

Lesson 30: The Rise of David the Shepherd Boy

If you're like me and you're watching a movie or reading a book where there are two opponents-- you find yourself rooting for the underdog who is overpowered, and maybe not as big as the other guy, but you want him to come out on top. Maybe that's why America has this love-affair with Rocky Balboa and the Rocky series, We want Rocky to overcome adversity and defeat the other guy whether he's a Russian by the name of Ivan or Apollo Creed. We find ourselves cheering for Rocky.

And in today's lesson, we're talking about one of the greatest underdog stories ever written and this is not just some tale of fiction, but it actually happened. Of course, I'm talking about David vs Goliath, one of the most famous stories in the Bible.

It's the familiar story of the victorious kid who goes up against a 9-ft giant and all he's got for a weapon is his slingshot. And we may have some preconceived ideas as a result of hearing the story referred to numerous times, but maybe never really stopping to carefully look at what's going on. So, let's try to get a fresh look at the story of David & Goliath as well as David's rise to power.

But first, as always, let's review last week's **Lesson 29: God Gives Israel a King:**

Questions for Review:

1. Why did the people want a king? **Because they were tired of being "special"—they wanted to be like everybody else, like all the nations around them. They wanted a king that they could see.**
2. Why was Saul chosen? **Because he was tall and good-looking.**
3. Did the people reject God as the King? **Yes**
4. Was Saul a good choice as a king? Why or why not? **No, Saul cared more about how he looked in the eyes of man than in the eyes of God. Saul had a half-hearted obedience to God. In many ways, Saul was religious and wanted to look good outwardly, but God did not possess his heart.**
5. What were some of the things that Samuel told the people would change if they had a king?
 - **Their king would force all their young men to be in his army.**
 - **He would force some of them to do his plowing and harvesting as well as make his weapons for war and build his chariots.**
 - **Their king would take their daughters to make perfume and to do all his household chores like cooking and baking.**
 - **Their king would take the best fields, olive groves and vineyards in Israel and give them to his servants.**
 - **Their king would take a tenth of what they produced to give to his servants.**
 - **Finally, their new king would take the Israelites male and female servants along with the strongest and finest young men to do his work, and he'd take their donkeys as well.**
6. How does God measure a man or woman? By their looks or what? **God looks upon the heart.**
7. Is God ever late? **No.**
8. Why was Samuel angry with Saul for not waiting and for going ahead and offering the burnt offering and sacrifice by himself? **Because that was the responsibility of the priest. Saul had not been anointed as a priest and was showing his disobedience, impatience and lack of trust in Samuel who was God's anointed priest and judge.**
9. When Israel attacks the Amalekites and they are victorious, what are the three lies that Saul tells to Samuel?

- a. I have done all that the Lord has commanded.
 - b. Saul claims that his soldiers took the livestock.
 - c. The animals are for a sacrifice
10. 1 Samuel 15:22, "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice as much as ___ _____
 ___ _____ ? What are the missing words? "...as much as in obeying the voice of
 the Lord."
11. What are three things we learn about Saul's disobedience to the Lord's command?
- a. It was partial obedience. Saul did most of what God commanded, but not all.
 - b. Saul camouflages his disobedience as being religious. He saved the livestock to offer for sacrifice to God. He had spared the best of the livestock to offer his people a free meal at his expense and to look good and benevolent in their eyes.
 - c. He doesn't take his disobedience seriously. After confessing his sin, he wants to move on to receiving the blessing of God, sidestepping the issue of discipline.

A. David, the Shepherd Boy

After Prophet Samuel realizes that Saul and his descendants will not continue to rule Israel, he goes looking for another candidate.

Guided by God, Samuel finds himself in the town of Bethlehem, knocking on the door of a man named Jesse among whose sons the next king is to be found.

Jesse presents seven of his sons, and Samuel sees that all are amazing men - physically fit, well-educated in Jewish law, dedicated to God. But that's not good enough. The Bible tells us that as Samuel is admiring one of Jesse's sons, he gets a message from God:

1 Samuel 16:7 (NLT)

⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

So Samuel asks: "Don't you have any more sons?" Jesse, a little flustered, responds: "Well, there still the youngest one, but he is out tending sheep." Let's read from 1 Samuel 16:10

1 Samuel 16:10-13 (NLT)

¹⁰ In the same way all seven of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these."

