunt. He would not take for himself even as much as a *khut*, possibly a small hair ornament or a shoe strap. Abraham would take nothing from the boorish king, so that the king could never claim that it was not G-d but "I that made Abraham rich." Abraham would not speak for his allies who were entitled legitimately to claim their rightful shares of the spoils and certainly their expenses. Even after Abraham had saved him, the king needed in some way to stain and diminish the sanctity that he could sense in Abraham. Besides what if Abraham's spirituality and ethics rubbed off on the people of Sodom? Where would that leave the king? Abraham's refusal to take the loot showed his faith in a divinely ordered world history. It is G-d who determines victory or defeat. It was G-d who had promised to give Abraham wealth. Let no one think the King of Sodom could do this. In Abraham's view, this war, like all other events, had a meaning for history, perhaps a purpose far higher in the long term than merely the actual fighting itself. Abraham would not soil his mission by accepting anything from the evil king.

A second Biblical war

In a second event (Numbers 25. 16f.), God commanded the Israelites to attack Midian in return for Midian's attempt to damage the Israelites by leading them into low behavior at Baal Peor as they were approaching the Promised Land after almost 40 years in the Sinai. The Midianites had not attacked the Israelites in a battle but struck instead at the core Biblical values by which God commanded the Israelites to live. A nation can lose a battle and still win a war. To come back from a moral fall is much more difficult. Such enemies cannot merely be fought, and there can be neither appeasement nor compromise. In the Bible's view, this was God's decision. The animosity of such enemies must be destroyed.

The Book of Numbers 22–25 and 31 tells the story of perhaps the greatest danger that the Israelites faced during the 40 years they lived in the Sinai Desert on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Near the end of the 40 years, they approached the border of Moab. Balak, King of Moab, feared the approach of the large nation with so many fighting men. Perhaps not knowing or not believing that God had commanded the Israelites not to harm Moab, a very frightened Balak appealed to the Midianites for support, although the Midianites apparently did not live that close by and could have nothing to fear from Israel. The two nations invited Balaam ben Beor, a soothsayer from Ptor in Mesopotamia, to curse the Israelites, promising him riches and honors. Perhaps a curse would be effective where military force seemed inadequate.

A cagey and greedy man, Balaam came to Moab. However, God would not let him curse the Israelites but made him bless them instead. Balaam was made to acknowledge among other things that Israelite family life was strong, “How goodly are they tents, O Jacob” (Num 24. 5) and that God “saw no sin in Jacob and no fault in Israel” (23.21). The great soothsayer could not harm God’s people by cursing but tried instead to earn his rewards by suggesting a different strategy – if the Israelites could be led into bad behavior, they would become vulnerable. The Midianites sent their women to seduce Israelite men into the disgusting orgiastic worship of their deity Baal Peor.

The plan succeeded up to a point, creating a deep trauma for the Israelites, the effect of which was felt even years later. The peak was reached when Zimri ben Salu, a prince of the tribe of Simeon, brought Cozbi, a Midianite princess, to his tent in full view of Moses and the Israelite elders. It is noteworthy that the name Cozbi is associated both with an Akkadian cognate term for beautiful and with a Hebrew term meaning deceitful. Moses seemed stunned and unsure how to react. But Pinhas, grandson of Aaron the High Priest, reacted quickly and decisively. Taking a spear in hand, he followed the couple into Zimri’s tent and speared them, deliberately catching them *in flagrante delicto*. The danger was ended, and God’s anger quieted, but not before 24,000 Israelites died in a Heaven-sent plague (Num 25.6–9).

With calm restored, God now commanded Moses to “harass the Midianites because they are your enemies deceiving you with entrapments,” (Numbers 25. 17–18) and the Midianites also wanted revenge for the killing of their princess. The Midianites still hated the Israelites and would still try to destroy them if they had the chance. Israel had to remove that danger. Moab, however, seems to have left off their opposition to Israel and to have dropped out of the picture. Perhaps they came to realize that the Israelites would indeed not attack them. The Bible’s account does not fault the Moabites for wanting to protect themselves. It does fault the Midianites for becoming involved in the way they did in matters not relevant to them. Although not threatened, they nevertheless used even their daughters, including the princess Cozbi, to lure the Israelites into orgiastic idolatry (Viz. Abravanel, on Num 25).

Soon after, God spoke to Moses, commanding the Israelites to revenge themselves on the Midianites. This would be Moses’s last mission before his death. Nevertheless, he carried it out with full diligence (Num 31). Moses called on the people to carry out God’s vengeance and to supply 1,000 men from each of the 12 Israelite tribes: 12,000 men, a rather small force designed perhaps as a raid rather than a total war. The tribe of Simeon was deliberately included, despite their large role in the encounter with Baal Peor.

The army would be led by Pinhas – the man who had brought the first success would carry the work to the finish. Some commentators suggest that another 12,000 or even 24,000 managed supplies for the fighters but did not themselves join in the battle.

The Midianites were motivated by cynical hatred, not by legitimate fear (Roter, 1988–1996 991a). They saw only a small force approaching and expected an easy victory. They were wrong. Pinhas and his 12,000 men completely defeated the Midianites, killing all their men and capturing the rest (31. 7f.). Their five kings were among the slain, and so was Balaam the

sorcerer, who had stopped in Midian to collect his reward for the 24,000 Israelites who had died in the plague (31.12).

The army returned to the Israelite camp, and Moses and the High Priest Elazar came out to meet them, whether to instruct them in certain procedures required of returning soldiers or to honor their success (Roter, 1988–1996, 994a). The original instructions may have been incomplete or unclear, and many prisoners had been brought back. Moses was not cruel or bloodthirsty, but God had apprised him of the dangerous hatred of the Midianites toward the Israelites, and the prisoners would have to be killed, particularly the women, as it was they who had lured the Israelite men into sin. Also, the victorious soldiers had taken no personal booty and brought everything they had taken to the High Priest to decide what to do with it (31). Again, a war of destruction was carried out at God's direct command. There is no mention of glory, and the soldiers did not take booty for themselves.

A third Biblical war

As the Israelites under Joshua prepared to enter and conquer Canaan, they offered its nations three choices. (1) They could depart the land in peace; (2) they could make peace and continue to dwell in Canaan, accepting the Noahide laws and paying tribute to the Israelites; or (3) they could fight to the death. The Talmud says that the Girgashites left Canaan, and the Jebusites (Joshua 6) made peace (Talmud 1:14). The other Canaanite peoples chose to fight.

