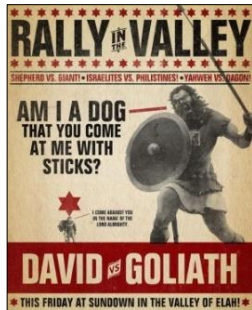


David's Stones

Slings, Swingers, and Singers

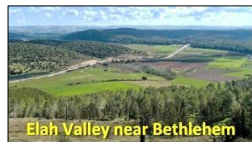
January 14, 2024

Today we're learning how to face and obliterate our biggest, baddest, fiercest foes.



So, *how do you fight a giant?*

I noticed a *huge mistake* in the Bible this week; it's when Goliath *underestimates* David's *pitching arm!* Huge mistake. But an even *bigger one* is when *we fail to recognize the very real and relatable power of incredible Sunday school stories by dismissing them as fables.* This historic fight took place in the Elah [EL-uh] valley near Bethlehem, which bears a striking resemblance to the Skagit valley near Burlington.



And I wanna *state*, right out of the *gate*, that *giants are definitely not just the stuff of fables.* Robert Wadlow *died* of an *infection, unrelated* to his *gigantism*, at the *age* of 22, *at a height of 8' 11" – and still growing!* In just his *last year*, he'd grown three more inches. There are differing views on Goliath's exact height, but at *most*, he was just 10" taller than Robert.



Now the *Philistines* gathered their *forces* ... [and King] Saul and the *Israelites* assembled and *camped* in the Valley of *Elah* and drew up their battle line ... The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them. A *champion* named *Goliath* ... came out of the Philistine camp. He was over *nine feet* tall. He had a *bronze helmet* ... a *coat of scale armor* of bronze weighing [125 pounds] ... [and] *bronze [leg armor]*, and a *bronze javelin* was slung on his back. [And also] His *spear shaft* was like a [10'] weaver's rod, and its *iron point* weighed [15 pounds]. [Not to mention his sword! Plus] His *shield bearer* went *ahead* of him. [And in a common tradition called *single combat* – intended to *minimize loss of life* on both sides] Goliath stood and shouted ... "Are you not the servants of *Saul*? Choose a man and ... if he is able to fight and kill *me*, we will become *your* subjects ... Give me a *man* and let us *fight* each other." On *hearing* [Goliath's] words, [first, King] Saul and [then] all the *Israelites* were *dismayed* and *terrified*. – 1 Samuel 17:1-11 NIV

Because, when they *chose Saul* from the *tribe* of *Benjamin*, (1 Sam 9:1) they did so *specifically* saying:

There *must* be a *king* over us ... to *lead* us in *warfare* and *fight our battles*. – 1 Samuel 8:19-20 NAB

[And] [Saul] was [at least 7' tall, being] taller than any of the people [by 14"] from his *shoulders upward*. [Which means *Saul was the size of Andre the Giant!*] – 1 Samuel 10:23 ESV

So when *Saul* was *terrified*, *they* were *more so!* But the *Lord* had *already* chosen *little David*.

[And] The *Lord* [had] said to [His prophet] Samuel, [when He sent him to *anoint David*] "Do not consider his *appearance* or his *height*, for ... the *Lord* does not *look* at the things *man* looks at. *Man* looks at the *outward appearance*, but the *Lord* looks at the *heart*." – 1 Samuel 16:7 NIV

[Now] David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem. [And] For forty days [Goliath] came forward every morning and evening and ... [David] reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the [single combat] war cry. [And] [Goliath] stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. [Now] When the Israelites saw the man, [stepping out toward them] they all ran from him in great fear. ... [So, short little] David said to [very tall] Saul, "Let no one lose heart ... your servant will go and fight him." Saul replied ... "You are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth." [Cuz he was so big when he was young] But David said ... "When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, [on the offense, and] struck it [with a sling-stone] and ... killed both the lion and the bear; this [Goliath] will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who delivered me [with a sling-stone] from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear [because they couldn't get their paws on him] will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." [So] Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you." – 1 Samuel 17:15-37 NIV

Now, the stakes couldn't be higher for the outcome of this single-combat fight. If David loses, the war's over! So why in the world would King Saul and his entire army allow little David to do battle on their behalf? There was something uniquely legendary about Saul's tribe of Benjamin.

