*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 14 - 19

David and Goliath

**Monday, June 14 1 Samuel 17:1-11**

*“Goliath”*

The tribes of Israel had settled in the central highlands while the Philistines lived in five capital cities of the coastal plains in the southwest. For the past several hundred years, the Philistines had been Israel’s greatest military threat. Defeating them had been one of the reasons for requesting a king. Saul’s initial victory over them drove the Philistines out of Israel’s central highlands and made this battle in the foothills between Israelite and Philistine territory inevitable. Much is at stake in the conflict so much so that the peace and prosperity of Israel’s future can be said to hang in the balance.

A single Philistine infantryman challenges Israel to match him in single combat. Man-to-man combat as a substitute for full-fledged battle between opposing armies was possible in the ancient world as a means of settling disputes without recourse to extensive bloodshed. Goliath is portrayed as an exceedingly tall warrior whose very height strikes terror in the hearts of the Israelites, and his armor shows him to be a man of great strength.

*The “giants” of this world, Lord, can be terrifying. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 15 1 Samuel 17:12-16**

*“David”*

The elaborate description of Goliath the warrior in the previous verses makes a stark contrast with David, the shepherd boy, described here. Goliath is enormous, protected by impressive armor, armed with potent weapons, and accompanied by his own shield bearer for added protection. He must have looked overpowering, even invincible.

By contrast, David can hardly look more vulnerable and insignificant. His primary role is traveling back and forth between home and the battlefield, tending his father’s sheep in Bethlehem and taking rations to the soldiers on the front line, as we learn in the next section. The text further characterizes David by contrasting him with others in the story. His oldest brothers are in Saul’s military, stationed at the camp of the Israelites, while Goliath takes his defiant stand morning and evening. The descriptions of David and Goliath subtly differentiate the powerful and defiant enemies of God in the world against the unassuming innocence of God’s faithful shepherd boy from Bethlehem.

*Power and significance come from you, Lord, not from our own accomplishments. Amen.*

**Wednesday, June 16 1 Samuel 17:17-30**

*“Who is this pagan Philistine?”*

David has been given the menial task of carrying provisions to the commander of his brother’s unit. But one day, when David delivers the rations, he arrives just as the army is moving to its battle lines, and he personally witnesses Goliath’s defiant challenge. In his subsequent conversations with the troops, David learns that there will be a substantial reward for the Israelite soldier powerful and brave enough to defeat the terrifying Philistine champion.

The central question of this passage is David’s in verse 26: “Who is this pagan Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” Here we note the contrast between the words of David and those of the Israelite troops. Rather than “this giant,” David sees a “pagan Philistine.” Where they describe Goliath as a man who comes out to “defy Israel,” David sees him as defying “the armies of the living God.” This worshipper of pagan gods has the audacity to reproach the armies of the living God. Thus the soldiers’ words of resignation are contrasted with David’s words of indignation.

*Like David, Lord, may I see things from your perspective. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 14 - 19

David and Goliath

**Thursday, June 17 1 Samuel 17:31-40**

*“David prepares to meet Goliath”*

David’s conversations with the troops contain an implicit offer to fight Goliath. Saul is at least willing to entertain the possibility. But when they meet and David volunteers to fight Goliath, Saul cannot accept the idea that this inexperienced youth could go up against the giant.

David’s explanation of how he might be able to prevail against the Philistine also reveals his profound faith in God. This pagan Philistine is no more frightening than a lion or bear trying to eat one of the sheep from his father’s flock. Just as David has rescued sheep, so now he will rescue the armies of the living God. And, just as God has delivered him from the lion and the bear, so God will deliver him from Goliath. Regardless of size or strength, the Lord will provide the victory. David has moved from reciting his own bravery and skill in verses 34-36 to acknowledging in verse 37 that God is the source of deliverance. Finally, in preparing for battle, David chooses the familiar sling and stones rather than the cumbersome but potentially life-saving armor of the king.

*In order to face giants, Lord, we need to trust your deliverance. Amen.*

**Friday, June 18 1 Samuel 17:41-51**

*“David kills Goliath”*

First we read of the Philistine champion, accompanied by his shield bearer, approaching closer to David. After getting a good look at this young Israelite challenger, Goliath is incredulous. Despising David’s shepherd staff as a stick, he curses David in the name of the Philistine gods and threatens to expose his corpse to the wild animals.

Now it is David’s turn. In a beautiful speech that dramatizes the conflict between Israel and the enemy nations around her, David emphasizes that Goliath is trusting in his own superior military resources (sword and spear and javelin). In contrast, David comes against him only in the name of the God of the armies of Israel, whom Goliath has defied. David repeats him theme by promising that everyone present, both Israelite and Philistine, will learn that God’s salvation is not by means of sword or spear, because the battle already belongs to the Lord. That David triumphs over the Philistine *with only a sling and stone* and *without a sword in his hand* confirms that God is true to his promises.

*In you, Lord, the battle has already been won. Amen.*

**Saturday, June 19 1 Samuel 17:52-58**

*“Israel routs the Philistines”*

Gath and Ekron were two of the five capital cities of the Philistines to which the soldiers of Israel chased the demoralized army of the Philistines. With this military victory, Davis is well on the way to becoming the kind of leader the people are expecting, from a shepherd of flocks to the king of a nation. Though Saul is still technically the king, the foundation has been laid for David’s ascendancy.

Victory over one’s enemies was frequently followed in antiquity by plundering the enemy camp, cutting off the head of one’s conquered foes, and putting them on public display. Thus, the skull of Goliath becomes a trophy of David’s victory. It was also a custom to take the armor of one’s enemies and deposit it in “his own tent” for safekeeping. The sword of Goliath will reappear in chapter 21 where David will use it to defend himself against the pursuit of Saul.

After David returns from killing Goliath, Saul learns more about who he is, about his family and where they live. From now on, Saul will have no difficulty knowing who David is.

*Your enemies, Lord, will bow the knee to you. Amen.*