

1 Samuel 22; 2 Samuel 23; 1 Chronicles 11 – 12

DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN

Introduction:

1. Our last lesson focused on David's many victories in battle against the enemies of Israel.
2. Obviously, God blessed David with success and triumph.
3. However, the Bible also reveals that David was victorious because of the men who stood and fought with him and for him.
4. They are sometimes referred to as David's "mighty men" (2 Sam. 10:7; 16:6; etc.).
5. By studying these men, we can learn valuable lessons about leadership, courage, loyalty, and sacrifice.

- I. David's Devoted Followers (1 Sam. 22:1-2; 1 Chron. 12)
 - A. David was chosen by God, and anointed by Samuel, to be King while Saul was still alive and reigning over Israel.
 - B. As Saul drifted away from God and failed as a ruler of the nation, more and more people began to look to David for leadership.
 - C. Saul was bitterly jealous of David and sought to kill him, causing David to flee into the wilderness around Judea.
 - D. During this time, David came to the cave of Adullam, which became his hideout.
 - E. Here, David began to gather a group of devoted followers.
 1. First, David was joined by his family – his brothers and his father's household.
 2. Next, he was joined by 400 men who were discontented with Saul's reign.
 - a. Some were in distress – anguished over the tyranny of Saul.
 - b. Some were in debt – due to the neglect of God's law (Ex. 22:25).
 - c. Some were in doubt – bitter in soul over the state of the nation.
 3. David became their captain, demonstrating true leadership.
 4. The Pulpit commentary states: "*Had Saul's government been just and upright David would have had no followers.... The Israelites had in him the very king they had desired, but they found that a brave general might at home be a ruthless tyrant.*"
 - F. Soon, the number of David's men had grown to 600 (1 Sam. 23:13; 27:2).
 - G. Under the leadership of David, these outcasts of society had become a well-trained, tough, and courageous fighting force – yet, a force for good (25:13).
 - H. As time went on, many joined David from the tribes of Gad, Benjamin, and Judah (1 Chron. 12:8-18).
 - I. At Ziklag, more joined David from the tribes of Benjamin and Manasseh (1 Chron. 12:1-7, 19-21).
 - J. "*For at that time day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God*" (1 Chronicles 12:22).
 - K. Lessons to be learned...
 1. Men seek righteous leadership.
 2. Integrity produces loyalty.
 3. Courage begets courage.

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- II. David's Mighty Men (2 Sam. 23; 1 Chron. 11)
- A. Out of this group of loyal followers, several men distinguished themselves as soldiers of great character and bravery.
 - B. "As a whole, they were heroic in battle and unflinching in loyalty, even remaining at David's side during the rebellions of Absalom (2 Sam. 16:6; cf. 17:8) and Adonijah (1 Kings 1:8-10)." {Cliff Goodwin, *David's Mighty Men*}
 - C. Initially, there were 37 fighters who were known as David's "mighty men."
 - D. In the book of Chronicles, this number grows to at least 50.
 - 1. It is possible that some mentioned in 1 Chronicles 11:10-47 replaced others who had fallen in battle.
 - 2. Or, perhaps some of lower rank were included in this list.
 - E. The organization of David's mighty men:
 - 1. "The Thirty" – a term for David's elite soldiers and captains (2 Sam. 23:13, 23-24; 1 Chron. 11:15).
 - 2. The Second Three – a triad of elite warrior superior to the 30, but second to the highest triad (23:19, 22-23; 1 Chron. 11:21).
 - a. Abishai
 - b. Benaiah
 - c. *Unnamed warrior*
 - i. Some suggest Joab
 - ii. Possibly a traitor
 - 3. The First Three – a triad of the most elite of David's captains (23:8-17).
 - a. Adino (aka Josheb-basshebeth)
 - b. Eleazar
 - c. Shammah
 - 4. Commander-in-chief – Joab (2 Sam. 20:23; 1 Chron. 19:8; 27:34)
 - F. Of these mighty men, only 5 are discussed in any detail in Scripture.
 - G. These are the men of the First Three and the Second Three – who will be the focus of this study.