Joshua and the Israelites, after crossing the River Jordan, won a spectacular success in the conquest of Jericho, a city ancient even in those days, protecting the entry to Canaan. The walls miraculously collapsed or, in another interpretation, sank into the earth. The Israelites wiped out the population, except for Rahav the innkeeper and her family who had helped the two Israelite spies whom Joshua had sent days before. Joshua treated Jericho as a divine gift, forbidding his people to take any booty and placing a curse on anyone who would try to rebuild it. The site of Jericho was to remain an everlasting monument to God's great miracle.

Now the Israelites looked toward Ai, a city of only 12,000 inhabitants but as well fortified as Jericho and strategically important. Joshua sent spies to scout the area. They reported back that the Israelites would conquer Ai easily. It was not even necessary to send the full army. A few thousand men would take the city. Accepting this report, Joshua sent just 3,000 men. Their frontal attack failed, and 36 men were killed, a defeat unexpected and dangerously disconcerting. The Israelites could lose confidence and the momentum of their earlier successes. The Canaanites would be encouraged to fight. What had gone wrong?

Joshua learned that one Israelite man, Achan, had transgressed by taking booty from Jericho, a fine Babylonian cloak and gold and silver. By doing so, he had undermined the spiritual dedication of the Israelites, and he was punished with death. A second and perhaps related difficulty was that the victory at Jericho had perhaps given rise to some over-confidence. Joshua had not scouted Ai himself, and his spies had thought it could be conquered by a small force; there would be no need to send the full army.

Joshua now took the campaign against Ai more in hand, and he formed an elaborate plan. First, a small contingent would fake another frontal attack on the city and then pretend to flee, drawing Ai's defenders out of the city in pursuit. A much larger force posted in hiding on the other side of Ai would move in quickly as soon as the gate was undefended, and they would set the city on fire. Ai's army would now be caught between two Israelite forces of overwhelming numbers with the city already in flames.

A third force was ready to block intervention if any neighboring cities, like Bethel, tried to send troops to reinforce Ai. The Israelites took Ai and killed all its populace as well as its king.

The victory was complete. Scripture does not mention Ai again, and it seems to have ceased to exist.

Because the Israelites had been shamed in their first attack on Ai, God wanted them to take it by fighting, not simply by visible divine intervention. The Israelites needed a large army for the ambush and also to demonstrate the actual power of the army, as well as to discourage attacks from neighboring cities. Joshua had shown his strong leadership first by executing Achan then by sleeping in the army camp with his soldiers to calm any fears they might have had the night before the successful attack.

A fourth Biblical battle

Forty years passed after the great victory of Deborah and Barak over the Canaanites, but Israel fell into the worship of Baal and Asherah, and the people were severely harassed by Midianites, Amalekites and others, who came like great swarms of locusts and stole or ravaged their crops and their herds. The Israelites would hide in caves or fortified towns and many were starving. Finally, the people cried out to God, Who sent a prophet and then an angel to rebuke and teach them. Gideon ben Joash of the Israelite tribe of Manasseh was preparing wheat to flee from the next raid. The angel addressed him, "God be with you, Man of Valor." Gideon answered, if God is with us, why has He given us into the hand of Midian?

God was informing Gideon that he was God's chosen messenger to save Israel from Midian. Gideon protested that he was unworthy, the least of his tribe and of his own family, but God said that He would be with him and Gideon would smite Midian. The battle was in God's hands. Gideon felt still unsure. He prevailed on the angel to stay until he could make a proper offering to God. When Gideon put meat and cakes on a rock, fire came forth from the rock and devoured the offering, and the angel disappeared. Following God's order, Gideon then destroyed the altar of Baal and the sacred tree of Asherah and built a new altar to God on which Gideon would sacrifice to God a bullock, using the broken wood of the Asherah for fuel.

The townsmen awoke the next morning, found their idols destroyed and learned that Gideon was responsible. They were ready to execute him, but Joash, Gideon's father, intervened, saying that Baal should fight his own battles; you do not need to fight for him. From this, Gideon came to be called Jerubaal, meaning one who fights with Baal (Judges 6.22).

The Midianites and their allies now gathered in great force in the Plain of Jezreel. A spirit of divine strength cloaked Gideon, and he sent to gather men from the Israelite tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zevulun and Naftali. Gideon asked for a sign from God that He would indeed support the Israelites. He apparently believed in God's ability to save Israel but was unsure of his own worthiness. Gideon left a small woolen cloth out at night. In the morning the cloth was drenched with dew, while around it all was dry. This symbolized that Gideon himself was worthy of receiving divine help even if his enemies were not (so Abravanel). Malbim interpreted the sign as meaning that Gideon was indeed fit to receive God's help even if Israel in general was less fit. The second night showed a cloth dry and the ground around it wet, indicating that God would help Israel even with just a small Israelite force. Let people not think that wars are won by armies. Wars are won by God.

The battle was now imminent: 32,000 men had come to Gideon, but God told him that there were too many. It should be clear to all that the victory would be of God, not of people. So God instructed Gideon to send home the men who were afraid either because of the battle or because they had worshipped idols. Better they should leave now quietly than flee from the battle. Twenty-two thousand went home. God again came to Gideon to tell him that the 10,000 remaining were too many. The divinely ordained victory did not depend even on 10,000.

God told Gideon to let the men drink at the nearby stream. Most bowed or lay down to drink. Only 300 brought the water up to their mouths. Those who bowed to drink were those who

had bowed before Baal or who drank with too great desire. Bringing the water to one's mouth was the practice of a fighter, not lazy or self-indulgent (Malbim). Three hundred men passed the test, and the other 9,700 went home. With these 300, God would bring victory.

Gideon was yet unsure if his own merits were sufficient. God gave him another sign. Gideon and one other soldier sneaked into the enemy camp at night and heard one man tell another of his dream in which he saw a bread roll into the camp and turn it upside down. When his listener interpreted the dream as a sign that God would defeat them, Gideon saw this as an indication of a failure of confidence among the Midianites and as a sign therefore of victory. Gideon planned an attack that would suit his force of only 300, far fewer than the hordes of Midianites, Amalekites and "Easterners." First, he attacked at night when his small numbers would be less recognized. He divided his men into three units, which would approach the enemy camp from three sides. Each man would carry a shofar (horn) and a flame concealed in a pitcher. At a signal, all 300 would blow their shofars, break their pitchers revealing their flames and shout, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." This would be done at the changing of the first watch of the night when sleepy guards were going off duty and the second watch was not fully alert and ready.

