

David and Goliath

AIM: to teach my pupils the story of David and Goliath and how the battle is the Lord's, showing that the Lord can give the victory against great odds.

POINT OF CONTACT: Talk about great upsets in athletic history. Then tell them that our Bible story for today tells of the greatest athletic upset in history. You might purchase a slingshot and take it to class. If you could make one much like David's, it would be all right. The sling, both among Greeks and Hebrews, was a powerful offensive weapon. The sling is composed of two strings and a leather strap. The strap is in the middle and is the place where the stone or bullet lies. The string on the right end of the strap is firmly fastened to the hand; the string on the left is held between the thumb and middle joint of the forefinger. It is then whirled two or three times around the head, and when discharged, the finger and thumb let go of their hold on the left-end string. The velocity and force of the sling are in proportion to the distance of the strap (where the stone lies) from the shoulder joint. Now from the above instructions, probably no one could make a good slingshot. However, most of us remember the slingshots we used when we were kids. One can be purchased at a store and would be a good point of contact for Sunday.

I. GOLIATH.

1. The Philistines stood on one mountain, and the Israelites stood on another mountain. These were two hills from whence they could see and talk with each other. See I Samuel 17:3.
2. Goliath was the champion of the Philistines. There are several possibilities from whence comes the word "champion."
 - 1) Our word "champion" comes from the word "campus." which means "the field." In other words, the champion is he who properly fights in the field or in the "campus." He is a man well-skilled in arms, strong, brave and patriotic.
 - 2) Many think that the word "champion" here comes from a word which means "a middle man," or "the man between two." This is, as here, "the man who undertakes to settle disputes between two armies or nations." Ancient champions settled disputes between contending parties by what was termed a "camp fight," hence the word "campio" or "champion" coming from "camp."
3. Goliath's height was six cubits and a span. The word "cubit" comes from the word "cubitus," which means "the elbow." A cubit was the distance between the elbow and the top of the middle finger, which is generally about 18 inches. The span is the distance from the top of the little finger to the end of the thumb. (Teacher, why not use a tape measure to measure several of the class members to see what a cubit or span would be to them.) The span was ordinarily about nine inches; consequently, Goliath would be nine feet, nine inches tall. Think of it! Others estimate his height at ten feet, seven inches; still others, at eleven feet, three inches. However, the more reasonable estimate is nine feet, nine inches.
4. Goliath was armed with a coat of mail. See I Samuel 17:5. A coat of mail was formed by plates of brass overlapping each other like the scales of a fish or the shingles on the roof of a house.
5. The weight of Goliath's coat was 5,000 shekels of brass. Read I Samuel 17:5b. This would be about 150 pounds. Someone has estimated it as 156 pounds and 4 ounces. Think of this!
6. Goliath had greaves of brass upon his legs. Notice I Samuel 17:6a. This type of armor was a plate of brass formed much like the mail, and it covered the shin or forepart of the leg from the knee down to the instep. It was buckled with straps behind the leg. It was much like the catcher's leg guards baseball players wear today, except, of course, it was made of brass.
7. Goliath had "a target of brass between his shoulders." See I Samuel 17:6b. This was probably a covering for his shoulders or a covering between his shoulders.
8. Goliath's spear's head weighed 600 shekels of iron. Read I Samuel 17:7. This, according to the best computations,

would amount to 18 pounds and 12 ounces. Think of it!

9. The armor of Goliath, total, is supposed to have weighed not less than 272 pounds and 13 ounces. The ordinary weight of a soldier's armor was 60 pounds, but, of course, Goliath was a huge man. Notice how ready for battle he was.

10. Goliath presented his challenge. See I Samuel 17:8. Goliath was shouting out a message of challenge. No doubt he had in mind some of his past victories. He probably conveyed a message similar to this: "I am Goliath, the Philistine of Gath, that killed the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests, and led into captivity the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah and placed it in the temple of Dagon, my god; and it remained in the cities of the Philistines seven months. Also, in all our battles I have gone at the head of the army; we conquered and cut down men and laid them as low as the dust of the earth. To this day the Philistines have granted me the honor of being chief of a thousand men; ye men of Israel, what noble exploit has Saul, the son of Kish of Gibeah, done that ye should make him king over you? If he be a hero, let him come down and fight with me; but if he be a weak or cowardly man, then choose you out a man that will come down to me."

