

David defeated Goliath, but Jesus defeated Satan

1 Samuel 17:1-11; 16, 26, 31-51

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We are studying the 52 questions in the New City Catechism this year, because it is a great summary of what we believe as Christians. I'm going to read Question 22 now, and then let's read the answer together.

Question 22: Why must the Redeemer be truly human?

That in human nature he might on our behalf perfectly obey the whole law and suffer the punishment for human sin;

and also that he might sympathize with our weaknesses.

Introduction

Jesus is our Savior and Redeemer. He became a human being to save us from slavery to sin. To help us understand the victory of Jesus, I want to look at the famous story about David and Goliath. It's a long story, so please listen as I read it from chapter 17 of the book of 1 Samuel.

1 Samuel 17:1-11; 16, 26, 31-51

1 The Philistines now mustered their army for battle and camped between Socoh in Judah and Azekah at Ephesdammim.

2 Saul countered by gathering his Israelite troops near the valley of Elah.

3 So the Philistines and Israelites faced each other on opposite hills, with the valley between them.

4 Then Goliath, a Philistine champion from Gath, came out of the Philistine ranks to face the forces of Israel.

He was over nine feet tall!

5 He wore a bronze helmet, and his bronze coat of mail weighed 125 pounds.

6 He also wore bronze leg armor, and he carried a bronze javelin on his shoulder.

7 The shaft of his spear was as heavy and thick as a weaver's beam, tipped with an iron spearhead that weighed 15 pounds.

His armor bearer walked ahead of him carrying a shield.

8 Goliath stood and shouted a taunt across to the Israelites.

"Why are you all coming out to fight?" he called.

"I am the Philistine champion, but you are only the servants of Saul.

Choose one man to come down here and fight me!

9 If he kills me, then we will be your slaves.

But if I kill him, you will be our slaves!

10 I defy the armies of Israel today!

Send me a man who will fight me!"

11 When Saul and the Israelites heard this, they were terrified and deeply shaken.

16 For forty days, every morning and evening, the Philistine champion strutted in front of the Israelite army.

26 David asked the soldiers standing nearby, "What will a man get for killing this Philistine and ending his defiance of Israel?

Who is this pagan Philistine anyway, that he is allowed to defy the armies of the living God?"

31 Then David's question was reported to King Saul, and the king sent for him.

32 "Don't worry about this Philistine," David told Saul.

"I'll go fight him!"

33 "Don't be ridiculous!" Saul replied.

"There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win!

You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth."

34 But David persisted.

"I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats," he said.

"When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock,

35 I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth.

If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death.

36 I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God!

37 The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!"

Saul finally consented. "All right, go ahead," he said.

"And may the Lord be with you!"

38 Then Saul gave David his own armor—a bronze helmet and a coat of mail.

39 David put it on, strapped the sword over it, and took a step or two to see what it was like, for he had never worn such things before.

"I can't go in these," he protested to Saul.

"I'm not used to them." So David took them off again.

40 He picked up five smooth stones from a stream and put them into his shepherd's bag.

Then, armed only with his shepherd's staff and sling, he started across the valley to fight the Philistine.

41 Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him,

42 sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy.

43 "Am I a dog," he roared at David, "that you come at me with a stick?" And he cursed David by the names of his gods.

44 "Come over here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!" Goliath yelled.

45 David replied to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin.

But I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

46 Today the Lord will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head.

And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel!

47 And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear.

This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!"

48 As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him.

49 Reaching into his shepherd's bag and taking out a stone, he hurled it with his sling and hit the Philistine in the forehead.

The stone sank in, and Goliath stumbled and fell face down on the ground.

50 So David triumphed over the Philistine with only a sling and a stone, for he had no sword.

51 Then David ran over and pulled Goliath's sword from its sheath.

David used it to kill him and cut off his head.

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they turned and ran.

Together we read Isaiah 40:8:

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."

Let's pray together.

Father in heaven, we come to you because you are the source of life and truth. Jesus, we worship you because you are full of mercy and love. Holy Spirit, please open our hearts and minds to be transformed by the word of God. Amen.

I have divided this message into two parts.

Part A. What David Did and What it Meant.

Part B. What Christ Did and What it Means for Us.

