

# Old Testament Lessons

OT Stories That Teach Us About God and Faith

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## I. Introduction

- A. Today's OT story is David and Goliath. This is a story of confident faith that God would ensure victory over a formidable foe if one or more of God's people would stand up to him.
- B. Prayer

## II. God defeats Goliath through David's actions of faith.

- A. **1 Samuel 16:1** . . . Now the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons." [2] But Samuel said, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me." (*Samuel's fear is all too common among God's people. God's word tells us how to live and what to do in certain situations, yet we tend to look at the reasons it can't be done or why it is too unsafe to live that way. And yet, the same God who tells us what to do empowers and assists us to do it – which means we can trust Him to keep us safe in the doing. And if He doesn't, is it not because He is bringing about a good that is far more valuable than our immediate safety?*) And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' [3] You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you." (*Just as God told Moses to tell Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to go into the wilderness to worship their God – which was partially true (Exodus 5:1-3), so God told Samuel to tell only that part of what he was doing that would keep him safe from Saul's wrath.*)
- B. [4] So Samuel did what the Lord said, and came to Bethlehem. After inviting Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice, he consecrated them. When they came in to the meal (*following the sacrifice*), Samuel looked at Eliab (*ih LIGH ab*) and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." [7] But the Lord said to Samuel, "**Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature**, because I have rejected him; **for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.**"
  1. We are prone to look at people and decide what they are like or how worthy they are of our attention or some position based on their

- appearance. And we may even take into account their education, job, financial condition, fame, and the power they wield.
2. This shallow level of observation is a weakness that God pointed out way back in David's day. In spite of that, many Christians think they can judge the character or godliness of a person by their looks or other outward accomplishments and public activities.
  3. However, as God says, the wise do not judge the worth or value or responsibility or faithfulness of a person based on their looks, but on their character – which is almost impossible to accurately discern by looks alone. To see a person's character, you must look far deeper than their looks – which requires time to get to know them.
- C. [10] Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen these. [11] Are these all your children?" And Jesse said, "There remains yet the youngest, and he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down [to dinner] until he comes."
1. God's choice for the next king of Israel was a young man no one thought to call because no one thought God would choose him. And yet, God made a similar choice in selecting Saul.
  2. There are those who assume God makes these kinds of choices because He is radical and likes doing the opposite of what we think He ought to do. The problem with this view is that Christians begin believing that being radical is godly, when sometimes it is just being foolish.
  3. It is my opinion that God does not do these kinds of things just to be radical, but to teach us that the common human way of making such choices is misguided – misguided because we are looking at such outward qualities as looks, physical ability, education, leadership abilities, gifting, and popularity, while failing to consider and examine the person's character, that is, his honesty, humility, self-control, patience, kindness, faithfulness, sense of duty, the quality of his work, and the condition of his personal relationships.
  4. And I think these kinds of misguided selections happen way too often in the church. Too often, the church puts people into positions of leadership because they are willing to serve, or because they have abilities useful for the position, or because they are popular, or well educated, or have charisma, while giving little consideration to the person's character and spiritual maturity. In other words, too often churches value a person's gifts and abilities more than his or her

godliness – and this to the detriment of the spiritual health of the individual and the church.

- D. [12] So Jesse sent and brought David in. Now he was ruddy (*his skin was young and healthy looking*), with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." [13] Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; **and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.**

1. In **Judges 6:34**, we read that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. He defeated the Midianites, and gave Israel peace for forty years. However, after his victory, he made an ephod which Israel worshiped as an idol for the remainder of his life.
2. We read in **Judges 13:24-25** that Samson grew up and the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. Yet he squandered his power on women.
3. And as we saw last Sunday, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul mightily – he prophesied and was changed into another man, yet his subsequent disobedience cost him his kingdom (**1 Samuel 10:6**).
4. The reality is, being filled with the Holy Spirit does not guarantee a life of perfect godliness from that day forward. Those filled with the Spirit still have a free will – as proven by Gideon, Samson, Saul, and David. Therefore, though filled with the Holy Spirit, we must intentionally and vigilantly resist temptation and pursue godliness, day after day, if we are to live a consistently faithful and godly life.

- E. **1 Samuel 17:1** . . . Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh (*SOH koh*) which belongs to Judah, and they camped in Ephes-dammim (*ee fess-DAM im*). [2] Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah (*EE luh*). [3] The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them. [4] Then a **champion** came out from the armies of the Philistines named **Goliath**, whose height was six cubits and a span (*9+feet tall*). [5] He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze (*126 lbs*). [6] He also had bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders. [7] The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron (*17-18 lbs*); his shield-carrier also walked before him. [8] He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul? **Choose**

**a man** for yourselves and let him come down to me. [9] If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us." [10] Again the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel this day; **give me a man** that we may fight together."

- F. [11] When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. [12] Now Jesse was old in the days of Saul. [13] The three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle. Their names were Eliab (*ih LIGH ab*) the firstborn, and the second was Abinadab, and the third Shammah (*SHAM uh*). [14] David was the youngest, and he went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.
- G. [16] The Philistine came forward morning and evening for forty days and took his stand. [17] Then Jesse said to David his son, "Take now for your brothers an ephah (*about a bushel*) of roasted grain and ten loaves and run to the camp to your brothers. [18] Bring also these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of their thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers, and bring back news of them."
- H. [20] So David arose early in the morning and **left the flock with a keeper** and took the supplies and went as Jesse had commanded him. He came to the circle of the camp while the army was going out in battle array shouting the war cry. [21] Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle array, army against army. [22] Then David left his baggage in the care of the baggage keeper, and ran to the battle line in order to greet his brothers. [23] As he was talking with them, behold, Goliath came up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke his usual words; and David heard them.
- I. [24] **When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid.** It seems this bothered David, for in vs 25-27, we learn that David asked, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach (*contemptuous insults and scorn*) from Israel? **For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?**" The answer given was, "the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free (*from taxes and public service*) in Israel."
- J. [28] Now Eliab (*ih LIGH ab*), his oldest brother heard when David spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? (vs 20 – **a keeper**) I know your insolence (*your*

