DAVID AND GOLIATH

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Some brief thoughts on David and Goliath which may appear in my book if I ever finish it.

David first makes an impact on The Story in the famous episode where as a small boy he defeats the giant, Goliath. This is often presented as an amazing spiritual act, where tiny David, armed only with faith and a few small stones, was able to defeat a huge giant. It is the sort of exercise of faith which is so extraordinary that it seems to little relevance to us in real life. But letâ€™s take a closer look at what happens in 1 Samuel 17.

The first thing to note is that Goliath was big â€“ very big. He scared the Israelite army silly. But David was no seven stone weakling, either. Reading the chapter we discover that David has gone into hand to hand combat with lions and bears. When the wild animals stole a sheep from his fatherâ€™s flock, David ran after them, beat them up and rescued the sheep. David was young, but he knew how to look after himself. There is also the famous episode where Saul gives David his armour to wear. Now Saul was a professional fighting man, he would only have given David armour that was suitable for him to wear. We knew from earlier on that Saul was a head taller than anyone else in Israel â€“ so why did he give David his armour. The only reasonable understanding is that David, too, was a big guy. But David had never worn armour so he turned Saul down (the Bible never says that the armour didnâ€™t fit). David was young and untried in battle, but he was a big guy who had risked his life fighting animals a good deal bigger than himself. Taking on Goliath was still a huge challenge â€“ but it was in the realm of the possible. David had experience of God protecting him in combat (albeit with lions and bears) and he built on that in order to fight the giant. This isnâ€™t an idealised, impossible story. It is a realistic, believable story of a young man who had faced big challenges and who was now trusting God as he stepped up to another level.