Among [the soldiers of Benjamin] [long before King Saul] were seven hundred select men who ... could sling a stone at a hair's breadth and not miss. – Judges 20:15-16 NKJ

In fact, when these Benjamites rebel, and God sends all Israel against them, it takes three tries!



[In the first battle] The [stone-slinging] Benjamites ... cut down 22,000 Israelites [cuz a stone-slinger can kill a sword-slinger at 100 feet, with the ballistic force of a 45mm handgun!] ... [and then they killed] another 18,000 Israelites, [because] all of them [were] armed with swords. ... [But then the sword-slingers ambushed a city behind the stone-slingers; and] the [stone-slinging] Benjamites turned and saw the smoke of the whole city going up ... Then the [sword-swinging] men of Israel turned on them, and the [stone-slinging] men of Benjamin were [then] terrified, because they realized that [by turning their back on the enemy, even for a moment] disaster had come upon them. – Judges 20:21-42 NIV

You see, you can't turn your back on your battles even for a moment. David defeated a giant, and several overwhelming enemy armies, but was defeated by adultery when he momentarily took his eyes off of the Lord to take a peek at a bathing beauty. But that's later. For now, he's about to take down his foe with a rock and the Rock of his salvation.

Then [David] took his staff in his hand, [Why? Strategy!] chose five smooth stones from the stream, [because living water – which is what Scripture calls moving water, naturally smooths rough round rocks into perfect "living" stone projectiles! So David] put [all five] in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his [unloaded] sling in his hand, [with his staff] approached [Goliath]. ... [Goliath] looked David over and ... [said] "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" – 1 Samuel 17:40-43 NIV

Yes! Sticks? Plural? Goliath sees more than one staff, cuz he's got bad eyes, which is likely why "his shield bearer went ahead of him" and why David "took his staff in his hand ... with his [unloaded] sling"! Because those who suffer from gigantism (or acromegaly) not only move slowly and awkwardly, but the tumor that causes it, compresses the visual nerve and impairs their sight.

So if you thought big ol' Goliath and his big ol' spear had the *advantage*, you missed the point. **David isn't the underdog in this fight ... Goliath is!** All Israel was betting their lives on David, because – as the army of enemies are about to grasp – **Goliath just brought a knife to a gunfight!** So he is a dog – an underdog! **Same goes when our biggest foes face off with our Living Stone!**

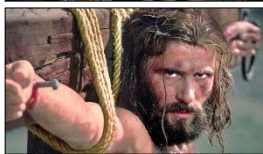
“Come here,” [Goliath] said, [expecting sword-swinging and spear-jabbing, and fatally disregarding his javelin and his shield] “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!” [And] David said to [Goliath], “You come against me with sword and spear and [that] javelin, [strapped to your back] but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty [our Rock] ... and [as a sword-swinger would say] I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the [entire] Philistine army to the birds ... and the beasts ... [and] all those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; [but by one living stone] for the battle is the Lord’s” [And Goliath literally won’t see it coming] – 1 Samuel 17:44-47 NIV

Goliath is so weighed down by armor-plated self-protection and tools of attack! Whereas light little David charges with only a tiny sling, five small stones, and ginormous faith, trust, and courage. **Cuz the more we lean on our own ways, the more weighed down, burdened, and weary we become.** It’s the same “weigh” with sin when we fail to lean on the Lord. David later writes:



My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. – Psalm 38:4 NIV

[So, Jesus later says] “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke ... and learn from Me” – Matthew 11:28-29 NIV



Coming to Him as to a Living Stone, rejected indeed by men, [who are big into swinging their own swords] but chosen by God ... who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, [transforming the cross into the tree of life] that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness – 1 Peter 2:4, 24 NKJ

Which requires facing and obliterating our biggest and baddest UN-righteousnesses. Like talk that should never be allowed in our mouth. Or hate that should never be allowed in our heart. Or lust that should never be allowed in our ... whatever. **So which sins loom largest in your life?** I ask because, **defeating our giants means first defeating our fears.** And **fear isn't conquered by thought, but action.** Which is why we can't turn our back till they're dead. So, **how do you fight a giant? Head on!** That is, if you want take their head off! So:

David hurried and ran ... to meet [Goliath] ... [and, as he ran] took out a stone; and he slung it and [that living stone] struck [that bronze helmet with such force] ... so that the stone [blew right through that diving bell and] sank into his forehead, [That'll leave a mark!] and [Goliath] fell on his face to the earth. [And with the Elah valley being a natural amphitheater, every Philistine heard David ring his bell!] So David [brilliantly and courageously] prevailed over [Goliath] [by outsmarting him] with a sling and a stone, and [David didn't lie, he indeed] struck [him] and killed him ... [even though] there was no sword in the hand of David. [As Goliath had thought] Therefore David ran and ... took his sword ... and cut off his head with it. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they [turned and] fled. [Like the devil, when we resist him (James 4:7)] – 1 Samuel 17:48-51 NKJ

To have the stones to run to meet to defeat your foes, **you need the fuel that comes from the faith that comes from the love that comes from the Living Stone.**



There's a guy on Etsy who makes *Biblical shepherd's slings* for 61 bucks. So I bought one. And a company in Israel sells *five smooth stones* from the *Elah valley stream*. So I bought *those*. Cuz there's something about holding something in your *hand* that *takes it out of the land of fables*. But **why did David take five?** If he'd missed with the *first*, Goliath's *shield* would've gone up as he grabbed for his *javelin*. But **David was looking beyond this giant**. David said he was taking on the *entire army*, which included Goliath's *four warrior sons!*

[In fact] When the Philistines were at war *again* ... David became *weary*. Then *Ishbi-benob*, who was *among the descendants of the giant* ... *intended to kill David*. But [David's trusted soldier] *Abishai* ... *helped* [David], and *struck* [*Ishbi-benob*] and killed him. – 2 Samuel 21:15-17 NAS

At Gezer *Sibbechai* ... killed *Sippai*, who was *one of the sons of the giant*. – 1 Chronicles 20:4 NKJ

[At Gob] *Sibbechai* ... killed *Saph*, who was *one of the sons of the giant*. ... [And] [At Gath] there was a man of *great stature* ... *born to the giant*. ... *Jonathan* ... killed *him*. These *four* were born to the *giant* in *Gath*, and *fell* by the *hand of David* and the *hand of his servants*. – 2 Samuel 21:18-22 NKJ

David the *slinger* was also a *singer*, and according to the *beginning of Psalm 18*:

[David] spoke to the Lord [*singing*] the words of *this song* [Psalm 18] on the *day* that the Lord delivered *Him* from the *hand of all his enemies* and ... *Saul* – Psalm 18:1 NKJ

But *which* enemies is Psalm 18 referring to? It doesn't say ... in *Psalm 18*. But, Psalm 18 is a *copy* of a *psalm* in *2nd Samuel*, where it *does*. Because, just after saying:

These four were *born to the giant* in *Gath*, and *fell* by the *hand of David* and the *hand of his servants*. [it says] *Then* David spoke to the Lord [*singing*] the words of *this song*, on the *day* when the Lord had *delivered* him from the *hand of all* [*five of*] his [*enormous*] *enemies* – 2 Samuel 21:22-22:1 NKJ

Makes you want to read *Psalm 18* with *that* in mind, *doesn't* it? Thanks to the *power* of our Lord and the *support of trusted friends*, David could finally *lay down* those *last four stones*, and *take five*, and *find rest* in the Lord, and *sing* to his *Savior*, referring to *Him* as his *Rock* ... *five times*.

He said: "The Lord is my Rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my Rock ... and my *Savior*—from violent men You save me. ... [For] who is the Rock except our *God*? ... The Lord *lives!* Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior! – 2 Samuel 22:2-3, 32, 47 NIV

[Because, *as was said to David*] Someone might *chase* you to *kill* you, but the Lord your God will keep you alive. [If not *down here*, then certainly *up there*; cuz] He will throw away your enemies' lives as He would throw a stone from a sling. – 1 Samuel 25:29 NCV

For we did not follow cunningly devised *fables* when we made known to you the *power* ... of our Lord Jesus Christ – 2 Peter 1:16 NKJ

So, *head-off* those *sins* that *loom large!* Cuz *they're* the *underdog!* **Take what you've got; give it to God; take your best shot; and give it your all;** and *don't turn* your *back* till you *ring* their *bell!* And **don't underestimate your own pitching arm when armed with the Living Stone;** cuz *that'd* be a *giant mistake!* Cuz **at the end of the day, they're all bringing knives to a gunfight.**