

Elder Vernon Johson

Numbers

Trial of Faith due to Goliath's Defiance

1 Pet. 1:6 "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Many times in the life of a child of God his faith is put to the test. This was true in the case of David going to battle against Goliath.

The children of Israel were at war with the Philistines. The Philistines had a mighty warrior named Goliath. King Saul, the army of Israel, and nearly all Israel were afraid of this mighty warrior as he was truly a giant in stature and human strength. The size of Goliath is described as follows: 1 Sam. 17:4 "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."

Goliath put forth a proposal to the children of Israel that struck fear in the heart of King Saul, the army of Israel and all of Israel: 1 Sam. 17:8 "And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. 9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. 10 And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. 11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid."

The problem King Saul, the army of Israel, and the people of Israel had was that they were strictly looking upon an arm of flesh. They only saw how they in their

flesh matched up against this man who was far greater and stronger than any of them. They were not trusting in the Lord and his promises.

Among all of Israel, there was a young lad by the name of David who was not afraid of the giant. At one time he had been a servant of King Saul but had returned to his father's house to care for the flock of sheep. Subsequently, his father Jesse sent him to carry food to his brothers in the war and to see how they fared: 1 Sam. 17:16 "And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. 17 And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren; 18 And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge."

David came to the army to see his brethren when the giant came and once again defied the army of Israel: 1 Sam. 17:22 "And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren. 23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them. 24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. 25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

26 And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

David had learned by experience how that the Lord can deliver and told King Saul of his experience: 1 Sam. 17:34 "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: 35 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. 36 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. 37 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. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee."

Most people in telling the story of David and Goliath, think that the young and much smaller David was up against great odds in fighting Goliath and that he was

fortunate to slay the giant because of the path of the stone that lodged in Goliath's forehead. The fight was indeed a great mismatch, but not as most people believe. Goliath had no chance of victory in this match as he was doing battle not only against David, but also against the Lord. The Lord had delivered David out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear. The Lord has all power and all wisdom and therefore Goliath was no match for the Lord.

David trusted in the Lord and proved his faith in battle against the giant. Even though his brothers derided him, and King Saul had said that he was no match against the giant, and the giant ridiculed him, yet David did not let the fear of the people, or of the army, or of King Saul deter him. David had the only one he needed to assure him of victory over the giant. He had the Lord. His trust was not in his own arm of flesh, but his trust was in the Lord. The people feared the giant because they trusted in their own strength. The army feared the giant because they trusted in their own strength. King Saul feared the giant because he trusted in his own strength.

David knew victory would be his because he trusted in the Lord: 1 Sam. 17:45 "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 carcasses 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."

Just as the number forty is associated with trial and judgment, David passed the trial of his faith and consequently the judgment was that he slew the giant with his own sword.