



Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. (2 Chron 20:15)

In elementary school, I was the older of two brothers and was therefore the shield and guardian for my little brother against larger bullies. I often wished for the shoe to be on the other foot. Little did I realize that I did have an older Brother mightier than every bully, enemy, or hateful troublemaker – the Lord Jesus Christ! *A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. (Prov 18:24)* *For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. (Matt 12:50)* But of far greater gravity is the fact Jesus is our LORD and Master. He is our rock and our Fortress. As related in 2 Chronicles 20:15 above, He is the victor of all of our righteous causes.

There came a day when the first fleshly King Saul of Israel (God was first King) was engaged in a standoff with the legions of the Philistines. They were arrayed in intimidating numbers across the valley of Elah facing the armies of Israel. The numbers of the Philistines was daunting for both appearance and numerical advantage. To add to this seemingly hopeless imbalance, a new and unexpected threat was posed by the Philistines: *4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. 5 And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass. 6 And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders. 7 And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him. (1 Sam 17:4-7)* By ancient records, the height of Goliath has been variously computed to be between 10 and 11.5 ft. tall. He was gigantic and struck fear in the hearts of the Israelites who did not remember their God was greater than the largest man ever born.

Consider, beyond the gigantic size of the giant, the size and weight of his armaments. His coat of mail weighed over 150 pounds; he wore greaves of iron sheaves on his shins and a large target (shield) of brass between his shoulders (he did not bear the shield in hand due to his overconfidence); the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam (about four inches in diameter and ten feet long); the head of his spear weighed about thirteen pounds alone; and there was an escort who went before the giant, out of formal courtesy, bearing a shield.

So the men of Israel were very fearful of this new development. Goliath proposed to be the champion of the two sides to settle the conflict without further bloodshed of many others. This seemed fair enough, but the advantage in size lay overwhelmingly on the side of the giant. Moreover, he was a seasoned veteran of battle.

While the mighty men of Israel shook fearfully in their boots and pondered who among them of their strongest and brightest could challenge the giant, a young lad was approaching the camp to bring victuals to his brothers. When the threat of defeat looms most threatening, and hope grows forlorn, the Lord is preparing a typical savior for His people in the form of the least among the Israelites to combat the greatest man of the Philistines. This is another example of the math of God. Gideon's 300 against the enemies 120,000; and now this youthful lad against the greatest giant in the land of the Philistines. Who would have considered it? Have the Israelites forgotten that the battle belongs to the LORD? He did not even need David except to emphasize His own glory and majesty in preparing the smallest to defeat the largest of warriors.

Of course, David was a shepherd boy and not trained in the military arts of war. He did, however, have one small strength that he had learned in defending the sheep from the wolves and lions – a slingshot. He was a good shepherd who found the greenest of pastures for his sheep, and he practiced his skill on the slingshot in order to ward off predators in defending the sheep. Would it not be a great blessing if the under-shepherds of our churches had at least one means of defending the sheep from the wolves and lions rather than eating those themselves?

So David evaluates the situation facing Israel through innocent and child-like eyes. His child-like faith and courage were completely disappointed at the lack of courage of the strong men of Israel. They had forgotten that one needs only a single ally when confronting the battles of life – the Lord who is the God of Battles. David asks, *who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?* (1 Sam 17:26)

David's brothers were offended at what they viewed as immature presumptuousness. But in spite of all, King Saul heard of this young lad and sent for him. *And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.* (1 Sam 17:32) Saul could hardly believe his ears! The exchange continued thusly: *And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.* (1 Sam 17:33-37) Though Saul doubted David's ability to down the giant, he had nothing to lose but David's life, so he relented and sent David to fight the giant. He went without armor since that was too heavy to be borne by a small boy.

⁴⁰ *And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.* (1 Sam 17:40) David took neither spear nor shield, but only a shepherd's staff and his faithful sling whose stones the Lord had always directed in flight. On the way into the valley of Elah to face Goliath, David gathered five smooth stones from the brook. Running water smoothens stones just as the water of life smoothens the turbulent heart. Why did David select five of those stones if he was so certain that God would direct his sling to target? I believe the evidence can be found in 2 Samuel 21. In verses 15-22 (too long to include here), the account is related of four other giants who

threatened David, but were killed by his men. Each was of a similar size as Goliath and perhaps even larger. One of them at Gath, the homeland of Goliath, had six toes on each foot and six fingers on each hand. These four were all killed by men other than David, but at the favor of God. They were sons of Goliath we are told. *These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.* (2 Sam 21:22)

It seems to me that the courage of David and his unsurpassed faith in God are under-rated in the account of his battle with Goliath. I believe David chose five smooth stones because he was aware of the sons of Goliath and realized that they may come to their father's defense when they saw him defeated so shamefully by David. David must have expected to fight FIVE giants instead of only the father, Goliath, of four other giants. So, being wise beyond years owing to his trust in God, David made adequate preparation for contingencies that were possible, or even probable. If we are God's people, we, too, must take measures for unforeseen dangers that lurk in the shadows against our brothers and sisters in Christ, against our nation, and against the Kingdom of God. It is not because God NEEDS our help, but He desires to see in us the courage and faith of a David.

As David approached the giant, Goliath was incensed at the absurdity of a lad coming before him with only a stick (shepherd's staff) to confront so formidable enemy as himself. *42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he despised him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. 43 And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.* (1 Sam 17:42-44) This threat might intimidate our modern politicians and clergymen of today, but it only solidified the mettle of David. *45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.* (1 Sam 17:45-47) Thus did David proceed to do.

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. (1 Sam 17:48) If God is in the equation, no need to fear and cringe. Note that little David RAN to meet Goliath! I wish our leaders of today would run to meet the enemies of freedom and liberty. *49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth. 50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. 51 Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.* (1 Sam 17:49-51) Yes, the champion of the Philistines was dead, beheaded by his own sword. The Philistines panicked at this miraculous defeat of Goliath. But the strong men of Israel were emboldened to battle by a mere boy – notwithstanding a boy who went forth in the favor and strength of God his Father.