

DAVID ... and his habit of slaying giants  
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(1 SAMUEL 17: 49)

The scene was awe-inspiring, for the man-mountain had appeared again from the tents of the Philistines. He sneered and asked, "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. 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 . . . I defy the armies of Israel this day" (vv. 9, 10). And as young David heard the challenge, he looked expectantly toward his countrymen. Surely this blasphemous heathen should be taught a lesson. What, is there no man willing to fight him? Then I will. It was unbelievable ; even Israel stood aghast. A mere boy had performed the impossible. They surged forward to reap the reward of his deed. They overtook and slew many Philistines ; but Goliath had strange relations who lived to fight another day.

#### The Giant of Regal Fury

Saul was desperately angry ; hidden fires smouldered within his breast. This upstart had bewitched and stolen the hearts of Israel. What were they singing? Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands (I 8: 7). Bah! Jealousy made him furious ; his hands clenched at his side. David was a menace. The boy's smiles were maddening ; his music thrilled the soul, but everything was wrong, and suddenly the volcanic powers erupted in Saul's breast. "And Saul cast the javelin ; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. . . . And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him" (I 8: 11-14). Saul repeatedly revealed the same inexcusable ferocity of purpose, but on each occasion David overcame bitterness with kindness. Then another giant came forward.

#### The Giant of Personal Revenge

Poor David had been driven from all his friends. He was homeless, and went in danger of his life; but God smiled upon the fugitive. The camp of Saul was wrapped in slumber, for the men, weary with the pursuits of the day, had lain down to rest. Even the sentries slept at their posts. David smiled in the shadows. A little care, and his enemy would be at his mercy. David calmly watched the camp, and deliberately planned his line of approach to the royal tent. Then he began the most perilous journey of his career. it was done ; his enemy lay at his feet. David beard the suggestions of evil, "Smite him now, and remove your enemy. Israel will acclaim your deed. Has not God delivered him into your hands'? This is the chance of a lifetime. Seize it." The youthful captain shook his head. King Saul was the Lord's anointed. David silently severed a piece of the sleeper's skirt, and then disappeared into the blackness of the night. He had conquered another giant. The reactions in the realm of evil were very considerable ; this David was a great warrior. Was there another volunteer to challenge this Israelite'? Certainly, a giant was already on his feet.

#### The Giant of Tormenting Guilt

He was clever-ruthlessly clever. He avoided open conflict with this dynamic fighter, for he knew David had to be trapped. Were there openings in the royal armour? Were

DAVID ... and his habit of slaying giants there any weak spots in the king's rugged defenses? Could any dart pierce to the heart of the invincible? What about a little bewitching beauty? What about an illegitimate affection? Could this impregnable human citadel be destroyed by fire-the fire of unholy passion, kindled by a spark of lust? It was worth trying. The giant planned his campaign, and David was soon fighting for his life. Apollyon had hands of toughened steel, and those hands were choking him. His eyes blurred ; his heart was bursting. The devil of lust had ruined his fighting qualities. Adultery, villainy, murder, had filled the music of his soul with vibrating discords. He reeled back under the pressure of the enemy, and was haunted by the memory of his disgraceful conduct. A man lay in his grave ; the fair name of a beautiful wife had become eternally stained ; he himself was guilty before God. And Giant Guilt sneered at his helpless victim. It was the monster's first mistake, for it gave David an opportunity to get on his knees. The guilty man prayed (Psa. 51), and the oppressor had the shock of his life. The battle continued for a long time, but the end was no longer in doubt. Ultimately the giant was overcome. He had been so near to triumph, but had thrown away his chances. David never gave him another opportunity, for he knew these giants, and liked them as much as they liked him.

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