

## Our impossible enemy. 1 Samuel 17



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The story of David and Goliath is among the most well-known in the Bible. But what is not so well-known is how to apply this story to our lives. It's simply misguided to see this as a 'The bigger they are, the harder they fall' story; or to draw the conclusion that 'God loves an underdog'. Nor should we try to find symbolic meaning in it, such as turning David's five smooth stones into five key principles for defeating the 'giants' in our lives. This Bible study is designed not only to help us understand this particular story, but also to teach us how to apply other Old Testament passages to our lives.

To begin, this story is not a fable or parable. The Philistines are a people attested to in history and archaeology. Furthermore, the notion of a Philistine soldier who was nine feet in height seems plausible considering that *Guinness Book of World Records* has published photographs of Robert Wadlow who was just an inch shy of nine feet tall. The Scriptures also contain records of Israelite warriors who were trained to be deadly accurate with a sling (Judges 20:16). However, the real key to understanding this passage is found in young David's reply to Goliath's defiant taunts against the God of Israel, "***You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty...***" (1 Samuel 17:45). Hundreds of years before David, God promised Joshua (Moses' successor) that one Israelite would cause a thousand of Israel's enemies to flee (Joshua 23:10 – 11). So this story reminds us that God is powerful and true to his word. However, the question still remains of how to apply this story to our lives today. Therefore, take time now to consider and discuss the following questions.

1. Who does David ultimately foreshadow in this story? (Matthew 12:22 - 23 and 21:8 - 9)
2. Who (in our modern context) is foreshadowed by the Israelite army that followed David into victory? (Ephesians 2:12 – 13, 19 - 20)
3. Who is the ultimate enemy (the Goliath) of God's people; and how are we to prepare ourselves for battle against him? (1 Peter 5:8 – 9; Ephesians 6:10 – 20)
4. Read 2 Corinthians 10:3 – 5. Consider and discuss how we are to advance God's kingdom and defend God's honour in this world?

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<sup>1</sup> This image of David and Goliath was done by a 13th century Jewish artist living in France.