

Too Big?

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[0:00] So tonight we're going to be looking at a very familiar story and that's the story of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17.

Because that story not only proves some things that happened in the past, it also foreshadows something important that's going to come later.

And so we'll look at both of those things tonight as we go through the story. So before we get to the main verses, let's go ahead and set the context. And to do that, we need to go back to the earlier chapters of 1 Samuel.

So to make it easier for you, I included all the cross-references there on the handout. So if you don't want to turn in your Bible, you can just follow along with the handout there. So 1 Samuel 9, 1 and 2 introduces to Saul.

And they say, There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zerah, the son of Bechorah, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

[1:16] And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.

So you can see already that Saul's physical appearance played a large role in why he was selected as king. You know, unfortunately, his reign didn't live up to his looks, though.

And so in 1 Samuel 13, that's when God announced that Samuel would have to tell Saul that Saul was going to lose his kingdom. So let's look at 1 Samuel 13, 13 and 14.

They say, Look at 1 Samuel 16, 1.

And that's where a new test gets assigned to Samuel. So 1 Samuel 16, 1 says, Now the Lord said to Samuel, How long have you been born for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?

[2:38] Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided myself a king among his sons. If you just skip down a few verses to 1 Samuel 16, 7, look at what 16, 7 says.

It says, But the Lord said to Samuel, Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees. For man looks at his outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

And of course, that is when Samuel was convinced that Eliab, David's older brother, was going to be the king, just because Eliab looked like he should be king.

So does that sound familiar with Samuel thinking that somebody should be king just because he looks like he could be king? It's almost the same thing they fell into with Saul.

But we know that David, the youngest son, is the one that God chose. And 1 Samuel 16, 13 records the anointing of David. That verse says, Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.

[3:46] And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah. So these verses all set up the narrative of David and Goliath in 1 Samuel 17.

So as we study those verses again, we're going to see that God used the episode to illustrate the truth of 1 Samuel 16, 7 and 16, 13. So keep 16, 7 and 16, 13 in your mind as we look at that.

So let's acquaint ourselves with the situation here. We're going to read 1 Samuel 17, 1 through 10 first. They describe this scene. It says, Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered at Soko, which belongs to Judah.

They encamped between Soko and Akiza in Ephesus Daman. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the

Philistines.

The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with the valley between them. And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines named Goliath from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

[4:56] He had a bronze helmet on his head, he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. And he had bronze armor on his leg, and a bronze javelin between his shoulders.

Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels, and a shield-bearer went before him. Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, Why have you come out to line up for battle?

Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourself, and let him come down to me. 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.

And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day. Give me a man that we may fight together. Let's think about how big Goliath was for a second.

Because one cubit measures approximately 18 inches, and one span is half of that, or about 9 inches. So that made Goliath about 9 feet 9 inches tall. So he was a pretty tall person.

[6:05] Are you seeing a little bit of similarity there between Eliab and also Saul? We have another tall person coming into the scene here. But of course, he's even taller than those other two.

And his shield was a large standing shield that covered the whole body. And most of his armament, like we saw, was bronze, except his spearhead was made of iron. And the spearhead weighed 15 pounds just by itself.

And his coat of mail weighed about 125 pounds. So that's almost as big as some people are, just in that weight there. So think about that.

Now that we've set the scene, we're going to look at the confrontation between David and Goliath from three different perspectives. And the first perspective comes from Goliath, Saul, and Israel's army.

And we can tell from the detailed measurements that we just looked at that Goliath was a big man. And Goliath, Saul, and Israel's army thought that Goliath was too big to hit.

[7:03] So too big to hit is what goes into your first blank there. And we can sense Goliath's cockiness from his own words. Let's look back at that a little bit.

Verse 8 has this quote from Goliath. He says, And then in verse 10, Goliath says, I defy the armies of Israel this day.

Give me a man that we may fight together. The word translated defy there is an unusually harsh word, and it means to put under reproach. And so the defiant taunts of Goliath were as much against the God of Israel as against the fighters themselves.