Gideon's plan worked beautifully. The camp was thrown into utter confusion. In the dark, even those Midianites willing to fight were stabbing at each other. They fled in panic, and Gideon and his men pursued them. Gideon then sent ahead to the men of Ephraim to block the fugitives at the fords of the Jordan, which they did effectively, killing the two Midianite generals, Orev and Zeev. Trouble then arose from within the ranks, but Gideon handled it wisely. The Ephraimites took Gideon's call so late in the battle as a deep insult and quarreled bitterly with Gideon. Gideon defused the tension, avoiding a civil war. What have I done, he answered them, compared to what you have done. I began the victory, but it was you who completed it. "Are not the last grapes of Ephraim better than the early grapes of Aviezer (Gideon's home)?" The Ephraimites were pacified (Judges 8.1–3, with Metzudot Tsion gloss).

Gideon and his 300 crossed the Jordan in pursuit of the fleeing Midianites. Tired and hungry, Gideon approached the Israelite inhabitants of the town of Succot and asked for food, but they refused. He then approached the city officials, who answered that they could not safely help him while the Midianites were still a threat (8. 4–7. Malbim). Gideon threatened severe punishment when he would return victorious. Almost the same happened at Penuel.

The two Midianite kings Zevah and Zalmuna remained with a force of 15,000. Still operating with only his 300, Gideon attacked by night again and destroyed the enemy force, capturing the two kings. He then punished the people of Succot for their refusal to supply food. He did not punish the officials, as he felt their fears were understandable (8, 14–16; see Malbim). Then he went on to destroy Penuel.

With victory complete, Gideon turned to the Midianite kings. "What manner of men were those you slew at Tabor?" He asked them. Apparently, while in flight from Gideon, the kings had stopped at Mt Tabor where they had killed Gideon's brothers. They explained to Gideon that they regarded them as rebels and worthy of death and added that they would have killed Gideon himself as a rebel if they could have. Gideon responded that if the kings had spared the lives of his brothers, he would have spared their lives, and he executed them.

The grateful Israelites asked Gideon to rule over them, him and his children and descendants forever, but he refused, saying that only God should rule over Israel. He also did not take the large share of the booty to which a winning general was entitled. Instead he asked only for gold nose rings, which the Midianites wore, and made from them a sort of jacket as a remembrance of God's deliverance of His people.

Yet violence is not glorified in Hebrew thinking and should be avoided if at all possible. Consider the story in this regard of the "wise woman" of Abel-Beth-Maacha and Sheba ben

Bichri who sought to undermine the rule of King David (II Samuel 20). The very dangerous revolt of Absalom had just been quelled, and David was returning to Jerusalem with much work to do in order to restore the stability of the nation and government. The Israelite tribes were quarreling with David's own tribe, Judah, as to who should lead the welcome of the king to Jerusalem, the capital. At that critical moment, Sheba ben Bichri stepped up. Scripture describes him as a "son of Belial," i.e. a rabble rouser and troublemaker. He blew the ram's horn and proclaimed that "we have no portion with David, nor any inheritance with the son of Jesse. Each man to his tent, O Israel." His point was that the tribes should not argue over who should welcome David, for no one owed him allegiance, and he was the son of Jesse, not of a king.

Many followed Sheba, and David could count only on the tribe of Judah. He recognized that Sheba's threat was serious. If Sheba could gain a hold on several fortified cities, a long, disastrous war could follow (20. 9). The new disturbance had to be put down quickly. David's force led by Joab marched to Abel Beth Maacha, to which Sheba had fled, and they began to build up siege mounds and to batter the city's defenses.

A bloody all-out attack was imminent. The most notable role in the story is played by the "wise woman," as she is termed. She called to Joab from the city wall, wisely and bluntly. "Are you Joab?" seeming to imply, "Are you Joab who thinks he is so smart?" Surely, people will say that they should have offered peace to Abel, and thus they would have had peace. She was reminding him of the Biblical injunction to offer peace to a city before attacking it. She went on to point out that she and her fellow citizens were peaceful and loyal and to ask how Joab could seek to destroy a city that was a "city and a mother in Israel": "Why will you swallow the inheritance given by God?" (20, 16–19). The wise woman was pleading for the city, yet rebuking Joab's quickness to fight in such a way that Joab could only be impressed with her honesty and intelligence.

Joab answered, "Far be it from me that I should swallow or destroy." However, Sheba ben Bichri has raised his hand against King David. Give him over, and I will depart. The woman replied that Sheba's head would be thrown to Joab over the wall. She knew both by law and by good sense what had to be done. The text does not tell exactly how she persuaded the city leaders to hand Sheba over. However, Abel was a Benjaminite city, and Sheba was of that tribe, perhaps a kinsman. A midrashic source suggests that she approached the city leaders and told them Joab was demanding that they turn over 50 people to be executed. She then pretended to have bargained with him, gradually reducing the number of people to be executed to only Sheba ben Bichri himself. At that point, the city fathers were grateful to get away so lightly, and they readily agreed. The Talmud also uses the story to discuss the question of what people should do in a situation where enemies demand that a group give one of their number to be murdered or raped. In Sheba's case, the Talmudic law would agree that he could be given over to save the rest because (1) the enemies demanded Sheba specifically, and (2) he was guilty of rebellion against a legitimate king and therefore in any case subject to a death penalty.

The city fathers were won over by the woman's wisdom, and they threw Sheba's head over the wall to Joab. They had ended the war before it began and had also prevented the besieging army from entering the city, which is always risky even if there is peace.

War and peace among the ancient Greeks

Herodotus, the fifth-century historian often called the father of history, reports on many early wars of the Greeks and their neighbors. Herodotus introduces his history, saying that he wants to record the achievements of both Greeks and non-Greeks and also to show how the conflict between the two races led to the Persian Wars (Herodotus, 1961).

A most entertaining writer, Herodotus's perspective on history is very different than the Bible's. In Herodotus's world, the gods are capricious as well as of limited power. This appears especially in his account of the life of King Croesus of Lydia. Probably the world's wealthiest man, Croesus determined at one point to try to conquer the growing Persian power of Cyrus the Great. He sought the advice of the best of oracles and after careful testing determined that the Oracle of Delphi would best answer his question – Shall I go to war against the Persians? The oracle's answer was an ambiguous riddle as usual: Go to war and a mighty kingdom will fall. Croesus accepted the oracle's word and attacked. A mighty kingdom did fall – his own. As Croesus was being led away by guards to be burned to death, they heard him muttering the word "Solon" over and over. Cyrus's curiosity was aroused and he stopped the execution. Croesus told him the story of how the Athenian wise man Solon had explained to Croesus that no man could consider himself happy until he could see all of his life, i.e. until his death. Croesus had ridiculed the notion that anyone could be happier than himself, given his immense wealth. Now he realized that Solon was right.