¹¹ Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats." "Send for him at once," Samuel said. "We will not sit down to eat until he arrives."

¹² So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the LORD said, "This is the one; anoint him."

¹³ So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.

The little one is David. Samuel demands that Jesse go get him and as soon as little David appears, Samuel knows he is the one. Despite the fact that physically he's not so impressive, he has what it takes to be the strong leader Israel needs.

This teaches us a very important lesson on how we're supposed to judge people. We live in a superficial world. We are judged by how we look, which is why plastic surgery and looking eternally young is such a big thing. Men and women spend hours in the gym to attain that so-called perfect body.

Judaism says true greatness of the individual is not measured by outward appearance; true greatness resides in the soul. God doesn't measure how we look on the outside; He's concerned with our heart and our soul—or to put it another way, our inner man. Some people spend all their time building themselves up or botoxing their face while their inner man is languishing and looks like a skeleton because it has not been nurtured in any way whatsoever.

David was gifted with musical talent which would elevate him to the spotlight. David became well-known for his ability to play the lyre, an ancient stringed instrument resembling a small harp.

The Bible says that because of Saul's wrongdoings, God sent an evil spirit to torment him. Saul seeks a musician to calm his nerves. Ironically, the musician called to assist the king turns out to be David, the boy who will one day be king.

B. Slaying Goliath

Theme: God is all-powerful.

Theme: Man must have faith in order to please God and be saved.

The Israelites are in yet another battle with the Philistines. Only this time, there is no fighting going on. The reason? The Israelites are afraid because the Philistines have changed the terms of engagement. The Philistines offer to become Israel's slaves if they can defeat their champion in one-on-one combat. The only problem is that their champion, whose name is Goliath, is huge. According to the account in the Bible, he is about 9'9" tall, making even the tallest NBA superstar look puny in his presence.

Goliath taunts Israel everyday, badmouthing both the nation and God. Desperate, Saul offers to anyone who might kill Goliath, his daughter in marriage, wealth and even exemption from paying taxes. Even with the tax break, no one accepts and Goliath taunts Israel in this regard for 40 days!

Meanwhile, back in Bethlehem, Jesse summons David from looking after the flocks of sheep, and wants him to check on the welfare of his brothers, who are serving in the Israelites army. When he arrives at the Israelite camp and hears Goliath's taunts, he is outraged that no one has enough confidence in God to stand up to this "uncircumcised Philistine".

1 Samuel 17:20-31 (NLT)

²⁰ So David left the sheep with another shepherd and set out early the next morning with the gifts, as Jesse had directed him. He arrived at the camp just as the Israelite army was leaving for the battlefield with shouts and battle cries.

²¹ Soon the Israelite and Philistine forces stood facing each other, army against army.

²² David left his things with the keeper of supplies and hurried out to the ranks to greet his

brothers.

²³ As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, came out from the Philistine ranks. Then David heard him shout his usual taunt to the army of Israel.

²⁴ As soon as the Israelite army saw him, they began to run away in fright.

²⁵ “Have you seen the giant?” the men asked. “He comes out each day to defy Israel. The king has offered a huge reward to anyone who kills him. He will give that man one of his daughters for a wife, and the man’s entire family will be exempted from paying taxes!”

²⁶ David asked the soldiers standing nearby, “What will a man get for killing this Philistine and ending his defiance of Israel? Who is this pagan Philistine anyway, that he is allowed to defy the armies of the living God?”

²⁷ And these men gave David the same reply. They said, “Yes, that is the reward for killing him.”

²⁸ But when David’s oldest brother, Eliab, heard David talking to the men, he was angry. “What are you doing around here anyway?” he demanded. “What about those few sheep you’re supposed to be taking care of? I know about your pride and deceit. You just want to see the battle!”

