

David's Mighty Men

“And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.”

Daniel 11:32

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”

I Corinthians 16:13

Introduction:

1. There is not a single effeminate or sissified aspect to the religion of God under either covenant. Believe it!
 2. It is the watered down, milquetoast, politically correct, compromising preachers of today that discourage men.
 3. David and the mighty men that followed him perfectly fulfilled Paul's militaristic exhortation in the flesh.
 4. Why did God spend several chapters of the Bible listing and recounting the deeds of these men? For you!
 5. The mighty men that followed David showed a degree of love and loyalty that cannot be matched by another.
 6. It is our duty as Christians to seize the exhortation and warning of Paul to be the best fighting saints possible.
 - a. David's mighty men were famous in earthly pursuits, but we have a greater spiritual battle (Eph 6:10-20).
 - b. We are fighting in a soul war with the lusts of our flesh, which Satan uses to destroy our faith (I Pet 2:11).
 - c. If David could induce their great love and loyalty, how much more should the Son of David induce ours?!
 - d. We live in perilous times of the last days; the lines have been drawn (II Tim 3:1 – 4:5). Where are you?
 - e. We have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col 1:13).
 - f. The Lord Jesus is the Son and Lord of David (Ps 110:1). He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev 5:5).
 - g. Our Savior is the Blessed and Only Potentate; He is King of kings and Lord of lords (I Timothy 6:15).
 - h. He is the Captain of our salvation (Heb 2:10). And on His white horse He has no peer (Rev 19:11-16).
- I. The world has created its own fantasy illusion of brave, mighty, tough, and successful men.
- A. They sell John Wayne, Rock Hudson, Clint Eastwood, Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Tom Cruise, Bruce Willis, Russell Crowe, and others; but they only look tough with steroids, makeup, retakes, and heterosexual stunt men for action scenes.
 - B. Athletes are promoted as another class of such heroes, but they only look tough in sporting contests with many rules and much equipment to protect them.
 - C. The Scriptures, containing real biographies of true characters, have the very best of all.
 1. The Bible records of brave men are for our learning (Rom 15:4; Heb 11:32-40).
 2. The character of men after God's own heart shows that Christians are not sissies.
 3. It is men who truly know God that do the greatest exploits on earth (Dan 11:32).
 - D. The purpose and emphasis here is to ask – Are you a mighty man of valor for the Lord?
- II. David gathered and organized the most elite and successful fighting force of men in history.
- A. David was a mighty man of valor himself (I Sam 16:18,21; 17:34-37,49-51; 18:5-7,27).
 - B. Others came to join him (I Samuel 22:1-2; 23:13; II Samuel 15:18; I Chron 12:1-22).
 - C. And we are not even considering Jonathan here, for he was not directly one of his men.
 1. Jonathan loved David as his own soul and covenanted with him (I Sam 18:1-4).
 2. Jonathan and his armorbearer took on the Philistines themselves (I Sam 14:1-15).
 3. David considered the love of Jonathan to have exceeded women (II Sam 1:17-27).
 4. David and Jonathan, as a fighting duo, would have been something (I Sam 23:16).
 - D. Time forbids us from considering the great warriors Jehu and Jonadab (II Kgs 10:15-28).
- III. A brief review of David's mighty men is valuable to appreciate their skill and faithfulness.
- A. The most definite account gives a list of 36 names, but a total of 37 (II Samuel 23:8-39).
 1. The 37 are a captain-general, three high captains, three lower captains, and thirty regulars, though all 37 of these men are mighty and valiant military men.

