

Mighty Ones

David had eight hundred thousand fighting men in Israel and five hundred thousand in Judah. But of all of these, there was a group called THE THIRTY whom were called DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN. And among the thirty, there were three that were considered the most mighty men of all, above the thirty. And among the thirty, there was one chief, considered the best of the thirty. Here is a telling of their exploits:

2 Samuel 23:8-23

8These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Joshebbasshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains, he was called **Adino** the Eznite, because of eight hundred slain by him at one time;

9and after him was **Eleazar** the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there to battle and the men of Israel had withdrawn.

10He arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword, and the LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to strip the slain.

11Now after him was **Shammah** the son of Agee a Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered into a troop where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines.

12But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the LORD brought about a great victory.

13Then **three of the thirty chief men** went down and came to David in the harvest time to the cave of Adullam, while the troop of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim.

14David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem.

15David had a craving and said, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!"

16So the **three mighty men** broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD;

17and he said, "Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their

lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.

18Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of the thirty. And he swung his spear against three hundred and killed them, and had a name as well as the three.

19He was most honored of the thirty, therefore he became their commander; however, he did not attain to the three.

20Then **Benaiah** the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, killed the two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion in the middle of a pit on a snowy day.

21He killed an Egyptian, an impressive man. Now the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, but he went down to him with a club and snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear.

22These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and had a name as well as the three mighty men.

23He was honored among the thirty, **but he did not attain to the three.** And David appointed him over his guard.

Characteristics of a Mighty One

1. Mighty Ones see dire circumstances as opportunity

20 Then **Benaiah** the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, killed the two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion in the middle of a pit on a snowy day.

- Stuck in a slippery, cold pit with a lion does not look like a good place to be

- Benaiah chose to look at this as an opportunity to do something great the second he started down the rope.

- Benaiah may have chosen, but maybe you didn't get a choice

How can you be mighty in the face of trials and pits filled with lions?

- It's all in how you look at it 😊

Leonidas, King of Sparta, was preparing to make a stand with his Greek troops against the Persian army in 480 B.C. when a Persian envoy arrived. The man urged on Leonidas the futility of trying to resist the advance of the huge Persian army. "Our archers are so numerous," said the envoy, "that the flight of their arrows darkens the sun." "So much the better," replied Leonidas, "for we shall fight them in the shade."

- Unlike some of the other mighty men, Benaiah didn't kill great numbers of David's enemies, but he killed two of Moab's best men. That was strategic warfare and it's very important.

- We may not be called to preach the gospel and see hundreds saved through our preaching, but the Lord can use us in prayer to bind the 'strong man' in our area (Luke 11:21-22) which can bring revival to our city. Removing key men is vitally important in spiritual battles.

2. **Mighty Ones seek out the battle**

13 Then **three of the thirty chief men** went down and came to David

- It is obvious that this wasn't "their battle" – they heard that their leader was in need and went to be at his side.
- Who is in need around you? Are you looking for a battle to win, or are you trying to ignore the hurting around you?
- Are there areas in your own life that you are overlooking, putting off dealing with?

How can I seek out the battle?

- Ask the Lord to reveal to you those that are hurting around you and how you can minister
- Ask the Lord to reveal the sin in your own life, and deal with it

3. **Mighty Ones seek the love & approval of their Leader – even at risk to themselves**

15 David had a craving and said, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!"

16 So the **three mighty men** broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD

- David's men came to his aid and were SEEKING and LOOKING and LISTENING for opportunity to please him – it was their IMPULSE to do things for him.
- We need to seek God, long for ways to express our love and loyalty and praise
- His needs before ours

How can we do this?

- Spending time in His presence
- Sacrificially giving of our time, money, resources
- We should ask the Lord for the burden of his heart. Lord, what is your desire? What do you want me to do for you?

4. **Mighty Ones stand when others flee**

– Shammah and the lentil field

11 Now after him was **Shammah** the son of Agee a Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered into a troop where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines.

12 But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the LORD brought about a great victory.

– Sometimes warfare is defensive. Perhaps that field was Shammah's own inheritance from the Lord. The devil is a robber (John 10:10); he tries to rob us of our inheritance in Christ. We should always be ready to defend what the Lord our God has given us.

