

Provoked into Promise

1 Samuel 17:4: And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

1 Samuel 17:10: And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

On December 8, 1990, the Galileo spacecraft swung by Earth on its way to Jupiter. Scientists and the Jet Propulsion laboratory monitored the progress of the spacecraft as if went around the Earth. Studying the craft, they noticed something odd.

- The spacecraft accelerated as it approached the Earth. This was nothing unusual; objects often accelerate as they are attracted by gravity. Also as predicted, the spacecraft began to decelerate as it reached its perigee and then started heading out into space.
- What was unusual, however, is the amount that the spacecraft decelerated. Rather, it was the amount that it failed to decelerate that attracted their attention. You see, what they expected to see, is that the craft should enter the Earth's gravitational field with one velocity, accelerate as it approaches, and then decelerate until it returns to its original velocity.
- In this case, the craft left the Earth travelling 3.92 mm/s (0.009 miles per hour) faster when it left than it did when it arrived. It is as though the Earth acted as a slingshot to give the spacecraft a little push on its way.
- For 15 years the scientists at JPL studied this phenomenon. They took meticulous readings of spacecraft as they went around the Earth. Some accelerated up to 13 mm/s while others did not accelerate at all.
- The only thing that all these craft seemed to have in common, is that no one could explain what was happening. After 15 years, the scientists at JPL released their findings to the greater scientific community in the hopes that someone could find an explanation.
- The only thing they were able to discover is a catchy name for the effect: the "Fly-by Anomaly." Some enterprising scientists were able to come up with a

mathematical formula to predict the amount of acceleration that could be achieved, but no one has yet come up with a way to explain it. It is as though an unseen hand is gently pushing the satellites along on their journey.

Back to David

In the scriptures I read at the beginning, we have a familiar passage in the Bible: the story of the giant Goliath coming out onto the field of battle to challenge the army of Israel. Goliath is a giant.

- Even non-believers will use the analogy of David and Goliath to represent someone standing up against impossible odds. Goliath stands out on the field of battle and mocks the Israelite army.
- The Israelites do not respond to his taunts. They leave Goliath alone in the field of battle.
- David first appears in the Bible as a young musician and shepherd. Samuel goes to Jesse's house and is directed by God to anoint one of Jesse's sons. He starts with the oldest and then goes down through the list one by one until he finally gets to the youngest, David.
- Samuel anoints David and immediately the Spirit of God left Saul.

1 Samuel 16:13: Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

1 Samuel 16:14: But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

So as soon as David was anointed, God's Spirit left Saul and was replaced by an evil spirit. This evil spirit troubled him so much that Saul's servants asked that a musician be brought in to comfort him. David is brought into Saul's service as a musician.

- Why a musician? Because God dwells in praise. Music and song are a form of praise.

Psalm 22:3: But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

- David wrote the psalm. He knew that God was in the praises of Israel because he saw it firsthand.
- He saw how the Spirit that came upon Saul would depart when David played his harp. The praises of David were a comfort to Saul.

1 Samuel 16:23: And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

- David loved writing songs for God. I know this because David wrote songs for the rest of his life. 73 of the 150 psalms are directly attributed to David while many more describe events in David's life.
- The Dead Sea Scrolls mention over 3,600 songs written by David. Clearly the man was a lover of music as well as a lover of God.
- It is quite probable that David would have remained on Saul's payroll as a musician for the rest of his life.

Along comes Goliath

- God had other plans for David. God had grown tired of Saul's repeated disobedience. Saul was once a humble man. Not only that, he was considered to be a great spiritual leader.
- Before he was king, Saul was considered by some to be a prophet of God.

1 Samuel 10:11: And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?

Here he is prophesying among the prophets. The people turned to one another and said, "Could Saul be a prophet?" Yet just 9 chapters later Saul has become a joke. To even consider him as a prophet is considered the zenith of foolishness.

1 Samuel 19:24: And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?

- To lay around naked in the Bible is a source of shame. To lie down all day and all night naked is to be an utter and complete embarrassment to himself and to his kingdom.
- Whereas in the beginning of his term as king, the people seriously asked if he might possibly be a prophet, by the end to even suggest it was a source of humor.

1 Samuel 10:22: Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold he hath hid himself among the stuff.

Saul is a humble man. He is embarrassed to be anointed as king. God has to tell the people where to find him. First, he is prophesying with the prophets, then God is telling people how to find him so that he can be anointed as King. This is a good sign for Saul and for Israel.

1 Samuel 10:26: And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

But he immediately messes it up.

1 Samuel 10:27: But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought no presents. But he held his peace.

- Saul immediately begins keeping score. He notes who supported him and who did not. Saul has not even left his coronation party and he is already making a list of enemies.
- It was this kind of behavior that led God to choose another man to replace Saul. God anointed David as the new king.
- But David was a musician. David liked being a musician. I believe that David was content to be a musician for the rest of his life.
- So, God had to find something that would move David in the direction that God needed him to go.

