

## **A MAN OF FAITH, BOY DAVID**

**1 Samuel 17:1-51**

**Key Verse: 17:45b**

**"...but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel..."**

**Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7,8a: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day." In these verses Paul is saying, as a victor of life in Jesus, that life is a continuous battle, and that there is a victor and a loser. Today's passage is about David and Goliath. David was the youngest of eight sons of Jesse, an Israelite, and he was a shepherd boy. He was sent on an errand by his father to his brothers who were on the battle-front, having been drafted by King Saul. Goliath was a giant and a champion and the commander of the Philistine camp. They fought a duel, and David won the victory over this champion. Like David, we also must fight many good fights in the year 1990. May God teach us from this familiar story the secret of victory.**

### **I. A man of big mouth, Goliath (1-16)**

**There was a war between the Philistines and the Israelites. In those days, warfare was a kind of face-to-face confrontation. In a battle or a war, the spirit of an army was the most important factor in winning the victory, and the spirit of an army largely depended on their leader.**

**Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Socoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Socoh and Azekah. Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them. A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; on his legs, he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javlin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed**

six hundred shekels. Goliath was a champion who was strong, well-disciplined and well-equipped with arms. He became a great champion by defeating innumerable opponents through much fighting and bloodshed. There was no soldier as fierce as Goliath. Still today, his name "Goliath" carries with it an impression of fear and terror.

Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." (8b,9) Goliath challenged the ranks of Israel to fight a duel so as to decide which side would be subject to the other. Challenge and response--this was the way people fought in ancient times. But what was the response of Israel? They did not dare to respond to the challenge. On hearing Goliath's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. They were caught by fear. This terrifying challenge did not stop after one time; it continued. For forty days Goliath came forward every morning and evening, took his stand and shouted, saying, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." (10) Each day, and day after day, the hearts of the Israelites were more and more filled with fear and terror. Finally, they lost their spirit, for they were paralyzed by fear. They were no more the armies of God; they were the slaves of fear.

Goliath's strategy in warfare was to plant fear in the hearts of his opponents by intimidating them with his vociferation, which welled up from his champion's spirit. In doing this, he won the victory over the Israelites without fighting. The Israelites lost the war before the fight because of their fear. In reality, the enemy of the Israelites was not Goliath the champion; their real enemy was the fear in their hearts. If a man wants to have a victorious life, he must make up his mind to overcome fear of Goliath. Otherwise his life will be continuous defeat in trembling fear.

There are many kinds of Goliaths in the world. Living in this age of technology, the pollution of nature, the population explosion and the impending genocidal nuclear holocaust might be our Goliaths. As Goliath the Philistine champion was the cause of fear to the Israelites, so there are many Goliaths that make each of us fearful. As long as we harbor any kind of fear, 1990 will be a year of terrible suffering, aside from the fact that we cannot have a victorious life. Fear, however, does not come from without,

but from within. Therefore, we must ask God to help us to overcome the fears in our hearts, hidden and apparent.

These days we note that a most serious problem of modern man is fear. A symbol of man is virility. But most young men these days are not as courageous as they ought to be. They are so fearful and cowardly that most women lose the joy of life. One weekend we sent out many letters of invitation to the Sunday worship service. Each envelope looked pretty heavy because a copy of the Sunday message was included. When one young man received this envelope, he looked at it and trembled, supposing that its contents might be terrible.

God blessed our one-to-one Bible studies so much that nearly 1,000 American students attended the 1988 summer conference. We were thankful to God and expected that God would do great things in American campus evangelism through us. We also expected that we would see the glory of God through a good many possible leadership material sheep who had attended the conference. Most of them said, "The messages were good and the conference was exciting." But when they went back into the world and heard from their friends, "You're gonna lose all the fun in life," and, "You can't be one of us," they were dismayed and terrified. They knew that living in Jesus is the best way of life, but they were too afraid of losing worldly pleasures. So, one after another ran away; some ran away, saying, "My mom doesn't allow me to attend the Sunday worship service." There are many kinds of Goliaths to many people. But pleasure-seeking has become a most powerful Goliath to many young people. Many young people are afraid of being kicked out of their peer group in which they enjoy their sinful pleasures. Many who receive only the minimum wage pay apartment rent so that they can keep up their sinful lives. Because of this, they don't want to be changed, nor do they want to take root in Jesus.

What is the root of fear? It is unbelief, which comes from a cut relationship with God. Cain rejected God's counseling, thinking that he would be free if he lived in his own way. But this was not so. He was overcome by fear. At the moment he ran away from God, he confessed, "My punishment is more than I can bear...whoever finds me will kill me." He felt like a condemned criminal, and he was overcome by a premonition that somebody would take a momentary opportunity to kill him. (Ge 4:13,14) There are many descendants of Cain in this world. With no apparent reason they tremble in fear day and night. They doubt people around them as if

they were out to kill them. In fear they say to each other, "Take care." And they do many kinds of evil things to overcome the fear in their hearts.