The story carries with it deep implications of the pessimistic tone often paramount in Greek historical thinking. Where were the gods? Herodotus seems to have believed in them, and often includes them in his narratives. What is missing here that so differentiates his view from the Bible's is a sense that any god cares about the world or about humankind and has any plan for its history. And, of course, the gods did not create the world, as the God of Genesis did. Even so brilliant a man as Solon did not see the world in this way.

A story Herodotus relates from the Second Persian War can be seen as pointing to another difference between Biblical and Greek thinking. In 480 BCE, the Persian leader Xerxes invaded Greece with a massive army and fleet. A small Greek force including 300 Spartans held a key pass in the mountains at Thermopylae.

Xerxes asked Demaratus, an exiled Spartan, for his opinion of his city. He replied, interestingly,

For though they (the Spartans) are free, they are not free in all respects, for they are "actually ruled by a lord and master: law is that master, and it is the law that they inwardly fear—much more so than our men fear you. They do whatever it commands... which is to win or fight to the death." (Herodotus, VII. 104)

Xerxes laughed at this, wrote Herodotus, but was stunned when the Greeks held off his army for days. Three hundred Spartans remained and fought to the death.

What does this tell us? Certainly, the Spartans were known as excellent and loyal soldiers. Indeed, Socrates seemed to prefer Sparta to Athens. Yet an element seems to be absent in the description of the creed of the Spartan soldier as compared to that of a soldier in the army of ancient Israel. The Spartan soldier is a highly disciplined, well-trained fighting machine. He is brave and loyal and feels a strong sense of duty and will not leave his post. He is the best of Greek soldiers. Yet, for what is the resolute Spartan soldier really fighting? Does he have the same transcendent sense of historical purpose as an Israelite soldier?

Let us note Socrates's guard-post allegory regarding suicide. A soldier must stay at his post until he is relieved (*Phaedo*, 62b-c). Though life may hold no meaning or even pleasure for him, he must not leave it out of a sense of duty. For the Bible, God gives life and takes it away. This is not a human decision. What is a human decision is to live fully and follow God's commandments. "See I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse, and you shall choose life so that you and your seed shall live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). The Biblical soldier believes in the transcendent value of what he is doing, and also life itself. Unlike the Spartan

soldier, no matter how brave, the Biblical soldier fights not simply out of duty but because he believes in the cause for which he is fighting.

Thucydides (1978), the other great Greek historian of the fifth century, wrote the history of the Peloponnesian War. Tellingly, he never mentions the gods in his work and may not have believed in gods at all. This is in contrast to Socrates, a deeply religious man who often expressed his belief in gods and oracles, though he was repelled by the vicious narratives of earlier Greek mythology and seemed to have had little interest in historical study.

Biblical history starts with God creating the world and proceeds toward a messianic denouement. Greek writers tended to see the world more in terms of cycles. Yet there were some exceptions, notably Pericles, who saw history in a larger context. Pericles's funeral oration, as reported by Thucydides in *The Peloponnesian War*, perhaps signals the peak moment of Athenian history, a moment when its greatest statesman in its Golden Age explained what Athens meant to him. The Peloponnesian War, 431–404 BCE, was into its third year. There had been many difficulties, but Pericles's strategies seemed to be working. The Athenians held a public funeral to honor their dead and invited Pericles to speak.

Pericles opened by noting that speeches on such occasions must of necessity be inadequate, but that it is Athenian tradition to hold such ceremonies along with an oration. "I shall begin by speaking about our ancestors..." that by their courage have handed down to us a free and strong nation, and he goes on to praise the Athenian spirit and way of life that make Athens so superior. Indeed, we need not copy other cities; they need to copy us. Athens is a democracy where effort and hard work will be rewarded. Poverty need not hold one back, and the only shame is not to try to rise from it. Athens offers opportunity to its citizens as well as beauty and recreation. We are an open society, not secretive or fearful of others.

In war, Athens is superior to its enemies because it relies not on secret weapons but on courage and loyalty. Whereas the Spartans stress constant military preparations from early boyhood, the Athenians live without all the preparations and are just as ready to face battle. Athenians love beauty and culture, but do not become soft. Others are brave out of ignorance; Athenians know what is good in life and still enter battle with courage. Altogether then, Athens is an education to all of Greece. It was for such a city that our men fought and some so gallantly died. "You should fix your eyes on the greatness of Athens as she really is and should fall in love with her." He concludes: Great men have the whole earth as their memorial.

Pericles presents a positive, optimistic, far-sighted view of his city and its way of life. This is not lugubrious and tragic like Sophocles's view of the world or carping and argumentative like Socrates's. While it is not the Biblical view, it does offer a sense of purpose and a love of something (in this case Athens) that for Pericles is genuine. Pericles's successors in leadership were of much lower character and Athens went on to be badly defeated in the long and destructive war.

We wish to comment on a final curiosity emerging in Homer's *Odyssey* (1950). Why did it take so long (10 years) for Odysseus to return to his home to Ithaca after the fall of Troy? Biblical warriors who survived typically returned home to their daily lives; Homer's *Odyssey* records his many adventures:

- a. Leaving Troy, he attacks the Cicones, but is beaten off.
- b. He is caught by a storm and visits the country of the Lotophagi (Lotus Eaters). They are not hostile people, but eating of the lotus plant causes loss of memory and sense of purpose.
- c. Odysseus is able to pull his men away and resume his journey and wanders to the land of the Cyclopes. One of them, Polyphemus, traps Odysseus's party in his cave and devours two of them at each meal. To escape, Odysseus blinds the one-eyed monster, incurring the wrath of Poseidon.

