

THRU *the* BIBLE

1 Samuel 17 | "David & Goliath"

I. DAVID AND GOLIATH. (17)

A. (v. 4)

1. **"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."**

a. "champion" - Heb. "middle-man; a man of the between"

1) He was the man that came out in the space between the two armies.

b. "six cubits and a span" = ~9' 9"

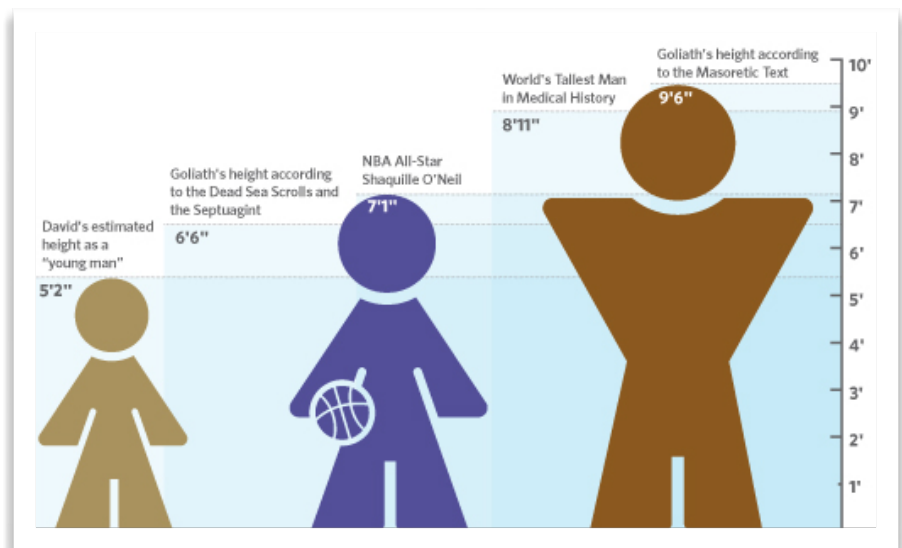
1) 1 cubit¹ = ~18 inches = 1.5 feet

a) $1.5 \times 6 = 9$ feet

2) 1 span² = .5 cubit = ~9 inches



Robert Wadlow 1940
8'11" tall



¹ A cubit was the length from the elbow to the top of your middle finger, thus about 18 inches.

² A span is the distance between your thumb and pinkie stretched out, thus about a half cubit, or 9 inches.

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- 3) Most formulas that estimate "ideal" body weight suggest that a man of Goliath's height should have weighed about 450 pounds. For comparison, Shaquille O'Neal stands at seven feet one inch. He weighed around 325 pounds when he was a fit NBA player, but the ideal body weight for that height is only about 220 pounds. Goliath may have weighed more than ideal estimates.³

B. (v. 5-7)

1. **"And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail;..."**
 - a. "mail" - Heb. "scales"
 - 1) These were jointed metal plates that looked like fish scales.

2. **"...and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass..."**
 - a. "five thousand shekels of brass" = ~130 lbs
 - 1) 1 shekel⁴ = 11.5 grams
 - a) 11.5 grams x 5,000 = 126.7658 lbs

³ <https://www.icr.org/article/could-you-outrun-goliath/>

⁴ A two-shekel weight was just discovered by the Temple Mount, and it weighed 23 grams, thus 1 shekel would be 11.5 grams. <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/temple-at-jerusalem/iron-age-weight-found-near-temple-mount/>

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3. "...And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders..."

- a. "greaves" - Heb. "shin-pieces of armor"
- b. "target" - Heb. "spear; javelin"

4. "...And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him."

- a. "six hundred shekels of iron" = ~20 lbs
- b. "shield" - Heb. *tsinnah* = a large shield that covers and protects the whole body

C. (v. 8)

1. "And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them,..."

- a. Those with gigantism or acromegaly generally have a deep, husky voice because of the cartilaginous proliferation of the larynx.

D. (v. 15)

1. "But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem."

- a. David had become Saul's personal musician and armor bearer (16:21), but with Saul on the battlefield, David was able to go home for a while.