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- III. Adino – Who Did Much With Little (2 Sam. 23:8; 1 Chron. 11:11)
- A. In 1 Chronicles 11:11, he is referred to as Jashobeam.
 - 1. In 2 Samuel 23:8, the phrase, “that sat in the seat,” likely should be rendered as a name – Josheb-basshebeth.
 - 2. The name Adino the Enzite seems to be closely related to the word for wielding a spear.
 - B. This mighty man was chief of the captain – greatest of the three, meaning the First Triad of David’s warriors.
 - C. With only his spear as a weapon, he killed 800 enemy soldiers at one time!
 - 1. One spear does not seem like much in a battle against an army.
 - 2. Yet, with God’s help, one spear was enough!
 - 3. We must not allow human perception to limit God’s power.
 - D. “Little is much when God is in it.”
 - 1. Exodus 4:1-2 – Moses’ rod
 - 2. Judges 7:7 – Gideon’s army
 - 3. 1 Samuel 17:40, 50 – David’s sling
 - 4. Zechariah 4:10 – Zerubbabel’s Temple
 - 5. Luke 21:1-4 – The widow’s two mites (cf. Mark 12:41-44)
 - 6. John 6:7-13 – The lad’s loaves and fishes
 - 7. Revelation 3:7-8 – The little strength of Philadelphia
 - E. Opportunity + Ability = Responsibility
 - 1. In each of these cases, opportunity to serve God was presented.
 - 2. In each of these cases, the individuals could have doubted their abilities.
 - 3. Yet, due to their faith in God, they recognized their responsibility.
 - a. They must do their part.
 - b. They must trust God to do His part.
 - F. What opportunities are presented to us? (2 Cor. 2:12)
 - G. What abilities do we have? (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 6:17)
 - H. How will God respond? (1 Thes. 2:13)
 - I. Will we recognize our responsibility? (Isa. 6:8; John 4:35)
 - J. Let us all determine to use what we have – no matter how great or small – to serve the Lord.
- IV. Eleazar – Who Never Gave Up (2 Sam. 23:9-10; 1 Chron. 11:12-13a)
- A. The second of David’s mighty men was Eleazar – whose name means, “God has helped” or “God is helper.”
 - B. The battle mentioned here took place at Pasdammim, also known as Ephesdammim.
 - 1. This name means, “Boundary of blood.”
 - 2. It was the site of many conflicts between Israel and the Philistines.
 - 3. It was located in the valley of Elah and was the place where David defeated Goliath (1 Sam. 17:1).
 - 4. Just as Goliath had defied Israel on that day (1 Sam. 17:10), now Israel would defy the Philistines with the leadership of Eleazar.
 - C. When the Philistines arrayed themselves for battle, the men of Israel went up to meet them.
 - 1. The word for “gone away” actually means to “go up” or “ascend.”
 - 2. The Israelites did not abandon Eleazar, but fought with him, following his example of courage.

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- D. The bravery and devotion of Eleazar is seen in his persistence in fighting – he fought until his hand was exhausted and cramped around his sword hilt.
 - 1. The word for “clave” means, “To cling or adhere to; to be joined.”
 - 2. It is the same word used for marriage in Genesis 2:24.
 - 3. It is the same word used for allegiance to God in Deut. 10:20 (cf. Jer. 13:11).
 - 4. It is the same word used for avoiding sin (Psalm 101:3).
 - E. Due to his faithfulness and perseverance, God brought a great victory – salvation – to Israel that day.
 - F. The soldier of the Lord must continue fighting even in **difficulty**.
 - 1. Difficult situations on the battlefield are no excuse to cease fighting.
 - 2. Many will stand up for the cause of truth until they face opposition or meet resistance (Matt. 13:20-21).
 - 3. Yet, Jesus warned that His followers would face persecution (Mark 13:12-13; John 16:33; 2 Tim. 3:12).
 - 4. Darkness hates and will resist the light (cf. John 3:20).
 - 5. We should consider the example of Paul (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7).
 - G. The soldier of the Lord must continue fighting even in **discouragement**.
 - 1. Past mistakes, failures, or defeats are no excuse to cease fighting.
 - 2. Many refuse to stand and fight due to guilt and discouragement over past mistakes.
 - 3. Yet, the grace of God allows one’s sins to be forgiven (2 Tim. 2:1; cf. Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38).
 - 4. God does not hold forgiven sins against us anymore (Heb. 8:12).
 - 5. We should remember the example of Peter (Matt. 26:75; Acts 2:14ff).
 - H. The soldier of the Lord must continue fighting even in **distraction**.
 - 1. Worldly desires or pursuits are no excuse to cease fighting.
 - 2. Many will stand and fight until they are distracted by worldly wants (Matt. 13:22; Luke 8:14).
 - 3. Yet, the Lord’s soldier must not become entangled in this world (2 Tim. 2:3-4; Matt. 6:19-21; Col. 3:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17).
 - 4. Instead, we must put God and His kingdom first (Matt. 6:33).
 - 5. We should ponder the example of Demas (2 Tim. 4:10).
 - I. The soldier of the Lord must continue fighting even unto **death**.
 - 1. Age, time, or weariness are no excuses to cease fighting.
 - 2. Many will stand and fight until they grow tired or think they have done enough.
 - 3. Yet, God commands us not to grow weary in serving Him (Gal. 6:9-10; 2 Thes. 3:13; 1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 12:3).
 - 4. Instead, we must be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7).
 - 5. We should imitate the example of Jesus.
 - J. Eleazar fought until exhaustion – and then continued fighting!
 - K. Let us seek to do the same.
 - L. When our time comes to leave this world, may it be with the Bible clutched in our hands, the Lord bound to our hearts, and our treasure stored in Heaven!
- V. Shammah – Who Stood His Ground (2 Sam. 23:11-12; 1 Chron. 11:13b-14)
- A. Shammah was the son of Agee the Hararite.
 - 1. Shammah means, “Astonishment.”
 - 2. Agee means, “Fugitive.”
 - 3. Hararite means, “Mountaineer or dweller in the mountains.”

