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Of Giants and Creatures

By Dan Camp

There have been many challenges to the advancement of the Gospel and the Church (the biblical Bride of Christ). If believers could somehow be convinced there is only one challenge, or **giant**. Or, if believers could be persuaded there are other giants, but no resources available in time and space to deal with them all. An enemy of the Church and of the Gospel of Christ, say, Satan perhaps, could easily accomplish the equivalent of shoveling mud and sand into the gears of God's Grace to His precious people. I remember when someone showed me the "MANY" in 1 John 4:1. That was a bad day. David had a very bad day involving a giant. Let's see how he handled things.

There are many interpretations of the great story of David killing the Philistine giant, Goliath. Some teachers liken David to modern day believers. Nope, he was clearly a picture of our Messiah and King. Our roles in the historic conflict are as the helpless soldiers who were being saved. Some liken the five stones that David chose from the brook as trials we must remove, by faith, from our pouches and believe in God to eliminate. Nope, again. Contrived explanations do not line up with biblical theology. But David's five stones did have a **giant** purpose!

It was a beautiful day for skipping stones! But David was on a mission. He went down to the cool creek on that hot day to find the best sailing stones he could find...nice round ones. He chose five. We will see why shortly.

David and his brothers had a problem, and the tall order of the day called for a champion. David had by Grace killed a bear and a lion, threats to his father's flock, but he was no warrior. He had observed Goliath, and he knew the rules of engagement. The chosen champion of one culture stood against any and all champions of another culture, in orderly, albeit deadly, succession, until someone cried, "**Uncle!**" which meant, "*The old geezer over there is the only one we have left, and he doesn't stand a chance.*" (Admit it; you always wondered where *Crying Uncle* came from!)

Hand-to-hand combat was the norm for the ancients. Thus, thriving people groups focused their resources on the breeding and training of true champions. The most reasoning and life-valuing societies developed this idea to put forth men, who would represent them in one-on-one, *mano a mano* warfare. The winner's army enslaved the people of the loser's army; but by this touch of early civility, many lives were spared.

The Philistines were a ruthless, murderous lot, and they had advanced as a people because of the victories of their champions, who just happened to be **physical giants**. Goliath, for example, was over nine feet tall, and his brief description in 1 Samuel 17 inspires fear and awe even thousands of years later. In fact, he was so successful, that we do not hear about his

relatives until many years after a stone from David's sling found its mark, right between Goliath's surprised peepers (eyes). Why didn't we hear about them? That particular day, the other giants were so afraid that they ran away! So much for giants being the key to national prosperity. Seems the "arm of flesh," operating independently of God, always fails; no matter how large it is!*

But, can you imagine?! There were **four** of them, four **more** after Goliath, also **all GIANTS** (2 Samuel 21:22)! And *Goliath, plus four, equals five. Five giants! Could it be?! Five giants – Five stones?! No way, Hosea! Did young David take the field that day, actually prepared, as the representative of Israel, to knock out the whole team of the giants from Gath, one by one, one after the other, until there were no more giants, no more Philistine champions to fell? Are you kidding me?! David obviously went out there to do much more than kill one little giant! Of course, he did!*

Could it be that Jesus did a whole lot more than simply pardon our sins?! You can bet your Strong's Concordance¹ that He did!

One of the best things about a big family is the joy of everyone expressing themselves. From Grandma's threat to declare her epitaph, "I told yawl I was sick!" to the mispronounced "*glimps*" of the little ones, part of the fun of life is the unexpected. Good writers and entertainers have always said that 50% of great comedy is the element of surprise, which has never been lacking in our house.

Years ago we moved to the southwest quadrant, "The Southern Crescent" of Atlanta, and eventually decided on a new church. The wonderful pastor wanted to come over to meet everyone personally and begin our prep for membership.

That night everyone pitched in, and spruced up after supper, but the waiting was very stressful for our little guys. Just like mature adults, stress can have an amazing effect on the things that kids say.

The preacher was coming! The **preacher** was coming! And when the preacher arrived, verbalized somewhere in the background – during the introductions to the new preacher – was a very loud, "The **CREATURE** is here!"

Being the son of a preacher-man, and married to the daughter of a preacher-man, and having been teased and called a preacher-man myself, I want nothing more than mercy for all preacher-men everywhere! But the reality is that the flesh, the world, and the devil have been hard at work for centuries, burning their candles from both ends. And, many a well-intended preacher-man, rabbi, and priest have succumbed to what some call **scripture-twisting**. In most cases, they have not done it maliciously. They have meant well, but have fallen short of God's Grace (Heb. 12:15a).

One of the most difficult things to reconcile and accept, as we embrace the true Grace of God and the Gospel, is that someone has taught us some really awful stuff, unbiblical stuff that has messed us up something terrible.

Steve McVey² deals with the issue boldly. He states right up front that he will leave the conference immediately unless everyone agrees on something crucial. ***If shown some plain truth from God's Word that goes against what we have previously been taught and believed, will we accept and believe God's Word? If not, Steve leaves!***

When Oliver North³ became convinced that God wanted him to help a Christian college raise funds, he wrote a check for the first \$1,000, held it in the air, and began counting hands in the audience until he reached the goal. ***Extreme needs and extreme problems demand extreme choices and extreme responses.***

The Grace of Jesus Christ has been mixed with Law, with flesh, with rules, with religion. We have been told repeatedly that they are the best of friends; that God *intends* for us to use them together; that this is what is *expected* of all good Christians. But does it work? Heavens, no; it has never worked! No matter how hard we shake the mixtures, oil and water always separate. **GRACE NEEDS NO HELP.**

Accelerated by our national and international economic woes, man's best efforts are crashing and burning while man's anger is more and more misdirected toward God, as though He were to blame! Suicide is rising; depression is out of control; and those who rule our information, influence, and truth-sources continue to soft sell the consequences. A Christian brother told me recently, ***"My adult children have gone far out in the world, deep into the world, and they are trying everything, except turning to the Lord."***

Many have been failed so badly, trying to use religion that they respond violently to any kind deed or word. ***"If you are going to talk Church to me, talk to the hand!"***

Those of us who love the Lord, His Word, and the lost and angry are grieving and praying for answers. Many of us have failed to measure up. Many of us have believed lies that bind. Many of us have become abusive, scary ***creatures***, instead of effective preachers and teachers of the truth about Grace.

