

Bi235 Old Testament 2

Lesson Bi235-17 David and Goliath

Is a boy a match for a man? Can a young shepherd boy defeat a well-trained, tall enemy soldier? Most of us would say that this is unlikely. But God was with David, and he was able to kill the enemy soldier named Goliath.

In previous lessons we learned that the careers of King Saul and David overlapped. Saul had displeased God, according to the prophet Samuel. But Saul was still the king. Samuel, however, had anointed David to be the next king. Many years went by though, before David became king.

Saul became increasingly moody and disturbed in his mind. His friends recommended that he bring someone to the palace who could provide music to soothe his mind. One of his friends told him about David, who was well-known in the region as a singer and stringed-instrument player. Saul sent for David, and he came to the palace at Gibeah. Whenever Saul was upset in his spirit, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul and he would feel better (1Sam 16:23).

Some time passed and David went back to Bethlehem. Enemy Philistine soldiers were again threatening Israel. The Philistines had been Israel's enemy for more than a century. They had chariots, horses, and iron weapons, while Saul had only foot soldiers and bronze weapons. They intended to attack by way of a valley, into the heartland of Judah.

Saul and his soldiers went out to oppose them. The Israelites camped on one hill. Across a valley the Philistines camped on another hill. Three of David's older brothers were part of Saul's army. David, the youngest brother, went back and forth between the army camp and his father's sheep near Bethlehem.

For more than one month, one of the Philistine soldiers came out of their camp to taunt the Israelites across the valley. His name was Goliath. He was very tall, about three meters (9 feet), and heavily armored. He also had another man to carry his shield.

Every day—twice a day—Goliath came out and taunted the Israelites. “Why have you come out and lined up for battle? Choose a man and have him come down to fight me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your slaves, but if I overcome and kill him, you will become our slaves and serve us Philistines.” He continued to shout, “This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other” (1Sam 17:10).

King Saul was also a tall man, but not as tall as Goliath. Furthermore, he and the rest of his soldiers were terrified of Goliath. No one was brave enough to confront the Philistine giant. Meanwhile Jesse had told David to take some food to his soldier brothers, and to bring back word of the battle. So David left his sheep with another shepherd and traveled about 20 kilometers (13 miles) to the army camp. As he arrived, the Israelite soldiers were going out to fight. But then Goliath stepped forward with his usual shouting, and the Israelite soldiers ran away in fear.

David heard the shouting of Goliath. He asked some soldiers nearby, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this ungodly Philistine? He's defying the armies of the living God.”

“Oh,” replied the soldiers, “the king will give him lots of money. He will also give him his daughter in marriage, and his family won't have to pay taxes ever again.”

David's oldest brother Eliab heard him talking with the soldiers. Angry, he said, "What are you doing here? Who is taking care of your sheep? You're a naughty boy! You only came here to watch the fighting!"

David replied, "I haven't done anything wrong. Can't I even talk with the soldiers?" Someone heard David asking what would be done for the man who killed Goliath, and reported it to King Saul.

Saul sent for David, and he said to Saul, "Let no one be afraid of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."

Saul told David that he was only a boy, not a soldier. "This Goliath has been trained as a soldier all his life. You can't go out and fight this man."

David protested to Saul, "I have been guarding my father's sheep for a long time. When a bear or lion seized one of the lambs, I went after it and made it drop the lamb. When it turned on me, I struck it and killed it. This Philistine will be killed just like the bear and lion, because he has defied the armies of the living God. Yahweh rescued me from the paws of the bear and lion, and he will rescue me from this Philistine, too" (1Sam 17:17-37).

Saul said, "Go, and may Yahweh be with you." Saul then offered to dress David up in his own battle dress and armor. David tried it on, and walked around in it, but it was too big for him. He wasn't used to such armor and weapons.

"I cannot wear these," he said. "I'm not used to them." So David took his shepherd's staff, his sling, and five smooth stones from a nearby stream. Then he approached Goliath.

Goliath saw him coming. He saw that he was young and handsome, but not a soldier. He ridiculed him, "Am I a dog that you come at me with a stick?" The giant cursed him in the name of his pagan gods. "Come here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and animals to eat!"

David shouted back at him, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of Yahweh Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel. You have defied him, and today Yahweh will deliver you into my hand. I'll kill you and cut off your head. Today, it will be Philistine corpses that the birds and animals will eat. The whole world will realize that there is a God in Israel. Everyone here will know it is not by sword and spear that Yahweh brings deliverance, for the battle belongs to Yahweh" (1Sam 17:38-47).

Goliath moved forward to attack, and David ran at him. He slung a stone from his sling. The stone struck Goliath in the forehead and knocked him down. Then David ran up, grabbed the giant's sword, killed him, and cut off his head.

When the Philistine soldiers saw that their hero was dead, they ran away. Israelite soldiers chased them and killed many. Dead soldiers lined the roads to the Philistine cities of Gath and Ekron. Then the Israelites came back and plundered the camp the enemy had abandoned.

Saul ordered David to stay with him from that time forward. David became a great friend of Prince Jonathan, Saul's son. Saul began sending David on military missions. He was so successful as a fighter that Saul promoted him to high rank in the army.

This story is **important** because it tells us how David began to be noticed by King Saul and the people of Israel. While a young man, he proved his bravery and fighting ability.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that God used David to achieve a victory over Israel's enemies. David was not simply a good fighter. He saw that the honor of Yahweh was being ridiculed, and he determined to defend the honor of God on the battlefield. He fully trusted Yahweh to bring the victory.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. At first, how did David come to be noticed by the king? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, "David's skills as a singer and musician proved to be soothing to Saul," you are correct.
2. Why was the Philistine giant so scary? [Pause]
 - A. If you answered, "He was tall, heavily armored, and a trained soldier, and he was also defiant of Israel and Israel's God," you answered correctly.
3. What was Goliath's challenge? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, "He offered to fight any Israelite soldier; if he won, then all Israel would surrender without fighting. If he was defeated, then the Philistines would surrender," you are right.
4. Why did David believe he could kill Goliath? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, "He knew that God had helped him to protect his sheep from bear and lion, and he believed that God would also give him victory over Goliath," you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to it at least three times. As you hear the story each time, imagine how it happened. Then tell the story in your own words to a friend or two. Join your faith together and pray for any needs that seem impossible, by human strength

Memorize the sentence from First Samuel 17:47: "All those gathered here will know it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's." A verse from the prophet Zechariah says something similar: "'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says Yahweh Almighty" (Zechariah 4:6).