

Ministry on David

Part 5

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[00:00:00] Let us turn to the first book of Chronicles, 1st Chronicles 12.

Now these be they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish.

And they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war.

They were armed with bows and could use both the right hand and the left, in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin.

Now verse 8, And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the halls of the wilderness, men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the rose upon [00:01:02] the mountains.

Verse 14, These were the sons of Gad, captains of the host.

One of the least was over a hundred, and the greatest over a thousand. These are they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks.

And they put to flight all them of the valleys, both toward the east and toward the west. And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hall to David. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye become peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you. But if ye come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon and rebuke it. Then the Spirit came upon Amassii, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side thou, son of Jesse.

[00:02:04] Peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers, for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.

And we may read a little more as we go on.

In this chapter we have two different times mentioned.

We have in the beginning these who came to David to Ziklag.

Then we have in the 23rd verse those who came to David to Hebron.

[00:03:06] Now the second that took place quite a few years after I take it, is in the first.

When David is in Ziklag, Saul is on the throne, and David is persecuted.

And there he is in Ziklag.

When the second thing takes place, Saul has been slain by the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, and David is now recognized as the king.

But the whole nation, as it were, has not yet recognized him.

But he is going to take his place, and he starts to reign in Hebron. And later on he reigns in Jerusalem. I see a sister reminding me I'm not speaking loud enough, so I'll have to try to speak a little louder. Excuse me.

If anybody doesn't hear, just put your hand up.

[00:04:02] We have the thought before us of the Lord's coming, and I believe that we should never have before us the thought of the Lord's coming, just merely as it were, to hold the truth of the Lord's coming as a doctrine that we hold in our minds.

We could do that, and without it having an effect on our lives, then it would just be that we give a mental assent to the thought of the Lord's coming, and I don't think that's what the Lord wants. I believe, brethren, that if the thought of the Lord's coming means anything to us, it means that it's going to have an effect on our lives, that we're going to be living like those that were looking for the Lord's coming. I'll never forget when I was a young man that in our town there was an old brother, [00:05:04] I believe he was a brother in the Lord, and every time you met him and spoke to him, he'd turn his eyes upwards and, oh, he was just waiting for the Lord to come, and I thought, well, what a godly old man that is. Every time you meet him, he's just talking about the Lord's coming, but someone told me afterwards that he didn't get along with his wife, and that he and his wife were always having quarrels with one another. Well, it took the edge off it, you know, that he was really looking for the Lord's coming. The thought of the Lord's coming apparently was not having such a practical effect on his life that he was able to get along with others that he should have got along with, he should have been able to get along with his wife, at least, I think. You see, this comes down to something very practical, and I believe we have a little picture of that here. We're in the twelfth chapter of 1 Chronicles.

[00:06:02] We have David, he's really the rightful king.

The Lord rejected Saul, Saul, it seems, never got into the Lord's presence. The most remarkable thing is that the very day that Saul is anointed king, he's told by Samuel that he's to wait a certain time, and that he would meet some men who were going up to God to battle.

Well, it turned out to be that.

But if they were going up to God to battle and Saul met them, what was Saul doing? He was going

away from God from battle, and battle means the house of God. And as we trace Saul's life, as a brother who wrote a book on the life of Saul said once, he titled the book, King Saul, The Man After The Flesh, Saul represents the best [00:07:03] that man can produce.

He was a head and shoulders above the others, he was the man of the people's choice, but he was not the man of God's choice.

He represents man acting in the flesh, but man not acting for God. God rejected him, and he sends Samuel to anoint David to be king. And David is so little thought of, even in his own family, that he's out looking after the sheep, and his father doesn't even call him in to the feast that they're having when Saul came.

Of course, Jesse, David's son, didn't know what Samuel had come for.

He thought he'd just come to offer a sacrifice, and he did that because if he'd said openly he was going to anoint a king, Saul perhaps would have made it difficult for him. So he goes there to offer a sacrifice, but the real reason for the visit was to anoint [00:08:01] a king from one of Jesse's sons.

