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# David and Goliath Bible Story Study Guide

Learn to Face Your Giants With the Story of David and Goliath

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David Cuts off the head of Goliath by James Tissot. Culture Club / Contributor / Getty Images

by [Mary Fairchild](#)

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The Philistines were at war with [Saul](#). Their champion fighter, Goliath, taunted the armies of Israel daily. But no Hebrew soldier had dared to face this giant of a man.

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David, newly anointed but still a boy, was deeply offended by the giant's haughty, mocking challenges. He was zealous to defend the Lord's name. Armed with the inferior weapons of a shepherd, but empowered by God, David killed the mighty Goliath. With their hero down, the Philistines scattered in fear.

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This triumph marked Israel's first victory at the hands of David. Proving his valor, David demonstrated that he was worthy to become Israel's next King.

## Scripture Reference

[1 Samuel 17](#)

## David and Goliath Bible Story Summary

The Philistine army had gathered for war against Israel. The two armies faced each other, camped for battle on opposite sides of a steep valley. A Philistine giant measuring over nine feet tall and wearing [full armor](#) came out each day for forty days, mocking and challenging the Israelites to fight. His name was Goliath. Saul, the King of Israel, and the whole army were terrified of Goliath.

One day [David](#), the youngest son of Jesse, was sent to the battle lines by his father to bring back news of his brothers. David was just a young teenager at the time. While there, David heard Goliath shouting his daily

defiance, and he saw the great fear stirred within the men of Israel. David responded, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of God?"

So David volunteered to fight Goliath. It took some persuasion, but King Saul finally agreed to let David oppose the giant. Dressed in his simple tunic, carrying his shepherd's staff, sling, and a pouch full of stones, David approached Goliath. The giant cursed at him, hurling threats and insults.

David said to the Philistine:

"You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied ... today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air ... and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel ... it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands." (1 Samuel 17:45-47)

As Goliath moved in for the kill, David reached into his bag and slung one of his stones at Goliath's head. It found a hole in the armor and sank into the giant's forehead. He fell face down on the ground. David then took Goliath's sword, killed him and cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. The Israelites pursued, chasing and killing them and plundering their camp.

## Major Characters

In one of the Bible's most familiar stories, a hero and a villain take the stage:

**Goliath:** The villain, a Philistine warrior from Gath, was over nine feet tall, wore armor weighing 125 pounds, and carried a 15-pound spear. Scholars believe he may have descended from the Anakim, who were ancestors of a race of giants living in Canaan when Joshua and Caleb led the people of Israel into the Promised Land. Another theory to explain Goliath's gigantism is that it may have been caused by an anterior pituitary tumor or excessive secretion of growth hormone from the pituitary gland.

**David:** The hero, David, was Israel's second and most important king. His family was from Bethlehem, also called the City of David, in Jerusalem. The youngest son of Jesse's family, David was part of the tribe of Judah. His great-grandmother was Ruth.

David's story runs from 1 Samuel 16 through 1 Kings 2. Along with being a warrior and king, he was a shepherd and accomplished musician.

David was an ancestor of Jesus Christ, who was often called "Son of David." Perhaps David's greatest accomplishment was to be called a man after God's own heart. (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22)

## Historical Context and Points of Interest

The Philistines were most likely the original Sea People who left the coastal areas of Greece, Asia Minor, and the Aegean Islands and permeated the eastern Mediterranean coast. Some of them came from Crete before settling in Canaan, near the Mediterranean coast. The Philistines dominated the region including the five fortified cities of Gaza, Gath, Ekron, Ashkelon, and Ashdod.

From 1200 to 1000 B.C., the Philistines were Israel's principal enemies. As a people, they were skilled at

working with iron tools and forging weapons, which gave them the ability to make impressive chariots. With these chariots of war, they dominated the coastal plains but were ineffective in the mountainous regions of central Israel. This put the Philistines at a disadvantage with their Israelite neighbors.

Why did the Israelites wait 40 days to begin the battle? Everyone was afraid of Goliath. He seemed invincible. Not even King Saul, the tallest man in Israel, had stepped out to fight. But an equally important reason had to do with the characteristics of the land. The sides of the valley were very steep. Whoever made the first move would have a strong disadvantage and probably suffer great loss. Both sides were waiting for the other to attack first.

## Life Lessons From David and Goliath

David's [faith in God](#) caused him to look at the giant from a different perspective. Goliath was merely a mortal man defying an all-powerful God. David looked at the battle from God's point of view. If we look at giant problems and impossible situations from God's perspective, we realize that God will fight for us and with us. When we put things in proper perspective, we see more clearly, and we can fight more effectively.

David chose not to wear the King's armor because it felt cumbersome and unfamiliar. David was comfortable with his simple sling, a weapon he was skilled at using. God will use the unique skills he's already placed in your hands, so don't worry about "wearing the King's armor." Just be yourself and use the familiar [gifts and talents](#) God has given you. He will work [miracles](#) through you.

When the giant criticized, insulted, and threatened, David didn't stop or even waver. Everyone else cowered in fear, but David ran to the battle. He knew that action needed to be taken. David did the right thing in spite of discouraging insults and fearful threats. Only God's opinion mattered to David.

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