

# Chapter 17

“The familiar story of David and Goliath carries with it many practical lessons for the Christian life. All of us face giants of one kind or another, but we too may overcome them through the power of God.” (Missler)

v.1 Socoh of Juday. Situated in the Shephelah some 14 miles west from Bethlehem toward Philistine territory.” (McCarter)

v.4 The ancient Greeks, to whom the Philistines were apparently related, sometimes decided issues of war through chosen champions who met in combat between the armies. Through this economy of warriors the judgment of the gods on the matter at stake was determined (trial by battle ordeal).” (NIV)

six cubits and a span. “Hebrew, Septuagint, Dead Sea Scroll and Josephus *four*.” (ESV)  
“A cubit was the distance from a man’s elbow to the tip of his middle finger (ca. 18”), a span from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger of his splayed hand (ca. 9”).” (McCarter)

v.5-7 Armor weight ~ 125 pounds. Spear point ~ 15 pounds.  
“A sword-wielding warrior cannot threaten him, but a slinger...” (McCarter)

v.10 “I defy the ranks of Israel.” “The verb ‘defy’ implies not only defiance and provocation but also open contempt.” (McCarter)

v.11 Israel’s giant warrior [Saul] quails before the Philistine champion. The fear of Saul and the Israelite army betrays a loss of faith in the covenant promises of the Lord. Their fear also demonstrates that the Israelite search for security in a human king...had failed.” (NIV)

v.32 David’s confidence does not rest in his own prowess but in the power of the living God, whose honor has been violated by the Philistines and whose covenant promises have been scorned by the Israelites.” (NIV)

vv.33-37 “Saul objects not so much on the grounds of David’s youth and small stature as of his lack of training and experience. David is ‘only a lad’; that is, he is here at the front as a servant.” (McCarter)

“God had tested David privately with a lion and a bear; now he was to test him openly with a giant. If we are faithful in the private battles, God will see us through the public testings. Too often God’s people faint at the smallest test that comes their way, little realizing that the ‘little tests’ are but preparation for the bigger battles that are sure to come (Jer 12.5).” (Missler)

v.40 “Usually the stones chosen were round and smooth and somewhat larger than a baseball. When hurled by a master slinger, they probably traveled at close to 100 miles per hour.” (NIV) Saul would have been familiar, and not belittled the power and effectiveness of the sling in battle, for he was a Benjaminite (Judges 20.16) “In all ages the sling has been the favorite weapon of the shepherds of Syria.” (Missler)

v.46 That all the world may know. David is speaking to the whole enemy army—defying them as Israel has been defied. David publicly declares that this battle was for the sake of God’s name. He seeks God’s glory, not glory for himself or the kingship.

v.51 They fled. “Most likely the Philistines saw the fall of their champion as the judgment of the gods, but they did not honor Goliath’s original proposal.” (NIV)

Here is David, small, apparently defenseless, with none of the bearing or equipment of a trained soldier—the perfect personification of the tiny nation of Judah. And against him stands the gigantic enemy, heavily armed and evidently irresistible, as the enemies of Judah so often seemed. It is Yahweh who gives victory, and he may give it to the weak (Israel) in order that his power might be known to all.” (McCarter)