

## II SAMUEL

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Samuel chapter 23 as we continue our study through the Word of God and we finish up this book this evening. Last time we were in a section that was dealing with David's mighty men, those who were faithful to their king, David and their Lord! And as you look at the qualities of these men, these are qualities that should be found in us as Christians. You see, as much as they ranked themselves under David, we rank ourselves under our King, Jesus Christ; we take our orders you might say from Him!

Now you might not feel like a mighty man of God, but please understand, God is looking for faithfulness to Him and He will supply us with the strength that we need to carry out His plans, his purposes! You see, God has called the weak, the foolish, the insignificant to go out and do His work. Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 1:25-31, **“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’”**

You see, if it was really all about us, then we would get the glory, but it is not, we are weak, we are foolish and yet God uses us to do great things and thus, He gets the glory! You are a mighty man or woman of God not because of **WHO** you are but because **WHOSE** you are! It is because you belong to Jesus and thus, He works in you and through you to do great things and it is not done by the power of your flesh!

Now just a quick recap of the mighty men of God that we looked at last time and then we will dig into our study verses this evening. We are told that:

- ADINO, A MIGHTY MAN OF GOD WHO WAS A MAN THAT WAS FAITHFUL IN PRAYER
- ELEAZAR, A MIGHTY MAN OF GOD WHO WAS A MAN THAT WAS FAITHFUL IN THE WORD
- SHAMMAH, A MIGHTY MAN OF GOD WHO WAS FAITHFUL IN HIS SERVICE
- DAVID, A MIGHTY MAN OF GOD WHO WAS FAITHFUL IN WORSHIP
- ABISHAI, A MIGHTY MAN OF GOD WHO WAS FAITHFUL WITH HIS EYES, THEY WERE PURE

So with that said, let's begin reading in II Samuel chapter 23, starting in verse 20 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening.

**II SAMUEL 23****VERSES 20-23**

1. Benaiah is the next mighty man of God and this guy seems like a tough dude! This guy went out and killed two lion-like heroes of Moab, he actually killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day, and he killed this giant Egyptian. No, I am not exaggerating. According to I Chronicles 11:23 he stood some 7½ feet tall, just a little taller than me!

Now what does this show us about the quality, the characteristic of a mighty man of God? Benaiah is showing us that he was a man of perseverance. You see, he did not let things get in the way of stopping his mission, his walk you might say. Yes, there were these two lion-like heroes of Moab, but that did not stop him. He took them on and defeated them. Yes, there was this lion in a pit and the weather was bad, it was snowing out, but he killed the lion. And this Egyptian giant, nothing was too big to get in his way and he killed him also.

For us as Christians, many times we struggle in this area. “We are out numbered, we can’t do this?” “Do you know how popular they are, we can’t come against them, who are we?” “I can’t go to church tonight, it is rainy or snowy or Jupiter is not aligned with Mars” “I have this giant problem in my life, I can’t do that!” Or whatever excuse we can make and when we make these excuses we take God right out of the picture and we are not persevering!

Keep in mind what Peter tells us in I Peter 5:8-11, **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**

You see, Satan is like a roaring lion that is seeking someone to devour. Thus, like Benaiah, we too must be alert, we must be watchful, we must fight no matter what the conditions might be or how strong the enemy seems to be, no matter how giant of a situation it is! And please understand that it doesn't really matter how we feel, the battle will continue on and the question is, “Will you continue to walk or will you stop?” You see, if you stop you are opening yourself up to be devoured by the Devil, but if you keep walking, you will see the victory you will have in your life over the Devil!

For some, they just don't feel on fire you might say, or they don't feel close to God so they just stop and in a sense, play dead. We are not to do that, we are to stand strong in the power of His might and fight against the enemy. We resist the Devil by standing strong in the faith! It is not about our ability because if it were, we would lose. It is about our availability before God because it is only through Him that we are victorious!

Paul reminds Timothy of what being a soldier is all about, that you must stay focused, you must have single-mindedness. He wrote in II Timothy 2:3-4, “**You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.**”

Paul is reminding us that our focus needs to be on Jesus Christ and what He has called us to do. We are not to become focused on the various things of this world that can just entangle us and take us off the path that God has for us. We, like a soldier must be of single-mindedness, focused on the cause of Christ, what we are fighting for, the eternal destiny of those around us. You see, it is the cares of this world that many times cause us to take our focus off the battle!