And we'll see that a little bit later on. So think about that. You have a guy who's about 9 feet 9 inches tall challenging somebody to come out and fight him. So do you think his taunts had the desired effect on the Israelites?

We don't have to look too far to prove that they actually did. Let's just read verse 11. It says, When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistines, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

[8:11] So you can see they did think he was too big to hit. So his words and actions would have been scary enough if they happened just one time. But look at verse 16. We'll skip a few verses and drop to verse 16 there.

It says, And the Philistine drew near and presented himself 40 days, morning and evening. So every day, twice a day, like clockwork, Goliath would come out and make the same challenge. So think about it. You could probably set your watch by him. You know, it's about 6 p.m. It's time for Goliath to come out again and just mark your day based on that. And you really have to try to picture the scene there because both armies are standing there staring at each other and they're looking at each other across the valley for that 40-day period.

And apparently, all of that standing had to make them hungry because Jesse had to send food from Bethlehem to the sons in the army because we learned in some of the verses that we skipped that three of Jesse's sons were actually there in the army.

So look at verses 17-19. It says, Then Jesse said to his son David, Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried grain and these ten loaves and run to your brothers at the camp and carry these

ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand and see how your brothers fare and bring back news of them.

[9 : 29] Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the valley of Elah fighting with the Philistines. That's a little charitable translation there to say they were fighting with the Philistines but they were there with them in the valley anyway.

And then if you skip down to 20-25, those verses describe David's journey and then what happened when David actually arrived. They say, So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with the keeper, and took the things and went as Jesse had commanded him.

And he came to the camp as the army was going out to the fight and shouting for the battle. For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array, army against army. And David left his supplies in the hands of the supply keeper, ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines. And he spoke according to the same words. So David heard them.

And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid. So the men of Israel said, Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel, and it shall be that the man who kills him, the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption from taxes in Israel.

[10 : 49] So pay particular attention to verse 24. It shows that Israel's army still thought that Goliath was too big to hit, because verse 24 says, All of the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid.

So David, being new to the scene, is kind of confused by all of this. In verse 26, we actually see the first words of David that are recorded in the Bible. And like Goliath, David asked Israel's soldiers two questions.

But David's questions were much different than what Goliath had asked. Verse 26 says, Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, What shall be done for this man who kills this Philistine and takes away the approach from Israel?

For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? And then reading on to 27, it says, And the people answered him in this manner, saying, So shall it be done for the man who kills him.

So perhaps David asked the first question because he wondered whether the soldiers lacked incentive to fight for Goliath. And he just wanted to find out what would happen if somebody did fight and win against Goliath.

[12 : 00] But his second question was the more significant question of the two. As far as we can tell from what's recorded here, nobody in Israel had even mentioned God to this point.

I don't know if you realized that as we were going through, but this really is the first time that somebody brings up God in this whole episode. But instead of triggering a new perspective from the army, the second question actually triggered a rebuke instead because verses 28 and 29 say this, they say, Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the man, and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, Why did you come down here?

And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle. So we'll stop there for a second and just look at this for a little bit.

So possibly Eliab was still stinging because Samuel anointed David as the next king instead of Eliab. But regardless, he belittled David with two questions of his own because notice he refers to the few sheep and he claims to know David's heart.

So he was even belittling the chores that David had to do by saying, Oh, you just have to watch a few sheep. And David's reply is interesting and that's where we pick up with verse 29.

[13 : 18] He actually ignores Eliab's question but he reacts to the rebuke instead. So look at 29 and 30. They say, And David said to him, What have I done now?

Is there not a cause? Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing and these people answered him as the first ones did. So do you get the feeling that David and Eliab had some disagreements in the past?

Sounds a little bit like a couple of brothers going together when David says, Well, what have I done now? But David asked enough people the same questions that some told Saul.

And 31 through 33 tells us a little bit about that. Those verses say, Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported them to Saul and he sent for him.

Then David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul said to David, You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him for you are a youth and he is a man of war from his youth.

[14 : 22] So we've seen that Goliath, Saul and Israel's army thought that Goliath was too big to hit. But David's dialogue with Saul shows us the second perspective and David thought that Goliath was too big to miss.

