

Bible Stories

DAVID and GOLIATH

1 Samuel 17:26

November 12, 2022

The story of David and Goliath has come to embody the struggle of the **"every man"** – the little guy – the underdog – the bullied who takes on the bully and knocks him off his pedestal - vanquishing the baddies from the land.

We cheer on our unlikely hero because he looks like us. He is not the **"Capped Crusader"** able to leap tall buildings in a single bound. He's unassuming and often overlooked, yet he's tough as nails and is willing to stand – alone if necessary – until the job is done.

Before we get to our story, we must unpack 2 very important details:

- When David stood that day across from Goliath, he had already been anointed king of Israel.
- David was well known to Saul prior to the events in the Elah valley.

Samuel still grieved for Saul, so finally, Yahweh had to tell him to stop grieving ---- it was time to move on – because the next king had been chosen from the family of Jesse in Bethlehem.

Samuel invited Jesse and the family to join him in sacrificing to Yahweh and after the sacrifice, Jesse's oldest son, Eliab was presented to Samuel.

Eliab was tall and good looking and Samuel immediately determined that he was the chosen of God. Yahweh had bad news for Samuel:

- **1 Samuel 16:7** - "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God does not see what man sees; for they look on the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks on the heart."

Down the list Samuel went – Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah, Nethanel, Raddai, Ozem and **"No Name"** – but none of the 7 sons of Jesse was the chosen of God. Samuel looked around and wondered if he had misheard God...

Samuel: *Do you have any more sons?*

Jesse: *Just David. But listen, he's the youngest and he's currently with the sheep.*

David was not important enough within the family to be included in the sacrifice or meal.

Samuel: *Go get him.... we can't have lunch until I've seen all your sons.*

- **1 Samuel 16:12-13** - Now David was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers.

That day the Spirit of God left Saul and came upon David. In the absence of the Spirit of God, Saul found his **"house"** empty and unprotected. Soon an evil spirit took up residence and would torment him, off and on - without mercy - for the rest of his life.

Because of the severity of these attacks, Saul's family decided that a skillful musician was needed to sooth him during these torments. A young man, at court, suggested David:

- **1 Samuel 16:18** - ... "I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a warrior, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence; and the LORD is with him."

David became an attendant to Saul and the Bible says that Saul loved David and David became his armor bearer. Every time the evil spirit tormented Saul, David would play his harp and the evil spirit would leave.

So, David, the anointed king of Israel played his harp for Saul, the rejected king of Israel. A very unusual situation indeed.

The Philistines had gathered **AGAIN** against Israel – this time to the Elah Valley.

The Philistines stood on one side of the valley and Israel stood on the other side of the valley.

Something interesting occurs in this story that doesn't happen in any other Bible story. Instead of a full-scale battle, which would have caused a great number of dead on both sides, the Philistines put forth one of their champions. They were proposing a mano-a-mano, winner-takes-all, event. Think WWE or MMA – Philistine style.

The loser's country would serve the winner's country. The Philistine's chose Goliath of Gath - a giant of a man. I mean, literally, a **GIANT**.

The Bible tells us that he was 6 cubits in height. We don't know exactly how long an ancient cubit was, but scholars believe it was between 18-21 inches. If we take the 18-inch measurement, Goliath was 9 feet tall. If we take the 21-inch measurement, he was 10 feet 5 inches tall.

- **Robert Wadlow**, is the tallest confirmed person EVER was 8 feet 11 inches.



- **Sultan Kosen**, from Turkey, is the current "**World's Tallest Man**" standing at an impressive 8 feet 3 inches tall



By any mathematical calculation, Goliath was a tall dude. But height was not his only impressive stat - He was **HUGE**. He had to be considering his armor, alone, weighed in at a whopping 126 lbs. Listen to the following description:

- **1 Samuel 17:5-7** - A bronze helmet was on his head, and he was clothed with scale body armor; the weight was five thousand bronze shekels. ⁶ Bronze greaves were on his legs, and a bronze javelin was *slung* between his shoulders. ⁷ The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam and the point of his spear *weighed* six hundred iron shekels. His shield bearer was walking in front of him.

