

**CURRENT TEACHING SERIES**

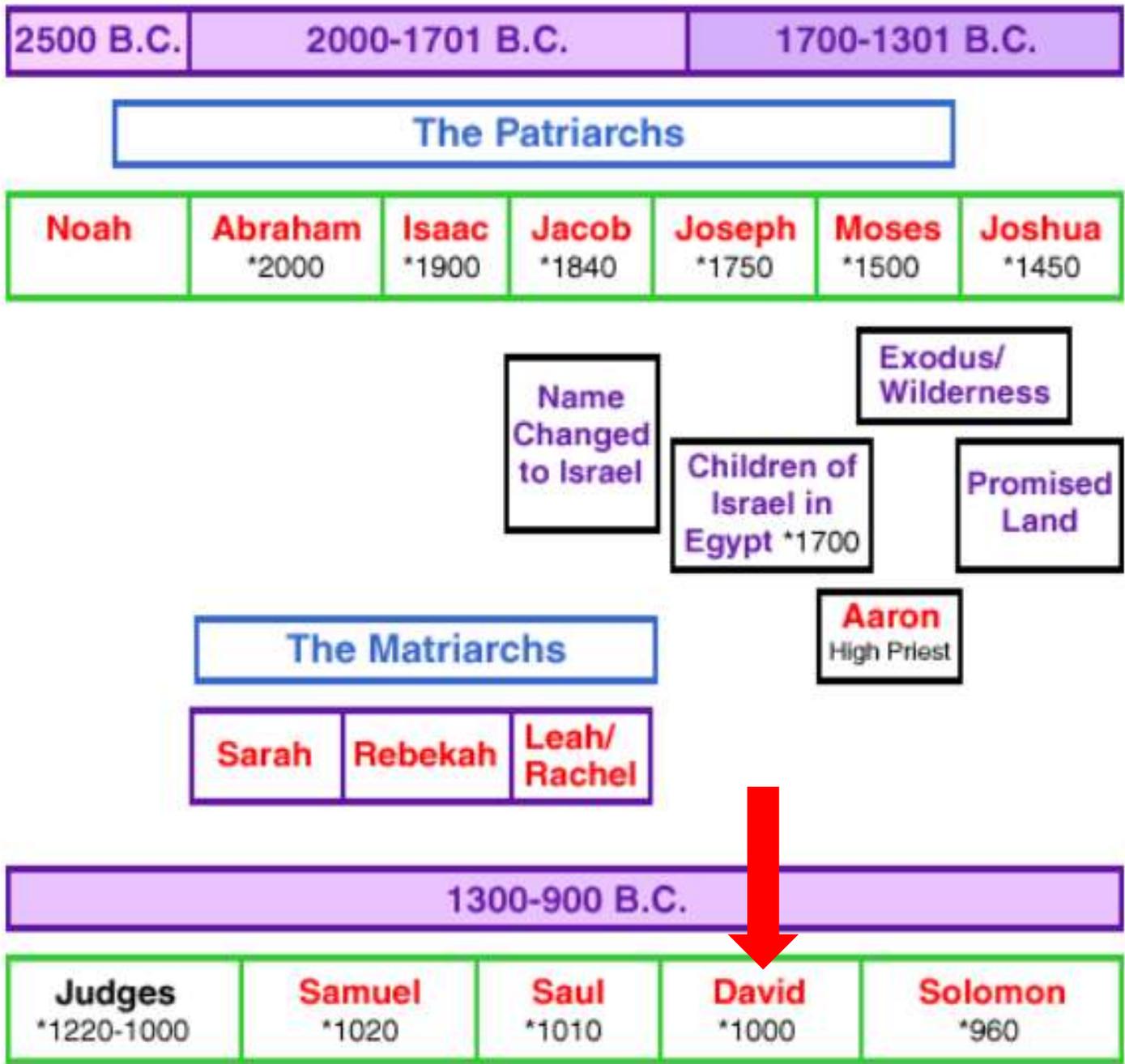
# **EPIC TALES**

A dramatic scene featuring a whale's tail fluke rising from the churning blue ocean. The sky is dark and filled with rain, creating a sense of intensity and awe. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues and greys, with the white text providing a stark contrast.

**RELEARNING THE ANCIENT BIBLE  
STORIES IN A BRAND-NEW WAY**

# Bible Timeline

By Genelle Austin-Lett and Mary Jane Chaignot



# David and Goliath

1 Samuel 17

**EPIC TALES**



A close-up photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the dark blue ocean, creating white foam at the base. The background is a deep blue sky with faint, light-colored streaks.

Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to \*Judah, and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim. Saul and the men of Israel were gathered and camped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array to encounter the Philistines. The Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them. 1 Samuel 17:1-3

\*Philistines were so confident in victory that they had advanced into the territory of Judah

**EPIC TALES**

# United Israelite Kingdom, Israel in the Time of Kings Saul, David and Solomon, 1000 to 924 B.C.

Israelite Kingdom under King Saul  
Lands conquered by King David



# Battle of the Valley of Elah

## 1 Samuel 17

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**Azekah** •  
Tell ez-Zakariyeh

*Saul's forces*  
**Israelite army position**

*Flat valley with dry creekbed*

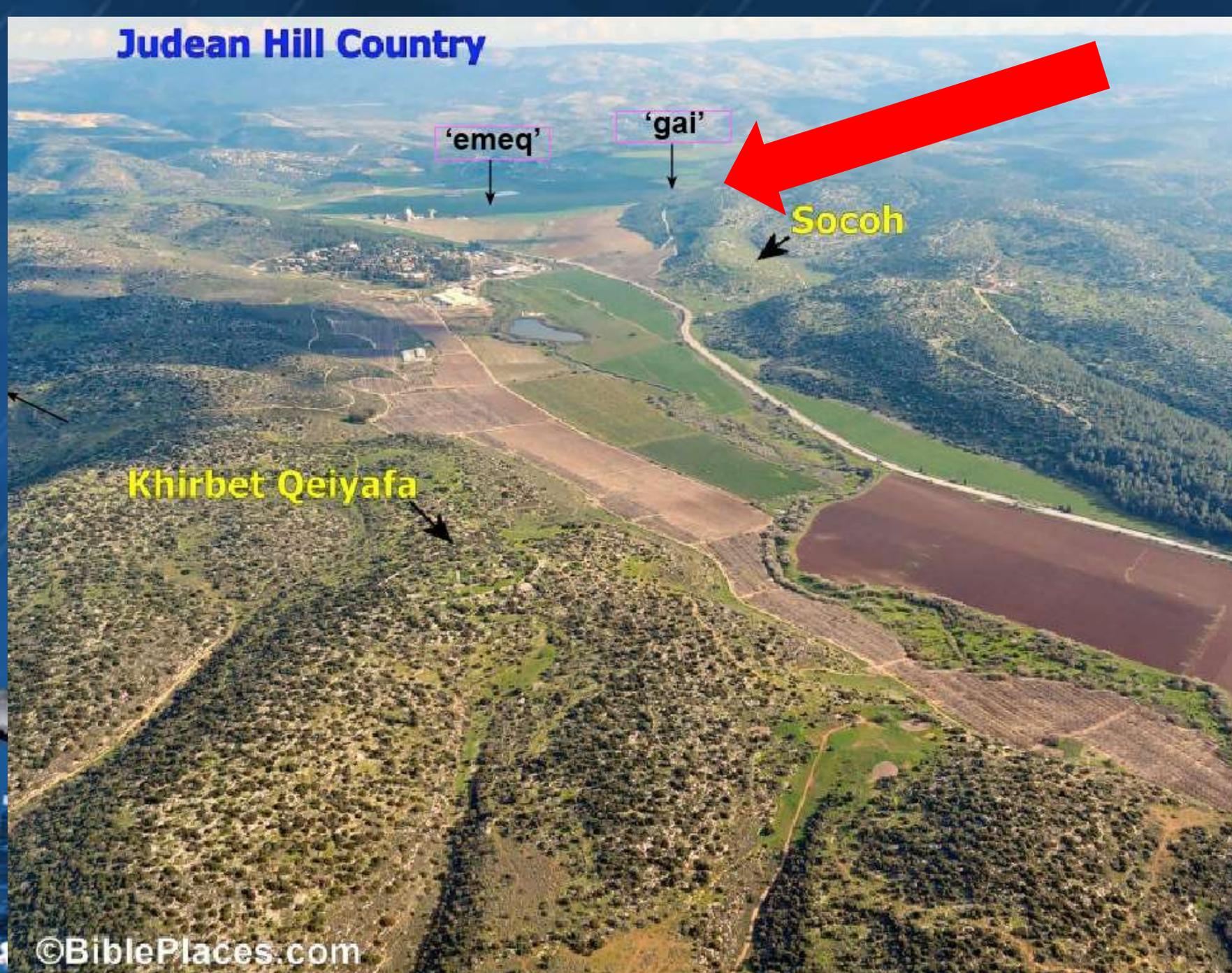
*Goliath*  
**Philistine army position**

*Wadi es-Sant*

**Socoh** •  
Khirbet 'Abbad

**EPIC TALES**

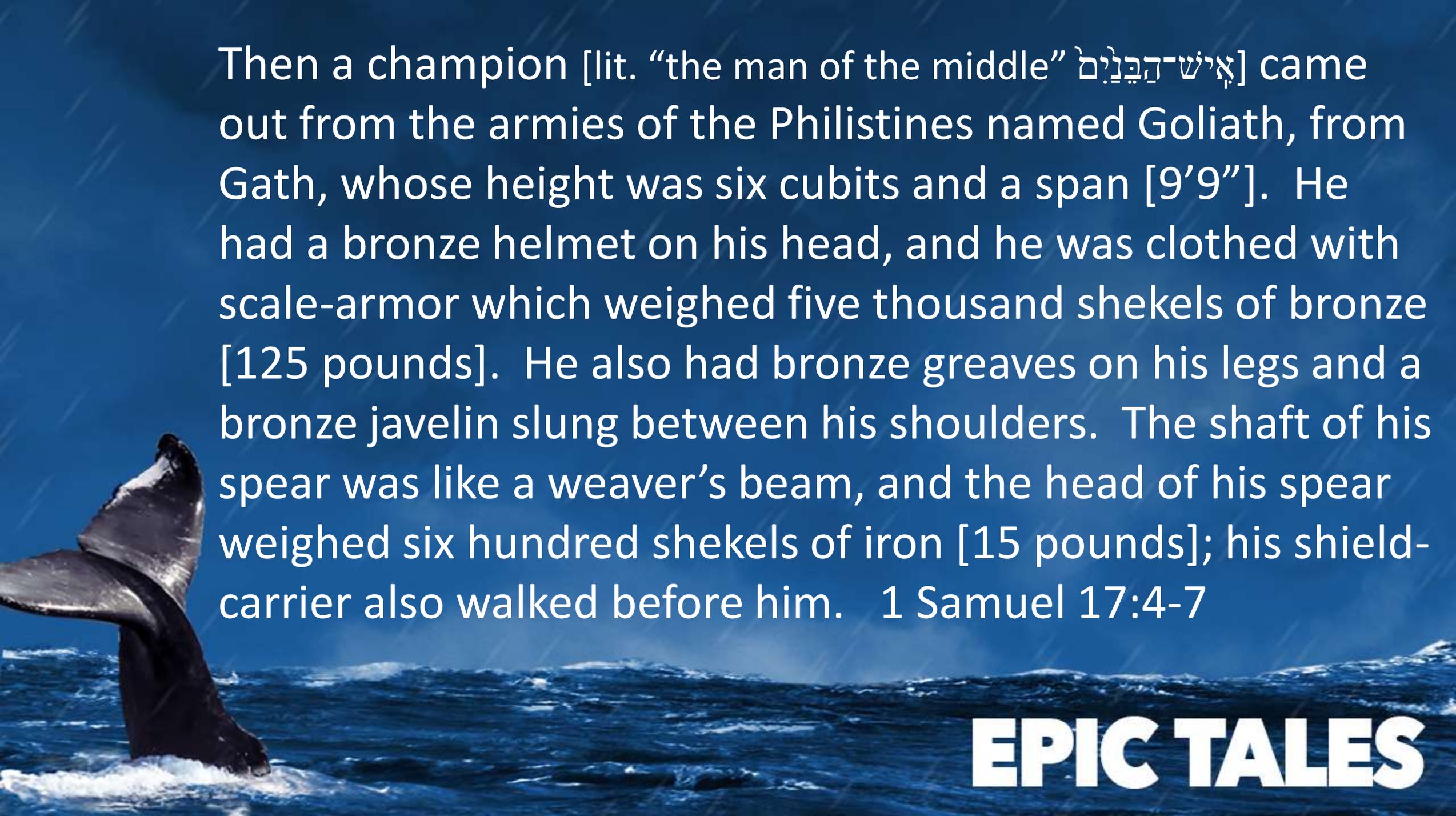
## Judean Hill Country



In Hebrew, there are two primary words that are translated as *valley* in English. One is the Hebrew word *emeq* (also spelled *emek*). This word is used in reference to valleys that are relatively *broad* or *wide*. A second Hebrew word for *valley* is *gai*, which implies a *narrow* valley. Whereas 1 Samuel 17:2 uses *emeq* to define this regional valley (also in 17:19), 17:3 uses *gai* to describe the specific location of the battle. The text says that the Israelites positioned themselves “on one side of the *gai*, with the Philistines on the other side” of the *gai*. Looking at the topography of the Elah Valley today, there seems to be only one place where the valley becomes literally *narrow* (just as the Hebrew word *gai* implies). It’s location is to the east around a bend in the broader valley of Elah.

