

a deeper dive

INTO YOUR FAVORITE BIBLE STORIES

5 – DON'T STOP BELIEVIN' – David and Goliath

“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...”

1 Samuel 17:47 NIV

There is no doubt about David’s faith as we read this familiar Biblical account of Israel’s history.

We get a clear sense of David’s enthusiasm

The armies of the Philistines and Israelites faced each other across the Valley of Elah. Each day for 40 days the Philistine champion warrior, Goliath would walk out into the valley and shout up a challenge to the Israelites.

“Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. ⁹If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.” ¹⁰And the Philistine said, “I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together.” 1 Samuel 17:8-10 ESV

The challenge of one champion to another was a method of dealing with battles that was commonly accepted in those days.

The truth was that King Saul, and his army were too frightened to take on the challenge.

DAVID came to the battlefield as a young man taking food to his brothers, who were part of the Israelite army. He heard the challenge and asked what was going on and who was going to do anything about it.

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We see David's sense of Righteous Indignation

David was incensed that an 'uncircumcised Philistine' should be allowed to 'defy the armies of the living God' (1 Samuel 17:25–26).

Two considerations, it seems, fired David up with a holy indignation:

- (1.) That the challenger was one that was a stranger to God (uncircumcised), and out of covenant with him.
- (2.) That the one's challenged were the armies of the living God, who were devoted to him, employed by him and for him. so the insults offered to them reflected upon the living God himself, and *that* he could not bear.¹

We learn about David's unquestionable confidence.

"The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!" 1 Samuel 17:37.

- **DAVID VOLUNTEER EVEN AGAINST WORLDLY LOGIC**
GOLIATH was a giant warrior representing the Philistines and was referred to as a 'champion . . . from Gath'.
 - His height is recorded as 'over nine feet tall' (about 3 meters, assuming a measure of a 'cubit' as about 18 inches).
 - The text describes the weight of his armor in some detail and based on the ancient references would have weighed around 150 lbs. (1 Samuel 17:5–7).

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So, David volunteered to take on the challenge himself. He went to see Saul, who thought the whole idea of young, small David taking on Goliath was absurd.

- **DAVID UNDERSTOOD HIS STRENGTHS**

After convincing Saul to commission his services in this battle, David refused his offer to wear the King's armor and picked up five smooth stones from a stream and went off to meet Goliath with a sling and his stones in his shepherd's pouch (1 Samuel 17:40).

David's faith made a visible impact

David's response was of great significance in demonstrating the kind of king that he would be one day.

He argued that while Goliath came with spear and javelin, he came *'in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel'* 1 Samuel 17:45.

It was God who would deliver Goliath into David's hands.

The Philistines were insulted that a young boy should be sent out to them, and Goliath made fearful threats against David.

David stood his ground, undaunted by the presence and power of the challenge.

Not only were the Philistines to learn about the LORD's power - so would the Israelites, for David continued:

'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' 1 Samuel 17:47.

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Goliath was killed by a stone slung with force and great accuracy by David right into the giant's forehead.

Through this victory David's reputation was established, and very quickly Saul saw him as a threat (1 Samuel 18).

David's faith and trust in God gave him victory

- For David, the Philistines represented a nation in rebellion against God.
 - Anyone who stood against the LORD Almighty would be judged by the LORD, and David anticipated well the result by his faith.
- David also found himself at odds with the Israelites, who had not shown such faith.
- It seems that almost reluctantly Saul said to David: *'Go, and the LORD be with you.'* Later Saul's reaction becomes evident as he regarded the killing of Goliath as evidence that the LORD was with David but not with him (1 Samuel 18:12).

The LORD blessed David, and from this time forward the light of leadership and trust shines on David in the narrative of God's chosen people.

God's blessings on him become deeper and deeper.

Goliath, the strong and big, had been defeated by the power of God in one who was young and weak.

ⁱ Matthew Henry commentary on 1 Samuel.