



Giants That Challenge The Church Of God

"And there went out a champion out of the Philistines named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span...And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them,...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 Samuel 17:4,8,9).

Israel was at war with the Philistines. Saul and the men of Israel set the battle in array against the Philistines. Both armies were encamped on a mountain, with a valley between them. Enlisted in the army of the Philistines was the giant mentioned in my text. He was nine feet, three inches tall. When fully dressed for war, with all his equipment, he appeared a monster so great that every man in Saul's army was sorely afraid.

Jesse, the Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah had three sons enlisted in the army of Israel under the command of King Saul. He sent David, the youngest son, with provisions for his sons and to see how the battle was progressing. When David reached the scene of battle, both Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army. David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, ran into the army, and saluted his brethren. As he talked with them, this champion, Goliath the giant, appeared as before, openly defying the armies of Israel. Again, they were frightened and fled.

The situation was serious; so serious that Saul had offered to give his daughter in marriage, together with great riches and freedom for the family, to the man who would prevail against this great giant. A nice bounty for his head, but all were afraid to go out against him.

This lad David was amazed, and asked, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" He was ridiculed by his brethren in the army, and charged with pride. Nevertheless he said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." Saul thought of him as a youth, but David quickly assured him that he had slain a lion and a bear while he kept his father's sheep. Said he, "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

Within a short time David encountered the giant with a very modest weapon in the name of the Lord. The giant was killed, and David returned to the armies of Israel with the head of Goliath. When the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. They were pursued by the armies of Israel and it was another victory for them.

On another occasion, Moses sent twelve men to spy out the land of Canaan. After forty days, they returned with samples of the luscious fruit and with the report that the land flowed with milk and honey. They said, "The people are strong, the cities are walled and there are giants in the land." Ten of the spies based their report on human reasoning, leaving God out, stating that it was impossible to take the land. But two of them, Joshua and Caleb, having faith in the promises of God, assured Moses that they were well able to possess the land.

As Goliath defied the armies of Israel, I see the giants of compromise, intellectualism, human reasoning, worldliness, etc., defying the church of the living God Today.

We have a fort to hold! The church is founded upon truth; the Word of God. It is our duty to promote truth, and protect the New Testament standards of holiness against every giant that may stand up against them. Paul directs us as to the method of combat, in 2 Timothy 4:1-4.

Worldliness is on giant that has raised its head in open defiance of the church of God. It is slowly creeping into the United Pentecostal Church. As much as I hate to admit it, worldliness has entered in many places, and the New Testament standards of holiness are slowly being lowered. The New Testament states that the life of a Christian is to be radically different from that of an unsaved person. A Christian's activities and appearance should be different from those of a non-Christian. A Christian is one who has renounced worldly standards, and who has taken up his cross to follow Christ daily.

Worldliness goes further than dress and appearance. But we can see many today leaving the old standards taught by our fathers, in spite of the strong protests from our pulpits. Immodest dress is creeping in among the ranks of our women, as well as short hair and make-up. This is against our fundamental doctrine of holiness, and shows a disregard for the Word of God, as well as a lack of consecration. Such practices are not right, and God is displeased with them. They may be traced back to pride and rebellion in the heart.

I read in a St. Louis newspaper that the attire of some wives of servicemen stationed in Germany was so immodest that the Commanding Officer ordered them to return home and dress properly before appearing on the streets. Thank God for someone who will protest!

To think that holiness concerns outward appearance alone, is an error. The Word of God condemns thinking like the world. Paul commanded, "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." To think like the world means to accept the world's standard of values, definitions of success, and ideas as to the purpose of life. The Christian must choose Christ's pattern of thinking, if he would be spiritually minded. If he does not do this, he will conform to the world's philosophy. Paul says, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Romans 8:6).

Loving the world's pleasures and treasures is a sign of worldliness. John commanded, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." This certainly forbids loving the world's pleasures and treasures. One may not dream of attending a theater, or of dressing immodestly, and yet be worldly in God's sight if he "minds earthly things."

Worldly conduct is a product of a worldly spirit. A valley separated the armies of Israel and the Philistines. There is a similar line of demarcation between the people of God and the people of the world-this line is holiness, and separation from the things of this world.

The substituting of a form of godliness for the power of the Spirit is another giant. The Bible speaks of those "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," And commands, ". . . from such turn away."

King Jeroboam presents a good example of such substitution. For twenty-two years, he led his people further and further into idolatry and sin. He made the mistake as had Cain, who had attempted to substitute manmade worship for truth and moral character. Jeroboam erected golden calves, and instituted worship with impressive rites and ceremonies, trying to wean the hearts of the Israelites from the altars of Jerusalem.

The devil has never discontinued the use of this sharp weapon. "Jeroboam's calves" remain with us until this, very day. But we shall always need the presence of the Holy Ghost in our services if they have any effect upon sinners. Dead Pentecostal services are the fullest of all things. I don't want fanaticism or wild fire at any price, but give me the old time, Holy Ghost-saturated meetings, with a sermon unctonized from above. Consecrated talent is a wonderful asset to any meeting, and I do not want to underestimate its value, but there is positively no substitute for a God-anointed ministry, or for a service where God has His way. We are Pentecostal! Let

us remain Pentecostal!

Another giant is this not knowing how to live with one another. An elder in a company of Christians remarked, "In our assembly we have learned all about the gospel, and all about prophecy, and all about other truths, but one thing we have never learned: how to get along with one another." How true this often is, and yet how unnecessary.

Why can't we kill this giant, and learn how to get along among ourselves? The New Testament is "filled" with instructions on how to love one another, and with exhortations against envy, strife, evil speaking, quarreling, etc. We are encouraged to forbearance, forgiveness, gentleness, and kindness. In the Scriptures, we are told fifteen times to love one another. We cannot afford to hate or dislike any brother or sister in Christ. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now."

We are to forgive one another. Jesus said, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Any lack of love among the people of God is a reproach to His kingdom. It will dwarf any church, as well as shrivel the souls of Christians.