

FUN AND LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

“Fun and Little Known Facts About Goliath in the Story of David and Goliath”

TRUE OR FALSE

Read each of the following statements and respond by checking the true box [✓] if you believe the statement is true, and the false box [] if you believe the statement is false.

1. Islam has the story of David and Goliath in their Muslim Scripture, The Qur'an.

True [] False

The Facts: In Islam, Goliath appears in chapter 2 of the Qur'an (II: 247-252), in the narrative of David and Saul's battle against the Philistines. Goliath's mention in the Qur'an is concise, though it remains a parallel to the account in the Hebrew Bible. Muslim scholars have tried to trace Goliath's origins, most commonly with the Amalekites. Goliath, in early scholarly tradition, became a kind of byword or collective name for the oppressors of the Israelite nation before David. Muslim tradition sees the battle with the Philistines as a prefiguration of the Prophet's battle of Badr, and sees Goliath as parallel to the enemies that the Prophet faced.

2. In some Jewish tradition Goliath's mother was said to have been impregnated by about 100 men, in order to give birth to the one giant Goliath.

True [] False

The Facts: According to the Jerusalem Talmud, Goliath was born by polyspermy, and had about one hundred fathers.

3. In the Biblical account of David and Goliath, the giant (Goliath) taunts David by calling him a “dog.”

[] True False

The Facts: The Biblical account has Goliath essentially calling himself a “dog” not David. See I Samuel 17:43, ⁴³ *He (Goliath) said to David, ‘Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?’ And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.”*

4. In Italy, Goliath is given superhero status much like Hercules and considered a hero fighting just causes and defending the helpless with amazing strength.

True [] False

The Facts: The Italians used Goliath as an action superhero in a series of Biblical adventure films (peplums) in the early 1960s. He was possessed of amazing strength, and the films were similar in theme to their Hercules movies. After the classic *Hercules* (1958) became a blockbuster sensation in the film industry, a 1959 Steve Reeves film *Terrore dei Barbari* (*Terror of the Barbarians*) was retitled *Goliath and the Barbarians* in the United States, (after Joseph E. Levine claimed the sole right to the name of *Hercules*); the film was so successful at the box office, it inspired Italian filmmakers to do a series of four more films featuring a beefcake hero named Goliath, although the films were not really related to each

other. (The 1960 Italian film *David and Goliath* starring Orson Welles was not one of these, since that movie was a straightforward adaptation of the Biblical story).

The four titles in the Italian *Goliath* series were as follows:

- *Goliath contro i giganti/Goliath Against the Giants* (1960) starring Brad Harris
- *Goliath e la schiava ribelle/Goliath and the Rebel Slave* (a.k.a. *The Tyrant of Lydia vs. The Son of Hercules*) (1963) starring Gordon Scott
- *Golia e il cavaliere mascherato/Goliath and the Masked Rider* (a.k.a. *Hercules and the Masked Rider*) (1964) starring Alan Steel
- *Golia alla conquista di Bagdad/Goliath at the Conquest of Baghdad* (a.k.a. *Goliath at the Conquest of Damascus*, 1964) starring Peter Lupus

5. In the true Biblical account David takes Goliath's own sword from his hand and cuts off his head.

True False

The Facts: According to the Bible David did use Goliath's own sword to cut off his head, but he did not take it from Goliath's hand, he drew it from his sheath or scabbard. See **1 Samuel 17:51**, *"⁵¹ David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword."*

6. In some Jewish tradition Goliath and David were kin to each other through David's great grandmother, Ruth.

True False

The Facts: In Jewish tradition, according to the Babylonian Talmud (Sotah 42b) Goliath was a son of Orpah, the sister-in-law of Ruth, David's own great grandmother (Ruth → Obed → Jesse → David). **Ruth Rabbah**, a haggadic and homiletic interpretation of the Book of Ruth, makes the blood-relationship even closer, considering Orpah and Ruth to have been full sisters. Orpah was said to have made a pretense of accompanying Ruth but after forty paces left her. Thereafter she led a dissolute life.

7. In one American telling of the story of David and Goliath, Goliath is actually portrayed as a giant pickle.

True False

The Facts: Big Idea's popular *VeggieTales* episode was called "Dave and the Giant Pickle", where Phil Vischer voiced Goliath. *Dave and the Giant Pickle* is the fifth episode in the *VeggieTales* animated series. Also, this video was the first time Larry the Cucumber was LarryBoy. It was released in March 1996 on VHS. Subtitled "A Lesson in Self-Esteem", it sends the message that with God's help humans can accomplish anything we set our minds to. The lesson is illustrated through a retelling of the Bible story of David and Goliath from the Book of Samuel.