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- B. On this occasion, the Philistines came together in a crowd – a troop – to attack the land of the Israelites.
- C. In fear, the Israelites were intimidated and fled.
- D. However, Shammah realized that much was at stake – the Philistines were seeking to steal or destroy the crops of Israel.
 - 1. The account in 2 Samuel states that it was a field of lentils.
 - 2. The account in 1 Chronicles states it was a field of barley.
 - 3. Yet, there is no contradiction, for two things can be planted in one field!
- E. This type of attack was not uncommon (cf. Judges 6:3-4, 11; 15:4-5).
 - 1. The harvest of crops was essential to the lives of the Israelites.
 - 2. Shammah understood that this ground must not be given up out of fear and without a fight.
- F. Thus, he literally stood his ground – in the middle of the field – a defended it against the Philistines.
- G. And, with God’s help, he defeated the host of the Philistines, saved the crops of his people, and won a great victory for Israel.
- H. We must stand our ground for Truth.
 - 1. God’s Word creates boundaries (2 John 9-11).
 - a. On God’s side of the boundary line is Truth, salvation, and life.
 - b. On the other side is error, sin, and death.
 - 2. We must defend God’s boundaries!
 - a. Without compromise (Phil. 1:27)
 - b. Without giving an inch (Jude 3)
 - 3. The identity of Jesus must be defended (Acts 6:8-10; 9:22; 17:3).
 - 4. God’s plan of salvation must be defended.
 - a. Hear (Acts 11:14; Rom. 10:17; Gal. 1:6-9)
 - b. Believe (Mark 16:16; Rom. 10:9-10; Heb. 11:6)
 - c. Repent (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 17:30)
 - d. Confess Christ (Acts 8:37-38; Rom. 10:9-10)
 - e. Be baptized (Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21)
 - f. Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10)
- I. We must stand our ground for the church.
 - 1. The identity of the church (Matt. 16:18)
 - 2. The singularity of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4)
 - 3. The entrance into the church (Acts 2:38, 41, 47)
 - 4. The name of the church (Acts 4:12; 11:26; Rom. 16:16)
 - 5. The unity of the church (John 17:21; Eph. 4:1-6)
 - 6. The organization of the church (Phil. 1:1)
 - 7. The work of the church (Gal. 6:9-10; Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:12)
- J. We must stand our ground for worship.
 - 1. The right attitudes (John 4:24)
 - 2. The right actions (John 4:24)
 - a. Praying (Acts 2:42)
 - b. Preaching (Acts 20:7)
 - c. Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
 - d. Giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2)
 - e. Lord’s Supper (Acts 20:7)
- K. We must stand our ground for morality.
 - 1. In spite of governmental legislation
 - 2. In spite of popular opinion
 - 3. In spite of personal preference

