

A slinger put both ends of the sling in his throwing hand, sometimes tying one end of the sling around his fingers and holding the other end between his thumb and forefinger. A slinger would not normally twirl the sling above his head but would simply spin it once and then, with a hard throwing motion (either overhand or underhand), let go of the end between his thumb and forefinger to release the stone.



Ancient slings were usually made of one long strip of braided wool or flax with a pouch in the middle to hold the stone. The longer a sling, the greater its range. The longest slings can cast a stone well over 800 feet (about 250 m) at a speed of between 60 and 100 miles (100–160 km) per hour.

Stones that were round and somewhat heavy were preferred by slingers because they are more likely to fly true. Stones used for slinging were usually about two inches (5 cm) in diameter (around the size of a golf ball).

David was probably no more than 16 years old when he fought Goliath and is described in the scriptures as “ruddy,” meaning red-haired or rosy-cheeked (youthful).

DEFEATING YOUR GOLIATHS

“This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand . . . that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel”
(1 Samuel 17:46).

A lion and a bear attacked David’s father’s flocks, and David fought them off, giving him confidence against Goliath.

Basketball standard, 10 feet (3 m)

Goliath, about 9 feet (2.7 m)

David



We all have to face Goliaths in our lives: trials, challenges, temptations that seem too large to overcome. But, like David, we can overcome them if we trust in God and do our part. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught, “When temptation comes your way, name that boastful, deceitful giant ‘Goliath!’ and do with it as David did to the Philistine of Gath” (“Overpowering the Goliaths in Our Lives,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2002, 5).

As you read 1 Samuel 17, what can you learn from the battle of David and Goliath? How did David’s trust in God help him? How was he prepared for this battle? What impact can one teenager have in building the Lord’s kingdom?

Here are some details to supplement your study of this remarkable story.

Goliath’s coat of mail weighed “five thousand shekels,” which could weigh 125–200 pounds (57–90 kg).

The staff of Goliath’s spear was “like a weaver’s beam”—probably weighing over 20 pounds (9 kg); its head weighed “six hundred shekels of iron”—15–25 pounds (7–11 kg).



The Philistines were probably originally from the region around the Aegean Sea. Goliath may have descended from a race of people said to be very tall, even “giants.” (See Deuteronomy 2:10–11; Joshua 11:22.)

Goliath’s helmet of brass was probably made of bronze, copper, or iron. It may have been attached to a **target**, which is thought to have shielded the back and neck.