You know, it is about the perspective that you look at things with sometimes. And we see that in verses 34 through 40. They say, But David said to Saul, Your servant used to keep his father's sheep and when a lion or bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it and delivered the lamb from its mouth.

And when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion and bear and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them seeing he has defied the armies of a living God.

Moreover, David said, The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, he will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Go, and the Lord be with you.

So Saul clothed David with his armor and he put a bronze helmet on his head. He also clothed them with the coat of mail. David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk for he had not tested them.

[15 : 33] And David said to Saul, I cannot walk with these for I have not tested them. So David took them off. Then he took his staff in his hand and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook and put them in a shepherd's bag in the pouch which he had and his sling was in his hand and he drew near to the Philistine.

So what makes David think that Goliath is too big to miss? Experience. Experience. Experience is definitely one thing there because to David's way of thinking Goliath really had reduced himself to the level of an animal because he defied the armies of the living God.

And so based on that fighting Goliath would be just another fight with the wild beast. When you think about it though David's courage and faith were as extraordinary as his logic was simple because the king was disarmed by David's presentation and Saul decided to make probably what was the biggest gamble of his military career and that was to accept David's offer.

So if you look at the last part of that Saul gave him a word of blessing that was certainly a prayer as well because he said the Lord be with you. Then Saul also gave David the use of some of Israel's finest offensive and defensive military gear.

It was the king's own as a matter of fact and so Saul's battle gear included a tunic that was worn next to the skin. He had a coat of armor that was worn over that and then he had a helmet and a sword.

[17 : 08] And ironically there when you think about it Saul's actions confirmed and foreshadowed the royal status that God had promised David because all of a sudden even though David's family is the only group that knows about David being anointed king besides Samuel all of a sudden David is wearing the king's armor and it was given to him by the king himself.

So let's read verses 41 through 44 and see what happens next. It says, So the Philistine came and began drawing near to David and the man who bore the shield went before him.

And when the Philistine looked about and saw David he disdained him for he was only a youth ruddy and good looking. So the Philistine said to David Am I a dog that you come to me with sticks? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David come to me and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. So was Goliath impressed by what he saw there?

You even have to look at the scene too because not only Goliath came but remember his shield bearer came as well and so there's just David standing by himself with the shield bearer and Goliath there together.

[18 : 20] And from Goliath's point of view winning a contest against an underage challenger wouldn't be particularly prestigious because he really had everything to lose there because if he defeated David in everybody else's mind that's what he was supposed to do with that.

And he despised David because of that. But to make the most of the contest though with what Goliath did he tried a psychological assault on David first because first he insulted David's weapon. He called it the stick in his hand and tried to suggest that it was an instrument only fitting for spanking a dog and then he cursed David by the Philistine gods. But Goliath actually uttered a statement of ironic truth about himself that he didn't realize at the time because just like a wild dog can be a threat to the flock and have to be chased away Goliath would have to be chased away as well.

So David had to be intimidated by seeing Goliath up close. I'm sure he was probably thinking that maybe he made a mistake at about that time. But he knew something that Goliath didn't know and that brings us to the third and the completely correct perspective of the three.

Because Goliath was only too big to miss because David knew that he served too big a God. So we're going to find out here as we go through this that David served too big a God for Goliath to cause him a problem.

[19 : 49] Look at verses 45 through 47. Then David said to the Philistine, You come to me with the sword, with the spear, and with the 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.

This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands. So whom does David say will be responsible for the victory over Goliath?

He makes it very clear that the Lord is going to be the one that's responsible. David obviously remembered something that the rest of Israel's army should have remembered because in Deuteronomy 20, 1 through 5, we see this that Moses told the Israelites.

He says, When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them, for the Lord your God is with you and brought you up from the land of Egypt.

[21 : 05] So shall it be when you are on the verge of battle that the priest shall approach and speak to the people, and he shall say to them, Hear, O Israel, today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint.

Do not be afraid. Do not tremble or be terrified because of them. For the Lord your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to save you. So take a look back now at what David said to Saul in 1 Samuel 17, 32.