<http://biblicalisraelstours.com/2013/01/the-david-and-goliath-story-re-visited/>

# PIC TALES

A photograph of a whale's tail breaching the surface of the ocean. The tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the point of exit. The water is a deep blue with white-capped waves. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Then a champion [lit. “the man of the middle” אִישׁ-הַבְּנַיִם] came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span [9’9”]. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze [125 pounds]. He also had bronze greaves on his legs and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver’s beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron [15 pounds]; his shield-carrier also walked before him. 1 Samuel 17:4-7

**EPIC TALES**

Ulster Med J. 2014 May; 83(2): 86–88.

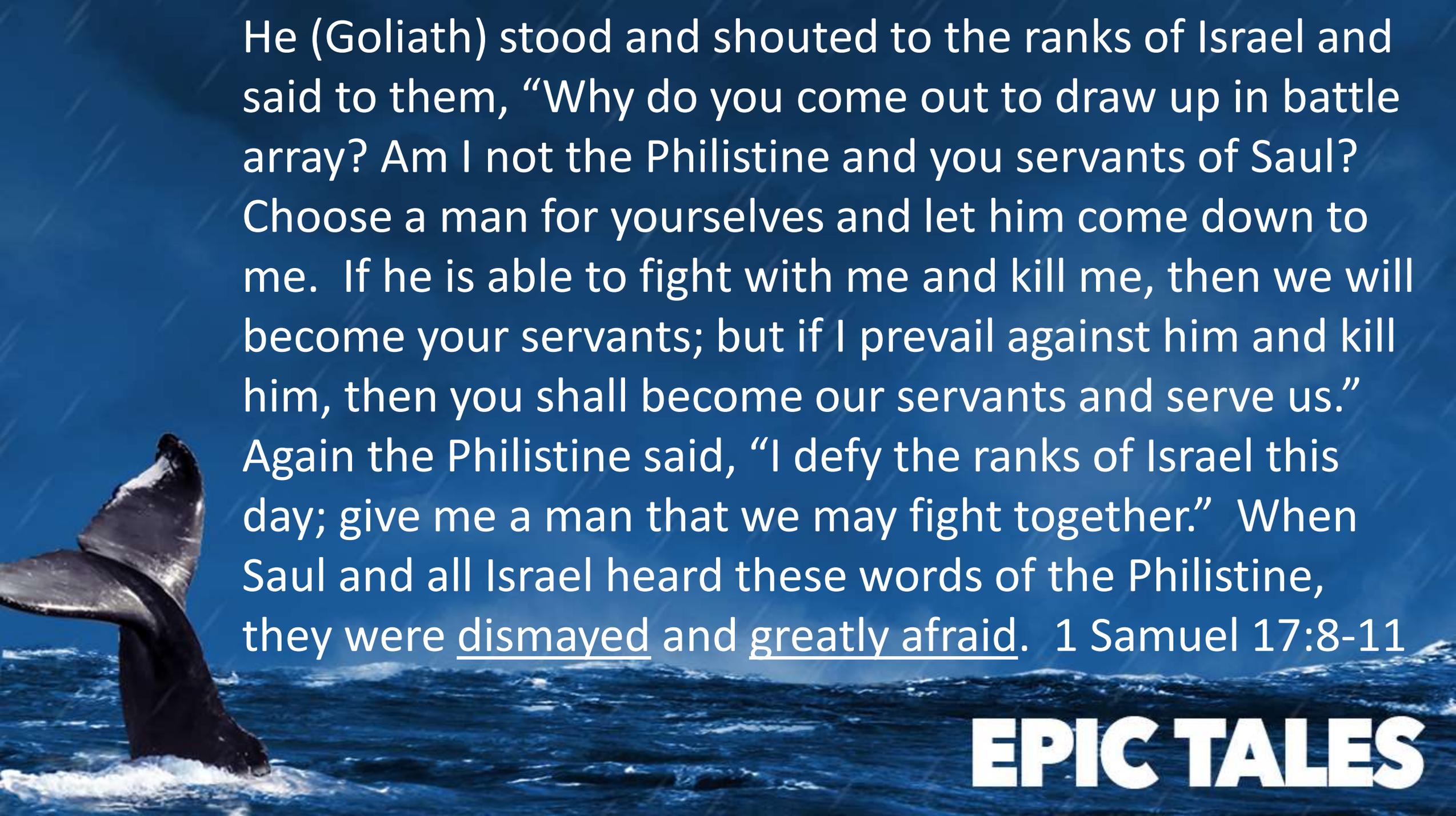
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## Hereditary Gigantism-the biblical giant Goliath and his brothers

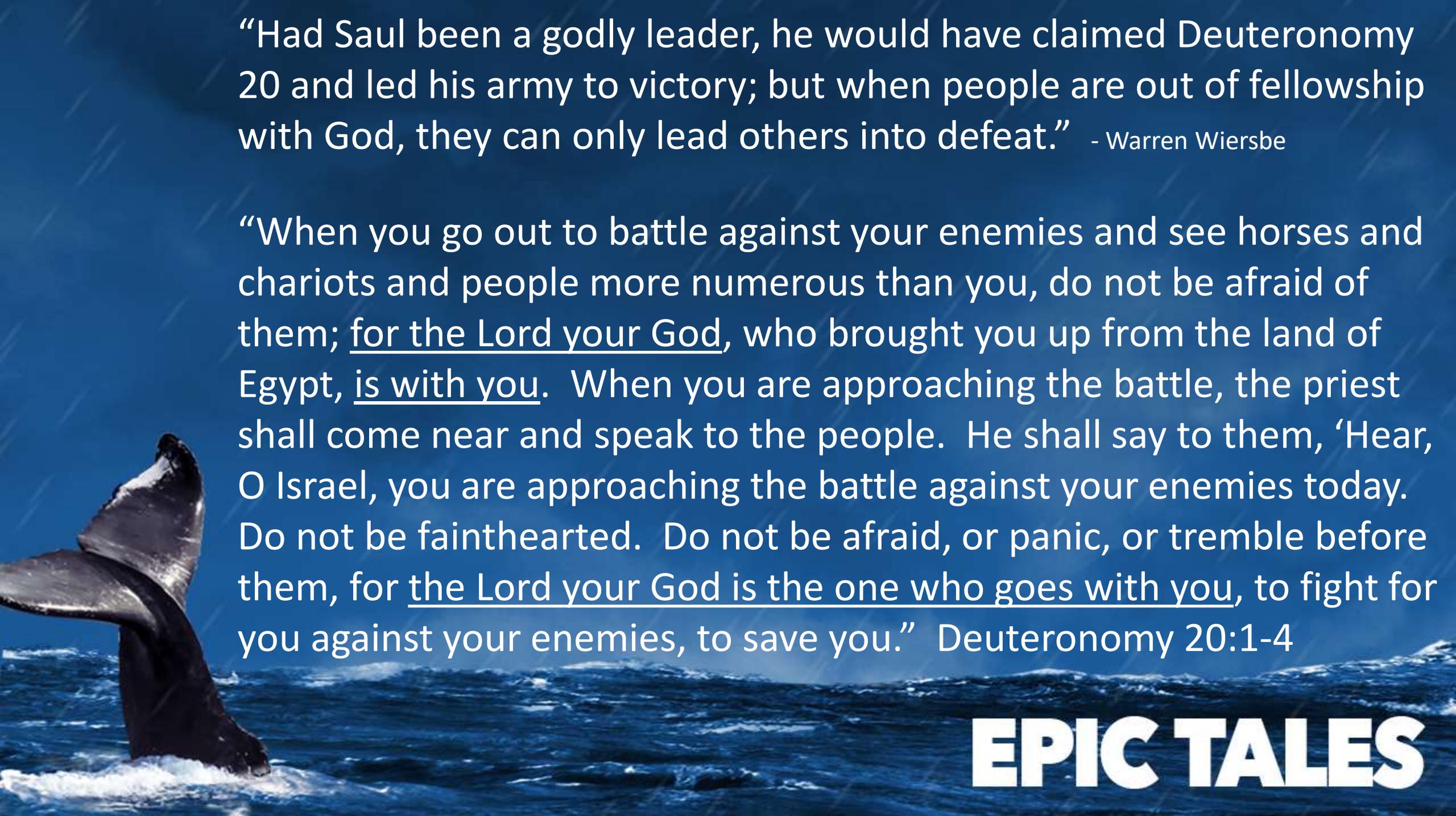
Deirdre E Donnelly<sup>1</sup> and Patrick J Morrison<sup>1,2</sup>

The biblical giant Goliath has an identifiable family tree suggestive of autosomal dominant inheritance. We suggest that he had a hereditary pituitary disorder possibly due to the AIP gene, causing early onset and familial acromegaly or gigantism. We comment on the evidence within the scriptures for his other relatives including a relative with six digits and speculate on possible causes of the six digits. Recognition of a hereditary pituitary disorder in the biblical Goliath and his family sheds additional information on his and other family members' battles with David and his relatives.

A whale's tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean, creating a splash of white water. The background is a clear, bright blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

He (Goliath) stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, “Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us.” Again the Philistine said, “I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together.” When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. 1 Samuel 17:8-11

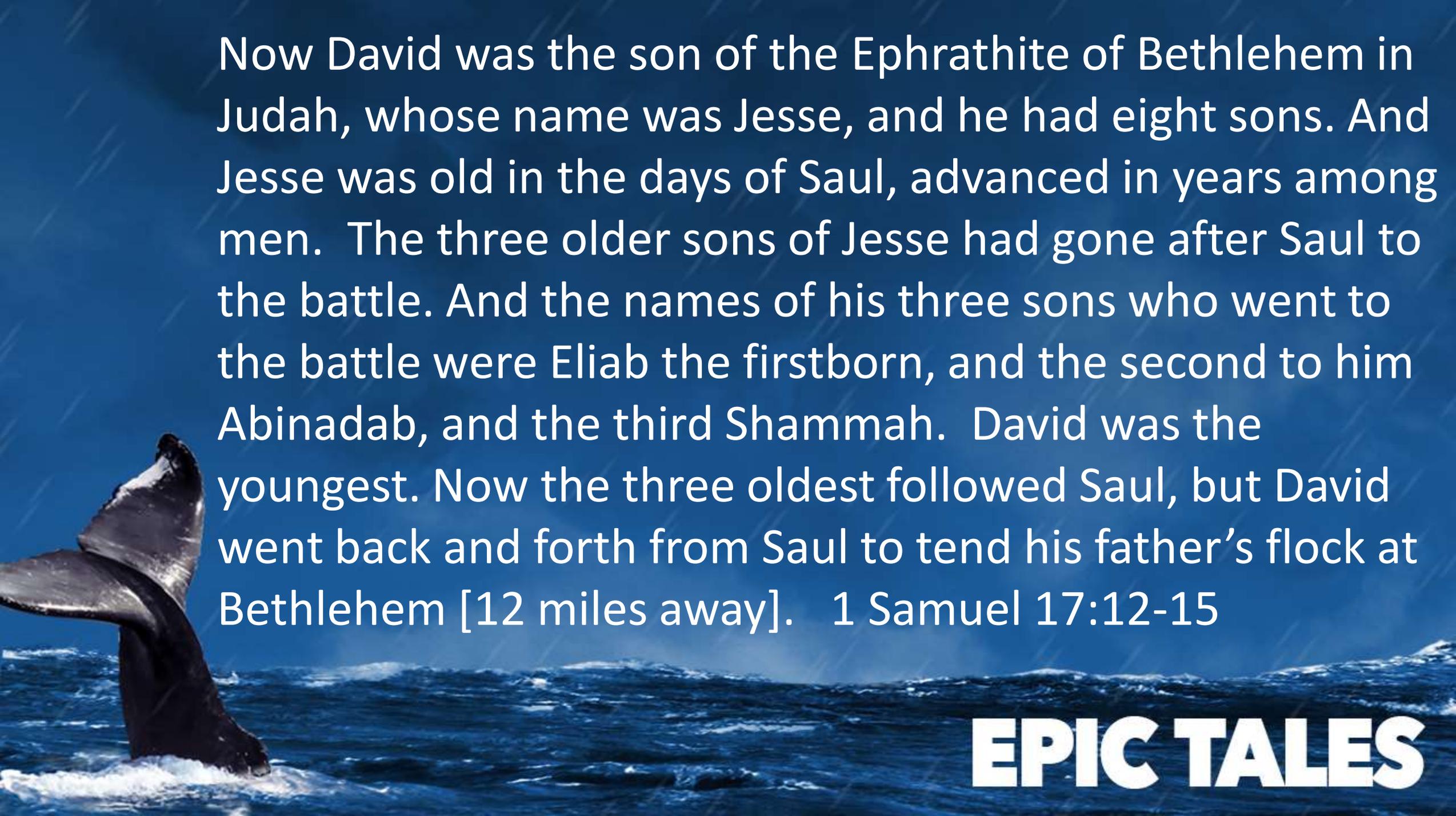
**EPIC TALES**

A whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean on the left side of the image. The water is a deep blue with white foam at the base of the tail. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

