



First Baptist Church Selmer

FIRM FOUNDATION • DAVID AND GOLIATH • 1 SAMUEL 17:1-21, 31-52 • 10/22/2023

MAIN POINT

Jesus is the greater David, the conquering King and Champion who defeated our greatest foe for all time.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the best underdog victory story you have ever witnessed or heard of?

When the game is on the line, would you be more likely to trust the underdog or the seasoned veteran? Why?

The story of David defeating Goliath is one of the most known and loved in the Bible. We like a good underdog story, but the truth is, few of us ever really believe in the underdog until after the fact. In the same way, David's family and friends didn't think much of him until after he defeated Goliath. This was God's intention. David's story is meant to point us to Jesus, God's Son, who no one would have expected to save the world. When all seemed hopeless, Jesus showed himself to be the greater David, the conquering King and Champion who defeated our greatest foe for all time.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 SAMUEL 17:1-11.

1 Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle. And they were gathered at Socoh, which belongs to Judah, and encamped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim. 2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in line of battle against the Philistines. 3 And the Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. 4 And there came out from the camp of the Philistines a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. 5 He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. 6 And he had bronze armor on his legs, and a javelin of bronze slung between his shoulders. 7 The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And his shield-bearer went before him. 8 He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why have you come out to draw up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. 9 If 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." 10 And the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together." 11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. (ESV)

How would you characterize the situation Israel found themselves in?

Israel was terrified and frozen, unable to solve the gigantic problem before them. The bigger picture of the gospel is that sin is the greatest problem we face, and we are helpless to do anything about it. Ephesians 2:12 states that, before Jesus came to our rescue, we were without hope in the world. Romans 5:16 puts it this way, "For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly."

Goliath asked, "Why do you line up in battle formation?" What are some useless ways people try to face the power of sin in their lives today?

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 SAMUEL 17:12-21.

12 Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years. 13 The three oldest sons of Jesse had followed Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. 14 David was the youngest. The three eldest followed Saul, 15 but David went back and forth from Saul to feed his

father's sheep at Bethlehem. 16 For forty days the Philistine came forward and took his stand, morning and evening.

17 And Jesse said to David his son, "Take for your brothers an ephah of this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp to your brothers. 18 Also take these ten cheeses to the commander of their thousand. See if your brothers are well, and bring some token from them."

19 Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines. 20 And David rose early in the morning and left the sheep with a keeper and took the provisions and went, as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the encampment as the host was going out to the battle line, shouting the war cry. 21 And Israel and the Philistines drew up for battle, army against army. (ESV)

Among the four brothers, what was David's role during this crisis?

David was from Bethlehem, and Jesus was from Bethlehem. Physically, there was nothing about David that made people think he was special, and there was nothing about Jesus' appearance either that would draw people to Him as a leader. When looking at the hopeless situation Israel was in, people were searching for a hero, so no one would think to give young David a second glance. When looking at the hopeless situation Israel was in while waiting for a Savior, no one thought someone like Jesus could possibly be God's Answer.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 SAMUEL 17:31-40.

31 When the words that David spoke were heard, they repeated them before Saul, and he sent for him. 32 And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." 33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth." 34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, 35 I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him. 36 Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 And David said, "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!”

38 Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail, 39 and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.” So David put them off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine. (ESV)

Considering that no one else accepted Goliath’s challenge, what does this tell us about David?

What changed Saul’s mind between verses 33 and 37?

What do you learn about David’s outlook in these verses?

In what ways did people scoff at the idea that Jesus was the Messiah that had come to rescue them?

David was an Israelite. He was on their side, and he was in Eliab’s family. He had come down to the battlelines with good purpose, yet his own people assumed the worst about him. Similarly, Jesus came from Heaven to earth and His own people turned their noses up at Him, too. In Mark 6:3, they asked, ‘Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?’ So they were offended by him.”

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 SAMUEL 17:41-52.

41 And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him. 42 And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance. 43 And the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 The Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field.” 45 Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with 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 defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this

day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand."

48 When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David. 51 Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. 52 And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron. (ESV)

How would you describe David's battle plan—sit back and wait or take the initiative?

What do you think David's brothers and the rest of Israel thought about David running toward Goliath with a sling and a stone?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18. Much the same as a sling and a stone, why is the cross "foolishness" to those who are perishing?

David ran toward the fight (1 Samuel 17:22,32,48) and Jesus ran toward the cross. David slung a stone to defeat the giant Goliath and Jesus' death on the cross slung the stone that defeated sin and death, the greatest giants of all time (Heb. 2:14). Throughout David's life, God continued to show that all along He was redeeming a people by His grace for His glory. Jesus is the greater David, the Conquering King and Champion of our enemy.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Which truth did you need to hear the most today—that God is at work in your hopelessness? That Jesus runs to your battle? That Jesus has defeated the power of sin and death in your life? Explain.

What battle do you need to run toward in faith and the power of Jesus, who, ultimately, has already won the victory?

How might you share the gospel with someone using the story of David and Goliath?

PRAYER

Praise Jesus, your Conquering King, and Champion. Thank Him for defeating sin and death on your behalf. Ask Him to help you never minimize belief in Him or diminish His power by your actions, but to fully embrace Him in both faith and obedience.

