

Giant-Killers

1 Samuel 17:45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

- The Philistines were the most fierce and enduring foes faced by the ancient Israelites; the pages of the Old Testament are filled with the accounts of their bloody clashes for nearly 600 years.
- The Hebrews were largely denied access to the Mediterranean seacoast by the strategically-placed Philistine Pentapolis, five city-states with strongholds at Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath and Gaza.
- The Philistines also had a tactical advantage over Israel because they alone possessed the ancient technology of iron-making (1 Samuel 13:19-22), making their chariots and weapons superior.

1 Samuel 13:19-20 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.

- The Philistines survived to outlast the Northern Tribes of Israel, and remained a painful thorn in the side of the Southern Tribes of Judah until they were taken in captivity. The country of Philistia was finally terminated when it was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, but even today lives on through the names "Palestine" and "Palestinian" as the fiercest enemy of modern-day Israel!
- Strangely enough, the high point in Israel's war against this wicked race did not come as a result of cunning military strategy or raw brute strength. Instead, it was at the hand of a young unknown shepherd boy named David that the greatest Philistine champion of all time was vanquished.
- His name was Goliath, and he was quite literally a giant. At nine and a half feet tall, wearing 126 pounds of bronze armor, and with a spear that had a shaft the size of a fence rail and a head that weighed 15 pounds, he was an imposing figure to say the least.
- He had challenged the men of Israel's army to single combat, morning and evening, for the last forty days. There was only one condition: the loser would sell his entire country into slavery. Thus far, no one had dared to take the challenge. With only the valley of Elah separating the two armies, the tension was thick.

- Into this brutal arena walks an inexperienced teenager named David, the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse. He is not even supposed to be there; he is just making a delivery of food to his older brothers. But he just happens to arrive at the camp early in the morning, just as Goliath is shouting his challenge at Israel once again.

1 Samuel 17:10 I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

- David isn't mature enough to be politically correct, use tact and discretion, or come up with a couple dozen rationales as to why he should wait around for a better option with the shaking soldiers of Israel. He is just plain mad that someone is insulting His God and mocking God's people!

1 Samuel 17:26 Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

- David's oldest brother is quick to put him in his place. After all, he has been serving in the army for many years now and he knows how the battle should be fought ... with patience, caution, reserve. But his words only make David more angry!

1 Samuel 17:29 (KJV) And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?

1 Samuel 17:29 (MSG) "What is it with you?" replied David. "All I did was ask a question."

- David's impudence was finally reported to King Saul, who was reluctantly convinced by the youth to allow him to fight Goliath. David couldn't even wear any armor, because it didn't fit him! So Saul sent him out on a fool's errand, without so much as a weapon. All David took was a slingshot and five smooth stones. It was suicide!
- Have you ever thought about the mission of the church in today's world? It's suicide to try to build a church with all their technology and weaponry arrayed against us! Did you ever feel like we just can't compete on their level? Well, you're absolutely right. But our answer to this dilemma is the same as David's declaration:

1 Samuel 17:45 Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts.

2 Corinthians 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;

- The army of Israel thought it was time to stay back, but David knew it was time to step out!

C.T. Studd (missionary to China, India, and Africa): Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.

- The soldiers of Israel were experienced – and apathetic! David was inexperienced – and excited!
- Saul's armor was defensive, but David couldn't even move in it. David was interested in going on the offensive, even though everyone knew he was hopelessly outmatched. (Doug Klinedinst: We know what you are against, now what are you for?)
- The weapons of the Philistines were impressive, but David had the ultimate weapon – the name of the Lord!

Galatians 3:3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

- After David killed the first giant, others began to kill giants!

2 Samuel 21:22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

- Ishbi-benob (meaning: "TO SETTLE"), whose spear weighed three hundred shekels, was killed by Abishai the son of Zeruiah
- Sippai (meaning: "TO LIMIT") was killed by Sibbechai the Hushathite
- Lahmi (meaning: "TO CONSUME"), the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam, was killed by Elhanan the son of Jair, a Bethlehemite
- A man of great stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number (AN OVERWHELMING ENEMY), was killed by Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David
- Everyone on the hillside with the Israelites was waiting for God to move. But God didn't move until David moved!

- The success of the battle depends on someone stepping out!