“Had Saul been a godly leader, he would have claimed Deuteronomy 20 and led his army to victory; but when people are out of fellowship with God, they can only lead others into defeat.” - Warren Wiersbe

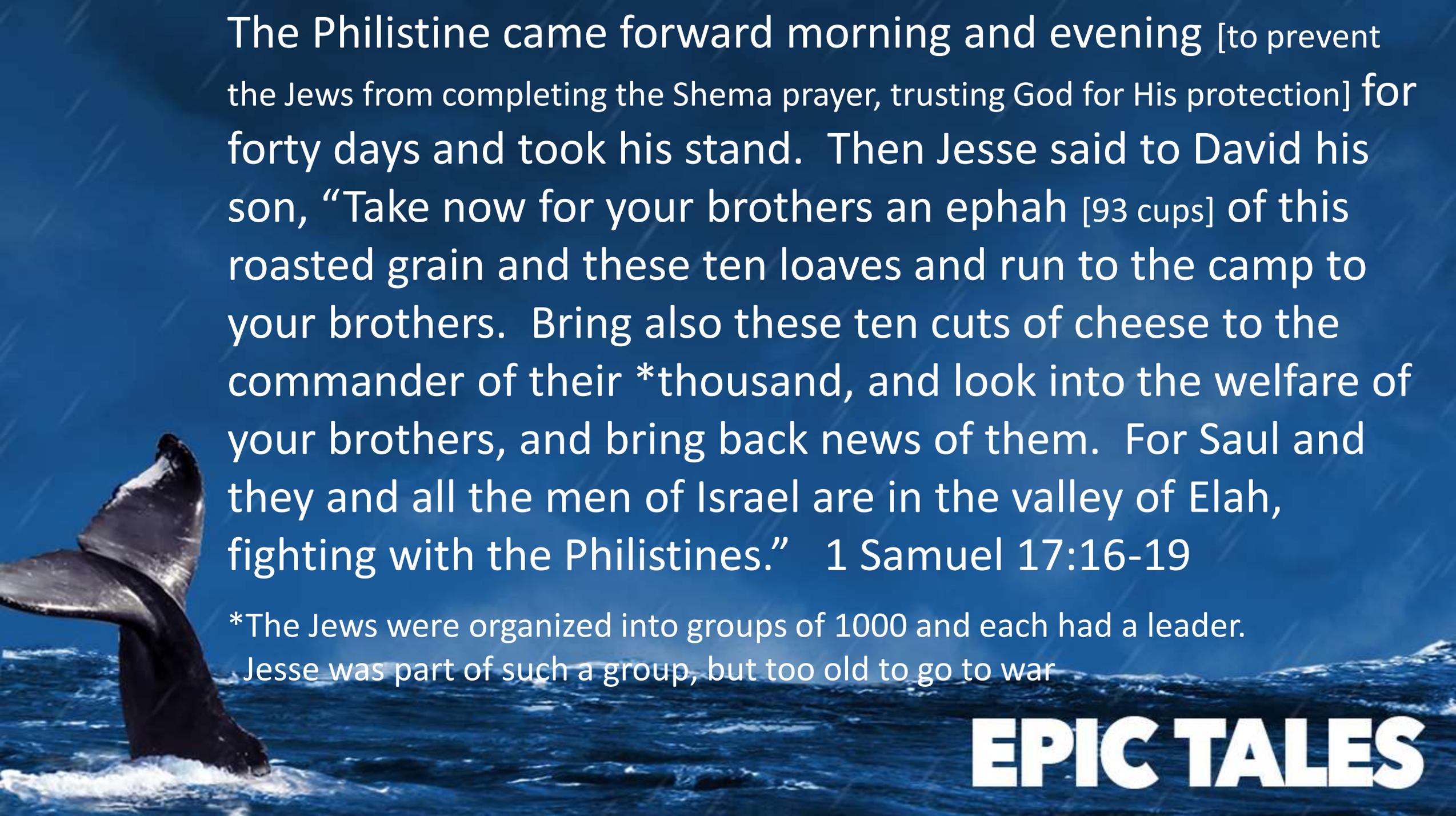
“When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you. When you are approaching the battle, the priest shall come near and speak to the people. He shall say to them, ‘Hear, O Israel, you are approaching the battle against your enemies today. Do not be fainthearted. Do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.” Deuteronomy 20:1-4

**EPIC TALES**

A blue whale's tail is visible on the left side of the image, emerging from the dark blue ocean. The background is a deep blue sky with a subtle pattern of light rays.

Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced in years among men. The three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and the second to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem [12 miles away]. 1 Samuel 17:12-15

**EPIC TALES**

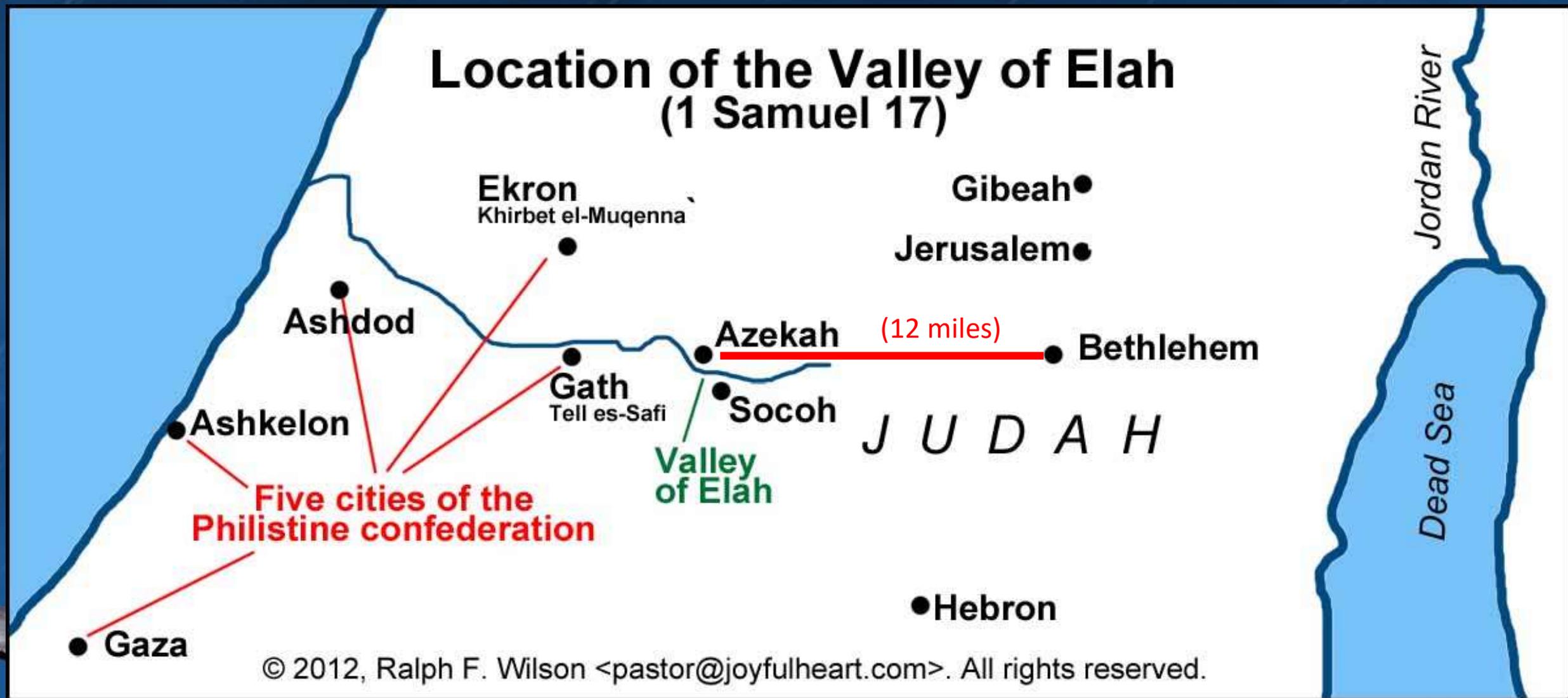
The background of the image is a vibrant blue sky with a subtle pattern of white diagonal lines. In the lower-left corner, the dark, curved tail of a whale is seen breaching the surface of the ocean, creating a splash of white water. The rest of the image is filled with the blue sky and the white line pattern.

The Philistine came forward morning and evening [to prevent the Jews from completing the Shema prayer, trusting God for His protection] for forty days and took his stand. Then Jesse said to David his son, “Take now for your brothers an ephah [93 cups] of this roasted grain and these ten loaves and run to the camp to your brothers. Bring also these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of their \*thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers, and bring back news of them. For Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.” 1 Samuel 17:16-19

\*The Jews were organized into groups of 1000 and each had a leader. Jesse was part of such a group, but too old to go to war