And Samuel has them all pass before him, and the Lord rejects them all.

So he has to turn around to Jesse and say, well, are all your children here? Well, he says, the youngest is out there keeping the sheep. Well, you send and bring him in. And as soon as David came in, the Lord said to Samuel, arise, anoint him, for this is he. Saul, the man that the people thought such a lot of, he's not God's man. The shepherd boy that nobody thinks anything of, he's the one that's to be God's man. And David eventually, it eventually becomes very clear that David is to be the king. It becomes clear to Saul, and it was very clear to Jonathan, I believe, from the very moment that David slew Goliath, Jonathan realized this is the one who has the right to be king [00:09:01] and not me, because Jonathan was the one who would have been king after Saul if things had continued in the ordinary course of events. And that's when Jonathan strips himself of his bow and his girdle and everything he gives him to David. So Jonathan says, this robe doesn't belong to me, David, it belongs to you. You're the one that has the right to be the king. You should wear the insignia of the king's firstborn. This sword and this bow and this girdle, what good are they to me? You're the one that got the victory over the Philistines, my father should have won the victory, and after him I should have won it, and none of us could, and you got the victory, you're the king. I believe that's what Saul's action signified, and the heart of Jonathan, I mean Jonathan's action, and the heart of Jonathan was knit to the heart of David. The sad thing is that Jonathan didn't go all the way. He was faithful to David, but he wouldn't share his trials out in the cave and in the [00:10:03] woods, and so he perished on Mount Gilboa with his father. But here we have those who, when David is being persecuted by Saul, and he's there in Ziklag, and he's dwelling under difficulties, there were loyal men who stood by David.

You know, it's one thing to be loyal when everything's going outwardly well. It's another thing to be loyal when circumstances are against us. And the Lord looks, beloved, for us to be loyal to him in the day of his rejection. This is the day of Christ's rejection, and this is the day when if we're loyal to Christ, we have to share his reproach in some measure or other.

We don't know a great deal about it in a country like we live in, but it's there all the same, and people will let us know, sooner or later, if we are faithful to Christ, that they don't [00:11:03] want to have

anything to do with him. And so we have to share his reproach. Now I think we have a few lessons here in the attitude of these men who were loyal to David in his rejection. They came to David, it says, to Ziklag, while he had kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish.

And they were among the mighty men, helpers in the war. They were armed with bows and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow. Even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin. That's a wonderful statement, isn't it? There are several things here. First of all, the last statement says, they were Saul's brethren. Saul was the king, Saul was persecuting David, Saul was hunting David. And yet of Saul's brethren out of Benjamin, there were a number there who recognized David as God's man.

They recognized David as the true king, and they were loyal to David. [00:12:04] And it's not as if they were nobodies.

They were fighting men.

They were no doubt the best men in Saul's army.

It says they could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow.

And you know, you don't get to do things like that without practice.

We know today when we use rifles and guns that if you want to hit the target with a rifle, you've got to practice it.

When I was a young fellow and we had to have shooting practice, we had to go out certain half days a week when I was a young fellow, and we had to learn to shoot the bullseye with a rifle.

And that takes practice.

You have to learn how to do it. And for these men to learn to sling stones with the right hand or with the left.

[00:13:03] And if you're right-handed, it's not an easy thing to learn to sling things with your left hand. They practiced, and they were using all the ability that they had, they were willing to dedicate it to David, because they recognized that David was God's man. What a lesson for us, to use what the Lord has given us for him. God has given us all something to do, given us all some ability, some in some way and some in another.

How important, beloved, that we should dedicate what we have to the Lord.

And it mentions their names. I'm not going to go into all the names, but that's another thing, their names are mentioned in scripture.

And we can take, we can be sure that if we're seeking to be faithful to the Lord, the Lord doesn't forget our names.

Then it goes on and says further down, in verse 8, that the Gadites separated themselves [00:14:01] unto David of the Gadites, that's of the tribe of Gad, into the hold in the wilderness, men of might, men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler.

