

1 Samuel 17:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

Goliath's emergence as 'champion' (ish habbenayim, literally 'man of the between') suggests a professional warrior designated for representative combat. His height of 'six cubits and a span' (approximately 9.5 feet) placed him in legendary proportions, though some manuscripts read 'four cubits' (6.5 feet). Either way, Goliath represented humanly insurmountable opposition - the kind of giant that paralyzes faith and invites despair.

Historical Context

Gath was one of five Philistine city-states and home to other giants (2 Samuel 21:22). Representative combat, where armies agreed to abide by single combat's outcome, was practiced throughout the ancient Mediterranean. Such combat reduced casualties while settling disputes through perceived divine judgment.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What 'giants' in your life seem humanly impossible to overcome?
2. How does Goliath's impressive appearance represent the intimidating nature of spiritual opposition?

Interlinear Text

וַיֵּצֵא	אִישׁ	הַיָּבֵן יָם	מִמַּחֲנֶה וְ	פְּלִשְׁתֵּי יָם		
And there went out	a champion	H1143	out of the camp	of the Philistines		
H3318	H376		H4264	H6430		
גִּלְיָת	שְׁמוֹ	מִן ת	גָּבְהָ ו	שֵׁשׁ וְ	אַמּ וְ	וְזֶרֶת:
Goliath	named	of Gath	whose height	was six	cubits	and a span
H1555	H8034	H1661	H1363	H8337	H520	H2239

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 11:22 (Parallel theme): There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

1 Samuel 17:23 (Parallel theme): And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.