For Benaiah, nothing got in his way of completing the work he set out to do. Not the fame of those he was up against. Not the outside conditions. Not how big the situation seemed. Benaiah was a man of perseverance and that is what God has called us to be, men and women of perseverance!

**BENAI AH, A MAN OF PERSEVERANCE!**

2. So what does a mighty man of God look like? He is a person who:

- IS FAITHFUL IN PRAYER
- IS FAITHFUL IN THE WORD
- IS FAITHFUL IN SERVICE
- IS FAITHFUL IN WORSHIP
- IS FAITHFUL WITH HIS EYES, THEY ARE PURE
- IS FAITHFUL IN PERSEVERANCE

And as difficult as this may seem, take your eyes off the situation and place them on the Lord. Be faithful because, as Paul reminds us, “**being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.**” Or as The Amplified Bible puts it, “**And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.**” May we never lose sight of that!

VERSES 24-39

1. From this list of mighty men of God, there are a few names that stick out. First of all we see Eliam, who was the son of Ahithophel in verse 34. This was the father of Bathsheba and Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandfather. So part of David's mighty men we see not only the father of Bathsheba, but also her husband, Uriah the Hittite. Thus, you can understand why Ahithophel, Bathsheba's grandfather turned against David when he had the opportunity because of what David did to his granddaughter, this adulterous relationship, and the murder of her husband Uriah to cover his sin!

2. Out of all of David's men only 37, a handful, became David's mighty men. And please remember that they did not come to David as great men, as mighty men, but they were the outcasts of society, they were disgruntled, in distress, in debt, discontented, and they became the mighty men of God because they stood close to their captain, David! It is as Morgan wrote, "More than all his victories against outside foes, the influence of his life and character on the men nearest to him testify to his essential greatness." What an impact he had on their lives and may we impact those around us for Christ, to draw them to Him or to build them up in the faith!

## II SAMUEL 24

### VERSES 1-2

1. We are not exactly sure when this event took place, but most likely it was towards the end of David's reign. And what David is doing is trying to raise a standing army; trying to find out how many soldiers he had at his disposal. Not such a big deal when you think about it and thus, why was the Lord angry about what David was doing? In Exodus 30:12 we see this principle laid out by God, as we are told, "**When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them.**"

Here is the principle. In the ancient culture you could only count that which belonged to you and in this case, Israel did not belong to David, they belonged to the Lord. It was up to God to command a counting and not David. We see this played out in Numbers chapter 1 and Numbers chapter 26, at the beginning and at the end of their wilderness wanderings as the Lord commands them to take a census. But here it is David who orders this census and the Lord is angry with David for what he is doing.



2. Now it says that, **“He moved David against them to say, ‘Go number Israel and Judah.’”** The New King James believes that the **“He”** that is spoken of here is the Lord and it was the Lord that moved David to do this and thus, the “H” is capitalized. I don’t believe it is the Lord that is spoken of here, but it is Satan. How can I be sure? Because we are told in I Chronicles 21:1, **“Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.”** Thus, I believe that it was Satan that tempted David to sin and he moved David, but what about the Lord? I believe the Lord was using this to test David for the Lord does not tempt us, but Satan does.

Notice what James tells us in James 1:12-17, **“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”**

Now verse 12 and verse 13 seem to contradict each other, so what is going on here? Back in verse 12 I believe James is speaking of trials or tests, but here in verses 13 and 14 he is speaking of temptation. How do I know that is true? Let me explain.

The words “**trials**” and “**temptations**” come from the same Greek word, PEIRASMOS, (pi-ras-mos’). Thus, when we read of situations that will strengthen us, help us to grow, mature us, they are from God and they are trials to test our faith. On the other hand, Satan will come along to tempt us, to exploit the trial we are going through so we might sin. God wants to build us up - and He uses trials to do that. Satan wants to destroy us - and he uses temptations to do that. It can be the same situation; it just depends on how we respond to it!

How often do we like to blame God for our sin! But it is impossible for God to tempt you; it is a foreign concept to God. Now, I have heard people say who are living in an adulterous relationship, “God has brought us together!” No, the Devil tempted you and you took his bait and got hooked. You can’t blame the Devil, he didn’t force you, it was your choice!