Part A. What David Did and What it Meant

I'm going to outline these events like this: The man, enemy, problem, victory.

1. The man.

David is the youngest son in his family. That is a pattern in the bible. God frequently chooses the youngest son instead of the oldest or strongest son. Think of Joseph, for example. Joseph was the youngest, but God used Joseph to save his family and everyone in Egypt. Joseph and David are both young men who are smart, and brave, and they trust in the Lord. David's trust in God is his most important value, as we will see.

2. The enemy.

Goliath is a Philistine, an enemy of Israel. The Philistines are not the same people as the Palestinians today. And Israel in the Old Testament is not the same as Israel today. They have the same name, but they are not the same. Goliath is a huge, arrogant, terrifying man. Goliath insults David and King Saul and the Israelite army. Goliath is also an enemy of God himself. Goliath curses David in the name of Dagon, the primary Philistine god.

Dagon and God are in competition in this story. A false god and the one true God are each represented by a champion. The champions both claim that his god will win. Two human men are fighting. But David says in verse 27: "the battle is the Lord's."

3. The problem.

David seems to be facing impossible odds. The apparent problem is that no one can beat Goliath. That's obvious by the detailed description of Goliath's size and weapons. For 40 days the entire Israelite army was paralyzed by fear of Goliath. King Saul had no faith in David.

Look at verse 33.

33 "Don't be ridiculous!" Saul replied.

"There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win!

You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth."

And Goliath certainly didn't believe David could do it. Goliath says this in verse 43-44:

43 "Am I a dog," he roared at David, "that you come at me with a stick?"

And he cursed David by the names of his gods.

44 "Come over here, and I'll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!" Goliath yelled.

No one believes in David. Is that the real problem here? If that is the problem, then maybe the solution is David needs to believe in himself. That would be the Disney movie version of the story, right? Walt Disney himself said: "All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."

We like to believe that. We want to be the hero! Do you think David is a Disney hero, who "followed his heart" and "was true to himself"? Is the lesson of the story that David "chased his dreams" and found "within himself" the courage to win?

No, David isn't a hero because he believes in himself. David believes in His God. That is the source of his victory.

4. The victory.

Confidence in God is the source of David's strength. He says in verse 37:

37 "The Lord who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!"

This is the first thing I want you to remember: The solution to the problem of Goliath is not David's courage, but David's faith. That's why David doesn't wear Saul's armor, or use his weapons. The story emphasizes David's weakness and vulnerability. God arranged for the youngest son of Jesse to face a human tank like Goliath.

The message of this story is the same message we find in Philippians 4:13. *"I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength."*

Faith is not strength, my friends. Faith is weakness, holding onto strength. The opposite of faith is not disbelief. The opposite of faith is self-reliance. Faith is your weakness, holding onto God's strength. David is aware of his weakness, so he depends on God for the victory.

Look at verse 48.

48 "As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him."

David has great confidence in God's ability to protect him. That's why David runs into danger. The battle is quick. It almost seems easy, like the walls of Jericho falling down in a moment. After Goliath falls, David uses Goliath's own sword to cut off his head. I am sure that everyone in the army of Israel was yelling and celebrating what David had done.

But it was God's victory. David never takes credit. David said in verses 45-47:

"You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin.

But I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies--the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

46 Today the Lord will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head...

47 And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear.

This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!"

Remember friends: "This is the Lord's battle." Have you ever tried to break a bad habit? To stop doing something that you know you shouldn't do? Sometimes people will say something like this: "Oh, that addiction is your Goliath! You need to be strong and brave. Be like David, and then you'll beat that giant!"

Why is that unhelpful? Because our sin is a much bigger problem than Goliath. My sin is too big for me to defeat on my own. My heart likes to sin--that is my true problem. My problem is not a giant standing over there across the valley. My problem is in here, in my heart. If "be like David" is my only hope of victory over the challenges in my life, I am in trouble. It will not work out like a Disney movie, I promise you.

Moralism and legalism tell you what to do, but they give you no power to do it. That is why moralism and legalism always make you feel hopeless and defeated. Moralism and legalism tell you to depend on yourself to solve your problems. Therefore you can only blame yourself when you fail. And that's just where Satan wants you to be. Satan wants you to feel alone, defeated, without God, without hope. My friends, there is a much better way. The gospel offers hope and victory and new life.

