

David And Goliath

Introduction.

1. One of the best known accounts in the Bible is the narrative about David killing the giant Goliath.
2. Some have carefully studied this battle, but most have never made an in-depth study of this famous battle.
3. This has led many to doubt the authenticity of this account and many view it as an ancient fable or myth.
4. Even some believers have doubts about the genuineness of this account and some are embarrassed by it.
5. Almost none are prepared to defend the authenticity of David killing the giant Goliath.

David

1. David was a young man at the time he encountered Goliath.
 - a. He was a youth. (1 Sam. 17:33). The Hebrew word in this verse is “nahar” and means “youth, lad, boy.”
 - b. He was likely about 14 to 16 years of age.

1) David was one of the eight sons of Jesse, and the youngest son. (1 Sam. 17:12; 1 Sam. 16:11).

1 Sam 17:12 Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had **eight sons**. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced {in years} among men.

1 Sam 16:11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet **the youngest**, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."

2) His three oldest brothers were serving in the army. (1 Sam. 17:13).

1 Sam 17:13 The three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle. And the names of his **three sons** who went to the battle were **Eliab** the firstborn, and the second to him **Abinadab**, and the third **Shammah**.

3) This left 4 other older brothers who likely were not old enough to be in the army of Israel.

4) If age was the reason these 4 brothers were not in the army, David may have been around 14-16 when he killed Goliath.

5) **This is a guess based on the birth order of the 8 brothers.**

c. Though David was very young he had several things going for him.

1) Foremost David had great trust in God who had chosen him to be the next king of Israel. (1 Sam.

16:11-13).

2) He was also very skillful with a slingshot and had experience in very dangerous situations.

3) He had killed wild beasts with his slingshot. (1 Sam. 17:34-37). See 1 Sam. 17:40. 50.

1 Sam 17:34 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,

1 Sam 17:35 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.

1 Sam 17:36 "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."

1 Sam 17:37 And David said, "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." And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you."

1 Sam 17:40 He took his stick [staff] in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in {his} pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.

1 Sam 17:50 Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand.

3. His oldest brother, Eliab, rebuked him for leaving the sheep and coming to the place of battle. (1 Sam. 17:28)

1 Sam 17:28 Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he 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? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle."

- a. Eliab was angered his youngest brother came to fight Goliath.
- b. Neither he nor the other two brothers in the army dared to fight this giant.
- c. He likely believed this youngest brother was no match for Goliath and had no business on the battle field.
- d. At first he seemed to think David had "come down in order to see the battle."
- e. He may have been irritated by the fact his youngest brother had been anointed to be the future king by Samuel.
- f. **Soldiers were usually 20 or older.** (Num. 1:2-3).

Num 1:2 "Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head

Num 1:3 **from twenty years old and upward**, whoever {is able to} go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

2. He was so young and so small Goliath was insulted they sent David out to fight him. (1 Sam. 17:41-43).

1 Sam 17:41 Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him.

1 Sam 17:42 When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was {but} a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance.

1 Sam 17:43 The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks [staves. strong wooden sticks]?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. "Dog" may have the idea of moving target.

- a. None of David's brothers had the courage to fight this giant.
- b. None of the seasoned soldiers had the encourage to encounter Goliath.
- c. **The whole army of Israel was afraid of Goliath.**
- d. If they went along with the challenge of Goliath, they would become servants of the Philistines if he defeated the one Israel chose to fight him. (1 Sam. 17:8-9).

1 Sam 17:8 He stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, "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.

1 Sam 17:9 "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."

Size of Goliath

1. The Bible indicates he was 9 feet and 9 inches tall. (1 Sam. 17:4-6).

1 Sam 17:4 Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was **six cubits and a span**.

1 Sam 17:5 {He had} a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze.

1 Sam 17:6 {He} also {had} bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin {slung} between his shoulders.

- A "cubit" is usually understood to be the distance from the middle finger to the elbow, and usually understood to be about 18 inches.
- Some believe a "cubit" was about 21 inches. If the cubit was 21 inches, Goliath was 11 feet and 3 inches tall. Most scholars believe the cubit was 18 inches.
- "A span" was the distance between the pinky finger and the thumb, that is, about 9 inches.

2. There have been reports of others in history about the size of Goliath.

- a. Herodotus, the ancient historian, wrote about a man named Artachasees who was the largest man in Persia. He was reported to have been 8 feet and 2 inches tall.
- b. There have been a number of men in modern times between 7 and 8 feet tall. NBA has a number of players 7' or more.
- c. Andre the Giant was 7' 4" and Jorge Gonzalez was 7' 7". Andre weighed about 520 pounds and Jorge weigh about 460 pounds. Silo Sam [Sam Harris] was the tallest wrestler at 7' 8".
- d. In modern times Robert Pershing Wadlow was documented to be 8 feet and 11.1 inches tall.
- e. Goliath was taller than these men, but there is no reason to doubt that of the billions of men who have

lived on the earth that no one could be taller than these men.