So, how does one ***transform*** into a giant-killer, into a fervent and effective prayer-warrior, into a true Bible teacher? Let's also ask, "Of whom was David a picture and type and symbol? Are we David, today?" NO, but this is essentially what most of us have been taught, and what we have acted out, mistakenly.

Jesus is the true giant-killer, and we are in Him by faith. We are to live in His New Covenant, which involves something they only dreamed about in the Old Testament. **We are not only in Him, but He is in us.**

The best summary I know is that "Jesus gave His Life for us, to give His Life to us, to live His Life through us" (Maj. W. Ian Thomas³).

Let's look at that again!

"Jesus ***gave*** His Life ***for*** us,
to ***give*** His Life ***to*** us,

to *live* His Life *through* us.”

Now, we are all very familiar with Christ’s atoning work. We hear about it every Sunday. He gave His Life for the forgiveness of our sins! Hallelujah! Praise His Name – **BUT DON’T STOP THERE!**

Immediately, teach that Jesus is The LORD of our lives!

And immediately, teach that JESUS IS OUR VERY LIFE!

We are often so busy working at being His ambassadors, and working at being good stewards, and working to develop ourselves into His grand workmanship, that we forget our relationship with Him, and all that it means. He is Savior, He is Lord, and HE IS LIFE (Col. 1:27; 3:1-4; Gal. 2:20, etc.).

In fact, have you ever heard this simple truth that **Jesus is your Life**? Or did some **creature** lead you to believe that God has lots of employees in His Great Do-It-Yourself Warehouse, and you are supposed to “live for Him?” No, God fired everyone at the Cross, except Jesus! You’re fired! Jesus is now your Life!

Some years back, a group of well-meaning Christian **creatures** welcomed Brother Yun⁴, tortured and subsequently escaped house-church pastor from China, to a visit of the United States. After his tour, someone made the error of asking what he thought of all he had seen. He was boarding his plane back to his family, but did not miss a beat as he replied, “It is amazing all you American Christians have accomplished **without God.**”

The chilling truth, as Paul exhorted, is that it is entirely possible to be born-again, but to somehow **miss** the daily “operating Grace” of Jesus in us!

We are either with Christ, our giant-slayer, or we are without Him. We live by faith in dependence on His Life – **SAVIOR PLUS LORD EQUALS LIFE** – or, we “try to live” independently of His Life. We walk by the Spirit of Christ or we walk by the flesh.

And in either case, if we should ever ask a persecuted brother, who experienced fasting for 74 days, we should be prepared for the unvarnished truth.

There is much to be said for the strength of man and all those virtues and abilities, that **seem** to derive from man, but which actually originate in and are sustained by the Lord. One night I was working late in downtown Atlanta, and a terrible thunderstorm descended. My moon-roof suddenly became a storm drain, and the closer-button failed! I wheeled into a service station, jerked to a stop under a broad overhang, and got out, soaking wet. A moment later I heard a man laughing, and turned to see World Champion Kevin Nash, formerly of my beloved Tennessee Volunteers (college athletics), approaching me. I was more frustrated than flattered at his broad smile, and explained that the roof would not close. He instructed me to sit back down in the driver’s seat, turn the key on, and push the close button, which I did - without any hesitation. He angled his muscle-covered seven-foot frame across the windshield of my little Toyota Celica, grabbed the edge of the moon-roof with his giant hands, and pulled. It closed, mostly by the force of his will. I thanked him profusely and asked him for an autograph “for my daughters,” which I keep in my Amplified® Bible.

I trust you get my point? God hates our “good flesh” (Phil. 3), and we are no longer obligated to it (Gk. sarx) in any way. But He can use it as He sees fit for His own. In this case, it was nice to have a giant around!

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Dan Camp gives his permission to all to share, use, and/or forward any portion of his articles. He would love to hear from you via email at eEncourager@aol.com

¹ *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. A concordance of the King James Bible completed by a team under the direction of Dr. James Strong, originally copyrighted ©1890. Continues to be published and is now available in several Bible versions.

² Steve McVey is president of Grace Walk Ministries, a discipleship training ministry located in the Atlanta, Georgia area. www.gracewalk.org

³ Oliver “Ollie” North, former lieutenant colonel in the US Marine Corp, is a conservative political commentator, a TV host, a military historian, and a *New York Times* best-selling author.

³ Major W. Ian Thomas was a Christian evangelical writer, theological teacher, and found of The Torchbearers Bible schools. Authored “*The Saving Life of Christ*,” as well as others.

⁴ Liu Zhenying (known as “Brother Yun” in the West) is an exiled Chinese Christian house church leader and evangelist, who has experienced prolonged torture and imprisonment for his faith. He travels widely from his current base in Germany. [from back cover: *The Heavenly Man: The Remarkable True Story of Chinese Christian Brother Yun*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2002.]

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