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- b. **Q** = How old was David at this point?... Probably about 15 years old.
- 1) David will begin to reign at 30 years old, and he reigns for 40 years (**2 Sam. 5:4-5; 1 Kings 2:11; 1 Chron. 29:27**), thus he dies at 70 years old.
 - a) Solomon began to reign in 970 B.C., so David's reign began in 1010 B.C., when he was 30 years old. Thus, David was born in 1040 B.C., about 10 years after the beginning of Saul's reign.
 - 2) When Samuel called Jesse's family to the sacrifice, the 7 older sons were there, but they didn't bring David in, and David was out with the sheep.
 - a) Since Jewish boys were not considered men until their bar-mitzvah when they were 13 years old, could this mean that David was the only boy under 13 years old? Maybe only 10-12 years old?
 - 3) David was probably over 13 years old when he came to play music for Saul and became Saul's armorbearer (**1 Sam. 16:21**).
 - 4) When David fought Goliath, his 3 oldest brothers (Eliab - 22+, Abinadab - 21+, and Shammah - 20+), were on the battlefield (**1 Sam. 17:13**), so they were at least 20 years old (**Num. 1:3**), and David must be under 20 years old since he's not on the battlefield.
 - 5) David's other 4 older brothers are also not on the battlefield, so they probably were under 20 years old (**Num. 1:3**). They were probably all

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teenagers (Nathaneel - 19, Raddai - 18, Ozem - 17, & seventh Unnamed Brother - 16), which would make David, at most, 15 years old when he fought Goliath.

E. (v. 18)

1. **"...and take their pledge."**

a. In other words, bring home some token from them that they are okay.

1) This would be like a soldier sending a letter home from the battlefield overseas.

F. (v. 20)

1. **"And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle."**

a. David's journey was about 15 miles from Bethlehem to the camp of Israel, thus about a 6 hour walk.

G. (v. 28)

1. **"And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why comest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of**

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thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle."

- a. It seems that Eliab had a low view of his younger brother David and really didn't know him very well.
 - 1) He accused David of not being responsible by leaving the sheep, but really he was responsible and left the sheep with someone else. (v. 20)
 - 2) He thought David was proud, but really he was humble.
 - 3) He thought David had a bad heart, but really David was a man after God's own heart.
 - 4) He thought that David just wanted to come see dead people on the battlefield, but really he was sent by his father. (v. 20)

- b. **BATTLE #1 - Don't lose the big picture.**
 - 1) If you want to step out in faith and want to do something great for the Lord, it could be that those closest to you (wife, husband, family, kids, parents, friends, etc.) are going to be the first ones to hassle you.
 - a) Jesus Himself was hassled by friends and family (Mark 3:21), and He said, "*A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.*" (Mark 6:4)
 - 2) **NOTE:** If you want to step out and do something great for the Lord, just know that your first battle is not with a giant, it's with those closest

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to you. However, if you stop there and engage with the battle, you'll never get to the real issue. David is not there to fight with Eliab and settle family problems. He's there to fight bigger battles and is genuinely concerned with the glory of God.

- 3) **KEY:** You might be a giant killer, but someone is always gonna put a limit on you.

H. (v. 29)

1. ***"And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"***
 - a. This seems to indicate that this was a common occurrence by his older brother Eliab.

I. (v. 33)

1. ***"And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."***
 - a. **BATTLE #2 - Don't listen to the Experts.**
 - 1) Conventional wisdom would say that David, an inexperienced young man, should not go fight Goliath, an older, experienced warrior.
 - 2) **NOTE:** Saul was trying to analyze how David would be able to kill the giant.

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- a) Too many people get caught up with paralysis of analysis. Don't let people tell you that you can't do it.
 - b) **KEY:** Don't let the experts tell you what God can do and what God can't do because the Church will sit around and nothing will ever get done.
- 3) **KEY:** God is not looking for people who are qualified, He's looking for people who are available.
- a) Cf. **1 Corinthians 1:26-29** - *"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."*
 - b) **KEY:** So often, God gone outside the conventional wisdom of man and done a great work!
 - i. Many missionaries that God used greatly were rejected by mission boards, but they were still called by God and they slew giant obstacles.

