

JEHOVAH TSABA: THE LORD OUR WARRIOR

Sometimes things happen in our lives that we can't explain. We didn't intend for them to happen, and we know they didn't come from us. Rather, they reveal the timelessness of our Creator. God isn't bound by time. He doesn't think in terms of yesterday or tomorrow. He guides, leads, and prompts us according to His knowledge. And sometimes He does this in a way that allows us just a glimpse into what it would be like to live without the boundaries of time, just as He does.

In this lesson, we're going to dig into together a very familiar passage. It is the story of David and Goliath. As we journey through life, we encounter many fears and sometimes our fears look like giants. When we face trials and tribulations, sometimes they appear larger than life. They seem impossible to overcome.

Remember what took place on September 11, 2001, our nation experienced one of the worst days in its history. Two airplanes crashed into the Twin Towers. Another one went down in a field. Another one flew into the Pentagon. After that event, for some "Getting on an airplane could be a giant..." Since that day, the giant of terrorism has taunted the best and most elite of our trained military personnel. It battles according to a different set of rules. It doesn't discriminate. Its victims cross age, racial, economic, and gender lines. It's a brutal giant that would rule through fear and intimidation, destroying anyone in its way.

A lot changed after our nation met this giant. The fabric of our land experienced a tear. We're still in the process of courageously rebuilding and restoring what was lost while continuing to defend what remains, and many of us have a lingering tendency to look over our shoulders. Or maybe we are reluctant to get on a plane. A giant isn't easy to forget or to take down.

Our next name of God is found in a story about one of the most infamous giants in history—Goliath. But before we get to God's name, let's review the details of this story because it highlights the power of God that is released when we know His name.

The Anatomy of a Giant

Have you ever watched a battle on the History Channel or in a movie where the two opposing groups decide to fight it out by way of representation? Neither group wants to expose itself to the risk of a high number of casualties, so each group appoints a representative to battle it out against the other. Whoever wins that battle attributes his victory to his entire army. Likewise, whoever loses that battle attributes his defeat to the rest of his forces.

Biblically speaking, representation can best be understood by looking at Adam. Adam was our first representative, and sin entered the world through him. But Christ is our last representative, and those who believe in Him are made righteous because He died on the cross for our sins. Representation is simply one person fighting for, speaking on behalf of, or representing many others. The one representative's actions are attributed to the many.

In 1 Samuel, we come across possibly the most famous representative battle in history. Christians and non-Christians alike refer to the lead characters in this war as celebrities. On one side stands a warrior, more creature than man, whose name terrified his foes. Towering at nine feet nine inches tall, this mammoth specimen was Goliath from Gath.

On the other side of the battle stands a boy without armor who, if he stood up straight, reached just high enough to stare right into Goliath's midsection. Barely. Which, as we will see later, was actually a good thing.

Goliath was more than just big. He hailed from a group of people who traced their roots from beyond this planet. We're first introduced to them in the book of Genesis: "The sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown" (Genesis 6:4). Theirs is an epic story rivaling any award-winning blockbuster of our day. They were a mixed breed of fallen angels called the Nephilim, or giants, and though most were annihilated at the flood, remnants could be found afterward.

- "There was war at Gath again, where there was a man of great stature who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also had been born to the giant" (2 Samuel 21:20).

- “Only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaim [giants]. Behold, his bedstead was an iron bedstead; it is in Rabbah of the sons of Ammon. Its length was nine cubits and its width four cubits” (Deuteronomy 3:11).
- “All the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight” (Numbers 13:32-33).

Goliath came from this rare species, one of a dying breed of giants whose reputation was enough to keep an enemy at bay. Goliath’s looming presence dominated the landscape. His footsteps beat the ground. Draped over his supersized frame was “the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze.” (1 Samuel 17:5). The armor alone probably weighed more than David himself. One hundred and seventy-five pounds of armor made Goliath seem impenetrable. And that was only for his upper body!

And he had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver’s beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him. (verses 6-7).

No doubt about it, Goliath was bad. And I don’t mean that in a good way. He was big, dangerous, and daunting. This battle takes place between the Israelites and the Philistines. These two nations weren’t competing for a medal or a title. They were competing for land, servants, and the well-being and survival of their people. Theirs was a fight for freedom. Thousands of soldiers lined up on each side. We read in 1 Samuel 17:3, “The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them.”

The armies glared at each other from a distance until one man, Goliath—whom we specifically read is a “champion”—came forward from the ranks of the Philistines and offered a challenge.

Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, “Why have you come out to line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.” (verses 8-9).

