

David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone. (1 Samuel 17:50)

Almighty King and Lord, you are the source of all courage. We give you thanks for giving us victory by your power over impossible situations. When life presents challenges that seem insurmountable, help us to recall your goodness and strength and to trust in your protection. In the name of our Savior Christ we pray. Amen.

Introduction

In the days of the monarchy, among the chief rivals of Israel were the Philistines. These “sea people” had gained a foothold on the coast and were attempting to overcome the army of King Saul. When no one would fight the giant Philistine champion named Goliath, young David stepped forward in faith.

Read: 1 Samuel 17:1-49

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel and the books of 1 and 2 Kings tell the story of Israel as a united nation and the subsequent division into north and south kingdoms. Part of the biblical books of History, some of this same content is repeated in 1 and 2 Chronicles in a shorter form.

For the nation of Israel, the time of the Monarchy was a high point; one king ruled over a united land. The first was King Saul, a troubled leader who later turned away from God. The Lord raised up King David to take Saul’s place.

David and Saul struggled against one another until the death of Saul, when David ascended to the throne. David ruled for many years and was succeeded by his son, King Solomon, who built the temple in Jerusalem.

Discussion Questions

1. What Philistine town was Goliath from? Were the Philistines original inhabitants of this area, or were they invaders?
2. Ancient manuscripts of the Bible put Goliath’s height somewhere between 6 ft., 6 in. and 9 ft., 11 in. How would you feel going out to fight such a large man? What did David’s brothers think?
3. Explaining his courage to King Saul (v. 34-37), what did David say about his previous battle experience? How does our remembrance of God’s help in the past give us courage for the present?
4. In the battle, what weapons did David have (v. 40)? What weapons did Goliath have (v. 45)? Seeing David, what did Goliath say?
5. Have you ever been insulted and made fun of? How does that feel? Why is it important to remember that it’s God who gives us our true identity, not the things other people say about us?
6. According to verse 47, what did David trust in? Whose power did David count on? What basis did David have for this confidence? How do we also have access to this power and confidence?
7. Read 1 John 4:4-6. In this context, when John speaks of “the world,” what is he referring to? In what way is “the world” opposed to God?
8. Why is it important to know that, as people of faith, “we are from God”? In what sense have we already overcome the world (1 John 4:4) because of what Jesus has done for us? What does this say about our future?