When James says “**drawn away**” it comes from the Greek word EXELKO, (ex-el’-ko) and it was often used as a hunting term that spoke of a baited trap that was used as a lure to capture an unsuspecting animal. The word “**enticed**” is the Greek word DELEAZO, (del-eh-ad’-zo) and it was used as a fishing term to refer to bait, to bait a hook! That is Satan’s plan, to deceive us into thinking that sin is good, and we take a bite.

You see, we are drawn away by our own fleshly desires and as we begin to think about sin, fantasize about it, the end result is that sin is birthed in our lives and sin will bring about death! It is as Jeremiah 17:9-10 says, **“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.”** Folks, sin is not a sickness, we can’t blame God for it, but it comes from our own evil heart if we give into temptation!

This is so simplistic and yet Satan uses it with tremendous success. He convinces us that in pursuing our corrupt desires it will produce in us life and goodness, satisfaction, and we take the bait! Remember what Jesus said of Satan and then what He has to offer us in John 10:10, **“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”** Don’t listen to the lies of the Devil, don’t let temptation give birth to sin in your life but find that abundant life in Christ for all He has for us is good!

#### VERSES 3-4

1. In all the wrong we have seen in Joab, here he is right on. He tells the king not to do this, that it is wrong and please notice that it is not just Joab, but it is also the captain’s of David’s army who are warning him not to do this. But David refuses to listen and he does it his way, and as we will see, that will not be good!

2. This once again shows me that no matter how long we are Christians, we must guard ourselves from these things that are tempting us. For David, it seems that glory, pride got the better of him here. He wanted to know how many soldiers he had, how big his army was so that he could decide if he had enough men to be victorious against the other nations. He wanted to see how big his kingdom had grown under his reign and the problem with that is as Morgan wrote, “The spirit of vainglory in numbers had taken possession of the people and the king, and there was a tendency to trust in numbers and forget God.” May we place our trust in the Lord and not in what we have! May we place our trust in the Lord and not take His glory from Him!

#### VERSES 5-9

1. You think that our census takes a long time to complete, but here we see Joab and his men spend 9 months and 20 days, almost 10 months taking this census in Israel. And when they were completed they brought their results to David. There were 1,300,000 fighting men among the twelve tribes of Israel, 800,000 from the 11 tribes and 500,000 from Judah. Thus, the total population has been estimated at around 6 million people in Israel!

2. Now there is one more point we should make, as Clarke points this out. He wrote, “In the parallel place, 1 Chronicles 21:5, the sums are widely different: in Israel *one million one hundred thousand*, in Judah *four hundred and seventy thousand*. Neither of these sums is too great, but they cannot be both correct; and which is the true number is difficult to say.” He continues on to write, “To attempt to reconcile them in every part is lost labour; better at once acknowledge what cannot be successfully denied, that although the original writers of the Old Testament wrote under the influence of the Divine Spirit, yet we are not told that the same influence descended on all *copiers* of their words, so as absolutely to prevent them from making mistakes.” Now this might not be a copyist error because as we read in I Chronicles the number from Benjamin is not included and thus, this may also speak of why we see the difference between II Samuel and I Chronicles. Does this change any doctrine? Absolutely not and thus, whatever the number is, as close as they are, it doesn’t cause my faith to stumble or to doubt God’s Word!

#### VERSE 10

1. There are times when we can get in the way of God speaking to us, as was the case here with David. He let pride, vainglory get in the way of God speaking to his heart that this census was wrong, but now, when it is done, he sees his sin and confesses it before God! Remember in I Samuel 13:14 David is called a man after God’s own heart, and yet we see his many imperfections. David was not a perfect man but when he sinned, he felt the conviction of God upon his life and he repented of his sin.

You see, conviction will draw you closer to God, back to Him. While condemnation will push you away from God and this comes from Satan. Condemnation makes you feel totally unworthy to even call yourself a Christian and to attach yourself to Christ. But our relationship is not based on our goodness but on the free gift of God through Christ that has cleansed us from all our unrighteousness. When you see it in the right light, then you understand that there is no condemnation in Christ, only conviction as He conforms us into His image.

### VERSES 11-13

1. We now see the prophet Gad come to David with 3 choices of judgment for his sin, 3 years of famine, 3 months of fleeing from your enemy, or 3 days of plague. I do realize that it speaks of 7 years of famine here, but according to I Chronicles 21:12 it should be 3 years of famine as we see the progression in these judgments of 3. We see 3 years, 3 months and then 3 days. Which of these judgments would David choose? Let's read on and see.