- f. Historical records do not list all the extra tall people who have lived throughout history.
- g. Goliath was very tall, but there have been rare cases of people who were very tall or very short.
 - 1) The smallest recorded adult was 1' 9 ½ inches - about the size of a newborn baby.
 - 2) The heaviest man, Jon Brewer Minnoch, weighs 1400 pounds.
- h. If one searches the internet he/she will discover all kinds of people who were very large or tall.
- i. One man wore a size 36 shoe.

3. **It is interesting to consider the weight of the armor of this giant.**

- a. The Bible states he had a coat of armor that weighed about 5000 shekels. (1 Sam. 17:5).

1 Sam 17:5 {He had} a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze.

- b. This would mean his armor weighed about 125 pounds.
- c. The tip of his spear weighed about 600 shekels that was 15 pounds - a pound less than a collegiate shot put.

David's Confidence

- 1. David had unwavering confidence in the Almighty God. (1 Sam. 17:37).

1 Sam 17:37 And David said, "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.**" And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you."

- 2. Hearing this, Saul gave David permission to fight Goliath and said "Go, and may the LORD be with you."
- 3. David must have been quite convincing considering their freedom was at stake assuming they agreed to the proposal of Goliath.
- 4. David approached the giant Goliath with unwavering confidence he would defeat Goliath with the help of God. (1 Sam. 17:46).

1 Sam 17:46 "This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,

Death of Goliath

- 1. Some believe there is a contradiction in regard to the death of Goliath.
 - a. The Bible states Goliath was killed by the stone from David's slingshot. (1 Sam. 17:48-50).

1 Sam 17:48 Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.

1 Sam 17:49 And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung {it,} and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground.

1 Sam 17:50 Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine **and killed him**; but there was no sword in David's hand.

b. It also states David killed Goliath when he cut off his head. (1 Sam. 17:51).

1 Sam 17:51 Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and **killed him**, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

2. **There is no contradiction as some have alleged.**

a. Verse 50 states David killed the Philistine Goliath “with a sling and a stone.”

b. But in verse 51 Samuel records David “killed him” when he cut off Goliath’s head.

c. This certainly sounds like a contradiction and suggests Samuel foolishly contradicts himself by reporting Goliath was killed twice and in two different ways.

d. The stone was a death blow to Goliath, but it did not instantly kill him.

e. He was in a state from which there was no recovery and he would have died shortly without any action from David.

f. David hastened his death when he beheaded Goliath and he also kept the vow he had made to behead Goliath - the giant enemy of Israel.

Note:

1. Many a person has been reported to have died in an automobile accident or some other type of accident who actually died in the ambulance or hospital.

2. The fact is there was little or no chance of the person surviving.

3. Though literally they died in the ambulance or hospital, it is reported they died from the accident.

Other Alleged Contradictions

1. Some believe the Bible contradicts itself in regard to whom kill Goliath.

a. Samuel clearly affirms David, the shepherd boy, killed Goliath.

b. It is alleged this does not agree with what is recorded in 2 Samuel 21:19.

2 Sam 21:19 There was war with the Philistines again at Gob, and **Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim** the Bethlehemite **killed Goliath the Gittite**, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

1) Here it is affirmed “Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregin the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite.”

2) This verse clearly conflicts with Samuel’s affirming David killed Goliath.

- 3) Most conservative scholars view this verse as a copyist mistake.
- 4) This verse has been accidentally corrupted by a copyist due to the tedious work of copying the Scriptures by hand and possibly accidentally merging two separate lines.
- 5) One should keep in mind that copyists could make an error even though they were diligent in their work not to change what had been written by the inspired penman.
- 4) The truth is that we have a copyist mistake that occasionally occurs in the Scriptures because of the tedious assignment of copying the Scriptures by hand - not with the best of lighting
- 5) They did not have typewriters or computers nor the best of lighting, but they were extremely careful in their work of copying the Scriptures.

c. The correct reading is 1 Chronicles 20:5 - not 2 Samuel 21:19.

1 Chr 20:5 And there was war with the Philistines again, and **Elhanan** the son of **Jair** killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear {was} like a weaver's beam.

- 1) Here we learn that Elhanan, the son of Jair, killed “the brother of Goliath the Gittite.”
- 2) He killed Lahmi - not Goliath.
- 2) He is not the same person as Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite. (2 Sam. 21:19).

Conclusion

1. There are many Scriptures that appear to contradict one another.
 2. A careful study of the Scriptures reveals Scriptures do not contradict one another.
 3. It often takes research to substantiate the infallibility of the holy scriptures.
 4. We may not immediately resolve the so-called contradiction, but with serious and prolonged study we will find the Scriptures are inerrant.
 5. It is essential that we trust Scriptures that come from God and teach us how to please God and be saved. (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- 2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;
- 2 Tim 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
- a. “All Scripture is inspired by God.”
 - b. Scripture informs us how to please God and equips us “for every good work.”

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