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- L. These things are essential to the nourishment and life of a Christian!
 - M. This ground cannot be given up due to fear or intimidation or without a fight!
 - N. Think of what God can accomplish with one man whose faith overcomes his fear and he chooses to stand his ground!
 - O. Will you stand? (Cf. Ephesians 6:10-14)
- VI. Abishai – Who Was Great, But Not Greatest (2 Sam. 23:18-19; 1 Cr. 11:20-21)
- A. Abishai was a brother of Joab and has been mentioned before.
 - 1. 1 Samuel 26:6-9 – He went with David into Saul’s camp by night and encouraged him to kill his enemy, the King.
 - 2. 2 Samuel 2:24; 3:30 – He and Joab pursued and eventually killed Abner, who had killed their brother.
 - 3. He also will be mentioned several times in future battles of Israel.
 - B. The great deed of Abishai that described him as one of David’s mighty men was the killing of 300 enemies with just a spear.
 - C. As a result, he was made captain of the second triad of David’s mighty men.
 - D. However, it is stated that even though he was “chief among the three” he did not attain “unto the first three.”
 - 1. Remember that Adino had killed 800 enemies with one spear (vs. 8).
 - 2. Abishai was great, but he was not the greatest.
 - E. This is not stated to disparage or disrespect Abishai.
 - F. Rather, it demonstrates an important truth – we all must serve to the best of our abilities, in spite of what others may do.
 - 1. Abishai was not Adino, but he was not required to be.
 - 2. Abishai was not Joab, but he was not excused from service.
 - 3. Abishai was not David, but he was not exempted from giving his all.
 - G. We must learn to serve God without comparing ourselves to others (2 Cor. 10:12; Luke 18:11; Rom. 15:18-20).
 - H. We must learn to serve God with our whole hearts (Mark 12:30; cf. 12:41-44; 2 Cor. 8:5).
 - I. We must learn to serve God with our every ability (Matt. 25:14-30).
 - J. We must learn to serve God for His glory, not our own (Prov. 25:27; Matt. 5:16; 23:5; John 5:44; 2 Cor. 10:18; Gal. 1:24; Phil. 2:3; 1 Pet. 4:11).
- VII. Benaiah – Who Was Valiant in Difficulty (2 Sam. 23:20-23; 1 Cr. 11:22-24)
- A. Interestingly, more details are recorded about Benaiah than any of the other mighty men.
 - B. He killed two Moabites who were described as being “lion-like.”
 - 1. This language indicates that they were fierce, strong warriors (cf. 1:23; 1 Chron. 12:8).
 - 2. How valiant one must be to kill two such men!
 - C. He killed a lion in a pit in the snow.
 - 1. The worst of enemies – a lion!
 - 2. In the worst of places – a pit!
 - 3. In the worst condition – snow!
 - 4. Yet, Benaiah rose to the challenge, defeated the enemy, and delivered the people from a tremendous threat.
 - D. He killed an Egyptian – an impressive man who was 7½ feet tall.
 - 1. The word ‘goodly’ means that he was impressive to behold.
 - 2. 5 cubits is approximately 7.5 feet.
 - 3. He wielded a spear, but Benaiah only had a staff.