²⁹ “What have I done now?” David replied. “I was only asking a question!”

³⁰ He walked over to some others and asked them the same thing and received the same answer.

³¹ Then David’s question was reported to King Saul, and the king sent for him.

David asks Saul to let him take on Goliath’s challenge. Admiring David’s courage, Saul agrees and gives David his royal armor. However, Saul’s battle duds are way too big for the young David, and he decides to face Goliath without any armor. But David does not go without a weapon.

Let’s read.

1 Samuel 17:32-51 (ESV)

³² And David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.”

³³ And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth.”

³⁴ But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep sheep for his father. And when there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock,

³⁵ I went after him and struck him and delivered it out of his mouth. And if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard and struck him and killed him.

³⁶ Your servant has struck down both lions and bears, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.”

³⁷ And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!”

³⁸ Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail,

³⁹ and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.” So David put them off.

⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd’s pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine.

⁴¹ And the Philistine moved forward and came near to David, with his shield-bearer in front of him.

⁴² And when the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised him, for he was but a youth, ruddy and handsome in appearance.

⁴³ And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

⁴⁴ The Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the field."

⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds 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 that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."

⁴⁸ When the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.

⁴⁹ And David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground.

⁵⁰ So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. There was no sword in the hand of David.

⁵¹ Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

The key verse here is 1 Samuel 17:45 (NASB)

⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.

David certainly wins the battle of words, but the battle of brawn has yet to take place. Running toward Goliath, David puts a stone in his sling and, after achieving the desired velocity, lets it fly, hitting Goliath squarely in the forehead. Goliath falls, and while the giant is unconscious, David rushes over to him, takes his gigantic sword and cuts off his head.

David takes Goliath's head and armor as war trophies, and eventually he deposits the sword at the Tabernacle as a testimony to God's role in giving him the victory.

C. Man on the Run

After David defeats Goliath, the Israelite women go around the streets singing, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." David is now in the spotlight and Saul doesn't like to share the spotlight. So, one day while David is playing his lyre, Saul picks up a spear and throws it at David, but misses his target. Saul then comes up with a more cunning plan to kill his rival.

Theme: God is faithful; He never changes.

Saul continues his attempts to kill David, but the combination of David's agility and the help of others—even Saul's children, Michal and Jonathan, David always escapes.

In one incident, Saul falls for the oldest trick in the book. Michal puts a pillow and clothes under the blankets and says that David is sick in bed while David escapes out the back. In another incident, Saul goes into a cave to relieve himself ...and let's read what happens in 1 Samuel 24

1 Samuel 24:2-7 (NASB)

² Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

³ He came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there *was* a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave.

⁴ The men of David said to him, "Behold, *this is* the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly.

⁵ It came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's *robe*.

⁶ So he said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed."

⁷ David persuaded his men with *these* words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose, left the cave, and went on *his* way.

David and men were already in the cave and Saul goes in to relieve himself. In the dark, unbeknownst to Saul, David cuts off a corner of the King's robe while Saul is taking a nap. David has a chance to kill Saul, but he refuses to do such a thing to God's anointed. Even though Saul is trying to kill him, David recognizes that God's anointing is still on King Saul.

D. The Adventures of David and His Merry Men

Because of David's status as an outlaw, he is forced to rob from the rich and give to the poor—the poor, in this case, being David and his followers.

The most famous case of David's Robin Hood antics involves a rich man named Nabal, who refuses to pay David for protecting his flocks (a sort of "ancient" protection racket).

Let's read **1 Samuel 25:10-38 (NLT)**

¹⁰ "Who is this fellow David?" Nabal sneered to the young men. "Who does this son of Jesse think he is? There are lots of servants these days who run away from their masters.

¹¹ Should I take my bread and my water and my meat that I've slaughtered for my shearers and give it to a band of outlaws who come from who knows where?"

¹² So David's young men returned and told him what Nabal had said.

¹³ "Get your swords!" was David's reply as he strapped on his own. Then 400 men started off with David, and 200 remained behind to guard their equipment.

¹⁴ Meanwhile, one of Nabal's servants went to Abigail and told her, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he screamed insults at them.