VERSE 14

1. David wants to fall into the hands of a merciful God instead of the merciless hands of man and thus, he chooses the 3 days of plague upon the people, including himself.

Remember what David wrote in Psalm 40:11, **“Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O Lord; Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.”** Folk’s, I don’t know about you, but I truly don’t want God’s justice, His judgment upon my life, I want His mercy, which, according to Jeremiah is new every morning! In Lamentations 3:21-24 we are told, **“This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. ‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I hope in Him!’”** May we not forget that!

2. In regards to what David did here, listen to what Clarke tells us as he wrote, “Had he chosen *war*, his own *personal safety* was in no danger, because there was already an ordinance preventing him from going to battle. Had he chosen *famine*, his own wealth would have secured his and his own family’s support. But he showed the greatness of his mind in choosing the *pestilence*, to the ravages of which himself and his household were exposed equally with the meanest of his subjects.” David did not place himself above the people, but he recognized that he was at fault and deserved to suffer for his sin.

3. I like the way that J. Vernon McGee put this in regards to God's judgment. He wrote, "My friend, those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines. From experience I can tell you that there is a tenderness in His discipline, there is a comfort in it all, and there is a blessing in it. He alone can wipe away the tears. He alone can bind up the brokenhearted. He alone can heal the wounds that are in the heart. The doctor can sew you up when you have been in an accident, but in great emotional accidents only the Lord Jesus can bind you up and put you together again. How we need Him today in our lives!" (J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible Vol. II, p. 241).

#### VERSES 15-17

1. Within these 3 days of judgment, 70,000 people in Israel have died and as the angel stood over Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord was merciful and stopped the plague even before David confessed his sin before the Lord. But look at the lives that were affected because of what David had done! Now I also want you to note the heart of David here. He cries out to God and tells the Lord that these sheep, these people that He has entrusted to him are innocent, they are not responsible for this. David rightly tells the Lord that he alone is responsible, he is guilty and that truly is the heart of a shepherd, for a leader! I want you to also note that the Lord did not accept David's request and you may wonder why that is? It is because the Lord had another purpose here and we will see that as we read on!



VERSES 18-21

1. Please keep in mind that the city of Jerusalem during the time of David was much smaller than what we see today. In fact, it was not even located near the top of Mount Moriah or Mount Zion but on a lower ridge and was only about ½ city block wide and 2 city blocks long. So David does not own this piece of property yet, but the Lord, through the prophet Gad calls for David to go and purchase this piece of property, this threshing floor of Araunah. And keep in mind the threshing floors were located near the top of a hill or mountain so that the breeze could blow away the chaff, separate it from the wheat. Also keep in mind that according to II Chronicles 3:1, this threshing floor of Araunah was located on Mount Moriah, and we will deal with the significance of that as we move on.

VERSES 22-25

1. You have to love the generous heart of Araunah here, he offers David everything, the land, the oxen, the wood for the sacrifice, all free for David, but David rejects this gift, why? I like what Clarke said regarding this. He wrote, “Had Araunah’s noble offer been accepted, it would have been *Araunah’s sacrifice*, not *David’s*; nor would it have answered the end of turning away the displeasure of the Most High.”

Here’s the thing. David was not going to give to the Lord that which cost him nothing. Again Clarke tells us, “He who has a religion that *costs him nothing*, has a religion that is *worth nothing*: nor will any man esteem the ordinances of God, if those ordinances cost him nothing.”

2. Isn't that true in our own lives, that what we give to the Lord must cost us something or if it didn't, then was it really a sacrifice? Of course what we give to the Lord must cost us something, that is what the word "sacrifice" is all about! Paul put it like this in Romans 12:1, "**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**" You see, we don't place animals on the altar for sacrifice any longer, but we do place ourselves upon this altar before God and that is what true worship is all about! Don't give to God that which costs you nothing, for true worship will cost you your time, your resources, your money, it will cost you ***YOUR LIFE!***

I like the way that Meyer put it. He wrote, "Where there is true, strong love to Jesus, it will cost us something. Love is the costliest of all undertakings . . . But what shall we mind if we gain Christ? You cannot give up for Him without regaining everything you have renounced, but purified and transfigured." I can truly tell you from my own life that when I give to God all of me, He gives me back more than what I gave to Him. For instance, in regards to my time, it is amazing to see what God can do when my time is short, as long as I am faithful; I get done what I need to! It may not be what ***I WANT*** to get done, but what ***I NEED*** to get done will be taken care of! When I am exhausted after a busy day and am going to teach in the evening, as tired as I am when I start, the Lord refreshes me. That is our God, we can't out give Him and we have the privilege of giving to Him!