- d. Escaping from Polyphemus, Odysseus next visits the home of Aeolus, god of the winds, who gives him a closed sack containing all the winds. But Odysseus falls asleep as he nears Ithaca, and his crew unties the sack, releasing all the other winds, which blow the ship back to Aeolia where Aeolus refuses to help them further, speculating they must be cursed by the gods.
- e. After six days sailing, Odysseus reaches the home of the cannibal Laestrygonians, who sinks all the Greek ships in the harbor, save that of Odysseus, and eats all of the crews, leaving Odysseus's own ship as the sole survivor.
- f. Odysseus and his remaining crew reach Aeaea, the home of the enchantress Circe, who turns Odysseus's men into pigs. With Hermes's advice, Odysseus become Circe's lover. Circe then releases Odysseus's men from the spell. Odysseus and his men leave and go to Hades to confront the ghost of the blind Greek prophet Tiresias, who tells Odysseus he must sacrifice to the god Poseidon to appease the god's anger toward him because he blinded Polyphemus.
- g. Resuming his further voyage; Odysseus passes the Sirens. He then must choose between confronting Scylla, a six-headed monster who eats six of Odysseus's remaining men, and Charybdis, a monster whirlpool that swallows everything near it three times a day.
- h. Odysseus and his remaining crew come to an island of the sun god Helios where his cattle pasture. Warned not to eat the sun god's cattle, the famished men are short of provisions and disobey this warning during Odysseus's brief absence. Zeus is furious and destroys their ship as the Greeks depart, leaving Odysseus as the lone survivor. Odysseus is washed ashore on the Island of Calypso, where he becomes her lover, until released by her on Zeus's order seven years later on a boat of Odysseus's own making.
- i. Poseidon, still angry, wrecks his boat and Odysseus swims ashore at Scheria, where the Phaeacians follow their tradition of returning shipwrecked strangers to their homelands, and send him back to Ithaca.
- j. Odysseus and his son Telemachus kill the "suitors" of his wife Penelope.

The question we are left with is why Odysseus takes so long to return to Ithaca. It is as if the mundane life is of little value to the Greeks, who only find meaning in adventure, even if such adventure might destroy them. (See the poem "Ulysses" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson.)

Job versus Zeno: Living purposiively versus searching for meaning

This exaggerated search for meaning is exemplified in Diogenes Laertius's story of the death of Zeno the Greek Stoic, who attempts to find meaning in the wrenching of his toe on the way back from the Stoa where he has been teaching. He cannot interpret this simply as a minor mishap but instead must give cosmic meaning to it.

The manner of his (Zeno's) death was as follows. As he was leaving the school he tripped and fell, breaking a toe. Striking the ground with his fist, he quoted the line from the *Niobe*. "I come, I come, why dost thou call for me?" And died on the spot through holding his breath. (Diogenes Laertius, 1853, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, VII, 28).

The medically impossible depiction of his suicide begs further consideration. Zeno holding his breath until death negates the involuntary aspect of breathing and the Biblical conception that God breathes life into man and takes it away (Gen. 2:7). Zeno, like other Greek and Roman stoics, needs to control the conditions around his death, equating this control with a

tragically tinged sense of freedom (Seneca, *De Ira*, 3.15.34). Why should Zeno kill himself after so seemingly minor an annoyance as wrenching his toe, while Job is able to withstand much greater stressors? Zeno's over-interpretation may represent his attempt to find meaning and purpose in an otherwise hopeless and meaningless world.

The Biblical figure of Job, in contrast, does not commit suicide despite far greater misfortunes – the loss of his wealth, his family and his health. His friends tell him to admit he deserves his punishment, but he refuses because he knows it is not true (Job 4–32). He certainly complains bitterly but does not break his relationship with God. On the opposite extreme, his wife tells him to “curse God and die” (Job 2: 9). But he refuses this response as well. Job is deeply grieved and indeed wrestles with suicide, stressing the same method of death, *strangling*, as did Zeno. “So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death, rather than these bones” (Job 7: 15). Strikingly, however, he differs from Zeno in seeing life as a gift from God, who decides when life will begin and end. Job reaffirms his relationship with his Creator: “Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him” (Job 13: 15).

Job is anchored in a sense of a personal Creator who is with him from the moment of his birth and will be with him to death and beyond. Thus, he can withstand far greater misfortune than can Zeno without the need to attribute cosmic meaning to it. This does not make Job less rational, but simply anchors his interpretive structure in his desire to live. He overcomes major losses in his life by deepening his faith in his Creator, who provides him with an inherent meaning for his life. The book of Job stresses that it is God himself that has given Job the breath of life. “The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty giveth me life” (Job 33: 4). When God restores the breath, man rises again and renews the face of the earth. Job is not obsessed with death, nor does he need to control it or to worry that it is timely. Job does not interpret each event as a signal to exit, but as a challenge to live the life that has been given to him in dignity. The implications of this difference for differential view of wars cannot be overestimated.

Combat itself seems to provide Greeks with a sense of meaning that is absent for them in everyday life. Life itself is seen as competition. In his book “The Glory of Hera,” sociologist Philip Slater makes the following observations. “Nothing defines the quality of Greek culture more than the way in which competition was extended from physical prowess to the realms of the intellect, to feats of poetry and dramatic composition.” Nothing seemed to have any meaning to the Greeks unless it involved the defeat of another (Slater, 1968, p. 36). The Biblical view is very different. Competition is not valued in itself. It is far better to focus on fulfilling God's purpose on earth. Consider the famous axiom of Hillel: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I?” (Mishna Avot 1:14). There is nothing in this directive that implies one's own worth is dependent on defeating another. Better that people live together cooperatively if they all follow God's sense of morality.

Conclusions

What can we conclude from this brief comparison of war, peace and violence in these two bedrock cultures of Western civilization? Let us examine a number of categories to make a comparison.

1. Precipitation of Conflict. While the Biblical world seems to want to avoid conflict if possible, the ancient Greek world seems to relish in it. Everything seems to be a competition in Greek thinking. A wins only if B loses.

