



August 17, 2014

1 Samuel 17

*“David and a Defiant Giant”*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

It was bound to come along sooner or later and here it is, Pastor Gary’s message on what’s likely the most widely known account found in the Bible; the story of David and Goliath! If you were to take a poll, you’d probably find that more people know something about this story than they do about Daniel and the Lions’ Den or Noah and the Flood or Jonah and the “Whale.”<sup>1</sup> It’s also the case that every Sunday school student has heard this story, and even people who don’t attend church or read the Bible know about this epic and heroic story. The account of David and Goliath has all the elements of a great movie that would appeal to us, including good versus evil; a hero versus a giant villain; love and war; and a good ending in which the villain dies and the hero gets the girl!

### We Need To Be Cautious!

1. Because this story is and so iconic and well known, and, because it’s the stuff from which movies are made, if we’re not careful, our minds can distort this story into an almost fable-like myth.
2. We need to be careful that this story about a boy and his slingshot versus a giant with armor and a sword doesn’t turn into a nice little fairy tale like Jack and the Beanstalk!
3. David and his encounter with Goliath was a real event that happened circa 1023BC, and it they are real people, who gathered at a real place, to fight a real battle, that was won by a real God!

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<sup>1</sup> For clarification, according to [Jonah 1:17](#), the Bible indicates this was not a whale, but *“a great fish.”*

4. Since we have a great storyline about an underdog defeating a giant against all odds, this is a story that appeals to our own underdog challenges against our own great obstacles, we are wont to interject ourselves into the story!
5. Whenever the story of David and Goliath comes up most people put themselves in David's sandals and believe, that with God's help, they too can win the victory over their obstacles and problems.
6. Because this is so true, the application of this account is almost always taught incorrectly.
7. Pastor Gary suggested that one way we can see how frequently improper application occurs is to look at a few selected sermon titles.<sup>2</sup>
  - a. "Five Stones for Victory"
  - b. "Facing your Giants"
  - c. "Overcoming your Giants"
  - d. "If David Can Defeat Goliath, So Can I"
  - e. "What is Your Goliath?"
  - f. "Become a Giant Killer"
  - g. "Man Up!"
  - h. "Waddya Lookin' At?!"
  - i. "Shaq-sized Problems Require God-sized Miracles"
  - j. "Goliath is Big, but David's Got Game"
8. The problem with these and other titles, and the angle these pastors used of putting people in David's place, is that it makes us the hero!
9. We are not the heroes; God is the hero of the account of David's victory over Goliath!

### The Philistines Versus The Israelites

10. The Philistines were perennial enemies of the Israelites, and a better way to understand this is to consider that they were essentially the Hamas<sup>3</sup> of that day.
11. The Philistines had gathered at Socoh<sup>4</sup> in Judah to go to war against the Israelites.

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<sup>2</sup> Pastor Gary used [sermoncentral.com](http://sermoncentral.com) to find the message titles he shared in this message.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.idfblog.com/hamas/>

<sup>4</sup> Socoh was about 15 miles due west of Bethlehem.

12. The Israelites, who were on one side of the Valley of Elah, went out to meet the Philistines, who were assembled on the opposite side.
13. The Philistines wanted to fight what was known as a “representative battle.”
  - a. In this specific type of warfare, opposing army would send out one man, who would fight on behalf of the entire army.
  - b. Being defeated in this man-to-man fight meant that the entire army became subjects of the victor’s army.

### Goliath

14. The Philistines put forth their champion, Goliath.
  - a. The Hebrew for champion, is ish benayim, which means, “man in the middle,” i.e., the representative soldier.
  - b. Goliath stood about 9’6” according to the biblical measurements of six cubits and a span.
    - i. **1 Samuel 17:4** - *“... a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.”* (KJV)
      1. A cubit was measured from the tip of a man’s middle finger to his elbow, which averaged about 18 inches.
      2. A span was the measurement of a man’s hand from the thumb to the little finger or pinky, which averaged about six to nine inches.
  - c. He was likely a descendant of the Rephaites, which was a giant race of people mentioned in the Bible, who, along with the Nephilim, existed before and after the Flood.
  - d. These races of giant people mysteriously faded off the pages of the Bible, so we only have so much to go on when we try to understand more about where they came from, etc.
  - e. It’s true that Goliath was a huge man, however, he wasn’t the tallest man mentioned in the Bible, because that distinction belongs to Og, king of Bashan.
    - i. **Deuteronomy 3:11** - *“Only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaites. His bed was made of iron and was more than thirteen feet long [9 cubits - KJV] and six feet wide [4 cubits - KJV]. It is still in Rabbah of the Ammonites.”*
    - ii. The Bible tells us that his bed measured 13½ ft. long and 6ft. wide!
  - f. By way of comparison, the tallest man ever documented was Robert Wadlow, who measured 8’11”. <sup>5 6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/3000/tallest-man-ever>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yE\\_G84ewGEg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yE_G84ewGEg)