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- b. *"for thou art but a youth"*
- 1) I'm amazed in the Scriptures how God seems to use young people to do amazing things for His kingdom!
 - a) Cf. **Jeremiah 1:4-10** - *"Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."*
 - b) Cf. **Daniel 1:17** - Daniel and his 3 friends were used by the Lord as they stood against the culture in the name of the Lord.
 - c) Cf. **1 Timothy 4:12** - The Apostle Paul told Timothy, *"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."*

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J. (v. 35)

1. ***"And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him."***

a. *"and smote him"* - Heb. *"attacked; fatally struck; slew"*

1) This is GNARLY!!! David attacked and killed a lion and a bear!

b. **Q** = How did David kill them?... We don't really know. But it makes me wonder, what was in David's other hand if he had it by the beard with the other one?...

1) Not his sling, not enough room to swing it.

2) Maybe his shepherd's staff (v. 40).

3) I would want a 12 gage in my other hand!

4) **Illust.** - A guy from Joe Focht's church in Philly said that when he was in Vietnam that one of the soldiers in his company started screaming and they looked up and a tiger (over 10' long) took him out of the foxhole and grabbed him with one arm pinched against his side. He was in the tiger's mouth and the tiger was running up the side of the hill with the guy flopping in his mouth. He said that they didn't want to take the shot because they didn't want to kill the guy. They didn't know what to do. But the guy has just for a package from home and he had a can of shaving cream in his big pocket in his fatigues, and he had the presence of mind while his one arm was jammed in the tigers mouth

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that he pulled out the can of shaving cream and shot the shaving cream up the tiger's nose! And the tiger spit him out, so the guys shot the tiger and killed it. So, what do you want in your other hand when you've got a lion by the beard?! Shaving cream?

K. (v. 36)

1. ***"Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God."***
 - a. This young shepherd boy has more HUTZPAH than any of the soldiers of Israel!!
 - b. **NOTE:** What we are in solitude is what we'll be in public.

L. (v. 38-39)

1. ***"And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him."***
 - a. *"Saul armed David with his armor"*
 - 1) Saul is over 7 foot tall and is trying to put his XXL onto this stripling David.

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- b. *"his own sword"* - Saul's sword (13:22)

- c. *"for he had not proved it"*
 - 1) *"proved"* - Heb. *"tested; attempted"*
 - a) David had not been trained as a soldier and never wore armor before.

- d. **BATTLE #3 - Never try to fight with someone else's armor!**
 - 1) You can't fight with someone else's relationship with the Lord.
 - 2) It's most difficult when somebody's appealing for your well-being, but they're doing it in the flesh.
 - a) They say, "The Lord be with you, but you need this and you need that," and they load you down with all this junk.
 - 3) **KEY:** If the Lord has sent you, then you don't need an expert in giant killers telling you how to go out and kill a giant. If they're experts, then why aren't they out there killing the giant?!

M. (v. 40)

- 1. ***"And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine."***

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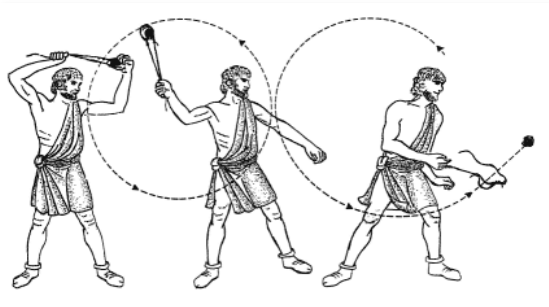
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a. **BATTLE #4 - Defeating the Giant.**

b. "sling"

- 1) Don't think of a wooden-forked branch with a thick rubber band like our modern slings. The ancient hand slings were usually a single, long strip of leather with a central pocket for the stone. Also, the longer the sling, the greater its range, with the long-range ones at about 3 feet long.⁵



- a) Unlike the Sunday school coloring books, the method of releasing a stone from a sling would be with an underhand motion.⁶
 - b) Historians tell us that some slingers could hurl their stones as far as 440 yards (1/4 mile)!
 - c) Experiments have shown that the stone leaves the sling in excess of 60 miles per hour!
- 2) The Tribe of Benjamin was known for an elite corps of slingers which were mostly left-handed, and we are told, "every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss." (**Judges 20:15-16; 1 Chron. 12:2**)
 - 3) David, being a shepherd boy always out in the field by himself watching the sheep, what else is he going to do but practice slinging stones?