He was also some good warriors, out of the tribe of Gad.

They said, well, we can see that Saul's not the rightful king, he's not God's man. David is.

We'll be faithful to David.

And it says they were men of might and men of war fit for the battle. They say, well, why is it talking in the Bible so much about battles? Well, in the Old Testament, they were real literal battles.

We are not fighting literal battles, in that sense.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but we have a battle. And the Christian life is a warfare.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood, though, the apostle Paul says in writing to the Ephesians, [00:15:01] but against principalities, against powers, against wicked spirits in the heavenly places. We're told that we're to resist the devil and he'll flee from us.

We have, as we've been reminded in our Sunday morning Bible study, the enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

We're in the enemy's land, and it's a warfare. These were men of war, and the Lord looks for us to be men of war in that sense. Their faces were like the faces of lions.

What does it mean when it says their faces were like the faces of lions? You know, the lion has a fearless face.

If you see a picture of a lion and you look at that, you can see the lion doesn't turn back for anybody.

The lion is the animal that's unafraid.

He doesn't turn back.

When these men were the faces of lions, it meant that they weren't going to turn back, [00:16:03] and we shouldn't be those who turn back. Someone has said a Christian might get pushed back, but he should never turn back, and a real Christian never does. The enemy might push us back, but you know, when the Lord gives the armor in the last chapter of Ephesians, there's no armor for the back. All the armor's for the front. There's no armor for the back. A true believer is never in Scripture looked at as turning his back to the enemy.

If he gets pushed back, he faces the enemy, and he's eventually able to rout the enemy with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. God doesn't give us armor for the back, and that's how we have to face the enemy. Our faces must be as the faces of lions. We should not be afraid.

David could say, I will trust and not be afraid. I've no doubt there were times when David was afraid,

but he trusted the Lord, and the [00:17:03] Lord enabled him to go forward and took his fear away. There are times when we are afraid, when we are fearful. What do we do then? Well, we put it in the Lord's hands.

We do what the Apostle Paul says in writing to the Philippians, be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall garrison your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. And then it says, they were swift as the rose upon the mountains. You know the rose, that's the deer on the mountains, how swift it is. It just seems to hop from one point to another, and it's very, very swift. And so they not only had the faces of lions, they were bold and unafraid. They were swift, and the Lord looks for those whose feet are swift, that our feet are swift to run the Lord's messages and to do his service.

[00:18:02] Then it mentions their names, too. See, they are recorded in scripture.

Then we have the sons of Gad, and they were captains of the host.

You know, everybody is not a captain. There were those in those days who were captains of the host. They were, one of the least was over a hundred, and the greatest over a thousand. But it's a big responsibility to be a captain in an army.

Even to be captain of a hundred, no doubt, would be a big responsibility. To be captain over a thousand would be a very great responsibility. Maybe we'd hardly say that was a captain today. That would almost be like a lieutenant general or something like that, had a big responsibility. But even in the Lord's things, there are those whom the Lord calls to have places of responsibility.

And so we have to serve under the one who is our captain, the Lord Jesus Christ. [00:19:04] You see, each one has a work to do according to his ability. These were faithful men. And it tells us about them something rather interesting in verse 15. It says, they went over Jordan in the first month, where it had overflowed all his banks, and they put to flight all them of the valleys both toward the east and toward the west. That is, they were willing to do something difficult.

From what we read and the pictures we've seen of the Jordan River, it's not a very big river. The Jordan is a rather small river.

We know how that Naaman really despised it. He says, aren't Abana and Farpa, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? That little bit of a creek, he says, aren't the rivers in my country better than that? And anyhow, he finally ate humble pie and went down and bathed himself in the Jordan [00:20:05] as the prophet had told him to do, and received the blessings through it. But I understand that when the Jordan overflows its banks, it's a little difficult to get over, because it fills up and flows right over on either side. And it would be an easy thing to cross over the Jordan River at the time when the river's low. But to go across the river when it's in flood and a raging torrent, it would be a rather dangerous thing to do. If any of you have anything to do with seeing rivers in flood, flowing their banks and water rushing along, it's very, very dangerous.