¹⁵ These men have been very good to us, and we never suffered any harm from them. Nothing was stolen from us the whole time they were with us.

¹⁶ In fact, day and night they were like a wall of protection to us and the sheep.

¹⁷ You need to know this and figure out what to do, for there is going to be trouble for our master and his whole family. He's so ill-tempered that no one can even talk to him!"

¹⁸ Abigail wasted no time. She quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five

sheep that had been slaughtered, nearly a bushel of roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes. She packed them on donkeys

¹⁹ and said to her servants, "Go on ahead. I will follow you shortly." But she didn't tell her husband Nabal what she was doing.

²⁰ As she was riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, she saw David and his men coming toward her.

²¹ David had just been saying, "A lot of good it did to help this fellow. We protected his flocks in the wilderness, and nothing he owned was lost or stolen. But he has repaid me evil for good.

²² May God strike me and kill me if even one man of his household is still alive tomorrow morning!"

²³ When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed low before him.

²⁴ She fell at his feet and said, "I accept all blame in this matter, my lord. Please listen to what I have to say.

²⁵ I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don't pay any attention to him. He is a fool, just as his name suggests. But I never even saw the young men you sent.

²⁶ "Now, my lord, as surely as the LORD lives and you yourself live, since the LORD has kept you from murdering and taking vengeance into your own hands, let all your enemies and those who try to harm you be as cursed as Nabal is.

²⁷ And here is a present that I, your servant, have brought to you and your young men.

²⁸ Please forgive me if I have offended you in any way. The LORD will surely reward you with a lasting dynasty, for you are fighting the LORD's battles. And you have not done wrong throughout your entire life.

²⁹ "Even when you are chased by those who seek to kill you, your life is safe in the care of the LORD your God, secure in his treasure pouch! But the lives of your enemies will disappear like stones shot from a sling!

³⁰ When the LORD has done all he promised and has made you leader of Israel,

³¹ don't let this be a blemish on your record. Then your conscience won't have to bear the staggering burden of needless bloodshed and vengeance. And when the LORD has done these great things for you, please remember me, your servant!"

³² David replied to Abigail, "Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you to meet me today!

³³ Thank God for your good sense! Bless you for keeping me from murder and from carrying out vengeance with my own hands.

³⁴ For I swear by the LORD, the God of Israel, who has kept me from hurting you, that if you had not hurried out to meet me, not one of Nabal's men would still be alive tomorrow morning."

³⁵ Then David accepted her present and told her, "Return home in peace. I have heard what you said. We will not kill your husband."

³⁶ When Abigail arrived home, she found that Nabal was throwing a big party and was celebrating like a king. He was very drunk, so she didn't tell him anything about her meeting with David until dawn the next day.

³⁷ In the morning when Nabal was sober, his wife told him what had happened. As a result he had a stroke, and he lay paralyzed on his bed like a stone.

³⁸ About ten days later, the LORD struck him, and he died.

When Nabal's wife, Abigail, hears of her husband's foolish response to David's request, she intercepts David and flatters him, presenting him with gifts. She tells him that her husband is just like his name: Nabal, which means "fool." David is persuaded by Abigail's words and returns to his camp.

When Abigail arrives home, she puts off telling her drunken husband of his near-death experience until "the wine left him," a euphemism for urination. When she does tell him, he has a seizure and dies. Thus, David's words that those who urinate against the wall will die, comes true, only in an unexpected way.

Abigail is now available and David marries her.

But marriage doesn't settle David down—he remains on the run for some time, even living for a year and four months with Israel's enemy, the Philistines. David had little choice in the matter—this is one of the few places he can escape from Saul's murderous intentions. David and his men even go on several raiding parties into Israel. However, the Bible is careful to point out that David actually tricks the Philistines in this regard. Instead of attacking Israel, David and his men go elsewhere and then bring back war spoils they claim are from Israel. But when the Philistines begin making war preparations for a massive attack against Israel, David finds himself in somewhat of a bind because he doesn't want to attack his own people. Thankfully, not all the Philistine kings trust David, and they refuse to let him participate in the war, lest he change sides in the heat of battle.