2. Purpose of the Conflict. Biblical stories emphasize that war must be conducted in terms of God's plan for history. Greek wars are typically not fought in terms of any divine plan for history.
3. Actions towards the Environment. Greek armies typically destroyed the environment, while Biblical armies were forbidden by Biblical law to destroy fruit trees.
4. Glorification of violence. While the Biblical world is certainly not passive and will wage serious war, there seems to be little love of violence in itself. The ancient Greek mindset seems to be inherently competitive and enjoy war for war's sake. The Biblical mindset is willing to wage war in terms of defense of the Biblical way of life.
5. Flexibility of the Military: While the Greek approach to battle often seems to involve a fairly stationary test of brute strength and numbers, the Biblical approach typically seems to depend on flexibility and a sense of transcendent purpose. Military battles are fought for a reason, not just as a test of strength or a sense of duty.
6. Willingness to physically destroy the enemy. While both the Biblical and ancient Greek mind-sets seem willing to completely annihilate the enemy, the reasons are different. The Greek mind set seems to enjoy the battle and inflicting severe pain upon one's adversary. The Biblical mind-set, in contrast, does not focus on violence, but is willing to use violence to destroy nations who are attacking the Israelite covenant with God.
7. Preference for Peace over War. The Biblical mind-set, while willing to engage in war, seems to prefer a more peaceful cooperative solution if possible. The Greek mind-set seems to actually enjoy physical conflict as a form of competition.
8. Depiction of Military Heroes. While the ancient Greeks often seem to idealize military heroes, the Biblical mindset is more mixed. While honoring military achievement, the Biblical attitude points more to peace. The Greek mind seems to love conflict.
9. Perception of the Human Being. The Greeks continuously search for life meaning through grandiosity, often involving military glory. The Israelites, in contrast, believed that man is inherently an exalted being created in the image of God himself, not to seek glory but to live according to God's instructions.

In summary, then, this chapter has attempted to contrast Biblical and ancient Greek attitudes towards the military with regard to peace, war and violence, and indeed the meaning of life itself.

Appendix

1. The Hebrew Scriptures (I Samuel 17) presents the battle of David and Goliath
 1. And the Philistines assembled their camps to war; and they assembled at Sochoh which belonged to Judah, and they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah in Ephes-dammim.
 2. And Saul and the men of Israel assembled, and they encamped in the Valley of the Terebinth, and they set the battle in array against the Philistines.
 3. And the Philistines were standing on the mountain from here, and Israel was standing on the mountain from here, and the valley was between them.
 4. And the champion emerged from the Philistines' camp, named Goliath, from Gath; his height was six cubits and a span.
 5. And a helmet of copper was on his head, and he was wearing a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of copper.
 6. And greaves of copper were on his legs, and a copper javelin was between his shoulders.

7. And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the spear's head was six hundred shekels of iron, and the shield-bearer went before him.
8. And he stood and called to the array of Israel, and he said to them, "Why should you come out to wage war? Am I not the Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose for yourselves a man, and let him come down to me.
9. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, we shall be slaves to you, and if I overcome him, and kill him, you shall be slaves to us and serve us."
10. And the Philistine said, "I taunt the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man, and let us fight together."
11. And Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, and they were panic stricken and very much afraid.
12. And David was the son of this Ephrathite man from Bethlehem of Judah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons; and the man was old in Saul's time, coming among men.
13. And Jesse's three eldest sons who had followed Saul, went to war; and the names of his three sons who went to war, were: Eliab, the firstborn, and the second to him, Abinadab, and the third, Shammah.
14. And David was the youngest, and the three eldest followed Saul.
15. Now David went to and fro from Saul, to tend his father's sheep in Bethlehem.
16. And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.
17. And Jesse said to David his son, "Take now to your brothers, an ephah of this parched corn and ten loaves of this bread, and rush them to the camp, to your brothers.
18. And you shall bring these ten cheeses to the captain of the thousand, and you shall see how your brothers are faring, and you shall take the tidings of their welfare."
19. And Saul and they, and all the men of Israel in the Valley of the Terebinth, were at war with the Philistines.
20. And David arose early in the morning, and he left the sheep with a keeper; and he carried off and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the barricade, and the army which was going out to the battle array, shouted in the battle.
21. And the Israelites and the Philistines put the battle in array, army against army.
22. And David left the baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and he ran to the battle array, and he came and greeted his brothers.
23. And while he was speaking with them, behold, the champion, named Goliath the Philistine, from Gath, was coming up from the ranks of the Philistines, and he spoke the same words (as before), and David heard.
24. And all the men of Israel, upon seeing the man, fled from before him, and were exceedingly frightened.
25. And the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who is coming up, for he is coming up to taunt Israel? And it will be, that the man who will kill him, the King will enrich him with great riches, and he will give him his daughter, and he will make his father's house free in Israel."
26. And David said to the men who were standing before him, saying, "What shall be done to the man who slays that Philistine, and takes away reproach from Israel, for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the ranks of the living God?"
27. And the people said to him, "So shall be done to the man who slays him."
28. And Eliab, his eldest brother, heard when he spoke to the men, and Eliab's wrath was kindled against David, and he said, "Why have you come down? With whom have you left those few sheep in the desert? I know your impetuosity, and the evil of your heart, for you have come down in order to see the war."

29. And David said, "What have I done now? Is it not but a word?"
30. And he turned around from him, toward another. And he spoke according to the same manner, the people answered according to the former manner.
31. And the words which David had spoken, were heard. And they related (them) before Saul, and he took him.
32. And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your bondsman will go, and battle with the Philistine."
33. And Saul said to David, "You are unable to go to this Philistine to battle with him, for you are a lad, and he is a warrior since his youth."
34. And David said to Saul, "Your bondsman was a shepherd of sheep for his father, and there came a lion and also a bear, and carried off a lamb from the flock.
35. And I went out after him and smote him, and saved it from his mouth. And he arose upon me, and I took hold of his jaw, and I smote him and slew him.
36. Both the lion and the bear has your bondsman slain, and the uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he taunted the armies of the living God."
37. And David said, "The Lord Who saved me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will save me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the Lord be with you."
38. And Saul dressed David with his garments, and he placed a copper helmet on his head, and he dressed him with a coat of mail.
39. And David girded his sword over his garments, and he did not want to go (in them), for he was not accustomed, and David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I am not accustomed." And David took them off.
40. And he took his staff in his hand, and he chose for himself five smooth pebbles from the brook, and he placed them in the shepherds' bag which he had, and in the sack, and his slingshot was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine.
41. And the Philistine was continuously drawing nearer to David, and the man who bore the shield was before him.
42. And the Philistine looked and saw David, and he despised him, for he was a youth, and ruddy, with an attractive appearance.
43. And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his god.
44. And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I shall give your flesh to the fowl of the air, and to the cattle of the field."
45. And David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword, spear and javelin, and I come to you with the Name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel which you have taunted.
46. This day, the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I shall slay you, and take off your head, and I shall give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines this day, to the fowl of the air and to the beasts of the earth, and all the earth shall know that Israel has a God.
47. And all this assembly shall know that not with sword and javelin does the Lord save, for the battle is the Lord's, and He will deliver you into our hand."
48. And it was, when the Philistine arose and drew closer to David, that David hastened and ran to the battle array, toward the Philistine.
49. And David stretched his hand into the bag, and took a stone therefrom, and slung it, and he hit the Philistine in his forehead, and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

