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THE LOOKOUT

MAY 2021

UNIT: History of Israel (1 Samuel & 1 Chronicles)

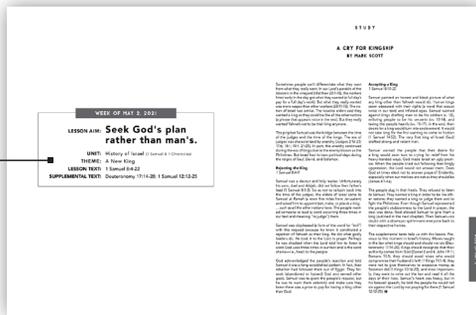
THEME: A New King

OVERVIEW:

William Shakespeare wrote, "What's past is prologue." We often must look backward to move forward. This month, students will learn from Israel's past about the people's desire for a king, what happens when that king goes AWOL, the need for a new king, and the establishment of his throne in Jerusalem.

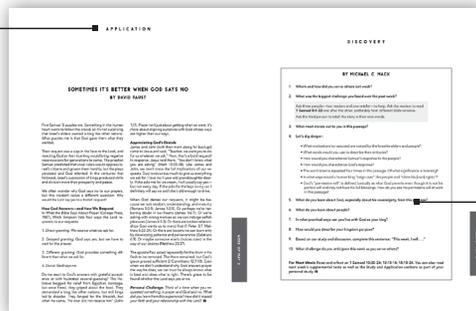
HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.



Tabs indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.



Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

WEEK OF MAY 16, 2021

LESSON AIM: **Take courage, knowing
the battle is the Lord's.**

UNIT: History of Israel (1 Samuel & 1 Chronicles)

THEME: A New King

LESSON TEXT: 1 Samuel 16:7; 17:32-50

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: 1 Samuel 13:13-14; Deuteronomy 6:5-9;
Psalm 26:1-3; Acts 13:22; Philippians 1:20

KINGLY CHARACTER: COURAGE AND HEART

BY MARK SCOTT

King Saul had gone AWOL (1 Samuel 13 and 15). Israel desperately needed a new king. But anointing one would be risky for Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1-13). It would need to be done under the radar. Two events would propel David forward so the nation could begin to emotionally embrace him as their new king—attending to Saul by calming the king with his music (1 Samuel 16:14-23) and fighting Goliath the giant (1 Samuel 17). (The order of these events is debated—cf. 1 Samuel 17:55-58.)

A Track Record of Courage

1 Samuel 16:7; 17:32-37

Samuel made it safely to Jesse's place in Bethlehem. The parade of potential kings began. How about Eliab the eldest? What about Abinadab or Shammah or the other brothers? God made it clear to Samuel that God's choice differed from man's choice. Humans consider *appearance* (countenance) or *height*. But God puts a tape measure around a leader's *heart*—the center of the inner person.

The battle line was drawn between Israel and the Philistines. Goliath taunted Israel twice per day for 40 days, and the Israelites shook in their sandals. Jesse sent David on a food run to his brothers who were in Saul's army. David witnessed the intimidation and asked what would be done for the person who "removes this disgrace from Israel" (1 Samuel 17:26). Eliab was angry at David's presumption, but David pressed forward to volunteer. He did not want anyone in Israel to *lose heart*. Even Saul objected. David was just a *young man* (boy).

But David cited his successes. As a good shepherd, David had rescued (delivered) his father's sheep when they were being attacked by a *lion* or a *bear*. If need be, he would *seize it by its hair . . . and kill it*. David was willing to fight *this uncircumcised Philistine*. Goliath had *defied* (upbraided or blasphemed—a key term in this whole narrative) Israel. David knew the veracity of God's name was at stake. Saul was impressed with his courage and gave him permission.

An Armor of Heart

1 Samuel 17:38-40

Saul outfitted David with his own armor for protection and victory. It was ill-fitting and too stiff. David was *not used to them*—maybe actually better rendered "he had not tested them" (*English Standard Version*). David had

something better than Saul's *tunic*. He had the armor of his heart.

Seemingly unprepared and with minimal resources (cf. Matthew 10:9-10), David headed into the Valley of Elah to confront Goliath—a mass of a man and an experienced soldier with impressive armor. David had only a shepherd's staff, *five smooth stones* he had picked up at the stream in the valley, his shepherd's bag, and his *sling*. David used unconventional weapons (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

The Defense of God's Honor

1 Samuel 17:41-50

Goliath was not impressed. He sized David "down" and felt mocked by being made to fight a *boy, glowing with health* (ruddy or red) and *handsome*. Goliath *despised* (regarded with contempt) David and called him a *dog* (probably just a metaphor emphasizing his small size but possibly a reference to a boy cult prostitute, as it is used at times in the Old Testament). Goliath *curled David* and intended to kill him.

