

## **Super Heroes and Super Blunders – 2 Samuel 23:8-39, 24:1-25**

### **Introduction:**

Power is maintained by the people who support you. The last two chapters highlight this fact, and point out two very different sources of support. In chapter 23 we read of the mighty men who supported David. Reading the account of their exploits one knows why no one opposed David (at least from without his family).

The second source of support is actually David's primary source of support – the Lord God Almighty. However, it seems that just for a moment David has forgotten this. How and why this happened it is hard to tell, but it came with terrible consequences.

As we explore this sad chapter in David's life may we remember words penned by David earlier in his life: "Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, Maker of heaven and earth."

### **David's Mighty Three – 2 Samuel 23: 8-12**

1. The first and "chief" among David's mighty men was Josheb-Basshebeth. He is a Tahkemonite (1 Chronicles 11:11 reads Hacmonite), a tribe we really know nothing about. What mighty act did he do (v. 8)?
2. The second person we meet is Eleazar, the son of Dodo. What mighty feat did he perform to earn his place among the top three of David's men (vss. 9-10)? What important piece of information do we gain about the battle in verse 10?
3. The third mighty man was Shammah, the son of Agee, the Hararite. What did Shammah do to earn his place among David's mighty men (v.11-12) (Note: Lehi is the area where Samson stood his ground against the Philistines and struck down 1000 soldiers using just the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:9-19)).

## **Loyalty Expressed – 2 Samuel 23:13-17**

4. Where was David and his men according to verse 13? Where were the Philistines?
5. Not only were the Philistines in the valley, what town had they put their garrison in (v. 14)? Why was that significant to David?
6. What does David long for according to verse 15? Was he making a command, or even a request? Explain.
7. Overhearing David, what did “the three mighty men” do (v. 16)? What was David’s response?
8. In verse 17 David explains his actions. Why did he do what he did? What do we learn about the three mighty men in this account?

## **Abishai and Benaiah – 2 Samuel 23:18-23**

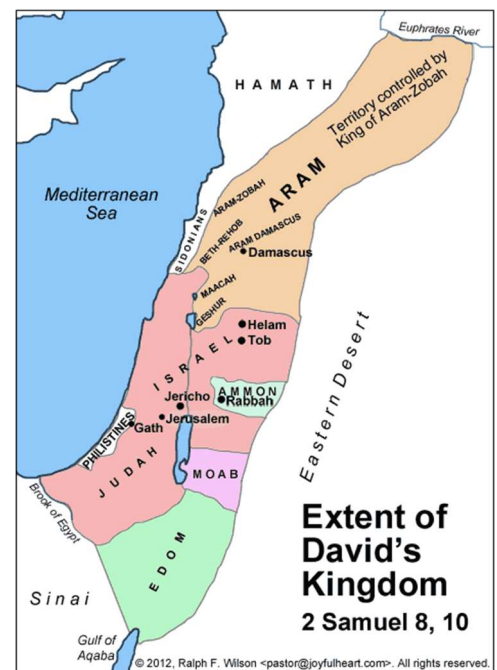
9. Who was Abishai (v. 18)? What mighty deed did he accomplish (v. 18)? What position did he acquire (v. 19)? (In 2 Samuel 21:17 what did he do?)
10. What is the first mighty deed noted in verse 20 that Benaiah did? Compared to the other feats we have been reading about, how does this compare? (Ariel can be translated “lions of God” or “lion-like men”)
11. Also in verse 20, what other feat did Benaiah accomplish?
12. In verse 21 we read that Benaiah excelled in one-on-one combat. What did he do?
13. Though not one of the mighty three, what honour was given to Benaiah (v. 23)?

## The Rest of David's Thirty-Seven Mighty Men – 2 Samuel 23:24-39

14. Who is the first person listed as one of the “thirty” (v. 24)? Who was he and what happened to him?
15. Who is the last person listed among David's mighty men (v. 39)? Who was he and what was his story?

## David's Census – 2 Samuel 24:1-9

16. What information are we given in 2 Samuel 24:1? Are we given any explanation as to why?
17. How was God going to “punish” Israel according to verse 1? Does this sound like a punishment?
18. What command does the king give to his general (v. 2)? What reason is given?
19. How does Joab respond to the command of the king (v. 3)? There is an interesting phrase in verse 3: “the Lord your God.” What do we learn about Joab in this?
20. It appears Joab was not the only one who opposed the census. Who else was against the census (v. 4)? Who wins out?
21. We get an account of all the area covered by the generals, and it is extensive. How long does it take to do the census (v. 8)? What might the generals be thinking?
22. What is the count given to the king (v. 9)? (1 Chronicles says 1,100,000 & 470,000) Looking at the description of the report, what does it seem David wanted to know? (note: this seems to be during a time of relative peace)



## **David's Sin and the Punishment – 2 Samuel 23:10-17**

23. After the census is complete, how does David feel about it (v. 10)? Why? (The word for “sinned” means to “miss the mark”- he fell short of God’s standards)
24. The prophet Gad is sent by God giving the king three options for atoning for his sin. What were they (vss. 11-13)?
25. What choice did David make (v. 14)? What reasoning does he give?
26. What was the result of David’s choice (v. 15)? How does this tie in with verse 1?
27. As the “angel of destruction” approaches Jerusalem, what does God say (v. 16)? Where does he stop?
28. What does David suggest as he sees the angel of destruction approach (v. 17)?

## **David Builds an Altar – 2 Samuel 24:18-25**

29. What instruction does the prophet Gad give to David (v. 18)?
30. Araunah is the owner of the threshing floor, and what does he do when he sees the king approaching (v. 20)?
31. Why has the king come to Araunah (v. 21)? If God has already stopped the plague (v. 16) why does David still want to build the altar?
32. How does Araunah respond to the king’s request to buy his threshing floor (vss. 22-23)?
33. Does David accept the gift of Araunah (v. 24)? Why?
34. David purchases the property and builds his altar and makes a sacrifice to God. What is the result (v. 25)?

## **Conclusion:**

In chapter 23 we get a record of David's mighty men, the source of much of his power and might. Then in chapter 24 David seemingly looks to the size of his army, the men at his disposal, to prove his strength and might. David, for a moment, gets his eyes off of his true source of strength, which is the Lord. Like Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon before him he appears, for a moment, to say, "Look at what I have done!"

Of course God will not share his glory with another, and there were consequences. Before we get upset at God for punishing the nation for David's sin, we must remember the opening words of chapter 23, "Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel" (ESV). Though we do not know what the nation has done, it was equally as repugnant to God as David's sin of pride.

The chapter, and the book, ends with David once again where he should be, submitted to God and at peace with Him. David has sacrificed a guilt offering and sought the forgiveness of God for himself and the nation. David has returned to the place of beginning: "Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth." Not from my mighty men, not my enlisted soldiers, but from God.

May we always remember that as well. Our strength is not in our abilities or successes, but in the Lord.