**EPIC TALES**

# Location of the Valley of Elah (1 Samuel 17)



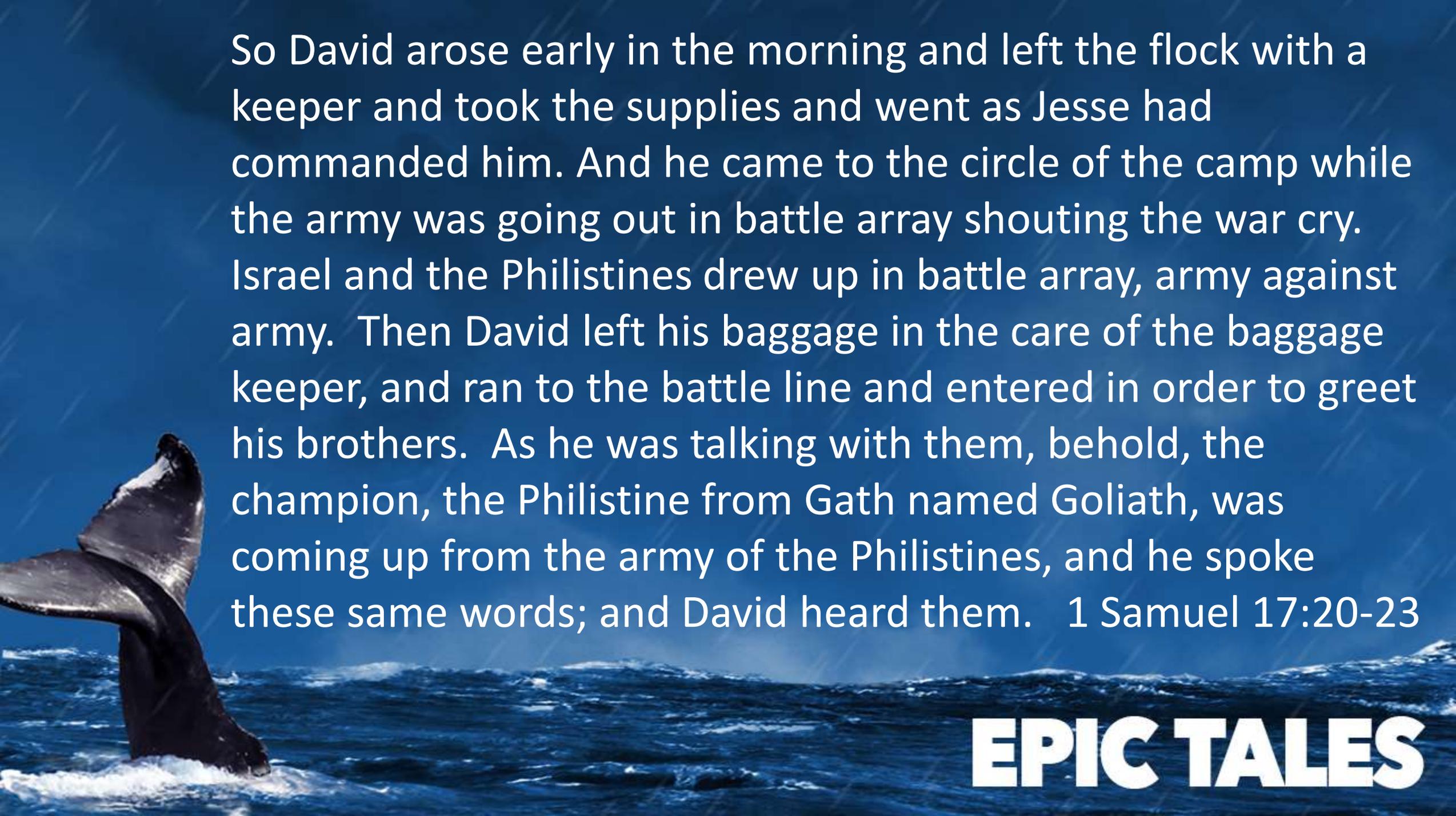
**Five cities of the Philistine confederation**

(12 miles)

J U D A H

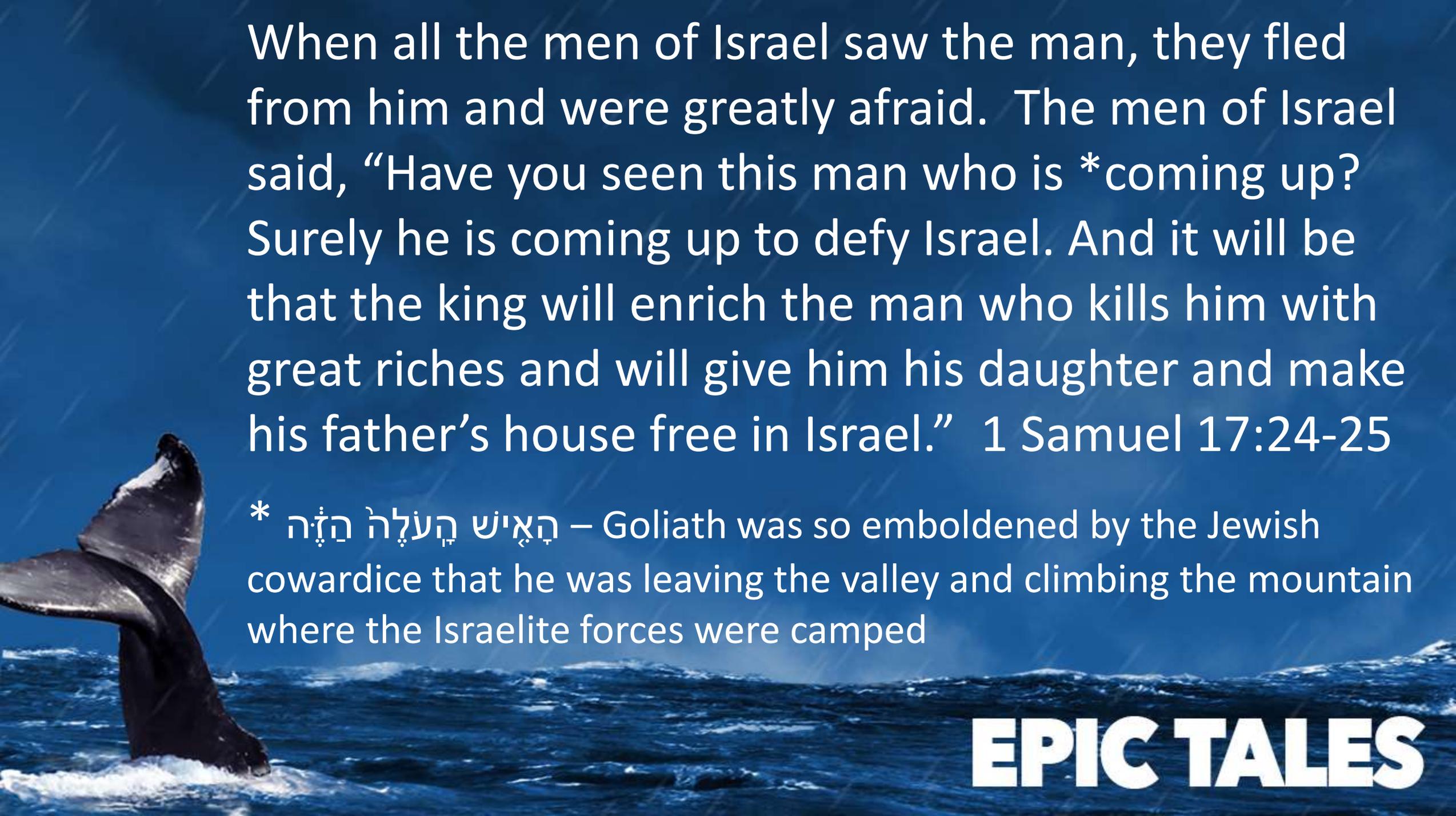
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**EPIC TALES**

A whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean on the left side of the image. The water is a deep blue with white foam from the splash. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

So David arose early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper and took the supplies and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the circle of the camp while the army was going out in battle array shouting the war cry. Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle array, army against army. Then David left his baggage in the care of the baggage keeper, and ran to the battle line and entered in order to greet his brothers. As he was talking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard them. 1 Samuel 17:20-23

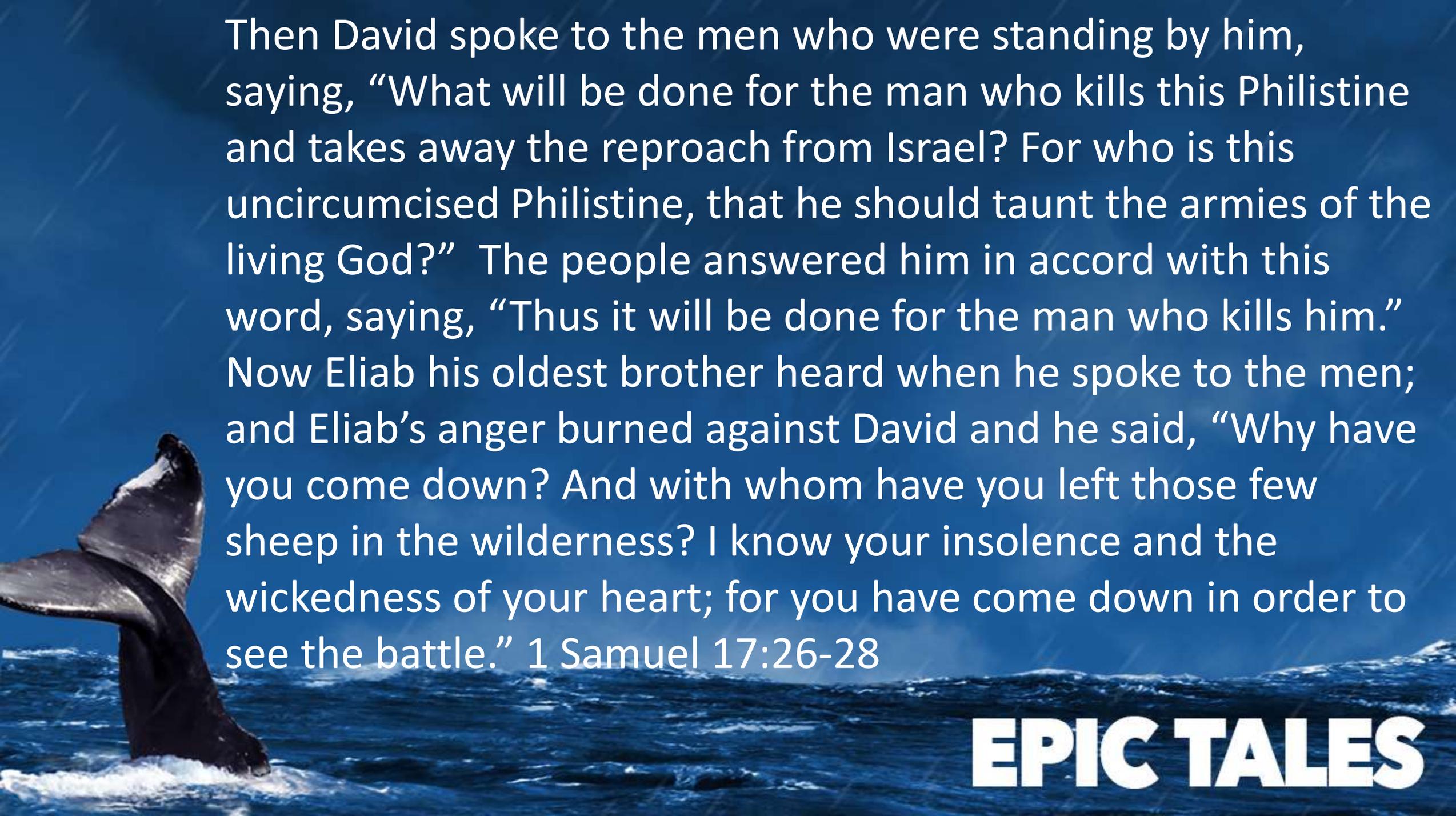
**EPIC TALES**

A photograph of a whale's tail breaching the surface of the ocean. The tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the point of exit. The water is a deep blue with white-capped waves. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid. The men of Israel said, “Have you seen this man who is \*coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father’s house free in Israel.” 1 Samuel 17:24-25

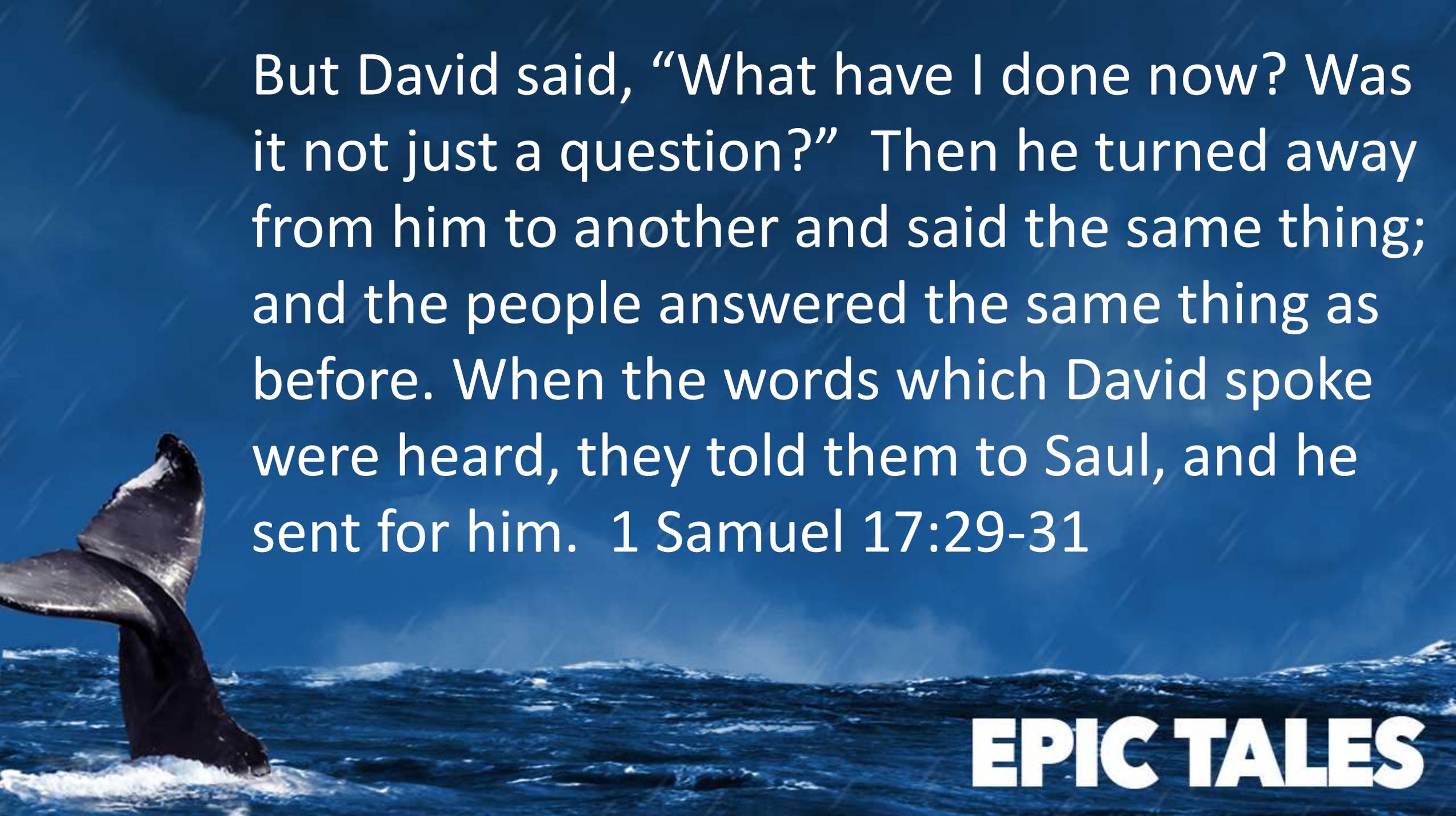
\* הַאִישׁ הָעֹלֶה הַזֶּה – Goliath was so emboldened by the Jewish cowardice that he was leaving the valley and climbing the mountain where the Israelite forces were camped