2. The missing man is understood by (a) being the most well known of all, (b) considering the context of officers and captains, (c) his inferior relatives mentioned, (d) his name mentioned three times in the list (23:38,24,37), and (e) David plainly made him chief and first in the alternate account (I Chron 11:6).
 3. Further details about these men are in the alternate account (I Chron 11:1-47).
 4. Differences between the two chapters reflect (a) different times of recording, (b) deaths and promotions, (c) different purposes or perspectives of recording, (d) differences in names for the same person, and (e) other aspects of bookkeeping.
- B. JOAB, David's nephew (I Chron 2:16), was captain over the entire host (II Sam 8:16).
1. He earned his position (I Chron 11:4-9) and performed well (II Sam 10:7-14).
 2. He wickedly killed Abner (II Sam 3:27), Absalom (18:14), and Amasa (20:10).
 3. Just before death, David told Solomon to kill Joab as a favor (I Kings 2:5-6).
- C. ADINO the Eznite (II Sam 23:8), Jashobeam (I Chron 11:11), was chief of captains.
1. He used a spear to kill 800 men at one time. Try that Van Damme or Rocky!
 2. The differences in numbers can be two battles or directly versus indirectly.
 3. The different names are not unusual; note Simon, Simeon, Peter, and Cephas.
- D. ELEAZAR defied the Philistines, fought through fatigue, and left only spoil (23:9-10).
- E. SHAMMAH fought the Philistines in a field of lentils when the people fled (23:11-12).
- F. These three mightiest men brought David water from a well in Bethlehem (23:13-17).
- G. ABISHAI, a brother of Joab, slew three hundred (23:18-19) and a giant (21:15-17).
- H. BENAIAH, grandson of a valiant man, performed some valiant acts himself (23:20-23).
1. He was the son of Jehoiada, a chief priest of Jehovah (I Chronicles 27:5).
 2. He served in the third slot of rotating generals over the host (I Chronicles 27:5).
 3. His son, Ammizabad, served for him when duties took him away (I Chron 27:6).
 4. He slew two lionmen of Moab, a lion in winter, and a 7'6" Egyptian (11:22-25).
 5. He was captain of David's personal guard – the Cherethites and Pelethites.
 - a. David put him over his personal guard, which did not report to Joab, the captain of the host (II Sam 8:18; 20:7,23; I Kgs 1:38; I Chron 18:15-17).
 - b. These private guards were like our Secret Service or Hitler's private SS.
 - c. They were not Israelites, but Philistines, for the greater loyalty (I Samuel 30:14; II Sam 15:18; 20:7; Ezekiel 25:16; Zephaniah 2:5-6).
 - d. They escorted Solomon to Gihon to Adonijah's fear (I Kings 1:32,38,44).
 - e. The words are not defined in the Oxford English Dictionary; the Hebrew may be *executioners* (Cherethites) and *couriers* (Pelethites).
 - f. The Cherethites were of the Philistines (I Sam 30:14; Eze 25:16; Zep 2:5).
 - g. Ittai and his 600 Gittites were part of this band of Philistines serving David, and they had unsurpassed loyalty to David (II Sam 15:18-22).
 - h. Ittai and his Gittites led a division against Absalom (II Sam 18:2,5,12).
 6. Benaiah was promoted to replace Joab as captain of Solomon's host (I Kgs 2:35).
 7. Benaiah was assigned to kill Joab for shedding innocent blood (I Kings 2:28-34).
- I. ASAHHEL, a brother of Joab, is the missing lesser captain by comparing wisely (23:24).
1. We have 37 in total, with Joab, three very chief, three chief, and the basic thirty.
 2. If we presume Joab as intended, we must identify the missing lesser captain.
 3. Asahel, as Joab's brother and David's nephew, was worthy of special treatment.
 4. Asahel was very fast, which was extremely valuable in those days (II Sam 2:18).
 5. He was also very brave, as he personally chased the great Abner (II Sam 2:19-23).
 6. He is listed as captain in the courses of the military, like Benaiah, with his son listed with him for those times his other duties called him away (I Chr 27:5-7).