You see, Saul was head and shoulders above all the people in Israel. He was the logical one to fight Goliath. Goliath wanted to fight Saul because he wanted to fight the head man or the king. In verse 10 he said, "I defy" or "I strip and make bare." He was daring someone to fight him.

11. For forty days Goliath came morning and evening to challenge the Israelites. See I Samuel 17:16.

II. DAVID.

Now let us look at Goliath's opposition.

1. Jesse, the father of David, sent him to take some food to his brethren and see how they were getting along in battle. See I Samuel 17:18. He was not even in battle himself. The story is simply conversation on down to verse 32 where David agrees to fight Goliath.

2. Saul tried to discourage David. Read I Samuel 17:33. Notice he said, "...thou art but a youth." David was about twenty or a little older.

3. David gives his credentials. In verse 34-37, he tells about slaying the lion and the bear, and then he gives his arguments which are as follows:

- 1) He had courage enough and strength enough to win the battle, as proved by the lion which came on the flock and seized a lamb. David said he ran after him, the lion attacked him, and then he seized hold of him by the shaggy beard, smote and slew him, and delivered the lamb.
- 2) He said a bear came the same way, and he attacked and slew him.
- 3) He then reminded Saul that Goliath was a Philistine. Goliath was an uncircumcised man and an enemy of God, so God would not be on his side.
- 4) He reminded Saul that Goliath had defied the armies of the Lord and in effect, had defied God himself. Therefore, the battle is the Lord's, and He will stand by David.
- 5) He assured Saul that he had perfect confidence that God would take care of him. He who delivered him out of the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear would deliver him out of the hand of the Philistines.

4. David tried Saul's armor but took it off and simply went with a sling and five stones. Notice I Samuel 17:38-40. Now the sling was a very important piece of equipment. Young boys learned to use it, attaining perfection in its use by frequent exercise since their childhood. When the boys were young and under their mother's care, they were obliged to learn to sling. They would fasten bread for a mark at the top of a pole; and until the child hit the bread, he could not eat. Finally when the child hit the bread, his mother gave it to him to eat. If he could not learn to use the sling, he did not eat.

Hence, no doubt, David had learned to use the sling by hours of practice. There is a lesson here. We must do our part before God gives us the victory and performs a miracle. David had worked and worked and worked; now he is ready for

battle. He is not as big as Goliath; he is not armed as is Goliath; but he has done his best, and he goes in the power of the Lord. God then gives him the victory.

III. THE BATTLE.

1. The Philistine cursed David by his gods. that is, his heathen gods. He said that "the fowls of the air" would eat David's flesh. Read I Samuel 17:43, 44.
2. David reminded him that the battle was the Lord's. He came not in the energy of the flesh but in the name of the Lord of hosts. (Look at verses 45-47.) In saying that the battle is the Lord's, David was reminding Goliath that he did not represent just Israel, but he represented the God of Israel. David was letting Goliath know that he was not championing the cause of a nation, but rather, the cause of Jehovah God!
3. The only place that David could have hit Goliath was in the head. Except for his face, Goliath was covered everywhere with his strong armor. David put his hand in his bag, took a stone, hurled it and smote the Philistine in his forehead. The victory was the Lord's!

IV. SOME LESSONS TO LEARN.

1. Battles are not won unless preparation is made.
2. Wrong preparation will not win battles.
3. We must use what we have.
4. We cannot use the armor of another. We must use what God has given to us.
5. We must do whatever task that we have been given to do and do it well. Even if it is taking care of sheep or bringing food to those in battle, we should do it very well, for God in His own good time will open the door for us to do something bigger.
6. We should fight always in the energy of the Lord.
7. We should always remember that the battle is the Lord's.
8. In the Lord we should have courage and claim the victory.
9. No matter how big the opposition, we can win the battle through Jesus Christ.