**EPIC TALES**

A whale's tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean, creating a splash of white water. The background is a clear, deep blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

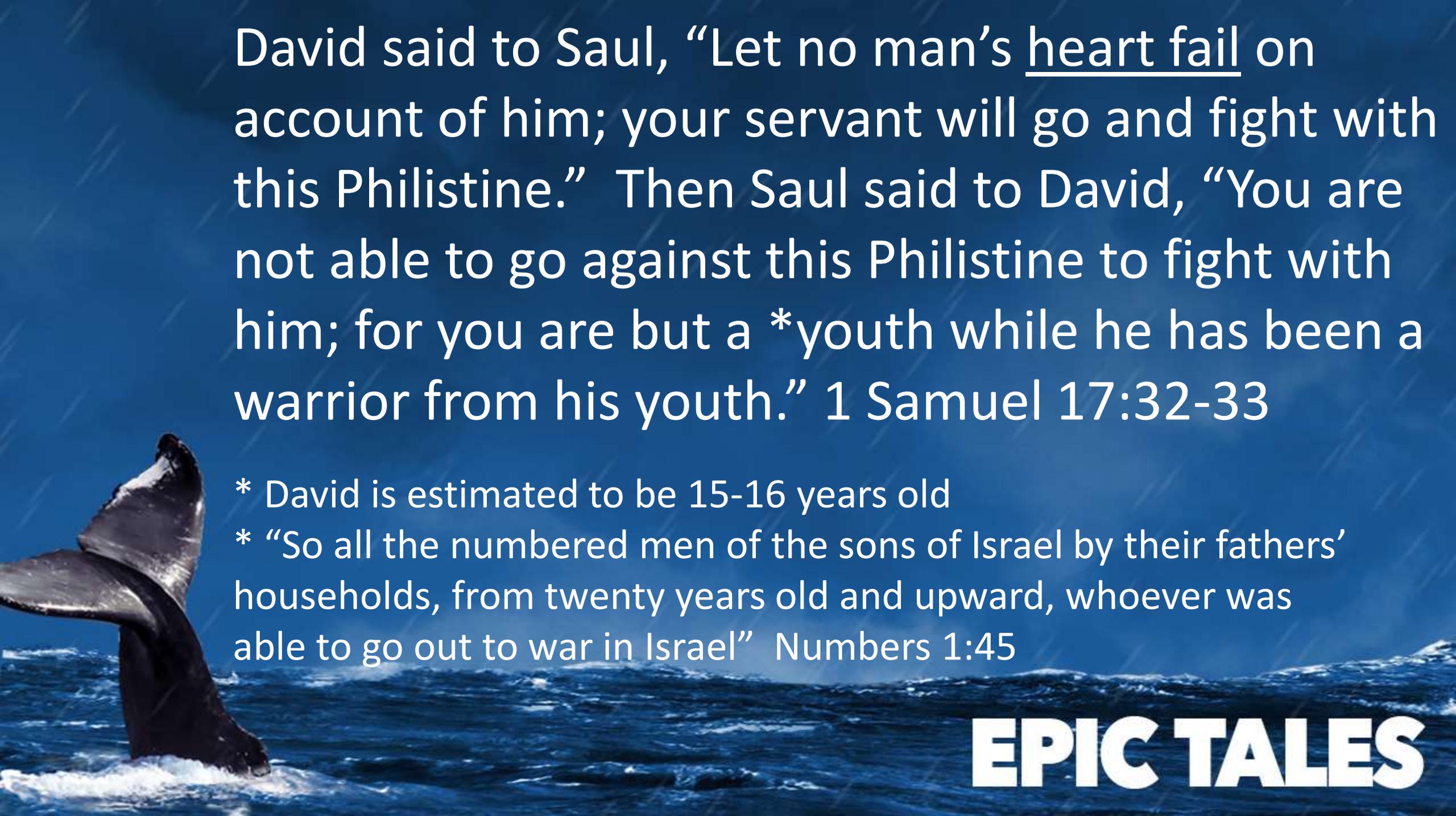
Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?” The people answered him in accord with this word, saying, “Thus it will be done for the man who kills him.” Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab’s anger burned against David and he said, “Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle.” 1 Samuel 17:26-28

**EPIC TALES**

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean. The water is a deep blue with white foam from the waves. The sky is a lighter blue. The whale's tail is dark grey and is curved upwards.

But David said, “What have I done now? Was it not just a question?” Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing; and the people answered the same thing as before. When the words which David spoke were heard, they told them to Saul, and he sent for him. 1 Samuel 17:29-31

**EPIC TALES**

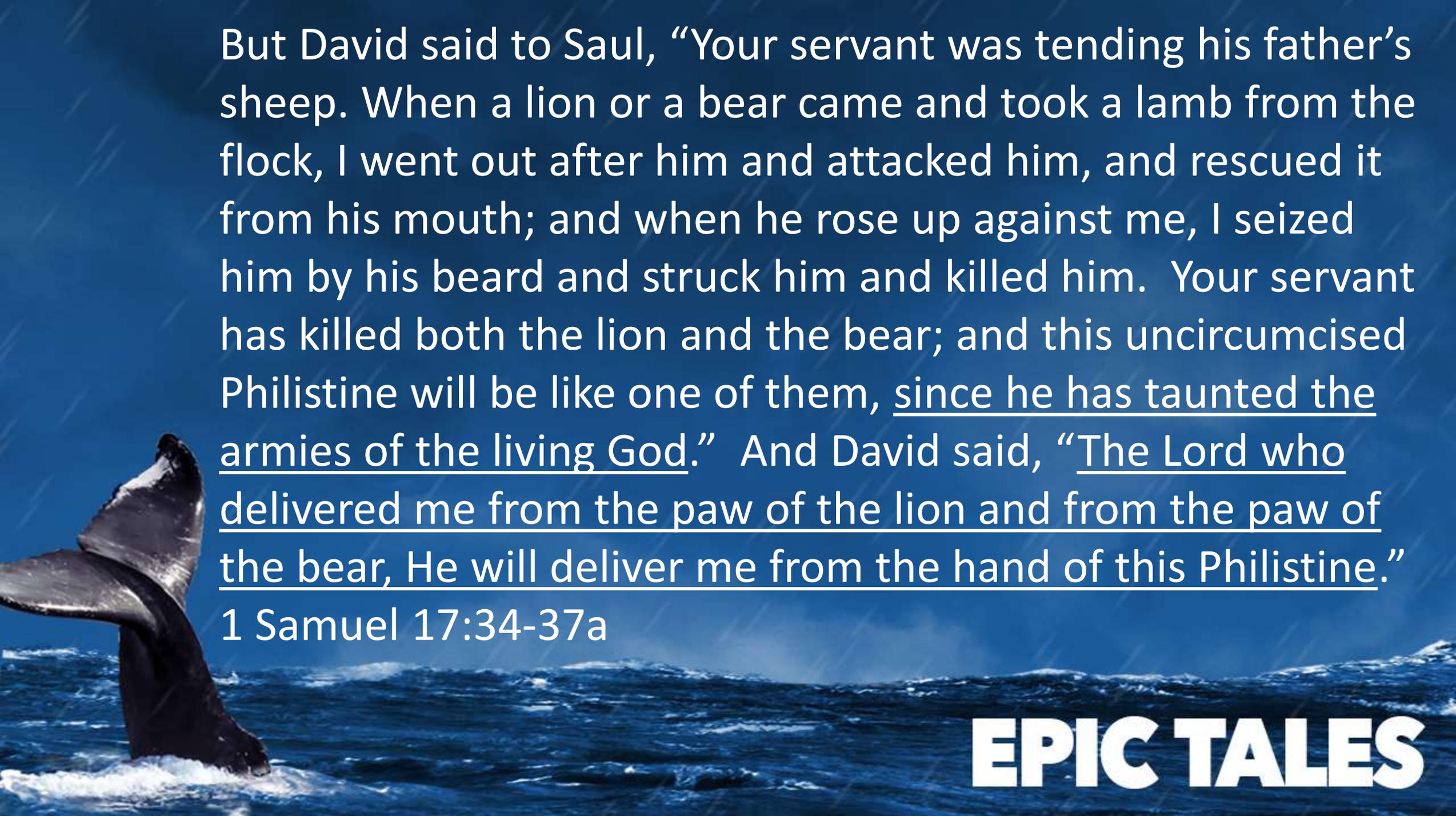
A photograph of a whale's tail breaching the surface of the ocean. The tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the point of exit. The water is a deep blue, and the sky above is a lighter blue. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” Then Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a \*youth while he has been a warrior from his youth.” 1 Samuel 17:32-33

\* David is estimated to be 15-16 years old

\* “So all the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers’ households, from twenty years old and upward, whoever was able to go out to war in Israel” Numbers 1:45

**EPIC TALES**

A photograph of a whale's tail breaching the surface of the ocean. The tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the point of exit. The water is a deep blue with white-capped waves. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

But David said to Saul, “Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.” And David said, “The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”