- g. Again, we need to be reminded that Goliath was not a mythical figure; he was a real person in a real place in a real time.
15. We know from skeletal remains found by archaeologists that the average height of a man in Israel in Old Testament times was approximately 5'5".
    - a. The average height of a man in the U.S. today is 5'9½".
  16. [1 Samuel 17:5](#) tells us Goliath *"wore a coat of scale armor"* which weighed *"five-thousand shekels,"* which is approximately 125lbs.!
  17. For 40 days, every morning and evening, Goliath came out to trash-talk and taunt the Israeli army.
  18. Every single soldier in the Israeli army chose to do nothing when it came to Goliath's twice-a-day rants.
    - a. [1 Samuel 17:11](#) - *"... Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified."*
    - b. [1 Samuel 17:24](#) - *"... they [Israelites] all ran from him in great fear."*

#### David

19. On the 41<sup>st</sup> day, Jesse, David's father, sent David to the battlefield for the purpose of sending cheese and bread to his brothers, as well to find out how they were doing and what was happening on the front lines.
  - a. Jesse's oldest sons, Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah, were there, according to [1 Samuel 17:17-24](#).
  - b. It is believed that David was about 17 years old at this time.
20. When David arrived in the camp he heard Goliath's rants first-hand.
21. When he was in the camp, David also learned about the "prizes" that awaited the man who killed Goliath, which ultimately weren't enough to bring one single man forward to face Goliath.
  - a. [1 Samuel 17:25](#) - *"Now the Israelites had been saying, 'Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his father's family from taxes in Israel.'"*
22. Just to make sure, David asked for a clarification about the rewards King Saul was offering.
  - a. [1 Samuel 17:26-27](#) - *"David asked the men standing near him, 'What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the*

*armies of the living God?’ They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, ‘This is what will be done for the man who kills him.’ ”*

23. Upon hearing David’s conversation with other soldiers, David’s oldest brother, Eliab, came unglued!
  - a. [1 Samuel 17:28–30](#) – *“When Eliab, David’s oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, ‘Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.’ ‘Now what have I done?’ said David. ‘Can’t I even speak?’ he then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before.”*
24. Someone gave a report to Saul about what David had been saying, so Saul sent for him.
  - a. [1 Samuel 17:32–33](#) – *“David said to Saul, ‘Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.’ Saul replied, ‘You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.’ ”*
  - b. It must have been quite a scene when Saul tried to put his armor on David, because he couldn’t even walk around the room, according to [1 Samuel 17:40–45](#).
25. David wasn’t motivated to fight Goliath, because of the “prize money” or the tax exemption or even having the king’s daughter as his wife.
26. What motivated David to fight a fierce, defiant, giant – when no one else would step forward – was a deep desire to defend the honor and Name of God!
27. Repeatedly, when David confronted Goliath, he invoked the Name of the Lord.
  - a. *“I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty”* – [1 Samuel 17:45](#)
  - b. *“[The] God of the armies of Israel”* – [1 Samuel 17:45](#)
  - c. *“This day the Lord will hand you over to me”* – [1 Samuel 17:46](#)
  - d. *“All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves”* – [1 Samuel 17:47](#)
  - e. *“[The] battle is the Lord’s”* – [1 Samuel 17:47](#)
28. For David, this was all about the Lord, and for the glory of the Lord!
29. All of the remarkable details of God’s victory through his servant David are found in [1 Samuel 17:48–58](#).

30. Israel had a great victory the day David slew Goliath, but more importantly, God had a great victory that day!

### Jesus

31. Again, the danger of inserting ourselves into the story as the person of David is that we make ourselves the hero instead of God.

- a. God is the hero of this story!
- b. God brought the victory!
- c. God was due all of the glory!

32. David is not a picture of us, because in this account, we would be the fear-filled, cowardly Israelites hiding in the hills!

33. In this account, David is a picture of Jesus.

- a. [Isaiah 11:1](#) - *“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”* (KJV)
- b. [Romans 15:12](#) - *“And again, Isaiah says, ‘The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.’ ”*
- c. [Revelation 22:16b](#) - *“I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”*

34. Jesus is the greater David who came to slay the giant of sin and death that stood opposed to us.

35. Jesus is the greater David who did what no one else would and no one else could.

36. Jesus is the greater David who stood in the gap and fought on our behalf.

37. Jesus is the greater David who triumphed over the Enemy and conquered sin and death with the single blow of the cross of Calvary.

38. It is God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!

### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [1 Samuel 17:1-5](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Allow the people in your group to share their remembrances of sermons, Bible studies, etc., that focused on David and Goliath.
  - a. How do you remember Goliath and the Philistine army being portrayed?
  - b. How do you remember David, his brothers, or the Israelite army being portrayed?
  - c. Where was God in the message/teaching/study?
4. Are you like everyone else, in that you've inserted yourself in David's place when you read this account?
5. What are some of the ways you've taken the glory for the victory over the obstacles, problems, and "giants" in your life?
6. Share an example about a time when you gave God the glory for the victory he won for you.
7. What motivates you to defend the name of God in the secular culture in which we live?
8. Does the hope of heaven and the biblical exhortation to live a life of holiness and righteousness motivate you to stand up for the Lord?
9. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: be motivated with a deep desire to defend the honor and the name of God; live for the glory of the Lord; remember it's Jesus who is the greater David, and it's Jesus who came to slay the giant of sin and death; remember it's Jesus who will stand in the gap and fight on their behalf; and the victory will be won through Jesus Christ, our Lord!

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).