

International Conversation Cafe

Old Testament: David and Goliath, 1 Samuel 17

David, ruled Israel for 40 years, from 1000 to 961 BC. In his lifetime, David was a poet, musician, leader, military commander, and king. In David's youth, he was a shepherd. A shepherd was responsible for protecting the sheep from animals like lions and bears. The weapon used against these animals was a sling, which was a leather pouch with leather straps attached to it, as in the picture. The shepherd would put a stone in the pouch, swing the pouch by the straps and then at the right moment, let go of one of the straps. With practice, the stone would hit the target. Training to use the sling was like an athletic endeavor. The story of David and Goliath takes place when David was probably 17 or 18 and not yet king. Though David trained, he trusted in God.



David and Goliath I Samuel 17

⁴ A mighty hero named Goliath came out of the Philistine camp. He was from Gath. He was more than nine feet tall. ⁵ He had a bronze helmet on his head. He wore a coat of bronze armor. It weighed 125 pounds. ⁶ On his legs he wore bronze guards. He carried a bronze javelin on his back. ⁷ His spear was as big as a weaver's rod. Its iron point weighed 15 pounds. The man who carried his shield walked along in front of him. "Goliath challenged the soldiers of Israel to send someone out to fight him. The loser would serve the winner. All of Israel were terrified of him. Goliath taunted them 40 days.

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Define unknown words and summarize the story thus far.

David was visiting his older brothers who were soldiers. When David saw and heard Goliath, he volunteered to fight him.

³³ Saul (Israel's king) replied, "You aren't able to go out there and fight that Philistine. You are too young. He's been a fighting man ever since he was a boy."
³⁴ But David said to Saul, "I've been taking care of my father's sheep. Sometimes a lion or a bear would come and carry off a sheep from the flock. ³⁵ Then I would go after it and hit it. I would save the sheep it was carrying in its mouth. If it turned around to attack me, I would grab hold of its hair. I would strike it down and kill it. ³⁶ In fact, I've killed both a lion and a bear. I'll do the same thing to this Philistine. He isn't even circumcised. He has dared the armies of the living God to fight him. ³⁷ "The Lord saved me from the paw of the lion. He saved me from the paw of the bear. And he'll save me from the powerful hand of this Philistine too."

Saul said to David, "Go. And may the Lord be with you."

Retell the story up to this point and give two reasons why David was confident.

⁴⁰ Then David picked up his wooden staff. He went down to a stream and chose five smooth stones. He put them in the pocket of his shepherd's bag. Then he took his sling in his hand and approached Goliath.

⁴¹ At that same time, the Philistine kept coming closer to David. The man who was carrying Goliath's shield walked along in front of him.

⁴² Goliath looked David over. He saw how young he was. He also saw how tanned and handsome he was. And he hated him. ⁴³ He said to David, "Why are you coming at me with sticks? Do you think I'm only a dog?" The Philistine called down curses on David in the name of his god. ⁴⁴ "Come over here," he said. "I'll feed your body to the birds of the air! I'll feed it to the wild animals!"

⁴⁵ David said to Goliath, "You are coming to fight against me with a sword, a name of the Lord who rules over all. He is the God of the armies of Israel. He's the one you have dared to fight against.

⁴⁶ "This very day the Lord will hand you over to me. I'll strike you down. I'll cut your head off. This very day I'll feed the bodies of the Philistine army to the birds of the air. I'll feed them to the wild animals. Then the whole world will know there is a God in Israel.

⁴⁷ "The Lord doesn't save by using a sword or a spear. And everyone who is here will know it. The battle belongs to the Lord. He will hand all of you over to us."

Define unknown words and retell the story.

Explain Goliath's hatred of David. What would David's defeat of Goliath prove to the world?

⁴⁸ As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly to the battle line to meet him. ⁴⁹ He reached into his bag. He took out a stone. He put it in his sling. He slung it at Goliath. The stone hit him on the forehead and sank into it. He fell to the ground on his face.

⁵⁰ So David won the fight against Goliath with a sling and a stone. He struck the Philistine down and killed him. He did it without even using a sword.

⁵¹ David ran and stood over him. He took hold of Goliath's sword and pulled it out. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.

The Philistines saw that their hero was dead. So they turned around and ran away.

⁵² Then the men of Israel and Judah shouted and rushed forward.

What do you like about this story?

What is remarkable about David?

Did you learn anything about God? Explain.

Describe what you see. Take your time. Look at each part of the painting.

How does it bring understanding to the story?



Peter Paul Rubens.. David Slaying Goliath. C. 1616.
Oil on canvas. 122.9 x 99.1 cm. Norton Simon
Museum. Pasadena, California