

DAVID AND GOLIATH

1Samuel 17:1 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.

While wisdom comes with age, sometimes, it is the young who remind the adults about the lessons of the past. One such lesson of the past is the story of David and Goliath. David was probably around 16 years of age, according to some sources. It was not by accident that the Philistines gathered in Judah. Bethlehem in Judah was the home of David. We read in chapter 16 how God led the prophet Samuel to anoint David as the new king of Israel. Now, the God who chose David began immediately to orchestrate events and lead David from Bethlehem to the throne in Gibeah, where Saul reigned. It was at Bethlehem that the Spirit of God came upon David and he confronted the lion and the bear.

1Samuel 17:35 And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

Remember this was a fully-grown male lion – ‘I caught him by the beard (mane)’. A male lion can weigh over 250 kilograms. A boy cannot seize such a ferocious creature by the mane and kill it (including a bear) without supernatural enablement. This is key to understanding the source of David’s confidence when he confronted Goliath. He himself states, ‘Thy servant slew both the lion and the

bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God' (I Samuel 17:36). How could David be silent when he knew all this, and Goliath kept defying the armies of Israel not far from where he slew the lion and the bear? The giant, who was about 12 feet tall, would thunder the same defiance every day for forty days before the armies of Israel, paralyzing them with fear.

1Samuel 17:10 *And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.*

1Samuel 17:16 *And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.*

Goliath said, 'Give me a man', but God gave him a boy to mock him. The lesson the boy David teaches us is this: he based his actions on the knowledge of what God did in the past. While the adults forgot the lessons of the past - e.g. how God defeated the giant *anakims* through Joshua and Caleb, the boy David had experiences with the mighty power of God in killing *anakims* from the animal kingdom. In fact, the giant *anakims*, who also struck immense fear into the hearts of the children of Israel in the days of the 12 spies, lived in Hebron, Judah. God, thankfully, raises up great men of faith where giants strike fear into the hearts of his people. Caleb was of the tribe of Judah – a worthy ancestor of David. It was Caleb who destroyed the *anakim* and chased them out of Hebron.

Joshua 15:13 *And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, even the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.*

Joshua 15:14 *And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.*

The Bible says of Caleb ‘And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it (Numbers 13:30). Although just a boy, David knew that God had given Israel the land, and he was determined not to allow any giant, anakim or Philistine, to threaten them again. While it is not advisable to compare the faith of David and Caleb, I think you will nevertheless agree with me that the scales clearly tip in favor of David because he was a boy and he was entirely alone. The great Caleb had the advantage of witnessing first-hand all the mighty miracles that God wrought through the hands of Moses. Not least, Caleb had the support of Joshua, and the backing of Moses. Furthermore, there was a psychological dimension: Goliath spoke the same words every day for 40 days before the armies of Israel. The anakim did not speak, as far as we know. It was just their size that terrified the 10 spies. Had David appeared the first day, Goliath would not have had 39 more days to blaspheme the God of Israel.

Moreover, while Caleb drove out the anakim, David kept the head and sword of Goliath as a souvenir, as a concrete, tangible witness of the power of faith. He gave the sword of Goliath to the High Priest, Ahimelech, so that all of Israel would see its size and strength and wonder at the power of the God of Israel. It was a sad day, when, because of the cruel jealousy of Saul, David had to ask for the sword of Goliath to use it to protect himself.

1Samuel 21:9 And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it

is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.

So far, we have explored the fact that God raised up a boy to remind the adults about the lessons of the past. Israel forgot about the faith of Caleb in confronting and chasing out the giants, the anakim. Young people, the Lord Jesus Christ, the God of the armies of the living church, can use you to rebuke us adults and remind us of the golden lessons of the past. We ought to consider one more lesson that David teaches us before we conclude: the wisdom of the boy David.

1Samuel 17:38 *And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.*

1Samuel 17:39 *And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.*

Three lessons can be drawn out from David's decision not to wear the armor of Saul. Some rabbis have concluded that David was careful not to provoke the jealousy of Saul. Let us say that David had killed Goliath using the armor of Saul. This could potentially raise the question: why didn't Saul use his own armor to kill Goliath? Saul knew what happened at Bethlehem where Samuel anointed David to be the next king. This was a delicate situation and David handled it wisely: he chose to wear the outfit of a shepherd. Saul must have taught, 'This will be the end of David', but God had other plans. By delivering Israel through the attire of a shepherd, God was signaling

to Israel that he is the Shepherd of his flock. This was Psalm 23 in action.

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

David was now in the valley of Elah, and with wisdom he decided to show Israel that God does not deliver with armies and swords, but humble faith. If he wore the armor of Saul, either the king would be jealous that he did not do the job himself, or, alternatively, he may boast that David could not have accomplished this without his armor. God did not want Saul to have anything to do with this great victory: the Spirit of God had already left him. How can a backslider be honored by God? David teaches us that God will use the young as they are: you do not need to borrow the character, weapons or ideas from any adults – especially those who do not know Jesus or are backsliders. Don't be ashamed of your status in life; it was the outfit of a shepherd, not king which saved Israel that day. We know the pressures on the young to conform to certain standards and images in the world of social media. Young person, do you dare to be yourself? Do not be ashamed of who you are? Be what Jesus makes you.

Zechariah 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.