The challenge had been issued, and it was a game-changer.

The Israelites had stood for days in front of a mass of Philistines. They had already faced a myriad of threats, problems, difficulties, and opposition, but all of that only got worse when one giant stepped forward. He was only one giant, but one giant is one giant too many. Most of us can handle the regular problems and normal challenges in life. We don't like them, but when they loom in the distance, we manage to keep going. Yet when that one giant shows up in your life—that changes everything. Nothing is said about the Israelites fearing the Philistines or worrying about this battle—that is, not until the giant showed up. But then...“When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.” (verse 11).

This unexpected twist of events left the Israelites at a clear disadvantage. They didn't have any giants on their side. They were overpowered and quickly became the undisputed underdogs in this battle. You know you're in a giant-sized battle not only by its massive size but also by the effect it has on you. The Israelites were afraid. And because of their fear, they became paralyzed. They couldn't move. They had no one to send against this monster, so they did nothing at all.

Has the fear of a giant ever gripped you to such a degree that it prevented you from moving forward? Maybe you've experienced this before on your job, in your home, with your health... Whatever it is, the giant calls the shots, dictating your emotions and your actions (or lack of actions). The giant sets the agenda, it hoards the ball, it won't go away...just like Goliath of Gath. Day after day Goliath taunted the Israelite army. Night after night the Israelites lay awake in fear, knowing they had no legitimate contender to go up against this ogre of a man. His taunt was relentless: “The Philistine came forward morning and evening for forty days and took his stand” (verse 16).

The Attitude Toward the Giant

But then David showed up. His father sent him to take roasted grain, bread, and cheese to his brothers at the front lines, so David left his flock of sheep in the care of another and headed to the valley of Elah.

This wasn't the first time David had been at the battle site. He had gone "back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem" (verse 15). But this was the first time we read what David had to say. The Israelites had said, "The king will enrich the man who kills [Goliath] with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel" (verse 25). Not a bad day at the office. To be given the king's daughter meant that the man would be marrying into royalty. David's reply to the men of Israel revealed that his perspective on the giant wasn't quite like everyone else's. Keep in mind that perspective is never just what you see. Perspective is how you view what you see. Perspective is a key to knowing and applying the character of God's names in order to live the abundant life.

The Israelites saw the same giant David saw; they just didn't see him the same way. The Israelites looked at his size, strength, and armor. David looked straight ahead, zeroing in on a very critical reality: Goliath had not been circumcised. David said, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?" (verse 26).

Everyone else had seen how large the giant appeared, but because David knew God and the power of His name, He had a different perspective than everyone else did. David saw something much more important than what everyone else saw—he saw that the giant hadn't been to the doctor. No circumcision could only mean one thing—no supernatural covering. The rite of circumcision sanctioned the covenant between God and His people. All males in Israel were circumcised on the eighth day to signify that they belonged to this covenant and to position themselves underneath its provision, power, and covering.

To be circumcised meant that you belonged to the family of God. To be uncircumcised meant that the power of God's name was not on your side because there was no divine covering. You were a pagan. Now, you may have been a big and intimidating pagan, but you were still just a pagan. It was as simple or as difficult as that. It's simple because it's obvious. But it's also difficult because so many men in the Israelite army missed it. They looked up at the towering giant standing before them and cowered in fear. David didn't look up. He looked straight ahead and said, "I've got it because God's got it. That man has not been cut."

The Israelites were consumed with fear, and many of us today crumble in the shadow of a giant for the same reason—we look at the wrong thing. We look at Goliath’s size without evaluating his status. When we do that, we allow the size of the giant to eclipse the size of God. And that’s how we lose our battle. Something small can easily eclipse something larger. The sun is staggering in size, but if you put a quarter between your eye and the sun, that tiny quarter can block out the enormous sun.

The men saw Goliath. David saw God. Those are two totally different things. To put it another way, David saw the spiritual reality behind the physical problem. All the Israelites saw is what they saw. Sometimes God will allow you to experience a bigger-than-life Goliath so that you will experience a bigger-than-Goliath God. But you will never get to experience the bigger-than-Goliath God if your eyes are focused on the bigger-than-life Goliath.

Giants rule many of our hearts and our homes today because we’ve lost the ability to look beyond what we see in order to view the spiritual reality surrounding it. If we miss seeing the uncircumcision because we are looking at the height, we will continue to be overrun and intimidated by the giants in our lives. Perspective is everything. Paul tells us in his letter to the church at Ephesus that our perspective on the ultimate reality ought to come from another location. He writes that God has “raised us up with [Christ], and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6).

