

DAVID AND GOLIATH

BIBLE TEXT: I Samuel 17:1-58

LESSON 211 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "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" (I Samuel 17:45).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Samuel 17:1-58

¹ Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.

² And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

³ And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and *there was* a valley between them.

⁴ And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span.

⁵ And *he had* an helmet of brass upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass.

⁶ And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.

⁷ And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

⁸ And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array? *am* not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

⁹ If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

¹⁰ And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

¹¹ When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

¹² Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul.

¹³ And the three eldest sons of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

¹⁴ And David *was* the youngest: and the

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

At War with the Philistines

The Children of Israel had gone to battle against the Philistines, the same old foe. "And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul" (I Samuel 14:52). In the fourteenth chapter of I Samuel, we read that time after time the Children of Israel had chased and smitten some of the Philistines.

Never did the Israelites completely rout the enemy as Gideon did the Midianites (Lesson 194). Gideon pursued them even to the other side of Jordan, smote them, and took their two kings, and discomfited all the host. "Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon" (Judges 8:28).

The Children of Israel did not totally rout the Philistines. The Israelites, led by Saul and his son Jonathan, fought back and forth with them. The time came when the Children of Israel were arrayed in battle on one side of the valley with the Philistines encamped on the other side. From out the camp of the Philistines went forth their champion, Goliath of Gath. The Philistines put all their trust in this one man. They were willing to put the battle to a single combat. Scarcely any nation would be willing to venture its all on the success of one man, but the Philistines had such confidence in Goliath that they were willing to put the battle entirely on a duel with their champion.

Goliath

Goliath was a giant, three times as tall as some of you children. A boy standing on the shoulders of a man would not be even as tall as was Goliath. This man of monstrous stature must have appeared terrible, especially if he had strength and spirit in proportion to his size. From his youth, Goliath had been trained to be a soldier. He was well furnished with an armor of brass so heavy that some men could scarcely carry it, let alone fight while wearing it. Goliath carried a spear like a weaver's beam, the head of which weighed 600 shekels of iron. Besides all this, he had a man go before him, bearing a shield.

A Challenge

In front of the armies of the Philistines stood Goliath to challenge the Children of Israel. No doubt, in a big voice he defied the army of the Lord. In a boastful manner he probably reminded them that they had none so great as he. Goliath ridiculed them even to go to battle against the Philistines. He probably bragged that they had no man bold enough to fight with him.. In a proud way Goliath cried, "Give me a man, that we may fight together."

The Dismay of Israel

For forty days, morning and night, Goliath insulted the Children of Israel in this manner. No doubt, each day the champion grew bolder and more proud, while the Children of Israel grew fainthearted and more timid. Perhaps the people were

three eldest followed Saul.

¹⁵ But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

¹⁶ And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.

¹⁷ And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched *corn*, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;

¹⁸ And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of *their* thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

¹⁹ Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

²⁰ And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

²¹ For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

²² And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

²³ And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard *them*.

²⁴ And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

²⁵ And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

²⁶ And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

²⁷ And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

²⁸ And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

²⁹ And David said, What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause?

³⁰ And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

dismayed because the courage of Saul, their king, had failed. In times past, Saul had been no coward. When the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul (**1 Samuel 11:6** ⁶ And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly), he accepted the challenge of Nahash the Ammonite, and led the Israelites to victory. The Ammonites were slain and scattered so that no two remained together (**1 Samuel 11:11** ¹¹ And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.).

Why was Saul now afraid of the big words and the big looks of one single Philistine? Because Saul was disobedient. He had rejected God, and the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him (**1 Samuel 16:14** ¹⁴ But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.). Saul and the soldiers of Israel were dismayed and greatly afraid. Was there none to fight this defier?

David's Choice

God had a young man prepared for this very occasion. A number of miles away from the battlefield in the valley of Elah, was the youngest brother of three of the Israelite soldiers. He had been an armor-bearer for Saul, and had played a harp for the king. No doubt, he could have stayed with the king but David "returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep." Rather than live a life of ease, luxury, and idleness, he chose a life with toil, care, and peril. He was a shepherd of his father's flock.

Perhaps David chose that work because it gave him time and opportunity for prayer and meditation before God. Certainly, David's work as a shepherd fitted him for battle and gave him a confidence in God that he would not have experienced by staying in the king's palace.

David's Mission

One day Jesse sent his son, David, on an errand. It was a mission on which, seemingly, a servant could have gone — that of taking supplies to the soldier-sons of the family. Just like all parents whose children are away from home, Jesse was concerned about the welfare of his sons — how they were getting along and if they had enough to eat. In thoughtfulness of his sons, Jesse told David to take parched corn and ten loaves to his brothers, and ten "cheeses" to their captain.

David made arrangements to have someone care for the sheep, for he was diligent in business and "faithful over a few things." He arose early in the morning and did as his father had commanded him.

At the Scene of Battle

When David arrived at the battlefield, the armies were arrayed against each other. David found his brothers; and as he talked with them, out came Goliath whose booming voice called out the words of challenge. David heard the words and he was affected differently from the rest of the Israelites. Instead of fleeing and being sore afraid, David asked, "Who is this ... Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

Because David was willing to uphold the honor of God and Israel, the jealousy and envy of his eldest brother were kindled against him. Eliab belittled David's work as a shepherd. He falsely accused David of going to "see the battle," when David had really gone in the interest of his brothers.

³¹ And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul: and he sent for him.

³² And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

³³ And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

³⁴ And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

³⁵ And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

³⁶ Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

³⁷ David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

³⁸ And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

³⁹ And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him.

