

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Jan. 22

MONDAY

With some of his mighty men, David is camped not far from Bethlehem, his boyhood home. He makes an off-handed remark that he would love to have some water from the old creek. As he remembers it, a drink of water from that creek is the sweetest water ever!

READ: II Sam.23:13-17

Three of his men sneaked out to get the water for David. When they presented it to him, he was overwhelmed by their bravery and loyalty, and at the same time, ashamed that he had put the three men in harm's way: they had risked their lives to get him his water. By pouring the water onto the ground, David was publicly declaring the selfishness and foolishness of his actions. The example David sets for us is a good one: we need to own up to what we do, and make it right with God and man.

TUESDAY

Abishai is part of a three-some of remarkable men - that is, there are three mighty men who are somehow linked together, and who serve David, their king. Some of his story is told here.

READ: II Sam.23:18-19

He killed three hundred enemy in a battle! And although he was never promoted to the top, he was made captain of his own group. Although relatively un-known to the population, he was well-known to his king, and thereby honored by him. Do you feel as if you are somehow overlooked in your service for God? Don't give that a second thought. God knows. He keeps the books. And He is the Rewarder of those who seek Him!

WEDNESDAY

Benaiah is another one in this second group of three men who served David well. One of his exploits is described here.

READ: II Sam.23:20-23

Benaiah killed two Moabite and on one snowy day, killed a lion that was trapped in a pit. His greatest feat seems to have been, while armed only with a staff, fighting an Egyptian soldier with a spear. He took the spear from him and killed him with it. David appointed Benaiah over his honor guard. To be faithful in the little things brings greater responsibility. Oh that we would learn this and learn it well: God requires faithfulness in the little, everyday things of our lives.

THURSDAY

David's prized group of fighting men - the "Thirty" they were called - are named. Actually, 37 are listed because through the years, seven were killed and replaced. The last one named - Uriah the Hitite - was one of those killed.

READ: II Sam.23:24-39

Christ, the Son of David, has those, too, who like David, will fight battles against the spiritual enemies of His kingdom. The Bible says that, in His strength, they are more than conquerors. All good soldiers of Jesus Christ have their names better preserved than even these 37 listed here; for they are written in the books of heaven!

FRIDAY

The Lord is angry at Israel (for her unfaithfulness) and He puts it into David's heart to take a military census of the country. David orders it done.

READ: II Sam.24:1-2

What's the big deal with taking a census? It's hard to know for certain, but perhaps it was an act of pride. Knowing the size of his army would allow David to boast of his military might. Perhaps the problem was in the procedure: Exodus 30:12,13 requires a ransom be paid the Lord for each one counted "so that no plague will come upon them." There's no mention of that ransom in this story, but there is a plague! Clearly, the amazing thing about these verses is that God is so completely in charge! David takes a census because God incited him to do so. It's God bringing about His purposes.

SATURDAY

General Joab tries to dissuade David from taking a military census. But David is king and, in the end, he has his way.

READ: II Sam.24:3-4

General Joab pleads with him not to take the census. For whatever reason, the census was wrong, and Joab was aware of that. He tried to prevent it. At great personal risk, I might add. Joab does not always do the right thing, but in this case he did. And in doing so, he says to you and me that despite the risk (or discomfort or awkwardness), there are times when we must speak up for truth and right

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