The term “heavenly places” refers to the spiritual realm. We are located in two places at once. We exist physically here on earth, and we are also seated with Christ in heaven. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has given us a seat in another location. But the enemy tries to get us to forget our heavenly location. If we let him do that, we limit our perspective to what we can see physically.

It’s all about perspective. You need to know where you’re seated in order to access the power of God’s names. You’re seated with Christ in the heavenly realm. That reality ought to change the way you view the Goliaths in your life. Goliath isn’t so big when you have to look all the way down from heaven just to get a glimpse of him. You can save a lot of time and energy dealing with the giants you face by learning how to view things from your actual location and not simply

your physical location. Do you know where David got his confidence to defeat this giant of a man? David got it from what he saw, and he was able to see what he saw because he knew the power of God's name.

How to Approach a Giant

How do you approach a Goliath-sized problem? I'll tell you one way not to approach your giants, and that's with someone else's anointing—which is exactly what almost happened to David. After some of the men heard what David was saying about Goliath, they told Saul. Saul then summoned David to his presence and questioned him. **“You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth” (1 Samuel 17:33).** But David quickly told Saul he had killed both a lion and a bear, and once again he pointed out, **“This uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God” (verse 36).**

“Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor” (verse 38). But David nearly fell down. He could barely walk because he hadn't tested the armor Saul had put on him. So young David made a manly decision—he took off the armor someone else gave him and chose to fight the giant in his own anointing instead. He chose to fight his own battle with the tools he had.

You can't expect to win your battle in someone else's armor. But many people try. Not only that, you can't let someone else force his armor on you. Just because it worked for him doesn't mean that's the way God is going to work it out for you. A kingdom life is not a cookie-cutter life. God has a unique way He wants to take you to your destination. Never fall into the trap of wearing Saul's armor. Instead, clothe yourself in the power of God's names.

To position yourself so you can invoke the authority of the name of God involves not only your perspective—the view from your seat in God's kingdom on high—but also the courage to recognize and use the strengths God has given you. Resist the temptation to copy someone else.

When David approached Goliath, he did it with what he knew. He did it with what he had.

He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine (verse 40).

David faced the challenge with what he had, confident in his victory because of what he knew—this giant wasn't covered by the covenant. David also approached the giant. Do you remember what the Israelites did each day when Goliath came to taunt them? They went in the other direction—they went on the defense. But a powerful Christian doesn't score playing defense. It's difficult to score playing defense. A child of the King conquers his giants when he goes on the offense—which is exactly what David did.

Goliath responded to David's advance with his own disdain. When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods (verses 42-43).

Goliath took one look at David and thought the whole thing must be a joke—not even worth his time. In response, he started cursing David by the Philistine gods. Yet David didn't get all shook up. Rather, his reply was epic. You can almost hear the music building in the background and see the passion etched on David's face as he gives one of the greatest battle speeches in history and introduces us to this uniquely powerful name of God.

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 [Jehovah Tsaba], the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD's and He will give you into our hands (verses 45-47).

David didn't approach Goliath with the latest technology or the newest weaponry. David didn't even mention that he would use his slingshot to take Goliath down. Instead, David said he came

“in the name of the LORD of hosts.” God’s name was enough for David to win this war because David knew God’s name was more than simply a name—it was a gateway to His power.

The names of God come with certain benefits and privileges. Use them. He has issued you the authority to use them in line with His will. He has powerful names, uniquely crafted for your situations. His names can get you into places you never could have entered on your own. And they can give you the power to defeat the Goliaths in your life. By advancing in God’s name, David positioned himself to defeat someone who everyone thought was undefeatable. By advancing in God’s name, David essentially handed off the ball.

When a quarterback receives the hike from the center, the defensive tackles rush him. A linebacker or a defensive back might blitz him. The opposing team makes every effort to tackle him because he has the ball. But the moment the quarterback hands off the ball to a running back or passes it to a receiver, a shift occurs in the pursuit. The defensive team no longer goes after the quarterback. They go after the man with the ball.

When David approached Goliath in the full power of God’s name, he handed off the ball. He said, “I come to you in the name of Jehovah Tsaba.” The name Tsaba essentially means “army, or host.” David knew that because God was the Lord of the army and the Creator over all, the victory was His. People can fight the Lord in battle; they just can’t win. David recognized God’s supremacy in the situation rather than trying to handle it himself. He gave the battle over to God. That doesn’t mean David sat down and did nothing. Rather, he did all that he could, but he did it with one truth in mind—God would give Goliath into his hands. David knew this not because Goliath was taunting David but because Goliath was taunting God. Goliath was taunting God’s people, which is something that doesn’t sit too well with the King. David saw the physical battle on earth as a reflection of the spiritual battle in heaven.