- It can be hard to speak out for what is right in the face of our enemies/world

During his years as premier of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev denounced many of the policies and atrocities of Joseph Stalin. Once, as he censured Stalin in a public meeting, Khrushchev was interrupted by a shout from a heckler in the audience. "You were one of Stalin's colleagues. Why didn't you stop him?"

- "Who said that?" roared Khrushchev. An agonizing silence followed as nobody in the room dared move a muscle. Then Khrushchev replied quietly, "Now you know why."

The Hebrew meanings of the names in this passage are interesting. The word 'Shammah' means 'ruin, or desolation', so the spiritual picture is of a man who was a wreck in his natural self. However, the word 'Agee' is similar to a word meaning 'flame'⁴ and 'Hararite' means 'mountaineer'.

Three days after the Lord's crucifixion, the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews (John 20:19). In their own strength they were far from being an army. They had just seen their leader killed and must have had a paralysing sense of calamity in their hearts. But when the Spirit of God came upon them in tongues (flames) of fire at Pentecost, they went out and did great exploits under that power. God gets his glory by using weak vessels.

A mountaineer is one who climbs to great heights, and Psalm 18:32–35 shows us what we can achieve in God.

It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights.

He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great.

- No one would have looked down on Shammah if he had fled with everyone else
- Those that fled could have stayed and shared the glory of victory with Shammah
- The Lord wants to use all of us and do great things through us all
- How often have we missed out on the glory because we fled?
- The more alone you are in a situation or trial the greater the glory

5. **Mighty Ones believe in the impossible**

8These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Joshebbasshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains, he was called **Adino** the Eznite, because of eight hundred slain by him at one time;

In Hebrew 'Tahkemonite' means 'one who possesses insight and practical wisdom'.

Our commander knows everything and sees everything. We need the Spirit of Jesus to lead us in spiritual warfare if we are to be successful.

- None of these deeds were done in human strength
- These men were mighty only because they jumped in with both feet where there appeared to be nothing but air
- Paul tells us that the weapons of our warfare are mighty: they have power in God to demolish (spiritual) strongholds (2 Corinthians 10:3-4). Our most important spiritual weapons are prayer (including praying in tongues), fasting, and the Word of God.
- You can be just as mighty today if...
 1. You hold on to God and His Word
 2. Let go of your own strength and talents and recognize that it is God's strength that will complete the work in you
 3. Seek to please God with all your mind and heart

There's always room for more!

– Genealogies teach us that God is interested in individuals. Each individual is important to God.

2 Samuel 23:24–39 gives a list of David's chief men, which were known as 'The Thirty'. The passage begins by saying: 'Among the Thirty were...', but ends by saying there were thirty–seven in all. How can that be? How can 'The Thirty' consist of thirty–seven?

The answer is that there is always room for more mighty men in God's army. David began with thirty chief men, but seven others joined the ranks.

–It will take dedication, obedience and hard work on our part, but the door is always open. God is always looking for mighty men to do his bidding; he can never have too many.

Remember Eleazar in 2 Samuel 23:9? His name in Hebrew means 'God is my helper'. When any Israelite called to that man it would remind him of who his helper was.

– the Christian life is not about doing things for God, but allowing God to do things through us. Paul said that he worked harder than all of the other apostles, but it wasn't him, it was God who was working through him (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Conclusion: None of us start out very mighty

2 Samuel 23:37 tells us that among David's chief men was one called Zelek the Ammonite. The Ammonites had been Israel's enemies for generations but this man was now fighting for Israel. And isn't that true of us all? Paul said **in Romans 5:10:**

For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son...

Every Christian begins life as an enemy of Jesus Christ (Matthew 12:30) but ends up fighting for him. In the same way Paul (who wrote those words) began by persecuting the Church, but became one of its greatest advocates. There is no other way to explain that except by the grace of God.

None of David's men were forced to fight, and neither are we. Instead, God waits for our hearts to respond to his call.

Jesus said that he would build his Church (Matthew 16:18), but to do that he needs our help. Paul said that we are God's fellow-workers in this wonderful building project (1 Corinthians 3:9), but that will mean effort and dedication on our part.

How important is the kingdom of God to us? Important enough for us to want to extend it throughout the world? We only have a short time to serve Jesus on this earth; let's make every day count.