

Seeing Jesus in Every Story

**“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life;
and these are they which testify of Me.”**

John 5:39

Act 9 David and Goliath

1 Samuel 17

Prologue

The most famous battle recorded in the Old Testament was not fought between countries or armies, but two individuals: David and Goliath. This exciting story is an example of representative warfare, a contest of champions, the outcome of which affected two nations. David emerged as victor, displaying to the world that his words and actions were guided by the will of God and for the glory of God. We see throughout the unfolding details of the story that God was there working providentially all the time.

The back story . . .

Desiring to be like other nations of the world, Israel had asked for and received a king, Saul, to rule over them. But Saul was disobedient, rebelling against God and was subsequently rejected by Him (1 Samuel 15–16). The Lord commanded the prophet Samuel to go to Bethlehem and select a son of Jesse to be king. Jesse was the grandson of Ruth and Boaz, and so became part of the lineage of promise. After seven older sons of Jesse were passed over, the youngest—David—was singled out by God and anointed by Samuel. Although it would be many years before David ascended to the throne, the Spirit of God was with him from then on. The key to David's success is revealed in 1 Samuel 16:18, “The Lord was with him.”

☞ Cast ☞

David & Goliath
Eliab & King Saul

Read 1 Samuel 17. Briefly note what stands out to you at first reading. Be prepared to share one of your impressions with your discussion group.

1. Sometimes in life, things are not what they seem. Supreme acts of faith have a way of revealing truth. Through your reading of this chapter, in what way(s) do you see the providential hand of God at work? Give an example.

Scene 1: The Heart of the Matter – 1 Samuel 17:1–40

David was a gifted poet and musician long before he became a soldier and commander of Saul's army. It was in those quiet pastures where he composed music that he also honed his early combat training, singlehandedly fighting off both a bear and a lion. His skill at playing the harp came in handy whenever King Saul was distressed. David would be summoned to the palace to play and then would return home to the sheepfold where he tended his father's flocks. For years growing up, David went back and forth between Saul's camp and home as he was needed (v.15). But one particular day would change everything.

The Philistines were gathered together for battle against Israel; each standing on one side of a mountain with the Valley of Elah between them. A suggestion was made that one soldier from each camp be selected to represent the nation in hand to hand combat. The contenders were to vicariously fight the battle on behalf of their nation with the losers becoming the servants of the winners.

Enter Goliath onto the scene . . . vv. 4–10

The Philistines put forth a fearsome seasoned warrior named Goliath that stood 9'9" in stature. Wearing a coat of mail weighing close to 200 pounds, and sporting a 25 pound spear, Goliath appeared impressive and intimidating, thus no Israelite was willing to come forward against him. For forty days Israel endured the taunts from the Philistine.

1. Describe Goliath's boast against Israel and his challenge to them?
 - › What was Israel's response? vv. 11 and 24

Enter David onto the scene . . . vv. 12–27

The youngest of his family, his three oldest brothers fighting in the ranks of Saul's army, the teenager David is dispatched by his father to deliver food rations from home. Too young to fight but eager to see the battle, he arrives on the scene as the army is assembling on the mountainside, listening to Goliath's daily shouts.

2. What do the men tell David will be done for the man who kills the giant?
3. For forty days the Israelites have been encountering Goliath, but this is the first time for David. What is David's initial perception and response to what he was hearing?

Enter Eliab onto the scene . . . vv. 28–29

For a little insight, Eliab was the oldest of Jesse's sons and the one everyone expected to be anointed as king. He would've watched as Samuel poured the anointing oil over David and perhaps had some lingering jealousy over his younger brother's selection. We see this in his reaction to David's arrival.

4. Summarize his attack on David's motive for being there.

Enter King Saul onto the scene . . . vv. 31–40

5. When Saul heard about David's inquiries and his comments, he sent for him. What was Saul's initial reaction to David volunteering?
 - › Saul himself was fearful and didn't want to fight, so how did David assure him that God had a proven track record of faithfulness on David's behalf?
 - › What steps does Saul take to equip David? What was the result?
 - › Contrary to common sense and reason, how did David prefer to equip himself? Why?
 - › Was David able to fight the giant in his own strength? On whom was he depending?

Additional thoughts and observations

God's Word tells us that it is out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. In a thought or two, what were you able to discern about the heart attitude of the characters you heard in the dialogue throughout this dramatic scene?

- › *Goliath:*
- › *David:*
- › *Eliab:*
- › *Saul:*
- › One important lesson for us in this story is that the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart. Using the examples you just observed, what conclusion(s) are you able to draw about preparing *your heart* for the battles you face ahead?