1 John 5:12 says this. "Whoever has the Son of God has life. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

Part B. What Christ Did and What it Means for Us

Victory in your life happens when Christ does for you what you cannot do for yourself. Victory is found when you come to God unarmed, without confidence in yourself. You find victory when you surrender to Jesus. Only Jesus can defeat the enemy within your heart and mine.

The story of David and Goliath is ultimately about Jesus. The whole Bible is about Jesus. If we want to correctly understand the Old Testament we should ask the question, "how does this passage point me to Jesus?"

David was fighting as a champion, a representative of his people. The victory or defeat of David affected everyone, even though they didn't fight. If David lost, the whole army lost. The Israelites would become the slaves of the Philistines.

In the same way, Adam was a representative of all human beings. When Adam faced sin and death, he lost. Adam's defeat became our defeat. Sin and death were transferred to all his descendants. That's why we are born with original sin.

Romans 5:12 says: "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin."

Thankfully, Jesus fixed what Adam broke. Jesus also went into battle as our representative. Jesus is the son of Adam and son of David. Jesus battled Satan, who is the champion of evil and sin. Jesus fought death and evil in our place, and Jesus won.

Listen to what Paul said in Romans 5:18.

"18 Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone.

But Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone.

19 Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners.

But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous."

The gospel is Good News because it tells us that Jesus is the one who slays the giant who is too strong for us! Telling me to "be like David" is not Good News. If I trust in my gifts, ability, and strength then I am in trouble.

We are not the heroes of our stories. We all want to be superheroes, I know. But listen my friends, you are not Batman. You are Robin! You are not Luke Skywalker or Princess Leia. You are an Ewok!

We need to acknowledge our weakness and let Jesus be the hero. That's the lesson I want you to remember. David can be a good example for us if we remember that David is a flawed hero. David needed a Savior just like we do.

David of Psalm 51 is the one we should follow as an example. We heard it read earlier. These are the words of a biblical hero, not a comic book superhero. Listen to Psalm 51:10-12.

"10 Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.

11 Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you."

That is the kind of humility and dependence that God values. Even Jesus himself was humble and dependent. Listen to what Jesus said in John 5:30. "I can do nothing on my own... I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me."

David also knew that he could do nothing on his own. David depended on God to be the hero. When you read the story of David and Goliath, resist the temptation to picture yourself in David's place. If we are anywhere in this story, you and I are actually the soldiers watching the battle.

Imagine yourself there in the army. You were paralyzed with fear for 40 days. You watched helplessly as David fought the battle you could never win. Now imagine yourself in Jerusalem on the day Jesus died. You watch Jesus carry the cross and our sins through the streets. You stand helplessly with the disciples and watch Jesus die on the

cross.

Jesus went into battle as our representative, just like David did. Jesus fought Satan, and sin, and death and evil. It was our sins that were buried in the earth with Jesus. Therefore his resurrection brought our freedom, our victory, our forgiveness, and new life for us.

Do you believe that? Have you trusted in Jesus to be your representative? Will you let him win the victory over sin that you can never win? Jesus knew our sin problem was too big for us to tackle. That's why Jesus stepped forward, to fight our enemy.


Jesus fought to release us from the captivity of Satan. Jesus can free you from your own sin, and make you His follower. We are now captive to the sound of His voice, with the Holy Spirit alive in our hearts.

Every Sunday his followers gather here to celebrate His resurrection and victory! We are like a whole country dancing in the streets, like they won the World Cup. But they only watched the game. We dance and sing to celebrate the victory of Jesus, who is our true hero.

We will all leave this church tonight, to face our own battles this week. But we do not face them alone. We leave church with confidence in our God. We might feel weak and helpless this week, but we are never alone. We are never without hope. Because "this is the Lord's battle" and he has won the victory for us.

Let's pray together now.

Jesus, thank you. We do not have the kind of courage and confidence that David had. Thank you for showing us that David's trust was in the Lord and not in himself. Thank you for reminding us that God's power worked through David's weakness and faith. Holy Spirit, please help us trust in the strength of Jesus. Because "I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength." We pray in the powerful name of Jesus, our hero and Savior. Amen.

 One Voice Fellowship