Rouse all thy virtue; thou hast utmost need
Of valor now, and of address in arms.
Escape me more thou canst not; Pallas' hand
By mine subdues thee; now will I avenge
At once the agonies of every Greek 315
In thy unsparing fury slain by thee.
He said, and, brandishing the Pelian ash,
Dismiss'd it; but illustrious Hector warn'd,
Crouched low, and, overflying him, it pierced
The soil beyond, whence Pallas plucking it 320
Unseen, restored it to Achilles' hand,
And Hector to his godlike foe replied.
Godlike Achilles! thou hast err'd, nor know'st
At all my doom from Jove, as thou pretend'st,
But seek'st, by subtlety and wind of words, 325
All empty sounds, to rob me of my might.
Yet stand I firm. Think not to pierce my back.
Behold my bosom! if the Gods permit,
Meet me advancing, and transpierce me there.
Meantime avoid my glittering spear, but oh 330
May'st thou receive it all! since lighter far
545 To Ilium should the toils of battle prove,
Wert thou once slain, the fiercest of her foes.
He said, and hurling his long spear with aim
Unerring, smote the centre of the shield 335
Of Peleus' son, but his spear glanced away.
He, angry to have sent it forth in vain,
(For he had other none) with eyes downcast
Stood motionless awhile, then with loud voice
Sought from Deiphobus, white-shielded Chief, 340
A second; but Deiphobus was gone.
Then Hector understood his doom, and said.
Ah, it is plain; this is mine hour to die.
I thought Deiphobus at hand, but me
Pallas beguiled, and he is still in Troy. 345
A bitter death threatens me, it is nigh,
And there is no escape; Jove, and Jove's son
Apollo, from the first, although awhile
My prompt deliverers, chose this lot for me,
And now it finds me. But I will not fall 350
Inglorious; I will act some great exploit
That shall be celebrated ages hence.
So saying, his keen falchion from his side
He drew, well-temper'd, ponderous, and rush'd
At once to combat. As the eagle darts 355
Right downward through a sullen cloud to seize
Weak lamb or timorous hare, so brandishing
His splendid falchion, Hector rush'd to fight.

Achilles, opposite, with fellest ire
Full-fraught came on; his shield with various art 360
Celestial form'd, o'erspread his ample chest,
And on his radiant casque terrific waved
The bushy gold of his resplendent crest,
By Vulcan spun, and pour'd profuse around.
Bright as, among the stars, the star of all 365
Most radiant, Hesperus, at midnight moves,
So, in the right hand of Achilles beam'd
His brandish'd spear, while, meditating wo
To Hector, he explored his noble form,
546 Seeking where he was vulnerable most. 370
But every part, his dazzling armor torn
From brave Patroclus' body, well secured,
Save where the circling key-bone from the neck
Disjoins the shoulder; there his throat appear'd,
Whence injured life with swiftest flight escapes; 375
Achilles, plunging in that part his spear,
Impell'd it through the yielding flesh beyond.
The ashen beam his power of utterance left
Still unimpair'd, but in the dust he fell,
And the exulting conqueror exclaim'd. 380
But Hector! thou hadst once far other hopes,
And, stripping slain Patroclus, thought'st thee safe,
Nor caredst for absent me. Fond dream and vain!
I was not distant far; in yonder fleet
He left one able to avenge his death, 385
And he hath slain thee. Thee the dogs shall rend
Dishonorably, and the fowls of air,
But all Achaia's host shall him entomb.
To whom the Trojan Chief languid replied.
By thy own life, by theirs who gave thee birth, 390
And by thy knees, oh let not Grecian dogs
Rend and devour me, but in gold accept
And brass a ransom at my father's hands,
And at my mother's an illustrious price;
Send home my body, grant me burial rites 395
Among the daughters and the sons of Troy.
To whom with aspect stern Achilles thus.
Dog! neither knees nor parents name to me.
I would my fierceness of revenge were such,
That I could carve and eat thee, to whose arms 400
Such griefs I owe; so true it is and sure,
That none shall save thy carcase from the dogs.
No, trust me, would thy parents bring me weigh'd
Ten—twenty ransoms, and engage on oath
To add still more; would thy Dardanian Sire 405
547 Priam, redeem thee with thy weight in gold,

Not even at that price would I consent
That she who bare should place thee on thy bier
With lamentation; dogs and ravening fowls
Shall rend thy body while a scrap remains. 410
Then, dying, warlike Hector thus replied.
Full well I knew before, how suit of mine
Should speed preferr'd to thee. Thy heart is steel.
But oh, while yet thou livest, think, lest the Gods
Requite thee on that day, when pierced thyself 415
By Paris and Apollo, thou shalt fall,
Brave as thou art, before the Scæan gate.
He ceased, and death involved him dark around.
His spirit, from his limbs dismiss'd, the house
Of Ades sought, mourning in her descent 420
Youth's prime and vigor lost, disastrous doom!
But him though dead, Achilles thus bespake.
Die thou. My death shall find me at what hour
Jove gives commandment, and the Gods above.

He spake, and from the dead drawing away 425
His brazen spear, placed it apart, then stripp'd
His arms gore-stain'd. Meantime the other sons
Of the Achaians, gathering fast around,
The bulk admired, and the proportion just
Of Hector; neither stood a Grecian there 430
Who pierced him not, and thus the soldier spake.
Ye Gods! how far more patient of the touch
Is Hector now, than when he fired the fleet!

