

## David 2 - Slaying Giants

We are skipping ahead in the Biblical narrative after David's anointing to 1 Samuel 17. After David had been introduced to Saul to bless him in his depression, the next event that takes place in David's life is the contest with Goliath, the giant of Gath. Of course, this is one of the many well known stories in the Bible, and yet I am shocked to find out how many people have no idea about what the reference to David and Goliath is. This goes to show how Biblically illiterate our culture has become. There are many references to the Bible and phrases from the Bible throughout all of our literature. You cannot truly appreciate literature without knowledge of these references. Everyone has seen the movie about Oliver Twist, but if you read the book and don't have familiarity with the Bible, you would not understand the description of Oliver as "a millstone around the parochial throat." This was a reference Jesus made to the judgment for those who would offend the least child. Authors that used Biblical references or even based whole works on the Bible include Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, John Milton, Mark Twain, and Leo Tolstoy. Shakespeare contains thousands of references. People who have no idea about the Bible are missing so much. I am saddened by the great number of people who have no idea what the story of David and Goliath is all about.

### 1. The Philistines' proposition -

The story begins with the armies of the Israelites and the Philistines drawn up for battle. There was a standoff between the two armies. Each one was on a mountainside with a valley in between. Whoever moved first ran the risk of being caught in the valley having to fight against a foe with the advantage of momentum, descending on them from higher ground.

1Sam 17:4-7 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span.

5And *he had* an helmet of brass upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass.

6And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.

7And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

The Philistines offered a proposition to Israel. If Israel could put forth a champion to beat theirs, then they would submit to them, and vice versa.

1Sam 17:8-11 And he [**Goliath**] stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array? *am* not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

10 And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

As we read the description of Goliath, you could see very quickly that the situation was greatly stacked against the Jews. Depending on how you define a cubit, Goliath was at least a foot and a

half taller than your average Israelite. He was probably taller than that – up to nine feet tall. Now, in reality, bigger does not always guarantee better, but it often does. The Philistines engaged in what we would call "psyops" today. Perhaps their theory was to draw out the Israelites by their giant. One possibility among many was that if they could get the Israelites to act out of religious pride they might move too quickly and stumble into a trap. One way we know that they were not sincere in their proposition was because when Goliath *was* slain, they did not offer themselves in submission to the Israelites. Instead, they tried to escape.

Next, we are given a picture of the *apparent* lesser qualifications of David for the fight he was going to engage in. While his brothers were at the battle front, David had been sent home to tend the sheep. His father decided to send him back to battle, but only in a supportive way as if he was unqualified for a fighting role. When David got to the front he heard the challenge of Goliath and heard the talk and the fear of the army. His older brother didn't think too much of David, either.

1Sam 17:28-30 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.  
29And David said, What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause?  
30And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

David was incensed at the audacity of the giant. He challenged his brother and the people, "Is there not a cause?"

David understood that this was indeed a worthy cause while his older brother didn't. Word of this came to Saul and he sent for David.

1Sam 17:32-37 And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

33And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

35And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

37David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

## 2. The giant's presumptions -

Goliath presumed, of course, because of his size and experience, that he was the odds on favorite to win. When he saw David come out against him, he actually felt insulted. He wondered if the Israelites thought so little about him that this ruddy youth was some kind of match.

1Sam 17:42-44 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw

David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

Here is the real presumption that Goliath held: He cursed David by his gods. Goliath marked himself as an enemy of God. This happens spiritually in modern day life all the time. It happens when people think that their worldly philosophy can outgun the truths of the Bible. Although it happens certainly in times of debate when atheists mock Christianity, it happens in far more common moments. When people dismiss you as a religious nut, it is because they use their atheistic values to judge you and condemn your biblical values. They are literally cursing you and God. A curse doesn't have to be somebody using a foul word. In fact it is more commonly known as a *malediction*, an evil word against you from *mal*, meaning evil, and *diction*, that which is spoken. People are more subtle than Goliath and not as bold and outspoken, usually. However, their dismissiveness is the same spirit that Goliath had.

This is sin that an immature Christian can commit also. Immature believers can disregard the warnings you give them from the Bible, but they do so at their own peril. When you are tempted to ignore Godly advice, think of Goliath and his disregard for God.

1Sam 17:45-51 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the

armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.

48And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was* no sword in the hand of David.

51Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

David was bold *in the Lord*. He held his ground and preached to Goliath. You might feel, sometimes, that people walk away laughing at you, but you need to know that inside they have a respect for your firm belief. I hear about this from people all the time. David pointed out that it didn't matter what weapons Goliath had, the battle is of the Lord. When you engage in a spiritual battle, you have to remember that it is not

between someone else and you, it is between them and the Lord. The one they are fighting against is the Lord. If I suggest that someone is going to Hell, it is not because I have the power to send them there. If they don't like the doctrine, they can take it up with God Who gave it...I am only the reporter of what God has said.

David then *ran* toward the enemy. His confidence was truly in the Lord. He took his stone, fitted it in his sling, started whirling it around, and let it fly straight into the forehead of Goliath. There is no question that God blessed David, but I will tell you exactly how later on.

I had a friend who tried to suggest that David's faith was not necessarily so great because he had taken five stones with him to the battle. He suggested that if his faith was so great, why did he feel he needed backup. What is interesting to find out as you continue reading through the Scriptures was that Goliath had four brothers.

### 3. David's preparation -

People miss the message of the contest between David and Goliath. They often think it is only about the victory of a little guy over a big guy against overwhelming odds. It calls to mind stories of the *mom and pop* store standing firm against being swallowed up by the momentum of a lumbering behemoth corporation. Sometimes people don't want to think about a big corporation being challenged when that corporation is making your iPhone and they are rumored to be using slave labor in China. The message is misapplied to those who in their envy feel powerless and perceive that anyone in power is there unfairly and needs to be brought down. The message is also trivialized to suggest that though you are small you can do anything if you put your mind to it like the little engine who could. Positive thinking is good, but just because "I think I can, I think I can, I

think I can" actually doesn't always work. The difference with David is that his trust was in God and his heart was not just full of envy.

The message of David and Goliath is *more* about how someone who is weak yet pure in heart can defeat a powerful but evil foe. It evokes an image of a Chinese man in a standoff against a column of tanks in Tiananmen Square.

The *actual* message is that you, too, can defeat the giants that Satan would throw up at you...if you *truly* follow David's example.

I want to back up a little bit to when David appeared before Saul. Let's remember that David pointed out his experience to Saul as a shepherd protecting his sheep. In fact, the sling shot that he used is commonly known as a shepherd's sling. Also, he had experience going after a lion and a bear to protect the sheep. Remember that David was a man after God's own heart. He had the power of God in his life. But take special note of the exchange between David and Saul:

1Sam 17:38-40 And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him.

40And he took his staff in his hand,<sup>1</sup> and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag

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<sup>1</sup>It is possible that David might have actually used a staff sling, which could hurl a heavier rock more easily.



which he had, even in a scrip;  
and his sling *was* in his hand:  
and he drew near to the  
Philistine.

Saul offered his armor of a brass helmet and a coat of mail (which probably didn't fit him) along with his sword. But David knew that this armor, as generous as it was, was useless to him because *he had not proved* them. He was unpracticed with them. If he had gone into battle with that armor, he would have been going into battle handicapped. If God was going to bless no matter what, it wouldn't matter that David had not tested out and proved Saul's armor. Instead, he went into battle with the armor he *was* practiced with. You would think that whirling around the stone in a pouch on the end of a string would be impossible to aim. However, this was not so impossible. Later, in the armies of Israel, there were those who formed a special regiment of left handed sling throwers who could hit a target within a hands breath. I watched a video of an ancient weapons expert as he demonstrated the accuracy of a sling as he went out skeet shooting. He did not even have a standing target. As the clay pigeon was shot out, he destroyed it not once but several times using a sling. David knew how to use a sling and what it could do. He had used it often enough. You give a boy a rock and he just can't help but throw it at a target. I made a bean bag game and put it outside. Now, a bean bag toss might seem a little childish, but to guys it's a challenge. We can't help ourselves. We actually have to be careful what we leave out in the yard, because the boys will be out there throwing it. I'll bet David had a lot of target practice when he was out tending the sheep. This might seem to diminish the blessing of David's take down of the giant, but not so. God could have blessed the Israelites going into battle, but instead He chose a youth. If he missed on his first shot, the giant would have been alerted to use his shield more.

David had one shot and he had to get it right the first time. It was because he had proved his armaments that God then blessed him with the victory.

Now here is the point: David did indeed depend on the blessing of God to hit his target, but he had given God something to bless. His arm was strong, he had practiced often, and he offered this up to God. He was prepared for the battle and God blessed his preparations. David had been prepared for the battle, long before the battle took place. If you want God to bless your study, you have to put the time in studying. If you want God to bless your witnessing, you have to put in time witnessing. If you want God to bless your relationships, you are going to have to invest time and effort in your relationships. If you want God to bless your finances, you have to give Him His portion. Don't just wait around for God's blessings...give Him something to bless.

Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians.