E. How the Mighty Have Fallen: The Deaths of Samuel, Saul and Jonathan.

Theme: God is Supreme and Sovereign

Samuel eventually dies, and the whole country mourns his passing. Adding to their grief, a huge battle against the Philistines looms on the horizon and, without Samuel, Saul is unable to determine whether God intends to give the Israelites victory.

Theme: God communicates with man.

Saul realizes that there is only one way to get an answer. Ask his old buddy Samuel. You're thinking, "But you just said he's dead?" True, he is, but this doesn't seem to matter, because in the ancient world (as well as today) there are those who claim to be able to contact the dead. We call them mediums or psychics. The real problem in Saul's case is that he outlawed contacting the dead some years earlier. Saul doesn't want to be seen going against his own law. Therefore, he disguises himself and secretly visits a medium at the city of Endor.

The "witch of Endor," as she is sometimes called, summons Samuel, but when she sees him, she realizes that the man making this request is Saul, and she fears for her life. Saul assures her that he won't kill her and asks her to tell him what she sees. She says it's Samuel, who has a question for Saul: "Why have you disturbed me?!"

When Samuel hears the reason—that Saul wants to know the winner of the upcoming Israelite-Philistine bout—he reminds Saul that God has rejected him as king and concludes, "Tomorrow, you and your sons will be with me." Needless to say, this is not very good news to Saul.

The next day, and in keeping with Samuel's prediction, the Israelites are routed by the Philistines, and many of Saul's sons, including David's best friend, Jonathan, the crown prince, die in battle. Saul himself is mortally wounded and asks his armor bearer to finish the job so that the Philistines won't capture and torture him. The armor-bearer refuses to kill God's anointed king, and Saul is forced to take his own life by falling on his sword. When the Philistines arrive, they cut off Saul's head and take it and his armor to the temple of their god.

Thus, as the end of 1 Samuel, Israel is at a critical juncture in its national history. Their last judge, Samuel, is dead, as is their first king and most of his sons. What happens next will be crucial for the nation's survival.

And we'll learn more about that in next week's lesson,

Lesson 31: David, the Shepherd King of Israel.

Let's review today's lesson to make sure that you have a good understanding of what we've talked about cause we covered a lot of territory today.

Questions for Review:

1. Samuel goes to Jesse's house in Bethlehem to look for the next king and what is the message that God gives to Samuel as he is looking at Jesse's sons? *God said to Samuel, "Do not look at his countenance and at his tall stature, for I have rejected him. For it is not as man perceives it; a man sees what is visible to the eyes but God sees into the heart."* (1 Samuel 16:7)
2. How was David armed when he faced Goliath? *He only had his shepherd's staff and a slingshot, and five smooth stones.*
3. Whose name did David say had authorized him to fight Goliath and win? **1 Samuel 17:45 (ESV)** *I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.*
4. After David kills Goliath, what event causes King Saul to become jealous of David? *The Israelite women go around the streets singing, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands."*
5. When David comes upon Saul in the cave, what does he do? *He cuts off the edge of Saul's robe while he is asleep.*
6. Why doesn't David follow the advice of his men and kill King Saul who is asleep in the cave? *Because David knows that King Saul is still God's anointed king and he refuses to touch God's anointed.*
7. How does Nabal treat David and his men after they have offered protection for him, his household and his sheep? *He treats David and his men with contempt, mocking David and his men as outlaws.*
8. Who intervenes on Nabal's behalf? *His wife Abigail who intercedes on behalf of her husband whom she says is a fool.*
9. What happens to Nabal? *He suffers a stroke, is paralyzed and dies ten days later.*
10. What becomes of Nabal's wife, Abigail? *She marries David.*
11. Samuel is the last _____ of Israel? **Judge**
12. When Samuel dies, how does Saul try to communicate with him? *By consulting the witch at Endor.*
13. What message does Samuel give to Saul, from beyond the grave? *The next day, Saul and his sons will be killed by the Philistines.*