1 Samuel 17:34-37a

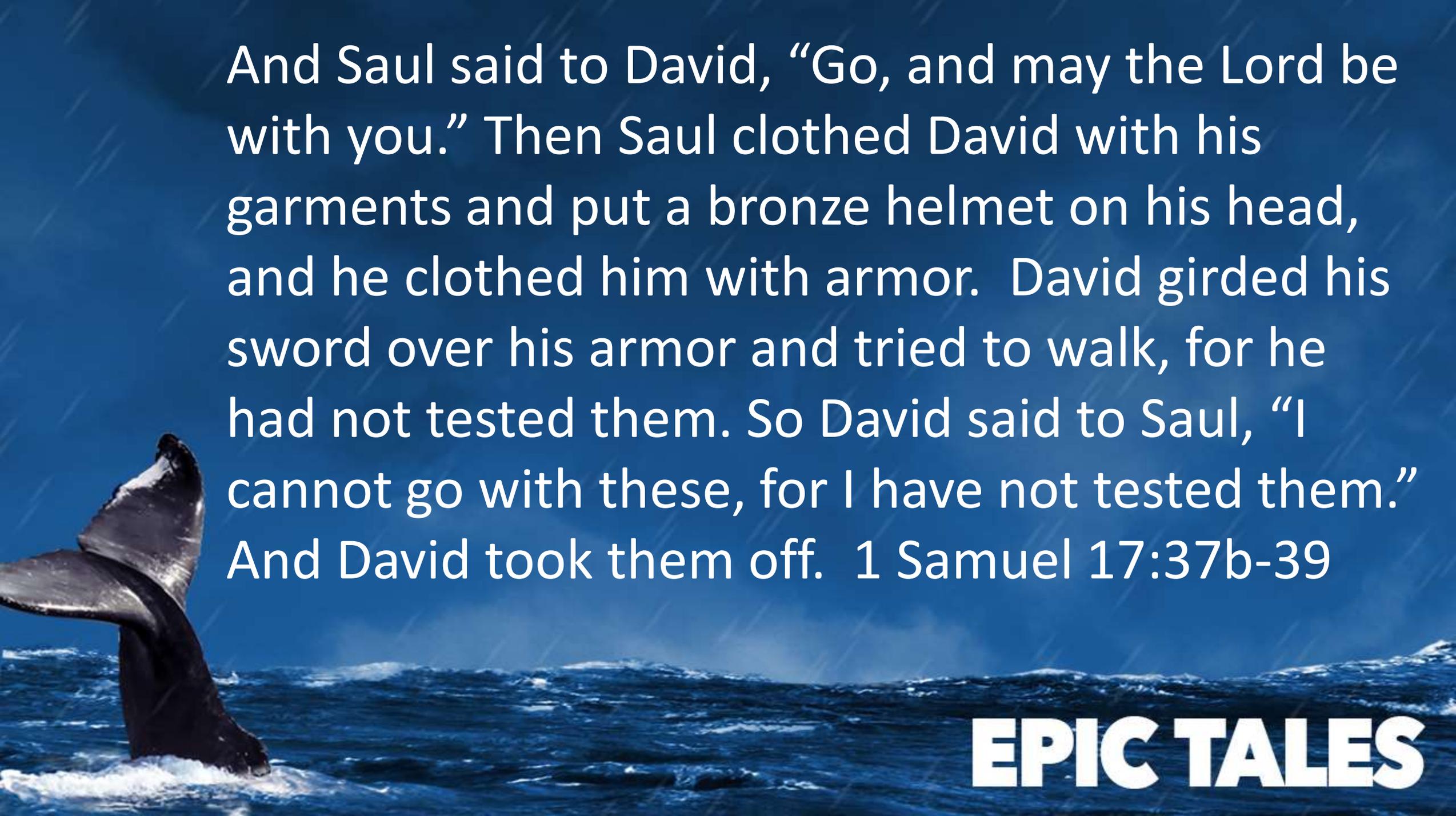
**EPIC TALES**

# Are you ready for your assignment?

“God had tested David privately with a lion and a bear; now he was to test him openly with a giant. If we are faithful in the private battles, God will see us through the public testings. Too often God’s people faint at the smallest test that comes their way, little realizing that the ‘little tests’ are but preparation for the bigger battles that are sure to come.” – Warren Wiersbe



**EPIC TALES**

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean. The water is a deep blue with white foam from the whale's splash. The sky is a lighter blue. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

And Saul said to David, “Go, and may the Lord be with you.” Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor. David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. So David said to Saul, “I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them.” And David took them off. 1 Samuel 17:37b-39

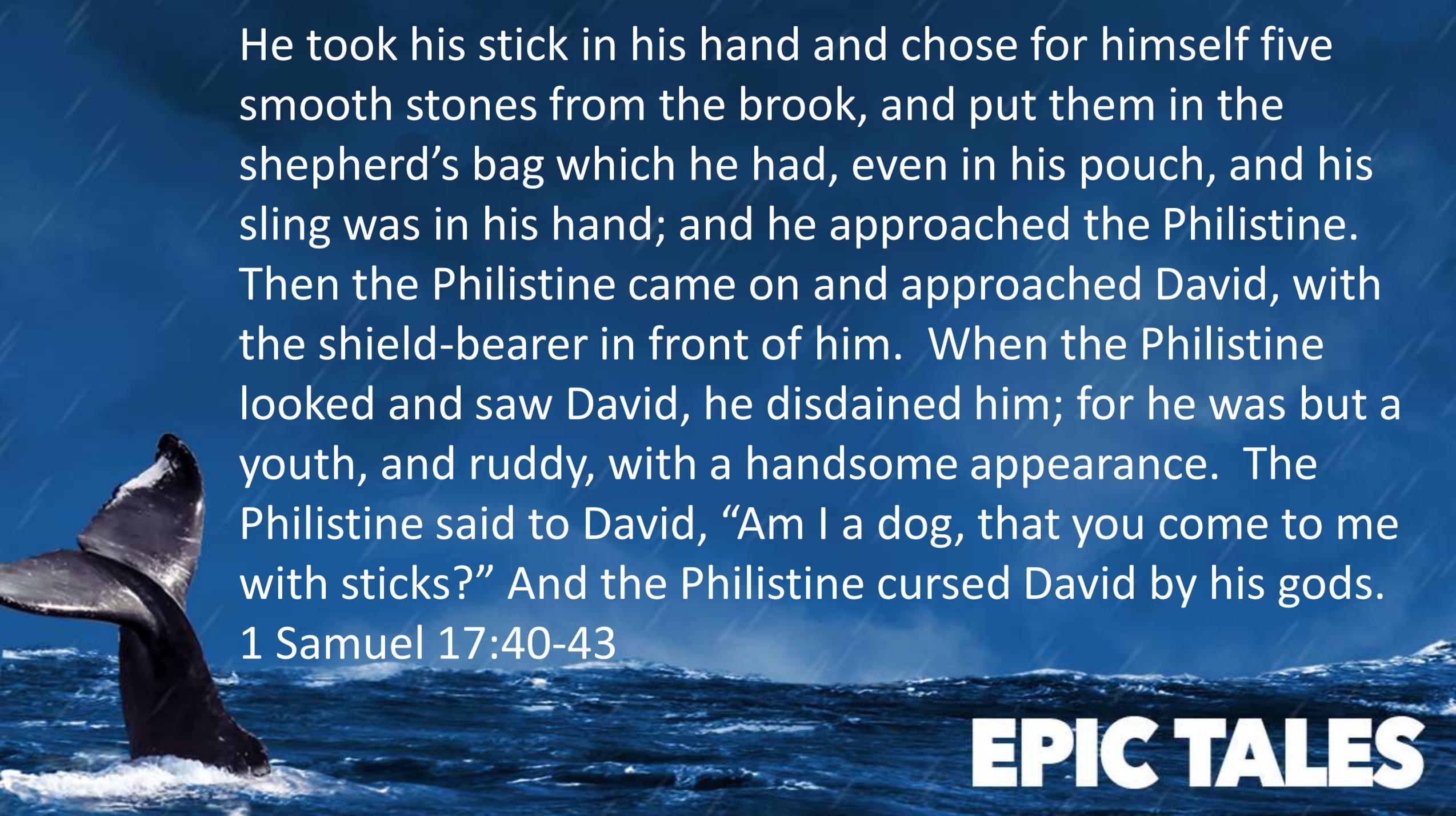
**EPIC TALES**

# Why did David reject Saul's armor?

- It was too big and heavy
- David trusted God to help and protect him; if he wore the armor, the magnitude of the miracle would be obscured (Source: Targum Yonasan)
- Saul was jealous of David's faith and courage; when David saw that, he quickly removed the armor (Source: Vayikra Rabbah 26:10)

A whale's tail is visible on the left side of the image, emerging from the blue ocean. The background is a deep blue sky with light rays.

**EPIC TALES**

A whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean, creating a splash of white water. The background is a clear, deep blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine. Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.  
1 Samuel 17:40-43

**EPIC TALES**

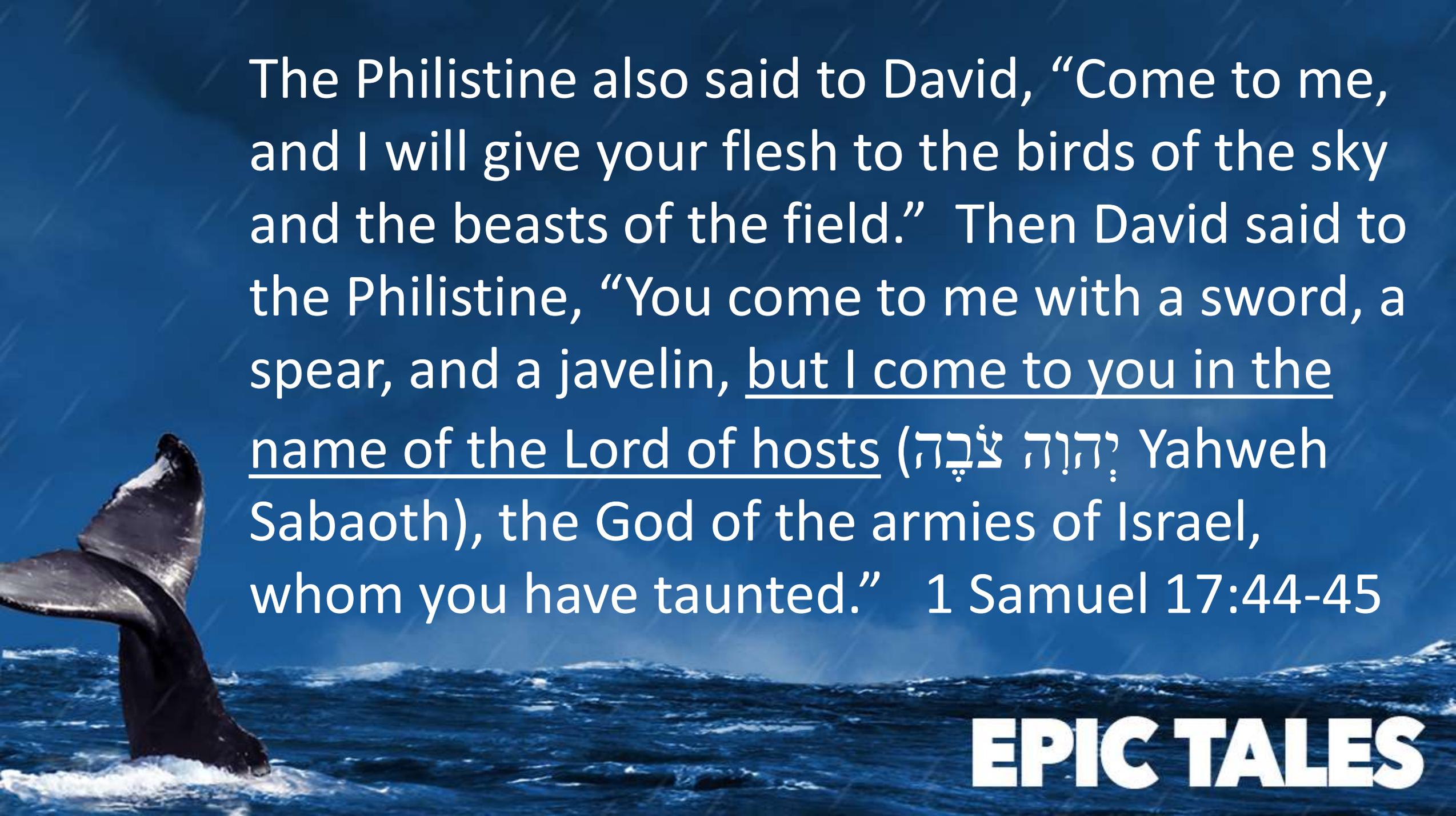


# Why 5 smooth stones?

- God did not tell David how many stones to bring
- David was preparing for other Philistines to attack him
- Goliath had four brothers. Their names, according to Rav Hisda, were Saph, Madon, Goliath, and Ishbi in Nob (see 2 Samuel 21:15–21). [Source: Sotah 42a, 42b]
- David was marching forward to avenge the honor of five... God, whose name Goliath was profaning; Aaron, whose descendants Hophni and Phinehas were murdered by Goliath; and the 3 patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), whose offspring Goliath was humiliating [Source: Midrash Shmuel 21]



**EPIC TALES**

A photograph of a whale's tail breaching the surface of the ocean. The tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the point of exit. The water is a deep blue with white-capped waves. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

