

## 20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 23 (June 2-8, 2013)

Many miracles are recorded in the Old Testament. We will spend the next few weeks looking at some of the best known of these events.

### **Sunday** -- June 2 (1 Samuel 17:1-11)

The familiar story begins with the introduction of a champion named Goliath, a giant Philistine who is over nine feet tall (v. 4). As if that is not intimidating enough, he is well armed and protected by incredible armor for the battle (v. 5-7). He issues a challenge to Israel's army under the direction of King Saul (v. 8-10). (The Philistines lived in the region of Gaza. Today, Israel struggles with the Hamas who live in the Gaza Strip. Some things never change.) Saul and his men are terrified because they have no one capable of fighting Goliath. Just like many Christians today, they don't understand the power of God to remove obstacles. Are there any giants in your life who cry out to you every morning? Are you prepared to do battle with your personal giant? The Bible is about to teach you how to approach this difficult challenge.

### **Monday** -- June 3 (1 Samuel 17:12-19)

Yesterday we met the champion; today we will meet the challenger. David is the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse from Bethlehem of Judah. The three oldest brothers have followed Saul off to war. David is a part-time shepherd and a part-time harpist for Saul (v. 12-15; see also 1 Samuel 16:15-23). The giant Philistine torments the army of Israel for 40 days and nights (v. 16). At this time, Jesse sends his youngest son, David, with a care package for his three oldest sons (v. 17-19). David obeys his elderly father and arrives in time to hear the latest challenge from Goliath (20-23). God has a plan for calming the fears of Israel's army, and we will see that plan unfold in tomorrow's devotions.

### **Tuesday** -- June 4 (1 Samuel 17:25-31)

King Saul has made a generous offer of great wealth, his daughter in marriage, and a tax exemption to anyone brave (or stupid) enough to fight Goliath (v. 25). (That tax exemption might be worth fighting for!) David asks the men to repeat the king's offer (v. 26-27). David's brother, Eliab, had been present when Samuel anointed his youngest brother to be the next king of Israel (see 1 Samuel 16:13). He burns with jealous anger and delivers a put-down in front of the other soldiers. He even discounts the value of David's care over his father's sheep (v. 28). Undeterred, David continues to talk with the men until one of them goes to Saul with the news that a volunteer has stepped forward. We will continue the story tomorrow.

### Wednesday -- June 5 (1 Samuel 17:32-40)

Against all human odds, David volunteers to fight the heavyweight champion, Goliath (v. 32). Based solely on sight, not on faith, Saul tells David he doesn't have a chance against such an experienced veteran (v. 33). God's chosen man testifies about the times God has used him to defend his sheep against lions and bears (v. 34-36). David is sure that the same God will allow him to defeat Goliath (v. 37). Saul relents but insists that David use the king's personal equipment. This is the same king who is afraid to put it on and fight the giant himself. The shepherd boy stumbles around in this unfamiliar armor before declaring, "I cannot go in these because I am not used to them" (v. 38-39). If David is to fight the giant, he must use the slingshot that he is accustomed to. He picks up **five** smooth stones and heads out to meet the enemy of the Jews. (Some teach that Goliath has four brothers who may come to his aid, but I have not found all of them in God's Word. That could explain the extra four stones.)

### Thursday -- June 6 (1 Samuel 17:41-51)

The Philistine sizes David up and sneers at the fact that the Jews have sent a boy out to do a man's job. He curses David and attacks him with scornful words (v. 41-44). God's man expresses confidence in the Lord's ability to win the battle against the sword and spear and javelin of Goliath. He believes God will get so much glory that the **whole world** will know there is a God in Israel (v. 46). Also, **Israel's army** will realize "that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's" (v. 47). Using the only weapon he knows, David runs to the battle line and drops Goliath with a carefully aimed rock to his forehead (v. 48-49). He cuts off Goliath's head using the giant's own sword. The rest of the Philistines turn and run because their hero is dead (v. 50-51). What a miracle! God loves to win victories against tremendous odds. Only then does He get **all** the glory!

### Friday -- June 7 (1 Samuel 52-58)

The men of Israel are encouraged by David's victory so they chase the fleeing Philistines back to their city of Gath, killing many along the way (v. 52). Then they return to the campsite of their enemy and take plunder (v. 53). David brings Goliath's head back to Jerusalem and keeps the giant's weapons in his own tent (v. 54). The rest of the chapter is strange because Saul and Abner (his commander) should know who David is. After all, God's shepherd boy has been playing the harp for Saul since the Spirit of God departed from him and an evil spirit from God tormented him (see 1 Samuel 16:14). Perhaps this is a reminder to all of us that when God truly gets all the glory, **we** will remain nameless. Glory to His Name!

### Saturday -- June 8 (1 Samuel 17 review)

I concluded Sunday's devotions with a promise that the Bible will teach you how to face difficult challenges in your life. Allow me to point out some guidelines gleaned from the wonderful chapter:

- 1) Obey current authorities (v. 17-20)
- 2) Be faithful to mundane duties (v. 20-22)
- 3) Endure criticisms (v. 28)
- 4) Draw from past victories (34-36)
- 5) Use the weapons God has given to you (v. 39-40)
- 6) Advance by faith, not by sight for God's glory (v. 45-47)
- 7) Finish the job and claim the victory (50-52).

I pray that your giants will fall as you march forward to victory in the Lord.