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4. Still, he fought the battle, took the spear from the Egyptian, and then killed him with his own weapon.
 - E. The difficulty of the challenge is no excuse not to engage in the fight!
 1. Our armor comes from the Lord (Eph. 6:11-18).
 2. Our strength comes from the Lord (Eph. 6:10; cf. Deut. 20:3-4; Josh. 1:9; 1 Chron. 28:10, 20; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; Phil. 4:13).
 3. Our help comes from the Lord (Psalm 121; Hos. 13:9; Heb. 13:6).
 4. Our victory comes from the Lord (1 Sam. 14:6; 17:47; Rom. 8:31, 37).
 - F. We must be willing to do difficult things.
 - G. Like Benaiah, with courage and faith, we can be victorious over all enemies.
 1. The worst of enemies – Satan (1 Pet. 5:8)
 2. The worst of places – the world (1 John 2:15-17)
 3. The worst of conditions – tests, trials, temptations (Jam. 1:7)
 4. Yet, the greatest of victories (1 John 4:4; Gal. 1:4; 1 Pet. 3:13)!
- VIII. The Loyalty of the Mighty Men (2 Sam. 23:13-17; 1 Chron. 11:15-19)
- A. The event recorded in this passage likely took place when the Philistines sought after David just after he had been made King (2 Sam. 5:17ff).
 - B. While David was waiting in the stronghold of the cave of Adullam, three men came to join with him.
 1. The parallel account states: “These things did these three mightiest” (1 Chron. 11:19).
 2. Thus, some think that it refers to the first triad of David’s mighty men – Adino, Eleazar, and Shammah.
 3. However, most commentators believe that this story serves as an introduction to the second triad – Abishai, Benaiah, and an unnamed warrior.
 4. The lesson of the passage is the same, no matter which three men are under consideration.
 - C. One day, David spoke out loud his wish for water from the well at Bethlehem.
 1. Of course, Bethlehem was David’s hometown and he had grown up drinking from that well.
 2. At this time, David had been hiding out in caves and in the wilderness for years.
 3. Furthermore, the need to draw water from wells indicates that it was during the dry season.
 4. The Philistine army had encamped in the valley of Rephaim and had control over many roadways and towns, including Bethlehem.
 5. David was not giving an order to his soldiers, merely wishing for a cool drink of good water.
 - D. Hearing David’s wish, these three men decided to grant it – in spite of the risk.
 1. They had to sneak through the lines of the Philistine army.
 2. They had to journey to Bethlehem (perhaps 15 – 20 miles) and draw water from the well.
 3. Then, they had to return to David’s camp.
 4. The text seems to indicate that there was some fighting involved.
 - E. This is a powerful picture of true loyalty and friendship.
 1. **Freedom** – they were not forced or coerced to act (vs. 13).
 2. **Devotion** – they would stand with David wherever (vs. 14).
 3. **Honesty** – David was unashamed to express his needs (vs. 15).
 4. **Sacrifice** – they acted with boldness and courage for David (vs. 16).

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5. **Respect** – David loved and honored them for their deeds (vs. 17).
 6. We should remember that Jesus is our friend (John 15:13-15).
 - F. Upon receiving their gift, David was moved and refused to drink the water.
 1. This was not a sign of disrespect or heartlessness.
 2. Instead, it indicated the humility of the new King of Israel – he did not see himself worthy of the risk these men had taken for his simple wish.
 3. Furthermore, because it had been bought with blood, David viewed their gift as holy.
 - G. Instead, he honored them greatly by offering their gift as a sacrifice to God.
 1. What a powerful lesson David taught!
 2. They had risked their lives to serve and honor their King.
 3. Yet, David demonstrated that He was a servant of God – and, by serving him they would be serving Jehovah.
 4. It was more important to David that God was honored as the true King of Israel!
 - H. David’s mighty men teach us that we must act in order to serve God.
 1. Adino – Do **bold** things!
 2. Eleazar – Do **exhausting** things!
 3. Shammah – Do **right** things!
 4. Abishai – Do **humble** things!
 5. Benaiah – Do **difficult** things!
 6. Mighty Men – Do **extravagant** things!
 - I. Without being asked, these men went above and beyond to serve their King – demonstrating their love and devotion for him.
 - J. When was the last time we did the same for God?
 1. Mark 12:41-44 – She gave her entire living (cf. 10:21)
 2. Mark 14:3-9 – She gave an extravagant gift.
 3. Phil. 3:4-8 – He gave his life.
 - K. What sacrifice have I made to give extravagantly to the Lord?
- IX. A Summation (2 Samuel 23:1, 39)
- A. The study of David’s mighty men teaches about the devotion, courage, and sacrifice that is needed to serve Jehovah.
 - B. Verses 24-39 list the rest of David’s mighty men (with others mentioned in 1 Chronicles 11:26-47).
 1. Even if one was not a part of the elite six, they were still on the list!
 2. David knew his mighty men.
 3. The Lord knows those who are His (2 Tim. 2:9).
 - C. Note, with sadness, the last name on this list – Uriah the Hittite.
 - D. Consider that this record of David’s mighty men and their deeds is given as a part of “the last words of David.”
 1. Before he died, King David wanted the nation to know the men who had been loyal to him for so many years.
 2. Their fellowship, friendship, and devoted service had made them as close as family.
 - E. “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32).
 - F. Are you one of the Lord’s mighty men?