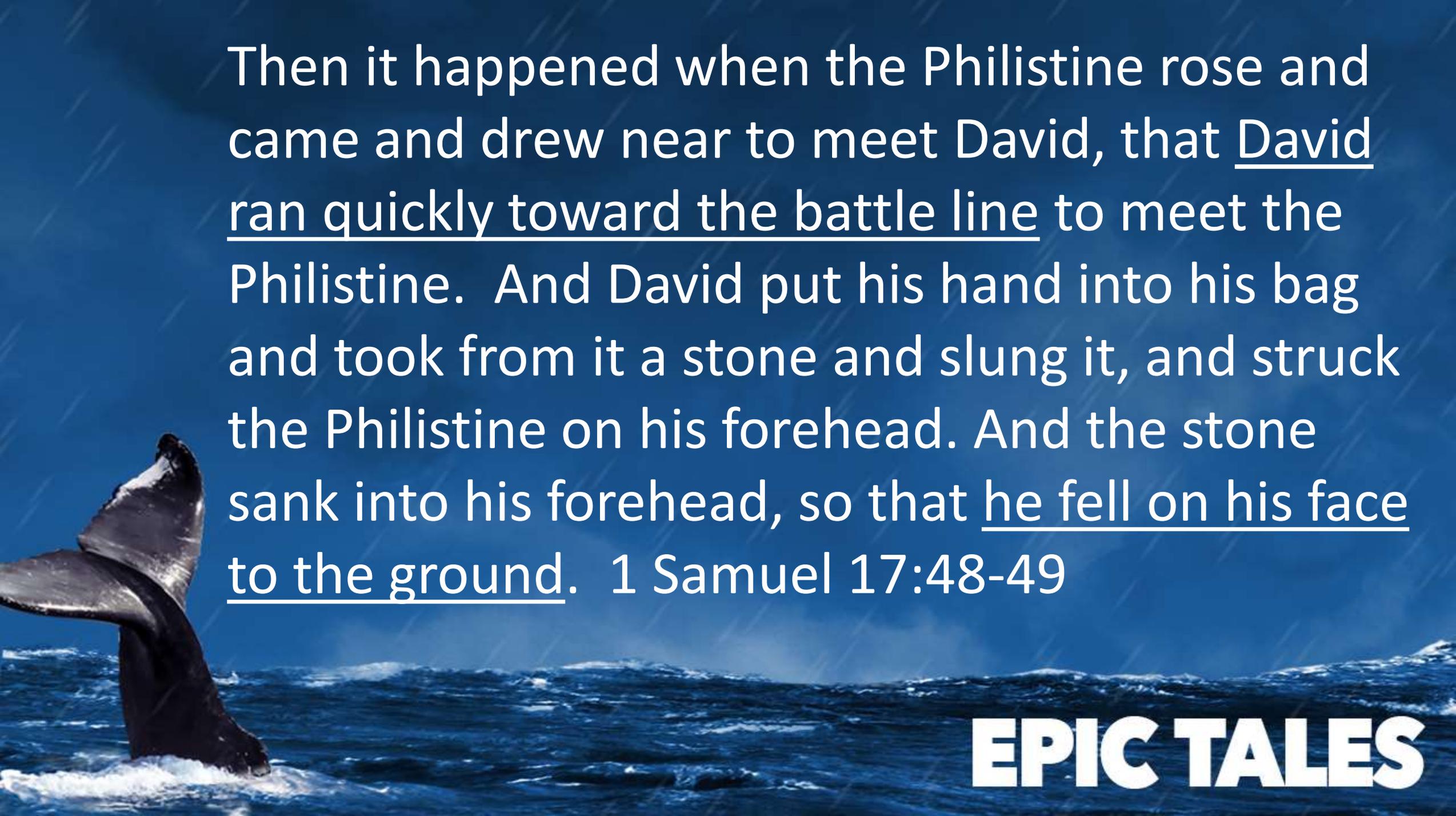
The Philistine also said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field.” Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת Yahweh Sabaoth), the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.” 1 Samuel 17:44-45

**EPIC TALES**



David said to the Philistine, “This day the Lord will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, (1) that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that (2) all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord’s and He will give you into our hands.” 1 Samuel 17:46-47

**EPIC TALES**

A whale tail is seen breaching the surface of the ocean on the left side of the image. The water is a deep blue with white foam from the splash. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground. 1 Samuel 17:48-49

**EPIC TALES**



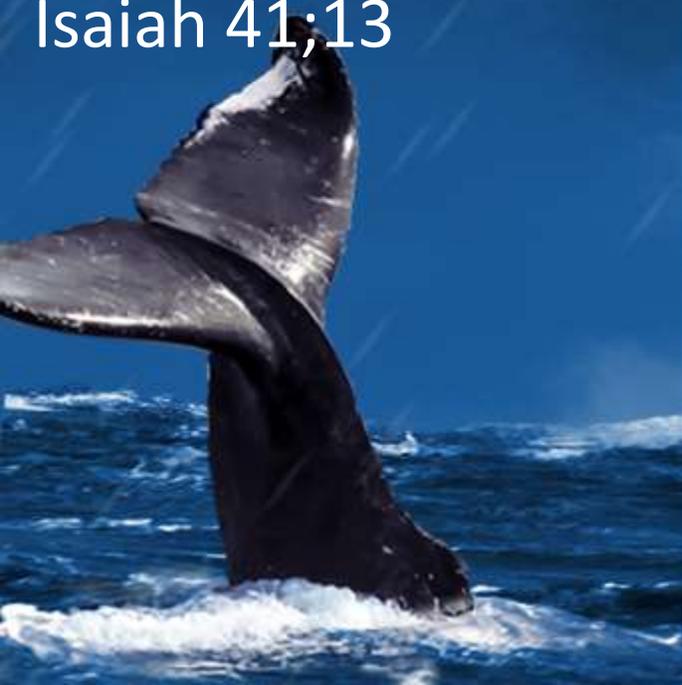
The age of Goliath is not clear, but early onset of pituitary tumours is typical of hereditary gigantism and limitation of lateral vision is common. Goliath himself had a shield bearer precede him, possibly to indicate to Goliath the direction of the approaching foe.

Goliath was killed by David who threw a stone at his forehead (1 Samuel 17:49). This gives further evidence that he suffered from pituitary gland dysfunction; a pituitary tumour pressing on his optic chiasm, and consequent visual disturbance due to pressure on his optic nerve, would have made it difficult for him to see the stone in his lateral vision. Pituitary giants look impressive in terms of stature, but may not have speed and agility to match their perceived strength. David, having agility, particularly having declined the heavy set of armour that was offered to him, and being skilled at sling shots, may have found a way around the fearsome looking giant by firing a sling shot from the side of the battlefield.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4113151/>

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean, set against a blue sky and sea background.**EPIC TALES**

“For I am the  
Lord your God,  
who upholds  
your right hand,  
Who says to you,  
‘Do not fear, I will  
help you.’”  
Isaiah 41:13



Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. 1 Samuel 17:50-51

A whale's tail is visible on the left side of the image, emerging from the blue ocean. The background is a deep blue sky with light rays.

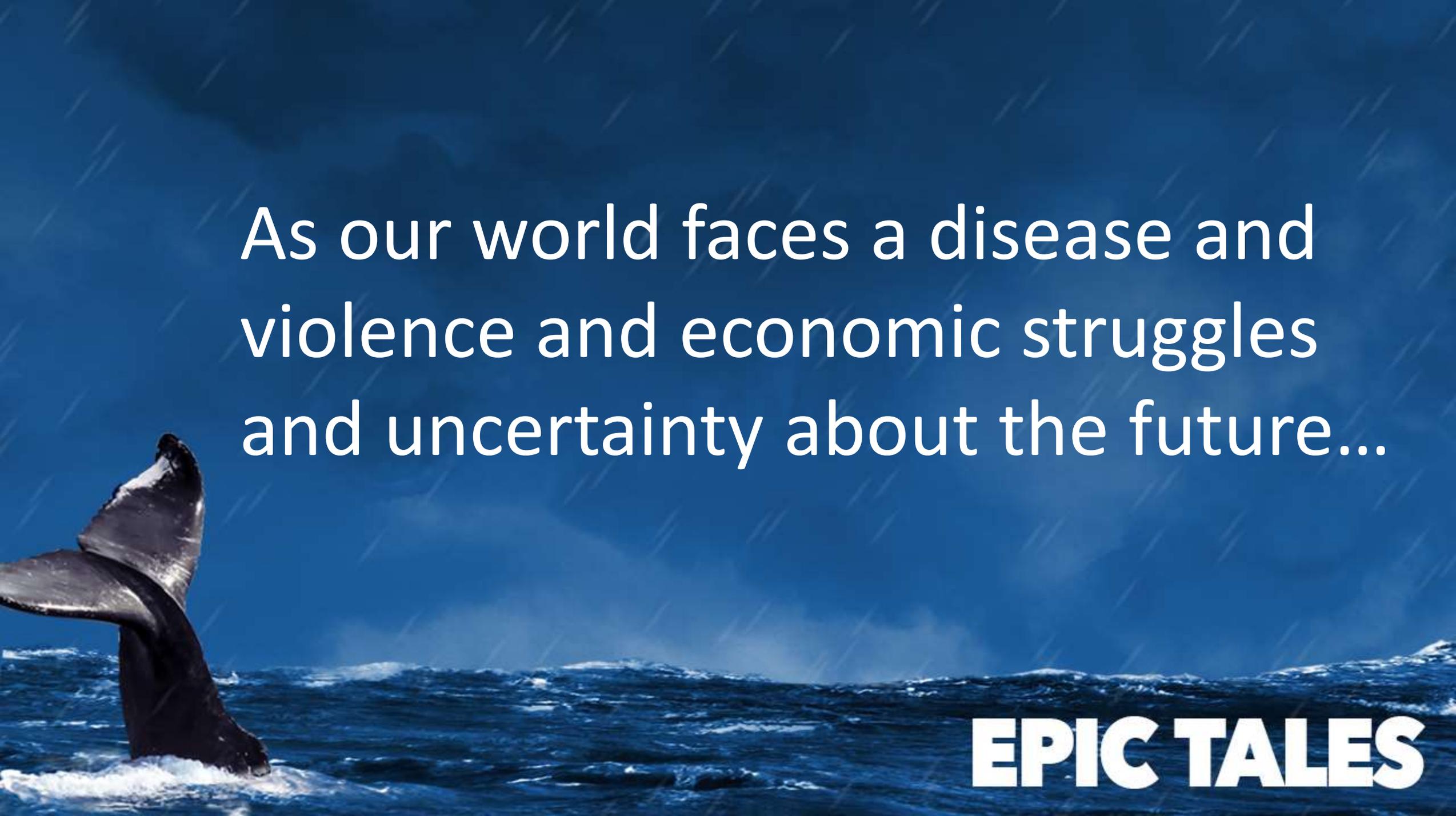
**EPIC TALES**

# Lessons of David vs. Goliath

- Sometimes the opportunity to do the right thing is placed upon you when you least expect it (1 Samuel 17:22-24)
- Fear is paralyzing
- Fear is contagious but so is Faith
- How will you react when fear comes and faith is required? (1 Samuel 17:24)
- God uses my past to prepare me for the future (1 Samuel 17:34-37)
- God's past faithfulness should encourage me in the midst of the present fight (1 Samuel 17:37)
- Don't use earthly methods to fight spiritual battles (David refusing Saul's armor, see 1 Samuel 17:38-39)
- Don't run from the battle, run to God (1 Samuel 17:48)