Twice a day for over a month everyone would put on their armor, go outside, stand across the valley from each other and listened while Goliath taunted Israel:

- **1 Samuel 17:8-11** "Why have you come out to form ranks *for* battle? Am I not the Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Commission for yourselves a man and let him come down to me. ⁹ If he *is* able to fight with me and he defeats me, then we will be your servants; but if I prevail over him and defeat him, then you will be our servants and you will serve us. I hereby defy the battle lines of Israel today! Give me a man so that we may fight each other!"

Everyone in Israel's camp was terrified – including the king. No one was prepared to fight Goliath. King Saul offered his daughter in marriage as well as a lifelong military exemption to any soldier who would go out and kill Goliath. **NO TAKERS!!**

Where was David? He was not yet old enough to fight (under 20 – see Numbers 1:45), so he was dividing his time between tending to Saul and tending to his father's sheep. At this point in the story, he was at home with the sheep.

One day, Jesse told David to take some food to his older brother's, who were serving in the army. David arrived in camp just in time to hear Goliath's afternoon taunt and he was amazed and astonished.

David: *Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? Let no man's heart fail because of him; I will go and fight this Philistine.*

Then he inquired as to what had been offered as a reward – perhaps wondering if the incentive was simply not enough to justify the risk. I mean, why else would the army of God be so unwilling to fight this idol worshipper?

There was an interesting dynamic going on in Jesse's family, because the oldest, Eliab, obviously irritated at David's presence, scolded him, "**Why are you here? Who's taking care of the sheep? You are conceited and your heart is wicked. You only came to watch the battle.**"

My personal take is that Eliab was jealous. After all, he had been passed over in favor of David to be the next king of Israel. Anyway.....

Un-cowed by his brother's disapproval, David went looking for answers and was noticed.

Saul sent for David

David: *I will go and fight this man.*

Saul: *You can't. You're just a kid and he is seasoned fighter.*

Saul looked at Goliath and saw a giant too big to kill.

David looked at Goliath and saw a giant too big to miss.

David: *I've killed lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them because he has defied the armies of the living God. The same God who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.*

Saul: *Go ahead then, and God help you!*

David was given the king's armor, but quickly took it off – too cumbersome. Instead, he gathered 5 fist-sized stones and put them in his bag.

There David stood – a kid with a sling and a bag of rocks. Can you hear the laughter in the air? The odds were not in his favor. And yet, there he stood - unafraid:

- **1st Samuel 17: 45-47** - "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you....., that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD's and He will give you into our hands."

Incensed by the words of this **"boy,"** Goliath lumbered out onto the field of battle. Unencumbered by heavy armor, David ran quickly toward Goliath, taking a stone from his bag as he ran. Slipping the stone into his sling, David swung - 1, 2, 3, release. The stone flew straight and true and, **THUD!** It sunk deep into Goliath's forehead. Goliath slowly crumpled to the ground and was still.

- **1 Samuel 17:50-51** - So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him. ⁵¹ David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.

VICTORY!!

What do we do with this story?

How was it possible that one idol-worshipping giant had cowed the entire army of the Living God. God had systematically been rejected. Saul, and by extension, the army of Israel were relying on their own power, and they were no match for Goliath. They knew it and the Philistine knew it.

When David arrived on the scene, he quickly realized that this was a spiritual battle much more than it was a physical battle. He knew that he could not stand in his own strength, so he didn't even try. He made it clear to Israel's king and Israel's army:

- *I've killed lions and bears; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them because he has defied the armies of the living God. The same God who delivered me from the lion and the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.*

And to the Philistines:

- *"You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you....., that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD's and He will give you into our hands."*

Who the real Champion was.

David had 2 driving motivations that day:

- His trust in God's power.
- His jealousy for God's honor.

That's how you slay giants!