1Cor 9:24-27 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

Paul is making an allusion to the Greek athletic games. They practice so they can win an earthly prize. We practice so we can receive a heavenly prize. They had no cause; we have a righteous cause. He speaks of the discipline of self and keeping himself in

subjection so that when the day of battle comes God will have something to bless and he won't be a castaway.

Paul describes *our* armor in Ephesians 6.

Eph 6:10-18 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

13Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

*Our* battles are not with the Goliaths of this world. *Our* battles are spiritual. *We*, just like David, have a case. It is not my intention to just preach a self-help message about overcoming the giant obstacles that get in the way of fulfilling your dreams. The giants we battle are much bigger. They are against the wiles of the devil, against principalities,

powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Our weapons are not physical, but spiritual.

2Cor 10:4-5 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

The promise of putting on the whole armor of God is so that after withstanding what Satan will throw at you, that you will be found upright and still standing after all is said and done.

Notice the armor of Ephesians 6. As Paul used the illustration of a soldier's armaments, he began with the girdle of truth first. This girdle was a wide belt that all the other parts of the body armor was attached to. God's unchangeable truth is the foundation for everything else. It is not your truth and my truth, but God's truth. When you read the Bible we must first be concerned not about what it means to me or you, but what did *God* mean when He had it written. It is also about being *truthful*. We have to be truthful with the truth – we have to be able to admit to ourselves what the truth is. We have to be honest with ourselves when we are being rebellious and resisting what we know is right. Instead of trying to weasel our way around a problem, we have to be able admit things to ourselves.

The next part of armor mentioned is the breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate covers the heart, which is the seat of the will. Our flesh desires things for self, but armed with truth we have to protect our will and make righteous decisions.

The next things that are mentioned are the shoes. The shoes were like the treads on a tank in that they provided a

sure foundation. They had nails coming out of the soles that enabled the soldier to push off and drive forward. Notice that the shoes are associated with the Gospel. The obvious implication is that we are meant to move forward with the Gospel most specifically as we start out in our Jerusaleme and expand our witness outward to our Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world.

The shield of faith is listed here as a defensive weapon that when Satan's fiery darts of doubt and despair, accusation and libel, and even physical harm are thrown at us, we can stand the attack with our trust in God that He will give the victory ultimately. However, the shield of faith is an offensive weapon as well. You not only used the shield to defend, but to attack as well.

1John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

We are to attack with faith. March forward with faith in the strength of God to carry the victory.

You might wonder why the helmet is associated with salvation. That is because the mind is associated with the spirit. Our salvation for now is a spiritual salvation. Now, we are transformed in our mind.

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

So many people doubt their salvation because they have not fortified themselves in the affirmation of their salvation. We need to know God's Word so that when Satan sends his doubts we can point to the Scriptures for the assurance of our salvation.

The last thing that is mentioned is the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God. First, let me point out to you that the sword is carried in a scabbard that is attached to the girdle of truth. Next, let me point out that this is the most offensive part of our armament. It is used to be on the attack. Remember that when Jesus faced the tempter in the wilderness that with every temptation was hurled at Him, His response was with the sword which is the Word of God. We are promised that the Word of God will not return void but will accomplish God's purpose for which it is sent in Isaiah 55:11. David was armed with a sling and five aerodynamic stones. He was practiced with that armament. We have been given a different armament. But neither Saul's, nor David's, nor our spiritual armor is of any use unless it is proved – unless we have practiced using it, unless we have become one with our weapons.

David's sling and David's aim was blessed because he had given God something *to* bless. We need to keep practicing and rehearsing with each other, learning from each other's experiences in the faith. We do this so that in the evil day we will be found standing.

We do ultimately win. We might suffer the back and forth of victories and defeats, but the fact that there are any defeats at all is not a threat to the fact that we will enjoy the ultimate victory if we are in Christ. The last thing to be defeated is death.

1Cor 15:26,55-57 The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.

55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.

57 But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What giants are you facing in your

life? Do you have difficult people veritably mock God by dismissing your attempt to share the Gospel with them? Are you challenged with a temptation that wants to bring you under the power of sin? Are you actively preparing for when the time of temptation calls you out? Stay in God's word so you have something for God to bless. Hide God's Word in your heart (Ps 119:11) Get familiar with your sword which is the Word of God.

1. The Philistines' proposition - 1Sam 17:4-37
2. The giant's presumptions - 1Sam 17:42-51
3. David's preparation - 1Sam 17:38-40, 1Cor 9:24-27, Eph 6:10-18, 2Cor 10:4-5, 1John 5:4, Rom 12:2, 1Cor 15:26,55-57