⁵ <https://christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-slingsforkids.html>

⁶ How to make a sling like David's. <https://youtu.be/srao1ag5S5Y>

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Especially knowing he would at times have to defend his flock.

c. "five smooth stones"

1) **Q** = Why did David need *five smooth stones* if he only needed one?...

a) Some say that it was because he might need more if he missed, but I don't think it was that at all.

b) I think it was because Goliath had FOUR BROTHERS (2 Sam. 21:22), and David was ready to take them all on!

i. Goliath's father was *Raphah* (2 Sam. 21:16, 18, 20, 22; 1 Chron. 20:5, 8).

a. Some have misread these verses in 2 Samuel 21 to say that "*the giant*" refers to Goliath, thus Goliath would have four sons. However, the Hebrew text shows this word as a proper name, Raphah, who would then be the father of the four brothers, plus Goliath (1 Chron. 20:5).

ii. Goliath had FOUR BROTHERS.

a. One brother was named Lahmi, "*whose spear staff was like a weaver's beam,*" and he was killed by one of David's might

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men, Elhanan the son of Jair ([2 Sam. 21:19](#); [1 Chron. 20:5](#)).

- b. The second brother was Ishbibenob, which was killed by Abishai the son of Zeruiah, David's sister ([2 Sam. 21:16-17](#)).
- c. The third brother was Saph, killed by Sibbechai the Hushathite ([2 Sam. 21:18](#)).
- d. The fourth brother is not named, but is known for having 12 fingers and 12 toes, and was killed by David's nephew Jonathan, the son of Shimea the brother of David ([2 Sam. 21:20-21](#); [1Chron. 20:6-7](#)).

N. (v. 42)

1. "And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance."

- a. "fair countenance" = no battle scars

O. (v. 51)

1. "Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith."

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And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled."

- a. "champion" - Heb. "mighty man"
 - 1) Different Hebrew word than in verse 4.

P. (v. 54)

1. "And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent."

- a. "and brought it to Jerusalem"
 - 1) At that time, Jerusalem was not a Jewish city, but a Jebusite city. So, either:
 - a) David brought Goliath's head right away, which would have made the Jebusites quite happy since they did not side with the Philistines.
 - b) Or, this speaks of David eventually bringing the head of Goliath with him when he came to Jerusalem later and captured the city.
- b. "but he put his armor in his tent"
 - 1) Later on, the sword of Goliath was eventually placed in the Tabernacle in Nob (1 Sam. 21:9).

Q. (v. 56)

1. "And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is."

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a. "stripling" - Heb. "young man"

R. (v. 55)

1. **"And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell."**

a. **Q** = Why didn't Saul recognize David since David played music before him and he had been Saul's armor bearer? Here a few possibilities:

- 1) Quite a bit of time had gone by since David left to go home (v. 15).
 - a) If it was a few years later, David would be a little older and it could be that Saul doesn't recognize him.
 - i. Maybe David grew a beard as he matured?
- 2) Saul is losing his mind and just forgot.
- 3) Probably, it could be that Saul recognized and knew David, but couldn't remember who his father was, thus the question, "Who's son is this young man?"
 - a) **NOTE:** Saul would need to know who David's family was because of the rewards given earlier (v. 25), which included the family being free from paying taxes, and to check out the family before giving his daughter in marriage.

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- b. **Illust.** - Years ago, I was the worship leader for CCBC, and the first few weeks, until I could organize the students to lead worship, I was always up there leading worship before the student body. When I ran into Liesl and met her for the first time, I knew she was a first semester student since I had been there for 3 years and knew all the student body, but I introduced myself and said, "Are you a first semester student?" And she said, "Yes. Are you?" I thought to myself, "I've been up in front leading worship for a few weeks, and you don't know who I am?! That's awesome! Either I'm a really great worship leader since people aren't focused on me, or she's just really focused on the Lord and doesn't care who is up front!" Either way, SCORE!!