What to Do When You Kill a Giant

Many of us are like the Israelites, wrestling with the wrong question. We’re so busy trying to figure out how we’re supposed to conquer the giants in our lives, we don’t ask ourselves the most important question: What does God say about this? When you’re wondering how to overcome the situation you’re in or the opposition you face—including internal opposition, such

as addiction, fear, or low self-esteem—you're thinking the battle is yours. And in that case, you're not likely to succeed, for "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). And no offense, but you're not smart enough, clever enough, or strong enough to beat an enemy from another realm. The battle belongs to Jehovah Tsaba.

Goliath was no ordinary foe. He was a giant with a genealogy that reached way back in time. David could never have beaten Goliath on his own. No man could have done that. Many of the struggles and challenges you face simply stem from living in a fallen world. But others are strategies set in motion by Satan to trip you up, defeat you, and keep you from reaching the place where God would have you to go. Accept it—Satan has your game film. He has studied you. He knows your weaknesses. He knows just what to do to get you to go where you never would think of going and do what you never would dream of doing. He knows how to paralyze you in fear or get you sidetracked on seemingly good things in order to keep you from what is best—the destiny and victory for which you have been created.

David killed Goliath because he knew the battle wasn't his own. He saw that Goliath had not been circumcised and therefore wasn't covered by Israel's covenant with Jehovah Tsaba. Not only that, but he saw that this uncircumcised giant was taunting the armies of the living God. Once David saw the spiritual core of the physical crisis, he could rest on God's willingness to fight and His ability to win. He knew the hosts of heaven would fight beside him and for him. David's rest and confidence in God didn't just send him to a prayer tent to hang out and wait it out. Prayer is essential, but rarely is it the only thing God asks you to do. David's rest and confidence led him to a brook, where he grabbed five stones. And then...

David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground. Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand (1 Samuel 17:49-50).

David prevailed with a sling and a stone. The passage specifically points out that he didn't even have a sword in his hand. God wants us to know this was a divinely orchestrated victory. God didn't want David to use the armor because David would have gotten some of the credit. Some of the most incredible things God will ever do in your life will occur when you think you have nothing. You think you're not positioned to move forward, make that change, advance in your destiny, defeat your giant...but that's precisely when God is most likely to show up. When He wins your battle, you know who did it. You know who ought to get the glory. And when the next giant shows up, you know who is going to defeat him too—Jehovah Tsaba.

After David killed Goliath, he put him on display. “Then David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent” (verse 54). David made a trophy case. When you go to a lodge in the mountains, you might see where hunters display the heads of the animals they've killed. In the same way, David wanted to make sure that everyone saw Goliath of Gath. And why would that be important to David? Because Goliath wasn't the only giant in the land. One giant had been taken down, but that didn't mean there wasn't another one lurking around the corner. The passage also tells us that David put the weapons in his own tent. He took the trophy to church to let the people know that Jehovah Tsaba is able to gain the victory and that they shouldn't fear when the next giant appears. But he took the sword to his house to remind himself of what God can do in a situation that looks unconquerable to everyone else. God gives us things to share with others, but He also gives us victories that are just for us to remember. They remind us what to do when the next giant shows up.

Getting Back What the Enemy Has Stolen

David chose to position himself in God's name, so he was able to take down the giant. He positioned himself in the power of God's name because he viewed the situation from God's perspective and not man's. He had a heavenly mindset in a worldly crisis, giving him the faith to defend the Israelites from the Philistines and enable his people to grow as a nation.

Immediately following David's victory, we read that the Philistines became the ones playing defense. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. The men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the valley, and to the gates of

Ekron. And the slain Philistines lay along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron. The sons of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines and plundered their camps (verses 52-53).

To plunder a camp is to take the spoils from the enemy's territory. When an army plundered a camp, they took weaponry, armor, food, and anything of monetary value. They also reclaimed items that had been previously plundered from their own camp in earlier battles. The army essentially got back what the enemy had stolen. With these additional items, the Israelite army was better equipped to face the Philistines or any other enemy.

When God secures your victory in His name, have confidence that His name also has the power to give you back what "the swarming locust has eaten" (Joel 2:25). God's name covers all: past, present, and future. But it especially covers the giants that taunt you in your life. Trust Jehovah Tsaba. He's got you covered.