7. The wording “was one of the thirty” does not preclude him from being a lesser captain by virtue of II Samuel 23:13; I Chronicles 11:15,25; 12:4.
 8. The words “one of the thirty” distinguishes him from the thirty names following.
 9. Asahel died early on and was likely replaced by Ishmaiah (I Chronicles 12:4).
 - J. ELHANAN, a Bethlehemite, killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath (II Sam 23:24; 21:19).
 1. Do different names discourage you? My grandfather was Cliff and John and J.C.
 2. Bethlehem is mentioned for connection with David and to clarify the same man!
 - K. MEBUNNA, or Sibbecai, killed Saph, another son of the giant (II Sam 23:27; 21:18).
 - L. URIAH, the Hittite, was a mighty man for David and the husband of Bathsheba (23:39).
 - M. The character of these mighty and tough men is worthy of our note and consideration.
 1. Their honesty and integrity were confirmed by Nabal’s men (I Sam 25:15-16).
 2. They could weep and show great emotion over Saul’s death (II Samuel 1:11-12).
 3. Uriah the Hittite rejected pleasure while others were fighting (II Sam 11:6-13).
 4. They had personal loyalty to David both extreme and tender (II Sam 23:13-17).
- IV. The Lord seeks a few good men, who will be courageous in the spiritual war of the last days.
- A. We are not called to a flesh and blood struggle, but a spiritual war (Ephesians 6:10-20).
 1. We need to understand the practical aspect of each piece of armor and use them.
 2. To be carnally minded is death, but spiritually minded life and peace (Rom 8:6).
 3. The Lord recognizes that ruling our spirit is greater than taking a city (Pr 16:32).
 4. The man that cannot rule his spirit is a fool and like a broken city (Prov 25:28).
 5. God’s grace in the gospel teaches us to be zealous in godliness (Titus 2:11-14).
 6. If we overcome in this spiritual war, Jesus our Captain will honor us (Rev 2:26).
 7. Gentle and meek, which David was, divides men (II Cor 10:1; II Samuel 3:39).
 - B. We are now living in the struggle of the perilous times of the last days (II Tim 3:1-13).
 1. The conflict is greater and greater, as evil seducers are worse and worse (13).
 2. We are not fighting Communists or Democrats, but carnal Christianity (1-5).
 3. And we will endure persecution, if we truly live godly lives for Him (12).
 4. The New Testament has numerous passages referring to our war (I Pet 2:11).
 - C. The Lord is not seeking a great host, but a dedicated and righteous few (Ezek 22:30).
 1. Noah found grace in God’s eyes, and by himself saved his family (Genesis 6:8).
 2. Ten righteous souls would have been enough to save Sodom (Gen 18:23-33).
 3. Moses more than once saved the nation by his singular faithfulness (Ps 106:23).
 4. Jesus wondered if He would find faith on the earth when He returned (Lu 18:8).
 5. The faithful have always been a small group (I Kgs 19:18; Isaiah 1:9; Act 1:15).
 6. Moses, Samuel, Noah, Daniel, and Job saved others alone (Jer 15:1; Eze 14:14).
 - D. Great men are now very rare, as God has judged America for its sins (Isaiah 3:1-26).
 1. A virtuous woman is very rare (Prov 31:10), but so is a faithful man (Prov 20:6).
 2. The situation has been, and is, dire (Jeremiah 5:1; Micah 7:2; Psalm 12:1).
 - E. Consider a few aspects of being a mighty man of valor for Jesus Christ, the Son of David.
 1. The great men of God are men of the word of God (Joshua 1:6-9; Psalm 1:1-3).
 2. The great men of God are men of prayer to God (Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10).
 3. The great men of God communicate it to their sons (I Kings 2:2; I Chron 28:9).
 4. Men of God know the value in unity (I Sam 23:16; II Kgs 10:15-17; Ps 119:63).
 5. They led their women in the worship of God (II Sam 6:14-23; I Cor 14:34-35).
 6. They taught their children the fear of the Lord (Psalm 34:11; 78:1-8; Joel 1:1-3).
 7. The great men of God are those who serve others (Luke (9:46-48; 22:24-27).
 8. The great men of God refuse to put anything evil before their eyes (Ps 101:3).
 9. The great men of God know that even thinking foolishly is sin (Prov 24:9).

10. The great men of God know that to tame their tongue is greatness (James 3:2).
11. The great men of God are willing to commit severe self-denial (Matt 5:28-30).
12. The great men of God choose to be content with their wives (Prov 5:19).
13. The great men of God do not get bitter, but better, with their wives (Col 3:19).
- F. It is the duty of great men to exercise daily to keep their skills sharp for certain conflict.
 1. Soldiers in the past engaged in sword practice daily to retain and improve skills.
 2. Our sword is the word of God, which requires daily effort (Ps 1:3; Acts 17:11).
 3. We have the exercises of godliness to keep our spiritual life ready (I Tim 4:7-8).
- G. It is the duty of great men to prepare the next generations for the warfare of the saints.
 1. Militaristic cities like Sparta and Troy trained their children from youth for war.
 2. It is our duty to prepare as many generations as possible (Ps 78:1-8; Joel 1:1-3).
- H. We reject treacherous (Ps 144), sinful (Ps 101), carnal (Ps 1), or lazy men (He 6:11-12).
- I. Together a threefold cord is not quickly broken (Ecc 4:9-12). Will we help each other?
 1. A divided kingdom, house, or church cannot stand (Matthew 12:25; I Cor 1:10).
 2. We must diligently endeavor to maintain the *esprit de corps* of Christ (Eph 4:1-6).
- J. The above 37 are great men, but think of David and Jonathan together (I Samuel 23:16).
- K. What can women do? They can pray for their man and all men and be great, loyal wives.
- L. Will you be able to end your life, as did Paul? "I have fought a good fight" (II Tim 4:7).

Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ is a great King, and He deserves our very best in adoration, affection, and service (Malachi 1:14).
2. If David had men willing to love and serve him as described above, how much more does His Son deserve?!
3. We enter the kingdom of Christ by baptism (Luke 7:29-30; 16:16); we stay in it by obedience (John 8:31).
4. Our conflict is not of this world, for our kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36; Eph 6:10-12; Heb 11:13).

For further study:

1. See I Samuel 14; I Samuel 17; II Samuel 21; II Samuel 23; II Kings 9-10; I Chronicles 11; I Chronicles 20; I Chron 27.
2. The sermon outline, *Heart of David* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/heart-of-david.pdf>.
3. The sermon outline, *David or Joab* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/david-or-joab.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, *Power of Darkness* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/power-of-darkness.pdf>
5. The sermon outline, *The Maccabees* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/maccabees.pdf>.
6. Youth Bible Study, *The Deeds of David* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/davids-deeds.pdf>.
7. The sermon outline, *Is There Not a Cause?* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/is-there-not-a-cause.pdf>.
8. Men's Meeting Study, *Greatness ... By a Great Cause* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/greatness-by-a-great-cause.pdf>.
9. Men's Meeting Study, *Keepers of the Kingdom* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/keepers-of-the-kingdom.pdf>.
10. The sermon outline, *Kingdom Warfare* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/kingdom-warfare.pdf>.
11. The sermon outline, *Kingdom Priorities* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/kingdom-priorities.pdf>.
12. Men's Meeting Study, *Duty, Honor, Sacrifice* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/duty-honor-sacrifice.pdf>.
13. The sermon outline, *Patriarchy – Where Are the Men?* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/patriarchy.pdf>.
14. The sermon outline, *Occupy Till I Come* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/occupy-till-i-come.pdf>.
15. Men's Meeting Study, *Spiritual Champions* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/spiritual-champions.pdf>.
16. The sermon outline, *Traits of Great Men* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/traits-of-great-men.pdf>.
17. Men's Meeting Study, *A Mighty Man's Life* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/a-mighty-man.pdf>.

David's Mighty Men

(II Samuel 23:8-39; I Chron 11:1-47)



Cherethites & Pelethites

Philistine bodyguards under the command of Benaiah

Gittites (600)

Philistine bodyguards under the command of Ittai the Gittite

Joab

Captain of the Host

Benaiah

Captain of the Host
(after treason of Joab)

Three Mightiest Captains

Adino

the Eznite

Eleazar

son of Dodo

Shammah

son of Agee

Three Mighty Captains

Abishai

son of Zeruah

Benaiah

son of Jehoiada

Asahel

son of Zeruah

Elhanan, son of Dodo
Helez the Paltite
Mebunnai the Hushathite
Heleb, son of Baanah
Hiddai of Gaash
Eliabba the Shaalbonite
Ahiam, son of Sharar
Hezrai the Carmelite
Bani the Gadite
Ira an Ithrite

Shammah the Harodite
Ira, son of Ikkesh the Tekoite
Zalmon the Ahohite
Ittai, son of Ribai of Benjamin
Abi-albon the Arbathite
Jonathan, son of Shage
Eliphelet, son of Ahasbai
Paarai the Arbite
Zelek the Ammonite
Gareb an Ithrite

Elika the Harodite
Abiezer the Anethothite
Maharai the Netophathite
Benaiah the Pirathonite
Azmaveth the Barhumite
Shammah the Hararite
Eliam, son of Ahithophel
Igal, son of Nathan of Zobah
Nahari the Beerothite
Uriah the Hittite