It is liberating to realize that the way to do battle is not to try to "fit" into someone else's armor and fight like them. To best protect *your* heart, put on the full armor of God! To better understand how to *suit up*, look closely at Ephesians 6:10–17. In the space below, record the pieces of God's armor—one size fits all—and what He designed each piece to do for you.

Scene 2: How to Slay a Giant – 1 Samuel 17:40–53

Simply put, it took an awful lot of *Chutzpah* for David to take on a giant alone with all odds stacked against him. But David didn't need anyone's help—he only needed God. He carefully picked up 5 smooth stones from the brook and put them into his shepherd's bag and along with his sling, approached the Philistine giant. The beautiful thing about this picture is the fact that it is exactly how God operates. In our weakness—He shows himself strong. In our faith—He overcomes, securing the victory on our behalf.

1. What was Goliath's response to David's approach? vv. 41–44
 2. What was Goliath's battle strategy? What was David's? v. 45
 3. Briefly state how Goliath was delivered into David's hands? vv. 46–51
- What did David boldly declare to the armies assembled on both hillsides that day? v. 47

Explore key words and phrases

In the original Hebrew translation, Goliath is not called a “champion” (v. 4), but rather a *middleman* or *mediator*. He was the designated middleman whose role was to fight with an Israeli counterpart. The losing army would serve the winning army.

The word “defy” in Hebrew means to *expose, blaspheme, rail or reproach*. It is tantamount to saying, “I scorn the ranks of Israel this day,” and thus Israel's God. David could not stand for it.

Additional thoughts and observations

As you get up each morning and prepare your heart for the day's battles, whether personal matters, financial hardship, serious health issues, or spiritual warfare, in whose name and whose strength do you fight them? Have you learned to say, “I come in the name of the Lord of hosts, for the battle is the Lord's?” Look up the following verses, adding them to your arsenal.

- Zechariah 4:6
- 2 Corinthians 12:9
- Isaiah 40:31
- Proverbs 24:5
- Psalm 73:26

Intermission: Pause – Ponder – Pray

**For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance,
but the Lord looks at the heart.**
1 Samuel 16:7

As you memorize this passage, let it work into your heart and mind. Scripture meditation is like a good cup of tea . . . satisfying as it is savored. So give yourself time to savor God's Word. Write the scripture in the space provided and meditate on what it says.

Ask the Lord to open your eyes and increase your understanding. Jot down what He points out to you; keep returning here and adding your thoughts throughout the week.

Ponder what this says about God. Consider His character, attributes, work, promises . . .

Consider the difference between how we human beings assess one another based on outward appearances and how God looks inwardly at the heart. From what you have learned, how does your heart attitude determine the degree of your usefulness to God?

Write your response to Him in worship and praise . . .

Epilogue: Seeing Jesus in the Story

Search to See . . .

Without ever putting on an army uniform or suiting up for battle or picking up a sword, it was David's victory; but it also became Israel's victory. When the Philistines fled in fear, the Israelites chased them all the way to Gath (Goliath's home town) and Ekron, claiming the plunder.

David is a type of Christ, in that Jesus is our Victor! The battle with Satan—our enemy—was won, conquered by our Mediator. We as His followers still fight the good fight, we wage warfare every day in His name, but He has already secured the victory on our behalf. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Make it personal

The giants in your life don't usually shout out once or twice and then leave you alone. More often than not, they show up morning and evening, day in and day out. Their relentless threats reverberate like a megaphone until our ears ache with the noise! But why do we allow it to go on? Somewhere in the recesses of our minds we've been deceived into believing that facing a giant head on is more difficult than living with daily intimidation. Rather than live in the shadow of a giant, God would have us learn to identify it, pick up a stone of truth and slay the lie.

In the exercise below, a few of the biggest giants we deal with are identified. Next to each one note the effect it has on *you*, on *your faith*, and *others* around you if you try to live in its shadow. Look up the scripture references to the right that, when applied, will help you to conquer it. Note briefly what they say.

Giant's name & its effect:	Slay it with the stone of Truth:
FEAR –	Isaiah 41:10
DISCOURAGEMENT –	Romans 8:31–39
SUFFERING –	1 Peter 5:10
WORRY –	Matthew 6:25–34
UNFORGIVENESS –	Ephesians 4:31–32
Name the GIANT facing you right now –	What stone of Truth will you use to conquer it?

- › For you personally, what is the most significant insight you've gained from the story of *David* and *Goliath*? How will you apply this insight to your life?

