

Christians are terrorized by enemies able and ready to destroy them, but they will reign victorious by faith in God’s anointed king who triumphed in battle and is exalted as champion. See your true identity in the David and Goliath story, and know your calling as a king who serves Jesus the King of kings.

Introduction – A new series answering the question, “What is a Christian?”

I. Story: What about David and Goliath?

A. War between advancing Philistines and retreating Israelites (vv. 1-3)

The geography of the battle is significant. Here the two armies occupy opposite hills facing each other. At stake for God’s people is the imminent threat of being pushed back into the wilderness by the same people the LORD commanded them to expel from the land! Most important, the LORD’s international honor and name is at stake. This is spiritual warfare!

B. Duel of federal champions (vv. 4-11, 26, 48-51)

1. In this corner: Goliath is portrayed as a serpent (“scale” armor) and something like a giant super-soldier. As one of the last living specimens of an ancient race of very tall humans descended from the Nephilim and Anakim (Num 13:31-33; Josh 11:21-22), Goliath stands about 9 feet 9 inches tall.

2. And in this corner: little David is commissioned by knee-knocking King Saul to be Israel’s champion. But don’t miss this: David is portrayed as a young shepherd but also a king-to-be serpent slayer (1 Sam 11 where Saul defeats King Nahash=“serpent”). Both David and Goliath are federal representatives of their respective peoples. After much narrative tension and buildup, once the battle begins it’s almost anti-climactic. David, without any sword or armor, but wielding only a sling and a stone, knocks Goliath facedown with a shot to the forehead, making the snake eat dust. Then David finished him off as he draws Goliath’s sword and chops his head right off.

C. Victory by the LORD, God of Israel’s armies (vv. 52-54; cf. vv. 45-47)

When David came to the battle line for Israel “in the name of the LORD of armies,” in effect he came as God’s instrument and in the power of all that God’s name invokes (Exo 34:5-7). The LORD is the God of war, and he has both war and its results in his hand. David claims his victory will resound throughout the earth as a witness that the LORD is with Israel (Ps 46:10-11). Once it becomes clear the LORD has won a great victory through David slaying the giant serpent, the Philistines retreat before the army of Israel. The battle is won, Israel is safe, and the LORD’s name is feared once again.

II. Identity: Who Are You Truly Like?

If you want to understand how the story can help you in real life rather than your private fantasy world, then you must take a closer look in the mirror by studying the text.

A. The bad guys: Goliath and the Philistines (vv. 1, 8-10, 41-44)

Bad guys can manifest a whole host of evil. But all bad guys are characterized by one common trait. They don’t need Israel’s God to get along in life and to enjoy ruling their private little kingdoms. When faced with the living God and the gospel of Jesus Christ, they are proud of their own strength, their own resourcefulness, and their own “gods”. Philistines probably looked a lot like the average Israelite soldier. Like you and me, they had homes and wives and children and jobs back home. Just

because you're a bad guy doesn't mean you act like Attila the Hun. It just means you're a sinner like everyone else, but you're on the wrong side of history because you're not on the LORD's side.

B. The good guys: Saul and the Israelites (vv. 2, 11, 24-25, 28, 33, 37b-38, 55-56)

You can't deny both good guys and bad guys are sinners. Look at Saul. Physically speaking he's the best candidate for the fight. But God's Spirit has left Saul. He's faithless. Look at the Israelite soldiers. They're all terrified and hoping someone else (anyone else!) will step up to face Goliath. David's oldest brother Eliab gives him a tongue-lashing, accusing David of showing off and grabbing a front-row seat like it's a spectator sport. The Israelite soldiers quickly escort zealous David to the king as their first pick to fight the giant. The only thing that makes them "good guys" is their positional righteousness. They are justified, by faith alone, not by any righteousness in themselves.

C. The anointed one: David, who foreshadows Jesus (vv. 32, 34-40, 45-47, 58; cf. 16:11-13)

Heidelberg Catechism 31: "Why is He called Christ, that is, Anointed? Because He has been ordained by God the Father, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, to be our eternal King, who governs us by His Word and Spirit, and who defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us." David is unique in the story. As Israel's anointed king, David is God's son who rules over his people. So David is the Christ-figure in this story. Whereas David, in the strength and power of the LORD, bested the snake Goliath with a sling and a stone, Jesus bested the serpent of old, Satan himself, with a cross and three nails. David put his life on the line and won a great victory for God and his people, Jesus gave up his life and won the greatest victory for God and his people.

III. Call: How Should You Then Live?

Heidelberg Catechism 32: "Why are you called a Christian? Because I am a member of Christ by faith and thus share in His anointing, so that I may as king..."

A. "Fight with a free and good conscience against sin and the devil in this life" (vv. 52-53)

Just as the Israelites surged forward after David's victory to give chase to the Philistines, so also Christians must surge forward with a victory shout and plunder the camp of Satan. That means as a king, you must stand firm in God's armor against the schemes of the devil (Eph 6:10-13). You must fight well by keeping the faith and maintaining a good conscience to avoid shipwrecking your faith and those under your care (1 Tim 1:18-19). You must work toward biblical justice by protecting and providing first for your family, and then for those whose need is greatest: the widow, the fatherless, the foreigner, the poor.

B. "Hereafter reign with Him eternally over all creatures" (vv. 57-58; cf. 18:1-5)

As far as the people are concerned, David's reign might as well begin now. Even Saul's son, Prince Jonathan, is ready for David to inherit the kingdom. That is why you, like Jonathan, do best to strip yourself of the trappings and benefits of your little kingdom and hand them over to Jesus the Greater David. Lest you get your expectations all wrong, follow the life trajectory of David and Jesus. At their moments of victory when you expect them to ascend the throne, instead God leads them into a prolonged period of waiting, enduring, and suffering before finally they receive a crown. Christian, since you a peculiar kind of king, a little king in the order of Christ, you must expect the same.

Conclusion – Here's one example of how embracing your calling as a king works out in real life. How best to use your royal palace for God's glory? Work diligently to make your home a place of grace and Christian instruction for your household. But not just for the sake of your household. Do it to better practice the art of Christian hospitality for your neighbors. Christian, the Bible says you are a king. Therefore rule and reign in the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.