⁴⁰ And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling *was* in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

⁴¹ And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield *went* before him.

⁴² And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

⁴³ And the Philistine said unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

⁴⁴ And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

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.

⁴⁶ This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the

A Cause

Saul had promised wealth and honor to the one who killed Goliath. It was also promised that his father's house would be free in Israel — no doubt free from toll, tribute, custom, and service to the king. David seemed to take little interest in the reward. He said, "Is there not a cause?" David was willing to go to battle, not for reward and praise of men but for the cause of the living God. David felt that Goliath's defiance was against God as well as against the Children of Israel.

God, today, will use the boy or girl, or anyone else, who will stand for the right against all opposition. By one's words and actions he can take away the reproach from the Gospel. One who has the cause of Christ at heart will not be discouraged by abusive language, nor by opposition from his family, those who would be expected to give him support and assistance.

David's Testimony and Faith

David went to Saul, the king, for permission to go against Goliath. He did not mention the reward; he wanted only to serve his God and country. Saul told him that he was just a youth and Goliath was a trained man of war. David quieted Saul's fears with words of faith, and gave a reason for his hope and courage. Even though David was a youth, he was not so inexperienced as Saul thought. David was not ashamed to tell that he kept his father's sheep. He did not boast in his own strength, but he gave glory and credit to God as he told of his boldness in the defense of his flock — the lambs were rescued and the beasts of prey were slain. When David told of his experiences, he expressed his faith that God would also deliver him from the hand of Goliath. No doubt, through these experiences David had learned to trust God more fully, and to walk boldly in the way of duty.

A Proved Protection

Saul gave his consent for David to fight against Goliath. Although Saul himself did not go to battle, his words, "The LORD be with thee," were his prayer for David.

Saul tried to put his own armor on David. Remember that Saul was a tall man — head and shoulders above the men of Israel — and David was a youth. Armor that was Saul's would be only a hindrance to David.

There was nothing wrong with Saul's armor; it was very good for Saul, but it did not fit David. There may be times when a Christian is advised by the unsaved to depend on a natural defense or the things of the world, neither of which can fit a Christian. God wants His people to trust Him, the only defense which is fitting to a Christian. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly" (Psalm 1:1).

God does have a preparation and an armor for the soldier of the Cross. It is one into which every Christian can fit. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . . Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:10-17).

David said, of Saul's armor, "I cannot go with these; for I

carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

⁴⁷ And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.

⁴⁸ And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

⁴⁹ And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang *it*, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

⁵⁰ So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was* no sword in the hand of David.

⁵¹ Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

⁵² And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

⁵³ And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.

⁵⁴ And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

⁵⁵ And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son *is* this youth? And Abner said, *As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.*

⁵⁶ And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling *is*.

⁵⁷ And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

⁵⁸ And Saul said to him, *Whose son art thou, thou young man?* And David answered, *I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.*

have not proved them." He had proved God. He put off the armor of Saul, and kept his faith in God. David ran to the brook, took out five smooth stones; and with his shepherd's sling went out to meet Goliath.

For God's Glory

It is true that five smooth stones and a sling are very simple weapons; but when small things are placed in God's control, He can use them in mighty ways. David used the things that he had at hand. It did not take him a long time to prepare for the battle.

This selected poem tells that God has used small things that were at hand, when they were consecrated to the Lord.

**"Shamgar had an oxgoad,
David had a sling,
Samson had a jawbone,
Rahab had a string,
Mary had some ointment,
Aaron had a rod,
Dorcas had a needle,
All were used for God."**

Goliath looked with scorn upon the youth who had accepted his challenge. He cursed David by his gods, as if threatening words could kill. Goliath boasted and was self-confident.

David was not seeking his own honor. He devoted his praise and glory to God, that all the world would know that there was a God in Israel, and that all Israel would know that God does not save with a sword and spear. David went to battle in the name of the Lord. "For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me" (Psalm 44:6).

Directed by God

Goliath, with armor clanking, arose proudly as if to make a fine impression. David advanced, no doubt lightly clad, and fearless, to meet the foe. Very deliberately he put one stone in the sling, drew back, and "slang" it with all his strength and with a prayer in his heart. God directed that stone, and it lodged in Goliath's forehead, the only spot that was unprotected. Almost before the armies of the Israelites and Philistines realized that the fight was on, Goliath fell to the ground. David ran to him. He had no sword of his own; but with Goliath's sword — probably so big that David had to use both hands — he cut off the head of Goliath, the champion of the Philistines and the defier of Israel.

David had used only one of the five stones with which he had armed himself. It is doubtful if David expected to use all five of them. No doubt he wanted a little reserve — like the grace and power of God that is available to every Christian — not just barely enough for the battle or test. God has a never-ending supply of grace and power for those who will seek Him.

Victory

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled, breaking the agreement of Goliath that they would be servants of Israel when Goliath was killed. The Children of Israel pursued the Philistines out of the valley, even unto Ekron. Many of the Philistines were wounded, and the Children of Israel were richer by the spoils of the enemies' tents.

Thus, because one youth dared to stand for that which was right, God received honor, the enemy was destroyed, the Children of Israel were encouraged, and David was regarded by the king.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why was David taking care of his father's sheep?
- 2 How did David happen to be on the battlefield?
- 3 How did Goliath defy the armies of the living God?
- 4 Why did David want to accept Goliath's challenge?
- 5 What opposition did David have?
- 6 Describe Goliath.
- 7 What protection did David have when he fought against Goliath?
- 8 What were his weapons?
- 9 Why did David refuse Saul's armor?
- 10 Who was the victor?