

David and Goliath – 1 Samuel 17:1-58

Introduction:

There are few stories in the Bible as well known as the story of David and Goliath. Motivational speakers use it. Big business executives use it. Coaches for sports teams use it. And of course, pastors use this story. It is the classic story of facing impossible odds and winning.

Sadly, what most uses of this story miss is the key component. It was not simply a story about bravery, though certainly it contains that element. It is not simply a story about optimism. It is not a story about deception or taking unfair advantage.* It is not a story about the little guy outworking the big giant. It is a story about faith. It is about the faith of a young man that outshines the faith of the king. It is the story about a man of integrity, courage and above all, immovable faith in an all powerful God.

God said that people look at the outward appearance while he is looking at the heart (cf. 1 Samuel 16:7). In this chapter God gives us a glimpse into the heart of a giant man of faith, David. May David's example inspire us to walk by faith as well.

The Stand-Off – 1 Samuel 17:1-11

1. Back in chapter 14 Israel soundly defeated the Philistines, but Saul did not complete the task given him. Now they are back to challenge the armies of Israel. What fact is revealed in verse 1 that demands a response from Israel?
2. Describe the battlefield as detailed in verse 3.
3. What do we learn about the Philistine's champion in verse 4?
4. We have a description of Goliath's armour in verses 5-6. Describe his armour. What is the message of these verses? (add the detail of the shield bearer of verse 7)
5. We add a description of Goliath's weapon in verse 7. Describe the weapon and tell what the message we are given in this detail.

6. What does Goliath propose the armies do in verses 8-9? How does he taunt the Israelites in verse 10?
7. What was the response of Saul to this challenge? (vs. 11) Why might Saul be mentioned first? What is the response of the armies of Israel?

Here Comes David... 1 Samuel 17:12-30

8. Starting in verse 12 we are introduced to David and his family as if we have not met him before. Things have changed since we first met David in chapter 16. What two facts indicate some time has passed since the anointing of David to be the next king? (vss. 12-13)
9. What was David's role according to verses 14-15? What are we learning about the character of David?
10. How long did the two armies face each other and the giant shout threats (v. 16)? What keeps Israel from advancing and destroying their enemy? What lesson do we learn about fear here?
11. What does Jesse (David's father) tell David to do in verses 17-18? Why does Jesse send supplies? In what manner are the supplies to be taken to them?
12. According to verse 20, how did David respond to the instructions of his father? We learn something here about David. What is it?
13. David arrives as the armies line up facing each other, shouting out their war cries. It looks like there will be a battle. David hurries to find his brothers. As he seeks out his brothers, something happens that changes everything that day. What happens in verse 23?
14. What was the response of the soldiers of Israel when Goliath showed up (vs. 24)?
15. What information did David receive from the soldiers (vss. 25-27)? Why hasn't anyone taken the king up on his offer?

16. Look at verse 26. Though riches and position are offered to those who slay the giant, what is David's focus?
17. What is the attitude of Eliab, David's oldest brother, towards his little brother (vs. 28)? What does he accuse David of? Does this sound like the first time these two have clashed?

An Offer That Could Not Be Refused – 1 Samuel 17:31-40

18. Who gets wind that there is someone in the camp asking about the king's offers (v. 31)?
19. What offer does David make to the king in verse 32?
20. What is Saul's response to David's offer (v. 33)? Why?
21. In verses 34-37 David gives two examples of why he believes he can defeat this giant. What are they? What does this tell us about David?
22. David is not boasting in his ability. Who does David believe will win the victory over the Philistine giant (vss. 36-37)? What are we learning about David?
23. Does David's speech convince the king to let this "lad" be the champion for Israel (v. 37)? How does King Saul try to help David gain an advantage (v. 38)? Why does it not work?
24. How does David go out to face the giant (v. 40)? He took five stones from the brook – was this a sign of a lack of faith? Explain.

The Battle is Engaged – 1 Samuel 17:41-51

25. Goliath moves into battle mode, advancing on the Israelite position. What was his opinion of David (v. 42)? Why?

26. Taunting was a normal part of warfare. Yet Goliath betrays the fact that this is more than a battle between two soldiers, or even two armies. What does he reveal the true nature of the battle in verse 43? Explain.
27. In verse 45 David describes the weapons of the giant – quite intimidating. Yet David describes the weapons he comes with in verse 45 as well. What are they and how do they compare?
28. David throws back the taunts of the giant with a fearless response, and a prediction of what was about to happen. How does David see the battle going (vss. 46-47)? Who will bring the victory? Why would God let David win this battle according to these verses?
29. How did David overcome the giant (vss. 48-49)? Is this believable?
30. Why do you think there is a summary of what happened in verse 50?
31. What does David do in verse 51? Compare that to verse 46.
32. How did the Philistines respond when they saw their champion killed (v. 51)? How did the Israelite army respond (vss. 52-53)?
33. Verse 54 is puzzling. Where does it say David took the head of Goliath? Compare that to verse 57. Also, Israel does not possess Jerusalem yet. What might this mean?
34. What seems odd about verses 55-58? How might you explain what is happening here?

Conclusion:

David not only destroys the giant, but frees the army from the fear that paralyzed it. David was full of confidence, but not confidence in himself, but in the God he served. Every victory of the past David attributed to God, and the victory he believed would soon take place would also be the work of God. In Psalm 20:7 David wrote, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.” David demonstrated that in a powerful way on the battlefield that day. This is what made David a better king than Saul: trust in God.