David essentially paraphrased that passage in numbers verse because 1 Samuel 17, 32 says, Then David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him. And you notice whenever Moses said that to Israelites, he said, Do not let your heart faint.

Do not be afraid. Do not tremble or be terrified because of them. David shortens it down to just a couple of sentences and says, Let no man's heart fail because of him.

Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine. Then 1 Samuel 17, 46 that we just looked at tells us why David wanted to fight.

[22 : 12] So let's look at this verse again. It says that David told Goliath, This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand and I will strike you and take your head from you.

And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. So David fought in the name of the Lord for the glory of the Lord whose name and glory would extend to the uttermost parts of the earth and to all nations.

So David really understood the chief issue here and that was that the Philistines were in effect challenging God by confronting the Lord's people. Compared to the build up that we've had, the account of the battle is actually very short.

It just covers about seven verses. So let's read verses 48 through 54. It says, So it was when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone, and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth.

[23:21] So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone and struck the Philistine and killed him, but there is no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword, and drew it out of its sheath, and killed him and cut off his head with it.

And when the Philistine saw that their champion was dead, they fled. Now the men of Israel arose and shouted and pursued the Philistine as far as the entrance of the valley into the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell along the side of the road to Sherem as far as Geth and Ekron. Then the children of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their tents.

And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent. It is kind of interesting because when it talks about David using a stone, the word translated stone there is actually about a tennis ball sized stone.

So it is a pretty good sized stone. It's not the typical sized stone that you normally see. So if you think about being hit in the forehead with a stone the size of a tennis ball, you can see why it can do a lot of damage there.

[24:29] So let's finish tonight by considering the significance of the battle between David and Goliath. Because like I told you, the battle proves God's word in 1 Samuel 16, 17, or excuse me, 16, 7 and 16, 13.

16, 7 is the verse that said, but the Lord said to Samuel, do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees.

For man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. So by all outward appearances, Goliath had everything going for him. You know, his physical appearance was imposing as anything a warrior could be.

And because of that, the battle should have been a mismatch in Goliath's favor. Instead, it was a mismatch in David's favor because of what we saw in 1 Samuel 16, 13. And 16, 13 is the verse that says, then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.

And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah. So what made the difference for David? The Spirit of the Lord was on David and was guiding David through that.

[25:44] And David's success in this battle is even more significant because it foreshadows Jesus' deliverance of his people too. So let's consider some of the similarities between David and Jesus.

Both David and Jesus were born in Bethlehem. We know that about David from 1 Samuel 16, 1. And then Micah 5, 2 tells us this about Jesus.

It says, but you, Bethlehem, a prophet, because you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me the one to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting.

Not only were both born in Bethlehem, though, both had brothers that doubted. We saw that about David in 1 Samuel 17, 28. And then John 7, 5 records these words about Jesus.

It says, for even his brothers did not believe in him. A third similarity between David and Jesus is that both humbly did the will of God.

[26:48] For David, we saw that when we looked at 1 Samuel 17, 45 and 46. And there are several examples that we could use to show that Jesus did the will of God, but I just picked Luke 22, 42.

And that's the verse that says, Father, if it is your will, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. Both also obeyed for God's glory.

And we know that David obeyed for God's glory based on what was said in 1 Samuel 17, 46. And here's an example for Jesus in John 17, 4.

That's where Jesus said, I have glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do. And finally, both delivered their people from death.

We saw that about David in verses 48 through 51 of 1 Samuel 17. And in Mark 10, 45, Jesus said these words.

[27:50] He said, For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. We have to be careful, though, because the comparison between David and Jesus can be taken only so far.

David was a human shepherd who only delivered his people from death temporarily. David delivered his people from death temporarily. And Jesus, who also called himself the Good

Shepherd, delivers his people from death forever.

So there's a big difference there when you think that one delivered people temporarily and the other delivered from death forever. So when we look at this story, we see that Goliath was neither too big to hit, nor was he too big to miss.

The real difference is that David and we have too big a God. And perhaps Jude said it best in Jude 25 when he said, To God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen. Amen.