Thus would they speak, then give him each a stab.
And now, the body stripp'd, their noble Chief 435
The swift Achilles standing in the midst,
The Grecians in wing'd accents thus address'd.
Friends, Chiefs and Senators of Argos' host!
Since, by the will of heaven, this man is slain
Who harm'd us more than all our foes beside, 440
Essay we next the city, so to learn
The Trojan purpose, whether (Hector slain)
They will forsake the citadel, or still
548 Defend it, even though of him deprived.
But wherefore speak I thus? still undeplord, 445
Unburied in my fleet Patroclus lies;
Him never, while alive myself, I mix
With living men and move, will I forget.
In Ades, haply, they forget the dead,
Yet will not I Patroclus, even there. 450
Now chanting pæans, ye Achaian youths!
Return we to the fleet with this our prize;
We have achieved great glory, we have slain

Illustrious Hector, him whom Ilium praised
In all her gates, and as a God revered. 455
He said; then purposing dishonor foul
To noble Hector, both his feet he bored
From heel to ancle, and, inserting thongs,
Them tied behind his chariot, but his head
Left unsustain'd to trail along the ground. 460
Ascending next, the armor at his side
He placed, then lash'd the steeds; they willing flew
Thick dust around the body dragg'd arose,
His sable locks all swept the plain, and all
His head, so graceful once, now track'd the dust, 465
For Jove had given it into hostile hands
That they might shame it in his native soil.
Thus, whelm'd in dust, it went. The mother Queen
Her son beholding, pluck'd her hair away,
Cast far aside her lucid veil, and fill'd 470
With shrieks the air. His father wept aloud,
And, all around, long, long complaints were heard
And lamentations in the streets of Troy,
Not fewer or less piercing, than if flames
549 Had wrapt all Ilium to her topmost towers. 475
His people scarce detain'd the ancient King
Grief-stung, and resolute to issue forth
Through the Dardanian gates; to all he kneel'd
In turn, then roll'd himself in dust, and each
By name solicited to give him way. 480
Stand off, my fellow mourners! I would pass
The gates, would seek, alone, the Grecian fleet.
I go to supplicate the bloody man,
Yon ravager; he may respect, perchance,
My years, may feel some pity of my age; 485
For, such as I am, his own father is,
Peleus, who rear'd him for a curse to Troy,
But chiefly rear'd him to myself a curse,
So numerous have my sons in prime of youth
Fall'n by his hand, all whom I less deplore 490
(Though mourning all) than one; my agonies
For Hector soon shall send me to the shades.
Oh had he but within these arms expired,
The hapless Queen who bore him, and myself
Had wept him, then, till sorrow could no more! 495
So spake he weeping, and the citizens
All sigh'd around; next, Hecuba began
Amid the women, thus, her sad complaint.

Ah wherefore, oh my son! wretch that I am,
Breathe I forlorn of thee? Thou, night and day, 500
My glory wast in Ilium, thee her sons

And daughters, both, hail'd as their guardian God,
Conscious of benefits from thee received,
Whose life prolong'd should have advanced them all
To high renown. Vain boast! thou art no more. 505
So mourn'd the Queen. But fair Andromache
Nought yet had heard, nor knew by sure report
Hector's delay without the city gates.
She in a closet of her palace sat,
A twofold web weaving magnificent, 510
With sprinkled flowers inwrought of various hues,
And to her maidens had commandment given
550 Through all her house, that compassing with fire
An ample tripod, they should warm a bath
For noble Hector from the fight return'd. 515
Tenderness ill-inform'd! she little knew
That in the field, from such refreshments far,
Pallas had slain him by Achilles' hand.
She heard a cry of sorrow from the tower;
Her limbs shook under her, her shuttle fell, 520
And to her bright-hair'd train, alarm'd, she cried.
Attend me two of you, that I may learn
What hath befallen. I have heard the voice
Of the Queen-mother; my rebounding heart
Chokes me, and I seem fetter'd by a frost. 525
Some mischief sure o'er Priam's sons impends.
Far be such tidings from me! but I fear
Horribly, lest Achilles, cutting off
My dauntless Hector from the gates alone,
Enforce him to the field, and quell perhaps 530
The might, this moment, of that dreadful arm
His hinderance long; for Hector ne'er was wont
To seek his safety in the ranks, but flew
First into battle, yielding place to none.
So saying, she rush'd with palpitating heart 535
And frantic air abroad, by her two maids
Attended; soon arriving at the tower,
And at the throng of men, awhile she stood
Down-looking wistful from the city-wall,
And, seeing him in front of Ilium, dragg'd 540
So cruelly toward the fleet of Greece,
O'erwhelm'd with sudden darkness at the view
Fell backward, with a sigh heard all around.
Far distant flew dispersed her head-attire,
Twist, frontlet, diadem, and even the veil 545
By golden Venus given her on the day
When Hector led her from Eëtion's house
Enrich'd with nuptial presents to his home.
Around her throng'd her sisters of the house

Of Priam, numerous, who within their arms 550
551 Fast held her, loathing life; but she, her breath
At length and sense recovering, her complaint
Broken with sighs amid them thus began.
Hector! I am undone; we both were born
To misery, thou in Priam's house in Troy, 555
And I in Hypoplacian Thebes wood-crown'd
Beneath Eëtion's roof. He, doom'd himself
To sorrow, me more sorrowfully doom'd,
Sustain'd in helpless infancy, whom oh
That he had ne'er begotten! thou descend'st 560
To Pluto's subterraneous dwelling drear,
Leaving myself destitute, and thy boy,
Fruit of our hapless loves, an infant yet,
Never to be hereafter thy delight,
Nor love of thine to share or kindness more. 565
For should he safe survive this cruel war,
With the Achaians penury and toil
Must be his lot, since strangers will remove
At will his landmarks, and possess his fields.
Thee lost, he loses all, of father, both, 570
And equal playmate in one day deprived,
To sad looks doom'd, and never-ceasing-tears.
He seeks, necessitous his father's friends,
One by his mantle pulls, one by his vest,
Whose utmost pity yields to his parch'd lips 575
A thirst-provoking drop, and grudges more;
Some happier child, as yet untaught to mourn
A parent's loss, shoves rudely from the board
My son, and, smiting him, reproachful cries—
Away—thy father is no guest of ours— 580
Then, weeping, to his widow'd mother comes
Astyanax, who on his father's lap
Ate marrow only, once, and fat of lambs,
552 And when sleep took him, and his crying fit
Had ceased, slept ever on the softest bed, 585
Warm in his nurse's arms, fed to his fill
With delicacies, and his heart at rest.
But now, Astyanax (so named in Troy
For thy sake, guardian of her gates and towers)
His father lost, must many a pang endure. 590
And as for thee, cast naked forth among
Yon galleys, where no parent's eye of thine
Shall find thee, when the dogs have torn thee once
Till they are sated, worms shall eat thee next.
Meantime, thy graceful raiment rich, prepared 595
By our own maidens, in thy palace lies;
But I will burn it, burn it all, because

Useless to thee, who never, so adorn'd,
Shalt slumber more; yet every eye in Troy
Shall see, how glorious once was thy attire. 600
So, weeping, she; to whom the multitude
Of Trojan dames responsive sigh'd around.

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