David answered the giant's taunts by defending God's honor. Sword, spear, and javelin are puny in the face of the *Lord Almighty* (Lord of hosts). David predicted what he would do to Goliath—strike him down, cut off his head, and give the giant's carcass to the birds and beasts. David believed this would make the *whole world* acknowledge *that there is a God in Israel*.

David ran toward Goliath and did as he promised. David *triumphed over the Philistine*. He defeated the giant with a *sling and a stone*. He even took Goliath's own sword and cut the giant's head off. Israel pursued the Philistines into their fortified cities.

It is tempting to spiritualize the story (i.e., assign meaning the author did not intend) by talking about how God helps us defeat the giants in our lives. Those lessons will get a hearing, but our Jewish forefathers probably would be surprised at such applications. It is more than a story about the underdog winning. It is even more than Israel identifying its new king. More likely, it is a story about God's promise to save the world not being compromised and the messianic line being preserved near the "house of bread" where, one day, the Good Shepherd will protect all of his sheep (Genesis 12:1-3; Luke 2:1-7; John 10:7-15). ■

APPLICATION

FAITH TO FACE DEFIANT GIANTS

BY DAVID FAUST

Do your problems look too big to overcome? The Israelites faced a towering foe so terrifying that his name, Goliath, has come to symbolize something huge and intimidating. For 40 days straight, the taunts of the defiant giant rang in the soldiers' ears every morning when they got up and every night when they went to bed.

In a classic mismatch, a young shepherd stepped forward. David, looking naïve and vulnerable, strode into battle dressed like a farmhand and armed with a sling and five smooth stones. By contrast, well-armed Goliath clanked like an unstoppable tank when he walked, and a shield bearer stood in front to protect him. If they were taking bets in Las Vegas, David faced overwhelming odds. But this battle wasn't just about swords and spears.

The Difference Faith Makes

David's victory over Goliath compels us to examine our faith. How will we face the challenges that confront us in the church, in our culture, and in our personal lives? Will we walk into battle armed merely with human resources and advice, or with the wisdom and power of God?

Faith risks failure when the world says, "Play it safe."

Faith focuses on character when the world says, "Keep up appearances." "People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Faith perseveres when the world says, "Give up." If you feel crushed by the load you're carrying at work, a health problem that won't go away, or a heavy leadership responsibility you bear, don't despair. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9).

Faith steps out when the world says, "Stay put." Abraham left his home when God told him to move. Joshua and Caleb insisted, "We can conquer the Promised Land," while faithless others warned, "No, we're like grasshoppers compared to the giants who live over there!" Faith in God stirred David to fight Goliath. It motivated James and John to leave their fishing boat and follow Jesus. Faith isn't reckless, but when God's call is clear, it gives us the boldness to step out.

Faith dreams about tomorrow when the world says, "Live for today." At the end of your life, what will matter most? "The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:17).

Faith thinks about others when the world says, "Focus on yourself." Paul commended the Macedonian Christians because, despite their own severe trials and extreme poverty, they considered it a privilege to share with God's people (2 Corinthians 8:2-3). Instead of giving up, they upped their giving!

Faith relies on God's power when the world says, "Do it yourself." God does more than we can measure, ask, or imagine—not by human ingenuity, but "according to his power that is at work within us" (Ephesians 3:20). Not so we will gain recognition for ourselves, but so he will be glorified—and not just today, but "throughout all generations, for ever and ever" (3:21).

Jesus wore the messianic title "Son of David." With the shepherd boy's blood flowing through his veins, he declared that faith can move mountains (Matthew 17:20). And that includes the molehills we face today.

Personal Challenge: What giant-sized problem confronts you right now? What difficult situation looks too large to overcome on your own? Ask God to increase your courage and help you to face the challenge with the strength he provides. ■

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. In what specific way did you obey God in fulfilling the mission on which he has sent you during the past week?
2. What was the biggest challenge you faced last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **1 Samuel 16:7** and **17:32-50** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions.

Ask a third person to retell the story in their own words.

3. What would you say is the key word in these passages, and why?
4. Let's dig deeper:
 - In your own words, what does God look for in spiritual leaders?
 - How is that different from the kinds of things people generally look for in leaders?
 - Compare the words of Saul and David. What main differences do you see in their perspectives and attitudes?
 - Now compare David and Goliath. What was each one depending on to bring about victory? (*Try to move beyond the obvious.*)
 - Fill in the blanks with your own response for this phrase, and then share your sentence with the group: The Lord who rescued me from ___ and ___ will rescue me from _____. (*Leader, respond to each sentence by saying, "Go, and the Lord be with you."*)
5. What do you learn about God from these passages?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. What do you learn about obedience from David in these passages? How is it related to a conviction that "the battle is the Lord's"?
8. What do you learn from David about what it takes to let the whole world know about our God?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. What battle do you anticipate facing this week?

For Next Week: Read and reflect on **1 Samuel 24:1-20**. You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. ■