COMMENTARY

| 1 SAMUEL 17:1-21; 31-40

17:1-2 The heartland of Benjamin and Judah was approachable from the coast through six valleys. The Philistines already had come up the Aijalon Valley (13:23). During the days of Samson (Jdg 13-16), they had come up the Sorek Valley. Now they were coming up the Valley of Elah and already controlled Socoh and Azekah. If they got much farther up the valley, they could come up the ridge route into the hill country and threaten Bethlehem, Hebron, and Saul's capital, Gibeah. The situation was desperate for Saul and his army.

17:3 The word translated "valley" in verse 2 designates a broad, flat valley. The word translated ravine denotes a narrower, more sharply defined valley or wadi. Today, the valley pinches in a bit east of Socoh, perhaps marking the site of the ancient conflict.

17:4 Recent archaeological finds at Tel es-Safi, the site of ancient Gath, confirm that the name Goliath was used among the Philistines around this period. Two other early manuscripts (LXX, DSS) state that Goliath was "six feet, nine inches tall." However, the description of Goliath's combat gear appears to support the larger height of nine feet, nine inches tall. At either height, Goliath would have towered over the much smaller Israelites.

17:5-7 The sheer spectacle of Goliath's armor and weapons frightened the Israelite army. At the same time, their weight would have restricted Goliath's agility. He probably assumed he would not have a prolonged fight with anyone.

17:8-9 Goliath challenged and taunted the Israelites. With his words Choose one of your men, Goliath suggested representative combat—the army of the losing combatant would become servants of the army of the victorious combatant.

17:10 The Hebrew word translated defy first came from Goliath's mouth, but it occurs four other times in the account (vv. 25,26,36,45), with the last three emphasizing Goliath's mocking of God's honor.

17:11 The Israelites needed their leader to articulate a plan of response, but King Saul had none.

17:20 David must have left very early in order to have made the 15-mile journey in time to see the army... marching out.

17:21 It appeared perhaps another day of standoff with the giant Goliath was forthcoming.

17:33 Saul rejected David's bold offer because David was just a youth, and because Goliath had been in training as a warrior from his youth.

17:34 Wild animals such as a lion or a bear were always threats to a lamb from the flock, and the shepherd's fighting ability was the lamb's only defense.

17:36 Lions and bears (lit "the lion and the bear") probably best gives the sense of the translation. David was probably describing his various encounters with wild animals rather than identifying two specific incidents. This uncircumcised Philistine would suffer the same fate as these animals for his defiance of the Lord (see note at v. 26).

17:37 The word rescued is the same word that appeared in verse 35; David rescued the sheep, and God rescued him. Now, God would rescue His flock Israel. Encouraged by David's faith, Saul found the courage to invoke God's name in the blessing, May the Lord be with you .

17:38-39 Saul brought his own military clothes for David to wear, a fact that suggests that although he was the youngest, David may not have been smaller than the king. David tried on the bronze helmet and other armor, but he was not accustomed to wearing them, so he took them off. Ironically, it would not be the last time David wore a king's clothes.

17:40 Rather than wearing royal armor, David took weapons with which he was most familiar. The five smooth stones he chose would have been roughly the size of tennis balls and would fly straighter than jagged stones. As a shepherd, he had likely become

proficient with his sling, which would also enable him to attack Goliath from a distance instead of in close combat, where the giant would have a big advantage.

17:42 Goliath saw David as an unfit challenge to his skill as a warrior. He was just a youth, and his features did not show that he had battle experience.

17:43 Goliath began his psychological warfare (“trash talk”) against David by suggesting the staff David carried was fit only to beat a dog. The statement he cursed David by his gods further slants the account toward describing a battle between the gods of the Philistines and the God of Israel rather than just a battle between two men.

17:45 David’s response to Goliath highlights the contrast in battle strategy. The Philistine relied on his dagger, spear, and sword (or sword, spear, and javelin), but David fought in the name of (as the representative of and with the authority of) Yahweh of Hosts, who was the God of Israel’s armies. Goliath had defied Him, but now the Lord would triumph over him through His servant.

17:46 Hand you over to me is literally “shut you into my hand,” or leave no way of escape. David’s reference to the Philistine camp meant the outcome of their personal battle would have implications for the Philistine army. Birds of the sky and the creatures of the earth mimicked Goliath’s mocking taunt (v. 44). David insisted that when victory was his, all the world would know that Israel had a God mighty enough to rescue in seemingly impossible situations. David’s concern was that the nations would also know the power of Yahweh.

17:47 This whole assembly probably designates Israel’s army, but it may include all who were present that day. David testified that the Lord saves, but not by sword or by spear. Since the battle was His, He would fight and win His way.

17:49 After a lengthy anticipation of the battle in the narrative, the battle was over almost as soon as it began. The words fell on his face describe Goliath falling face-forward. The force of the stone’s impact likely rocked him backward initially, but then he either lurched forward again to complete his fall or spun around face first as he continued to fall back (away from David) to the ground.

17:50 This emphasizes the unlikelihood of David’s victory, which gives glory to God. And killed him is a summary statement of the whole event. David landed the actual death blow not with a stone but with Goliath’s own sword (v. 51).

17:51 Goliath was badly wounded but was yet living when David reached him. Unwilling to stop short of finishing his task, David used Goliath's own sword to kill him and cut off his head. Seeing that their official representative in this death match was dead, the Philistines turned and ran back down the valley toward Gath.