*prideful self-confidence*) and the wickedness of your heart (*your bold irresponsibility in leaving the sheep unattended*); for you have come down in order to see the battle." (*Basing criticism on assumptions often leads to false accusations.*) [29] But David said, "What have I done now? Was it not just a question?" [30] Then he turned away from Eliab (*ih LIGH ab*) to another soldier and said the same thing; and the soldier answered the same thing as before.

K. [31] When the words which David spoke were heard, they told them to Saul, and he sent for him. [32] David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of Goliath; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." [33] Then Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for **you are but a youth** while he has been a warrior from his youth." (*Though David was young and inexperienced in warfare, he was **filled** with the Holy Spirit and he **believed** that God meant it when He said that Israel would chase their enemies – "five will chase a hundred, and a hundred will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword."* **Leviticus 26:7-8**)

L. [34] But David said to Saul, "Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, [35] I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. [36] Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and **this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted** the armies of the living God. [37] **The Lord who delivered me** from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, **He will deliver me** from the hand of this Philistine."

1. There are three important truths here that we should take into account when applying the lessons of this story to ourselves.
2. **First**, David was convinced that God was Israel's God, that Israel's God was his God, that his God was all-powerful, and therefore Israel's enemies could not stand against or defeat God's people.
3. **Second**, David was filled with the Holy Spirit – just as we are after repenting, coming to faith in Jesus Christ, and becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus. Therefore, the power David had to defeat the enemy is the power we have to resist temptation and live godly.
4. **Third**, David's faith in God's protection was a growing faith, built up over time by repeatedly seeing God at work on his behalf.

M. [37b] And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the Lord be with you." [38] Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze

helmet on his head, and clothed him with armor. [39] David girded Saul's sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them (*grown accustomed to using them in battle*). So David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I [am not accustomed to using them]." And David took them off. [40] He took his [shepherd's staff], and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.

1. Though David was filled with the Holy Spirit and had a settled faith, he used the abilities and the tools he was familiar with. He didn't try to be more than he was, but rather he acted within the boundaries of the gifts and abilities God had given him and used them according to how God had honored their use in the past.
2. Be comparison, Saul's fighting ability was far different than David's, but it wasn't better or worse. And so it is in the church. Some are at this level of spiritual maturity, and some at that level. Some have this gift and are good at using these tools to serve others, and others have that gift and those tools. Some are capable of giving this kind of leadership, and others that kind.
3. The important thing is to stay within your gifts and abilities, and use the tools you know work for you when serving God as David did.  
(Note **Romans 12:3-8**)

N. [17:41] Then the Philistine came and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. [42] When Goliath looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. [43] Goliath said to David, "**Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?**" And he cursed David by his gods. [44] Goliath also said to David, "Come to me, and **I will give your flesh** to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field."

1. From a warrior's point of view, David was completely vulnerable and certain to be defeated, while Goliath was certain of victory.
2. And it appears this contrast was not lost on Goliath for he was insulted that Israel would send a boy with sticks to fight him.
3. And yet, as we shall see, this contrast was important to God's plan and for reinforcing David's faith.
4. Finally, notice Goliath's self-confidence: "**I will give your flesh...**"  
Yet remember, God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

O. [45] Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin (*the dependable weapons of war*), but I come to you (*with **someone** who can defeat your weapons of war, for I come*) in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you

have [foolishly] taunted. [46] This day **the Lord will deliver you up into my hands** (*Notice, David makes no boast of winning on his own. His confidence is in God – the same God who enables us today to be victorious in our battle against the flesh, the world, and the devil.*), [But once my God defeats you,] I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of (*the Philistine soldiers whom you are protecting, which will prove insufficient and worthless when going up against God*) to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth – [not to prove I'm a better warrior than you, but so] that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, [47] and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear (*that is, by the size, strength, and equipment of the army*); for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands."

1. Goliath was fighting for his own honor and position among the Philistines. David was fighting for God's honor and God's position in the hearts and minds of Israel and the world.
  2. Goliath confidently trusted in his size, fighting skill, and equipment. David confidently trusted in God's superiority over anything the world could mount against Him or His people.
  3. Goliath's threats turned out to be empty. David's threats came true, not because David was superior, but because God is superior.
- P. [48-51] We know the rest of the story. David killed Goliath, cut off his head with his own sword, and the Philistine army was defeated by Israel because of God's empowerment and assistance.

### III. Conclusion

- A. David is not unique. Like us, his faith grew from its starting point to the strength of conviction he had in facing Goliath. And this happened for two primary reasons. **One**, he looked at his challenges and his trials as opportunities to trust God in doing what needed to be done **AND** to trust God to bring good out of the situation. And **two**, he looked at those experiences in a way that built his faith in God.
- B. You see, the challenge or trial was not David's focus. His focus was God's presence, provision, and protection as seen in God bringing him safely through and bringing good out of the challenge or trial.
- C. Like David, we have history, and we can look at our history in a way that feeds discouragement, discontentment, and distrust, or we can look at our history in a way that feeds a growing, settled, confident faith in God. Your perspective is up to you – but beware, the wrong perspective leads to a great loss. Therefore, may we be those who use the circumstances and challenges of life to feed our faith!