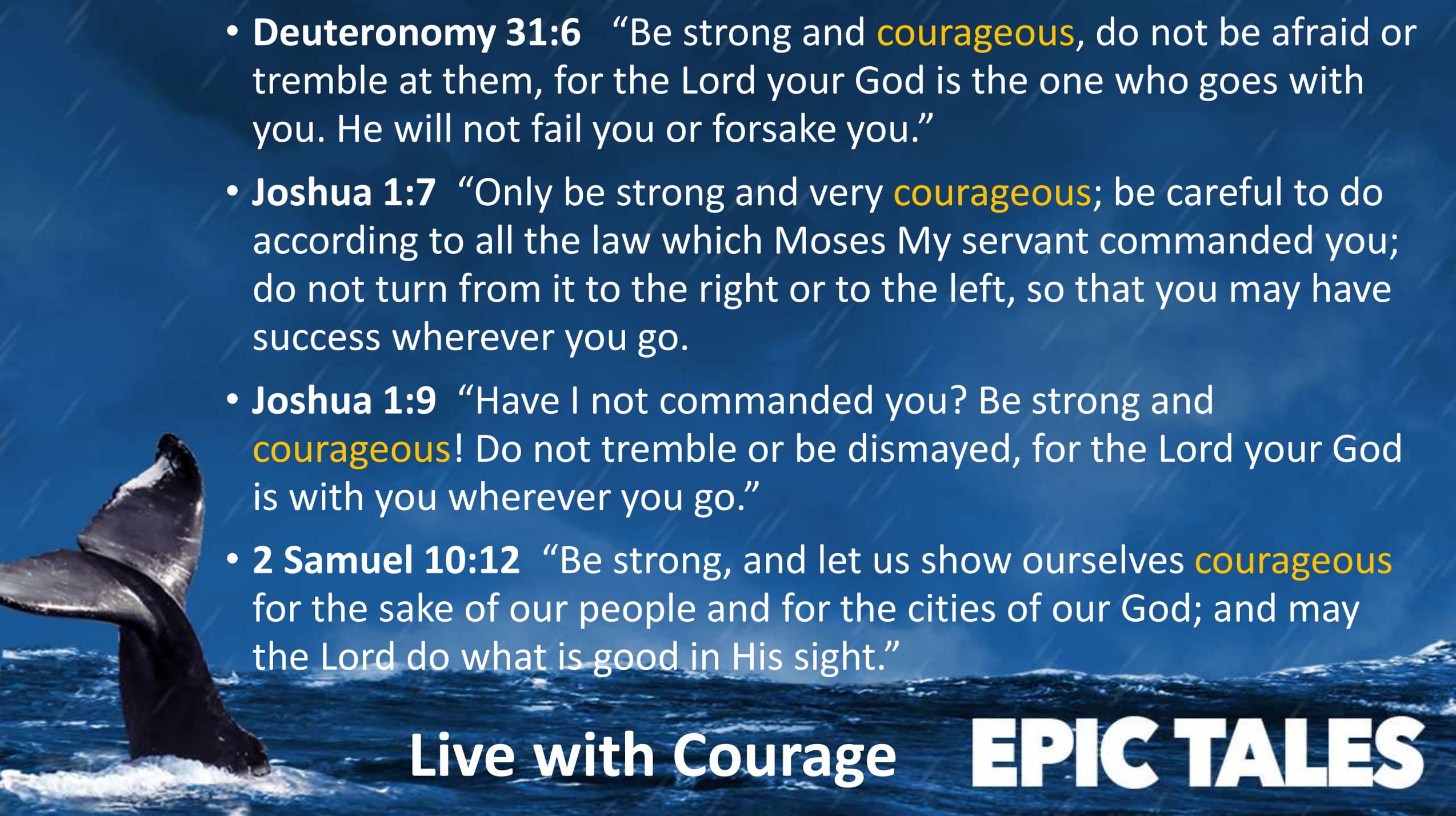


**EPIC TALES**

A dramatic scene of a whale's tail breaching the dark blue ocean. The sky is filled with heavy rain, creating a sense of urgency and chaos. The whale's tail is dark and wet, with white foam at the point of exit. The overall mood is one of intense, natural power.

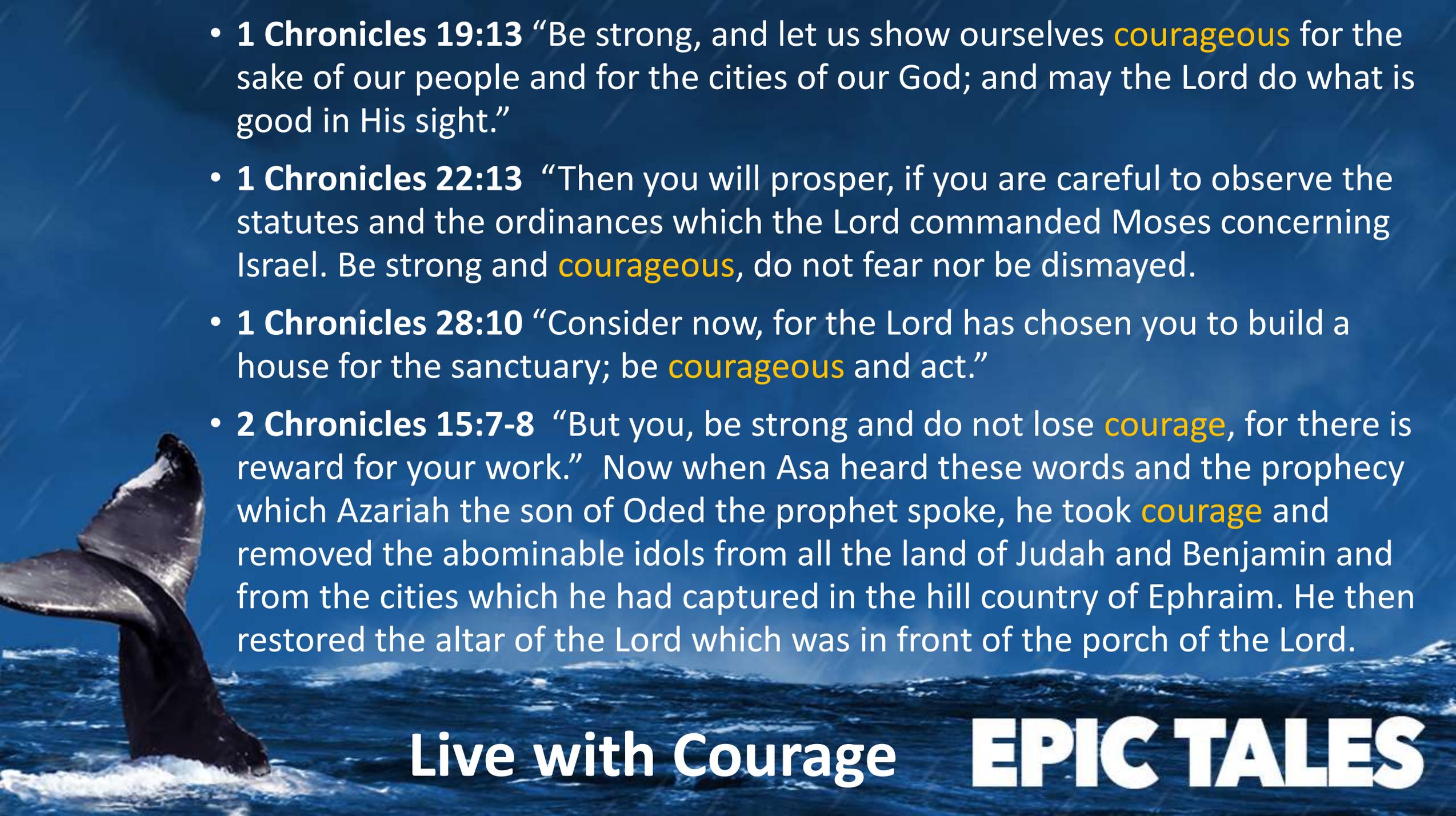
As our world faces a disease and  
violence and economic struggles  
and uncertainty about the future...

**EPIC TALES**

- 
- **Deuteronomy 31:6** “Be strong and **courageous**, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.”
  - **Joshua 1:7** “Only be strong and very **courageous**; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.
  - **Joshua 1:9** “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and **courageous**! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”
  - **2 Samuel 10:12** “Be strong, and let us show ourselves **courageous** for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the Lord do what is good in His sight.”

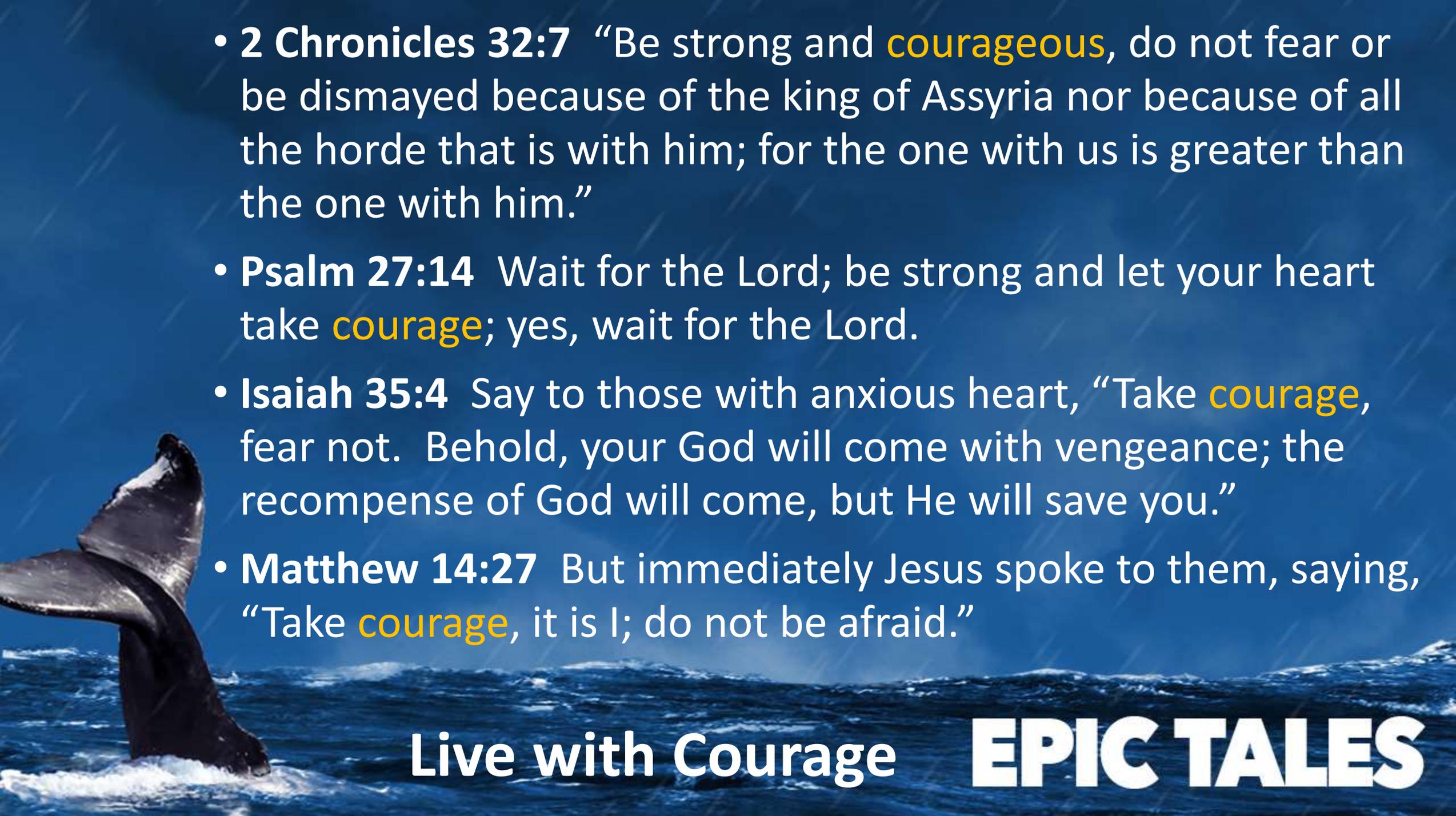
**Live with Courage**

**EPIC TALES**

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- **1 Chronicles 19:13** “Be strong, and let us show ourselves **courageous** for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the Lord do what is good in His sight.”
  - **1 Chronicles 22:13** “Then you will prosper, if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord commanded Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and **courageous**, do not fear nor be dismayed.
  - **1 Chronicles 28:10** “Consider now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be **courageous** and act.”
  - **2 Chronicles 15:7-8** “But you, be strong and do not lose **courage**, for there is reward for your work.” Now when Asa heard these words and the prophecy which Azariah the son of Oded the prophet spoke, he took **courage** and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. He then restored the altar of the Lord which was in front of the porch of the Lord.

**Live with Courage**

**EPIC TALES**

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- **2 Chronicles 32:7** “Be strong and **courageous**, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him.”
  - **Psalms 27:14** Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take **courage**; yes, wait for the Lord.
  - **Isaiah 35:4** Say to those with anxious heart, “Take **courage**, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; the recompense of God will come, but He will save you.”
  - **Matthew 14:27** But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take **courage**, it is I; do not be afraid.”

**Live with Courage**

**EPIC TALES**

# How does a COURAGEOUS person live?

Like David, they:

- Live by faith
- Are being constantly prepared by God for greater kingdom work
- Understand fear
- Move forward with courage
- Believe God when others doubt
- Work hard to achieve success and give credit to the Lord

A photograph of a whale's tail fluke emerging from the ocean, set against a blue sky with light rain or mist. The whale's tail is dark and curved, with white foam at the base where it meets the water.

**EPIC TALES**

As our world faces a disease and violence and economic struggles and uncertainty about the future...

Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

**EPIC TALES**