3. Here in II Samuel 24 we are told that David paid Araunah 50 shekels of silver for the threshing floor and the oxen but in I Chronicles 21:24-25 we are told that David paid 600 shekels of gold. Why is there this big difference? Because the 50 shekels of silver was just for the threshing floor and the oxen while the 600 shekels of gold was for the whole area of land. Why did David buy all this land? Maybe he felt that the Lord was leading him to purchase it so that the temple could be built there one day, and as we will see, it was here that Solomon built the temple!

4. So as David purchases this threshing floor and the oxen he offers to God a burnt offering and a peace offering. The burnt offering was to atone for sin while the peace offering was to enjoy fellowship with God. That was David; he enjoyed his time with the Lord. Morgan adds to this as he tells us, "We finally see the man after God's own heart turning the occasion of his sin and its punishment into an occasion of worship." May we have hearts of worship!

5. Now did God accept David's sacrifice to Him? We don't have to guess, because we are told in I Chronicles 21:26, "**And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the Lord; and He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering.**" The Living Bible puts this verse like this, "**and built an altar to the Lord there, and sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings upon it; and he called out to the Lord, who answered by sending down fire from heaven to burn up the offering on the altar.**" In other words, as David prepared the sacrifice before God, the Lord consumed the sacrifice from His fire from Heaven. Thus, we see God honor David's desire to be right with Him and to have fellowship with Him by consuming the sacrifice! Folks when we desire to draw near to God for cleansing and fellowship, He will receive our sacrifice just as He did David's!

6. Now this area of land known as Mount Moriah is an interesting place to say the least. In fact, it is probably one of the most contested pieces of property in the world. This area, Mount Moriah is the area where Abraham went to offer Isaac as a sacrifice to the Lord. And I believe this threshing floor of Araunah is the place where the temple was built and specifically, where the holy of holies was located in the temple. This area of Mount Moriah is the place where Jesus was crucified!

And today, the Muslims have control over the Temple Mount area, where the temple existed. The Muslims believe that this area on the Temple Mount known as the Dome of the Rock, it is that round, dome shaped gold structure you see in all the pictures of this area, is the place where Mohammed ascended up into Heaven. In fact, they deny that the temple of Solomon ever existed, let alone Herod's temple. They are doing everything possible to remove anything that would prove the temple existed but it is hard to remove the foundation stones that are there!

Now the Bible tells us that the temple will be rebuilt during the Tribulation Period and as we have seen before, they are ready to put it up today. They have all the temple implements for the sacrifices and offerings. The priests are trained in the work they will do. The only problem is that the Muslims will never let them rebuild the temple, or so they think. In Revelation 11:1-2 we are told, **“Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, ‘Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.’”**

But if the Dome of the Rock is the place where the holy of holies was located in Solomon's temple, how can the Jews take this down and rebuild their temple without a major war breaking out? First of all you need to understand that the rock that is inside the Dome of the Rock is not flat, but jagged and thus, it would never be used for a threshing floor. It was not the threshing floor of Araunah that David purchased. But, some 322 feet to the north of the Dome of the Rock is a place called the Dome of the Spirits, and this is a flat piece of rock and I believe it is the place where David offered his sacrifice, it is the place where Solomon's temple was built and where the rebuilt temple will be erected!

Remember, John was told to leave out the outer court and just measure the temple proper. Amazingly that would put the Dome of the Rock in the outer court and the Jews could rebuild their temple next to this structure without destroying it. And I believe it is the antichrist who makes this peace treaty with Israel to rebuild their temple and then, at the 3½ year mark of the seven year Tribulation Period he will enter the rebuilt temple and demand to be worshiped as God and the Jews will recognize that this man is not their Messiah and they flee for their lives. And Jerusalem will be trampled for 3½ years and many Jews will be put to death until the Lord returns! So a very interesting piece of property to say the least! And, for us, when the Lord returns guess where He sets up His temple? In Jerusalem!

7. Picture of the Temple Mount in Israel with the Dome of the Rock.



8. The preservation of Jerusalem and the purchase of the temple site prepared the way for the coming of David's successor, King Solomon. He would build the temple for the true worship of Israel's God. And we will see that as we move on next time in our study of I Kings!