Enter Goliath of Gath.

- This man measured over 6 cubits and a span in height. Saul and his men were arrayed on the battlefield yet none of them would answer the challenge.
- David goes into the battlefield to see what his brothers are up to. As he is there he hears the challenge of Goliath.

1 Samuel 17:26: And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

David's first response is to ask, "What did you say the king would pay?"

- His second response is, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?" David the shepherd and musician is goaded by God into becoming David the giant killer.
- Each of you has a plan on your life from God. You may be content to be a nurse, or a salesman, or even a musician. But God has a plan for your life.
- If you are not moving fast enough for God's will, he may just send a giant into your life to get you out of your comfort zone.
- David had practiced his skills with a sling. He was skilled at hitting his target. He knew how to take a sling and hit a target at a distance using a stone. David did not learn to throw a stone one his way out to meet Goliath.
- God has given you a talent as well. He expects you to practice with the stones and slings he gave you. But when the giant comes, be prepared to use every trick and tactic that he has given you.
- And learn he did. David became a great warrior in Saul's army. David the musician became David the warrior. He was a leader in Saul's Army. David was content to be a warrior, but God had other plans.

David, killer of 10,000

One day as David was returning from a battle with the Philistines that Saul, Jonathan, and David returned from battle.

1 Samuel 18:6: And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick.

1 Samuel 18:7: And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

1 Samuel 18:8: And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?

Once again Saul is keeping score. The women are singing Saul's praises and the praises of his army, but Saul is more concerned about who gets top billing. Saul is jealous of David.

1 Samuel 18:9: And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

- David wanted to be a musician, so God sent a Giant who turned him into a warrior. David was successful as a warrior. I am sure that David was probably happy to be a warrior.
- But God didn't want David to be a warrior; he wanted him to be a king. So once again God must push David out of his comfort zone.
- The conflict rages above and below the surface until even Saul's son Jonathan agrees that it is too dangerous for David to stay.

1 Samuel 20:35: And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

1 Samuel 20:36: And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

1 Samuel 20:37: And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee?

Jonathon and David have set up this little ruse to serve as a message to David. The bow and its arrows are a symbol of the conflict between David and Saul. The bow is a new weapon in the Bible.

- The sling and stone had always been the weapon of the traditional Hebrew warrior. It was with a sling and a stone that David had killed Goliath. But it is a new weapon, the bow and arrow that Jonathan uses here.
- The bow is a new weapon. Just as there is a transition from old weapon to new weapon, so there is a transition from the old kingdom of Saul to the new kingdom of David.
- The bow string is held in tension between the arms of the bow. The string is never allowed to relax. It is held in a constant state of tension. Sometimes that tension may be high, sometimes low, but the string is never relaxed.
- Likewise, there is tension between Saul and David. Sometimes Saul allows David into his house and even sits at his table and eats. Sometimes Saul pulls out a spear and tries to kill David with it.
- The tension between Saul and David is always present and never relaxed.

Finally, there is the arrow. The tension in the string pushes the arrow where it needs to go. The arrow is a relatively weak weapon without the bow to propel it. With the tension in the now string the arrow is launched to fulfill the desire of the bowman.

- That is why Jonathan shoots the arrow and then tells the lad that the arrow is far away; David is the arrow and because the tension between Saul and David, David must go far away.
- But God is the bowman. It is God who has created the tension between Saul and David in order to push David to where he needs to be. By forcing David out of Saul's army, David forms alliances that he will eventually use to bring the Northern and Southern kingdoms together.
- David is out of the picture when the Philistines eventually kill Saul and Jonathon, so there can be no accusation that David stole the kingdom from

Saul. David became king because God used the tension in his life to propel David to where he needed to be.

Where is God pushing you?

- David had a plan for his life. David was ready to be a musician, but God sent a giant into his life. Suddenly the musician is a warrior.
- David was ready to be a soldier for the rest of his life, but God pushed him into becoming king.
- David continued to write songs for the rest of his life. He continued to love God with all his heart for the rest of his life. At the end of his life David even had a desire in his heart that he would continue to serve God by building a temple.
- But God tells him that the act of building the temple will fall to his son Solomon. David can acquire all the materials, but God needed David to get his hands bloody. Because of that, David cannot build the temple that is in his heart.

Each of us has been given a goal or destination by God. We have our talents and abilities, but those by themselves will not get us to where God needs us to be.

God may sometimes have to send:

- a giant
- a mean boss
- an unruly teenager
- an unreasonable parent
- a car that won't run right
- a creditor that won't give you a second chance
- a waitress who can never get your order right
- a coffee cup that drips onto your new shirt

In order to goad you into becoming who he needs you to be.

- God will sometimes be the unexpected force that sends your life into a direction you did not expect and takes you to places you did not know you could go.
- And he knows that the greatest satisfaction comes from doing something you thought you could not do.

But he did.