

David and Goliath

A young shepherd boy defeats the giant Philistine champion with a sling and a stone, trusting not in armor but in the Lord.

1 Samuel 17:1-58

CHARACTERS: David, Goliath, Saul, Jesse

THEMES: Faith over fear, God uses the unlikely, Trust in God

THE PHILISTINES GATHERED their forces for war and assembled at Socoh in Judah. Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah. The two armies faced each other on opposite hills, with the valley between them.

A champion named Goliath came out from the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet, wore a coat of scale armor weighing 125 pounds, and carried a bronze javelin and an iron-pointed spear whose head alone weighed fifteen pounds. A shield-bearer went ahead of him.

Goliath stood and shouted to the Israelite ranks: 'Why do you come out and line up for battle? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he kills me, we will become your subjects; but if I kill him, you will become our subjects.' Morning and evening for forty days, Goliath took his stand and issued his challenge. Saul and all the Israelites were terrified.

David, the youngest son of Jesse, tended his father's sheep at Bethlehem but went back and forth to the Israelite camp. When Jesse sent David with food for his brothers, David heard Goliath's challenge. He saw the Israelites running away in fear.

'Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?' David asked.

His brothers were angry at his boldness, but David's words reached Saul, who sent for him. 'Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine,' David told the king. 'Your servant will go and fight him.'

'You are not able,' Saul said. 'You are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.'

But David replied, 'Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear that attacked my father's sheep. This uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me from this Philistine.'

Saul dressed David in his own armor, but David could not walk in it. 'I cannot go in these,' he said. He took his staff, chose five smooth stones from the stream, and with his sling in hand approached the Philistine.

Goliath looked David over and despised him. 'Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks? Come here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds!'

David answered, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands.'

As Goliath moved closer to attack, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag, he took out a stone, slung it, and struck Goliath on the forehead. The stone sank in, and the giant fell facedown on the ground.

David ran and stood over him, drew Goliath's own sword, and killed him. When the Philistines saw their hero was dead, they fled, and Israel pursued them with shouts of victory.

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