



## David and Goliath

***As the Philistine moved closer to attack him,  
David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.  
Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone,  
he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead.  
The stone sank into his forehead and he fell facedown on the ground.***

**1 Samuel 17:48, 49**

We all know the story so well. Children like to hear it told again and again, and adults as well. What a dramatic story! I can just imagine that when that great moment of the crisis was there, all was quiet, both in the camp of the Philistines and of the Israelites. Perhaps some even closed their eyes, not wanting to see the butchery and slaughtering of this teenager by this mighty giant.

Of course, it's the size and equipment of these two men that enters the picture and makes it seem so ridiculous for David. Perhaps Goliath was still a remnant of the Anakim of whom we read previously in the Bible. Joshua had almost wiped them out, but not completely. Here at least is one left. His height was approximately nine and a half feet. His coat of armor weighed some two hundred pounds. He must have worn it with comfort. The handle alone of his spear weighed twenty-five pounds. Add to that that he had one going before him with a shield for his protection. And then you see that young, small David. As a Jewish boy he likely was not more than five feet tall, perhaps not even that much. Wonder what kind of sling shot he had. As a boy I often wished I knew.

Ever wonder why this story is in the Bible? What does it tell us and mean for us who live centuries later?

Necessary it is for us to see that Goliath stands for and represents the powers of the world, and the enemies of the church. David and Israel are the people of God. The Goliaths of the world are always out to destroy the people of God. The Heidelberg Catechism speaks of our mortal enemies, out for the kill. They are the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. Sometimes these Goliaths can be easily recognized, as for example, in time of persecution; but they also come as angels of light, when people don't recognize them readily. They come in the form of apostasy, false doctrine, secularism, humanism, materialism, and other "isms."

They are called Goliaths. Why? Because they are so big, so strong, and apparently invincible. And over against them the Davids of the church are always so small and weak. And their cause seems to be so hopeless. From a mere human viewpoint, what chance does David have? The "match" simply is ridiculous, it doesn't add up at all. What nonsense!

The first important requirement is that we see the Goliaths of our age, that we recognize them for what they really are, that today, too, they try to swallow up the church alive (Psalm 124). Parents must see this, children must see this, but also the leaders in the church.

But don't we see these "uneven sides" in all of the history of the church? How mighty Egypt was and how hopeless the cause of the church seemed when God's people were enslaved by these cruel dictators! How hopeless the cause must have seemed to Deborah when Sisera came down the hills with nine hundred chariots and galloping trained war-horses over against the Israelites who as foot soldiers had only bows and arrows in their hands? What chance of survival was there for Hezekiah when Jerusalem was surrounded by 185,000 Assyrians? The Bible is full of these apparent inequities and hopeless situations. And when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared on the

scene of history the Goliaths of that day had it all but won. How can a root and tree grow out of dry ground? There are only a handful of Christians left, a few shepherds, Annas and Simeons. Where are the waiting masses? And the Devil comes with full force, through Herod immediately but also later when the land seems to have been filled with demon-possessed people. One of them is even called Legion. What a pitiful victim he is!

The victory, of course, is the Lord's. And He is the victorious Lord today.

Of Him David is a type and shadow.

It is the *faith* of David that we must see here. How beautiful is his confession and testimony. And all that from a mere teenager. What first of all really disturbed this young man was the defiance of Goliath, and mockery of the God of Israel. Blessed is the church that has such young people. And then that faith expresses itself so beautifully when David says to Goliath, "*This day the Lord will hand you over to me.*" Notice, he says that God will do it. Also that the battle is the Lord's. This means that there is no doubt about the outcome. And as he approaches Goliath, David doesn't say to himself, I'm going to take a chance, or, I'm going to do my best, or, perhaps it will turn out all right if I can throw this stone hard enough and straight enough. No, he is *convinced* of the victory before he takes one step towards the giant.

Try to imagine the situation in the crucial moment. This godly teenager has in his heart the positive assurance of the victory. He says, "I will." There was no doubt about it in his mind or heart. With firm assurance he slings the stone. Later Paul expressed such faith in the beautiful words, "We know." O yes, they also had it already in the Old Testament. Job knew that his redeemer lived. When one has that inner conviction he already has the victory. In fact that is the victory of the Spirit of God in us.

Today we have so much more than what David had. We know that Christ the great David, has come. He has overcome. He is Lord in heaven today, the Lord of the church of believers. This church faces the Goliaths of our day. According to all human standards her cause is not only weak, but ridiculous and hopeless. But if she is a living church she knows that the friendship of the world is enmity with God. This living church is a battling church. She truly sings, Onward Christian Soldiers, and also, Stand up, stand up for Jesus. And she knows that His cause and promises shall not fail.

Of course, God uses means. He could have caused Goliath to drop dead from a heart attack. But no, He uses the means of a slingshot and a stone coming from that heart of faith of young David. We must assume our responsibilities. Warriors we must be. As parents we must teach and be examples for our children in this warfare. But always with the faith in the promises of our victorious Lord. Being such soldiers, trusting in Him and loving Him, we can face any and every Goliath. Finally we face the last great enemy, death. Again, according to all odds, all human calculations and what the eye sees this is the end and we are losing the battle. But this faith also then can say, "I KNOW."

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