Why are people so fearful with no apparent reason? Paul explains in Romans 8:15. It is because of a spirit in a man that makes him a slave to fear. When a man's intimate relationship with God is broken, the Spirit of God leaves him. (Ge6:3) Simultaneously, evil spirits occupy his heart and make him fearful, until finally he dies because of fear. One who is possessed by evil spirits is miserable all the time because of fear, no matter who he may be.

To Paul, Timothy was an appropriate person to be his successor. He was honest, faithful and sincere. But Tim, because of fear, was withdrawn into himself, and he could not achieve anything. Paul admonished him by saying, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." (2Ti1:7) This is the reason Jesus is the good news of great joy to all people, for he anoints us with the Spirit of God when we believe in him. At the same time, he casts out all the evil spirits from our hearts.

## II. A man of God, boy David (17-51)

Let's learn how to win victory over Goliath from the boy David. David was the youngest among eight sons of Jesse. He was also a shepherd boy and stayed home when his three brothers were drafted by King Saul. One day, David was sent to the front lines by his father to deliver food to his brothers. When he arrived, the armies were drawn up in battle positions. David greeted his brothers, and as they stood there talking, Goliath came out to shout his usual defiant insults. Saul and all the Israelites were once again dismayed and terrified. Even though David was only a boy, he loved God and he was full of anger. He said, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (26) To David, who had faith in God Almighty, Goliath looked as if he were nothing. He saw Goliath as if he were the shadow of a big tree. Maybe David saw him as a wild dog in a steep valley, barking loudly. On the other hand, he saw the armies of God as all-powerful. He was full of spirit--a spirit of victory. When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard him say this, he could not understand this boy David and got mad. He said, "I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is." (28b)

When he was sent to Saul, David said to him, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." In this verse David shows his determination to respond to the challenge of the fierce Goliath. (32) Saul saw him and said, "You are only a boy." It meant, "Your spirit is good, but you are too young to fight him." At this point, David, in order to convince him, gave him an overview of his life as a shepherd. Read verses 34-37a. "But David said to Saul, 'Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.'" In these verses we learn two things from David. First, he talked about how courageous he had been. He mentioned dangerous wild animals who had attacked his flock and how he had fought with them, risking his life. But below the surface of this story, he was saying that when he fought these animals with his bare hands, it was the Lord who had delivered him from them. He knew that it was a dangerous and fearful thing to fight Goliath, but he was sure that the Lord who had delivered him from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear would deliver him from the hand of the Philistine. (37) By faith in God he overcame his fear and he could boldly respond to the challenge of Goliath. Only faith in God Almighty made it possible for him to overcome his fear problem and stand firmly to fight.

Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you." (37b) In a helpless situation, King Saul could not but depend on a boy David who had faith in God Almighty. What did David do in order to prepare to fight Goliath? At first, he tried on Saul's armor, but he felt uncomfortable, because he was not used to it. Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine. Meanwhile, the Philistine looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. Jokingly he said to David, "Am I a dog that you come at me with sticks?" He was overconfident about his skill. He never expected anything unusual to happen.

What did David answer? Look at verses 45,46. "David said to the

Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head... and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.' This is boy David's confession of faith. He said, "I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty." In the time of duel, before a nine-foot tall enemy, David had such an absolute and firm faith. We need this kind of absolute faith before enemies of God.

What was the result? As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly with total concentration toward the battle line to meet him. In the meantime, reaching into his bag, he took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground. David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he had killed him, he cut off his head with a sword. David triumphed over the Philistine. The secret of his victory lay in his faith in God Almighty. He was the youngest son, so he must have had a youngest son syndrome, which made him weak. He was only a boy; so he must have been afraid even to look at Goliath. But he had no fear in his heart. When he heard about Goliath's defying the armies of God, he burned with anger because he loved God. In his anger he believed that such a person should not exist, but should be extinguished. His love toward God and his hatred toward the uncircumcised Philistine were well-expressed in verse 26. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" When he confronted Goliath in a duel, David said, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty." (45a) When he entrusted himself to God, then God was with him. And he was filled with the Spirit and power of God. On the other hand, the champion Goliath's spirit was deranged, daunted by the spirit of David.

Now we see that unbelief is the cause of fear and defeat, and that faith is the secret of victory. May God give us a victorious life when we are determined to have faith in God. When we depend on our strength and skill, we may lose our battles and wars as Goliath did. But when we depend on God and overcome our fear and fight, surely victory will be ours, even though we are weak like a boy.