Because not only is the danger in a swift current, but these rivers, when they're in flood, they usually carry down trunks of trees and all kinds of things with them. And it's really very dangerous.

[00:21:03] So these men, because of their faithfulness to David, were willing to do dangerous things. They were willing to risk their lives, because a battle had to be fought. They had to go across, it says, and fight those that were in the valleys, both toward the east and toward the west. And the Lord used them. They went across. They risked their lives in difficult times.

They weren't just dry-weather Christians. They were rainy day. They would be a picture, we might say, of rainy day Christians as well, as those who are willing to stand for the Lord when the difficult times come. So it is, beloved. We have, in our Christian life, times when things go along smoothly.

We have times when things are not going smoothly. But if the Lord is really occupying the place in our hearts that he should, he'll give us the grace to serve him no matter what the circumstances.

[00:22:05] Then we have those who came to David. It says, the children of Benjamin and the children of Judah. Perhaps a lot of them came. And David goes out to meet them. And he says, now, if you've come peaceably, that's all right. But if you've come to betray me to my enemies, the Lord will look upon it, because I haven't done anything wrong to Saul. I'm innocent of the things he charges me of, and that was true. David is not speaking self-righteously here. He's speaking the truth. He was being chased around by Saul for no reason. Saul should have recognized that he was God's anointed king, and he wouldn't recognize it. He was too proud to own it. And so David says, if you've come to betray me to my enemies, the Lord will see to that. No, they weren't going to do that.

They were loyal to David. And Amaziah says, who's the chief of the captains, he says, thine we are, David. And on thy side, thou son of Jesse, peace, peace be unto thee, [00:23:02] and peace be to thy helpers. For thy God helpeth thee.

Then David received them and made them captains of the band. That was a lovely statement. Thine we are, David. We are yours, David, they said. And we're going to stand for you, and may the Lord give you peace. And David was so pleased that they received their reward. David made them captains. And you know, we have, if we had time to go into it, it's very interesting, we have David's mighty men listed twice in the scriptures. And the list of mighty men that David recognized, these men who were faithful to him in his rejection.

And when he became king, he didn't forget them. And beloved, if we as the Lord's people are faithful to him in his rejection, the Lord won't forget it in the day when he's reigning. May we seek to be faithful. Now, I want to say a little bit more. It mentions further down there in verse 23, [00:24:05] about those who came to David when they came to make him king in Hebrew. After Saul is dead, they came to David in Hebrew.

And it gives a great list of all these men.

And I don't want to go into all this, but it mentions them, different ones.

But I want to refer to just two or three.

In the 32nd verse it says, And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do. The heads of them were two hundred, and all their brethren were at their commandment. Now here we have the children of Issachar. They came to make David king in Hebrew.

But it says, they were men who had understanding of the times.

To know what Israel ought to do.

[00:25:02] Now, at that time it meant this.

They were men of spiritual discernment.

And they discerned that the time had come in God's plan for David to take the throne.

God had allowed Saul to be killed.

In his overruling providence, Saul had died on Mount Gilboa. And it tells us in, I think it's the 10th chapter of this same book, that Saul died because he consulted the woman that had a familiar spirit. Saul meddled in spiritism.

And that was the end of God's patience with him.

And it distinctly says he died because he consulted the woman that had a familiar spirit. Very, very solemn.

And these men of Issachar, they had understanding, they discerned the signs of the times, the day that they live in. And beloved, this is something that should be true of us. We should have understanding of the times. [00:26:02] We should discern the day in which we live. And I believe if we read the scriptures and we attend to the things of God as we should, the Lord will give us understanding of the times. We as Christians should realize that we live in a very, very important day. We live at the very close of the present period of God's grace. Very soon the day of God's grace is going to close. The Lord Jesus is coming again as we were singing in our hymns. And he's coming again to take his own to be with himself. And who is he going to take to be with himself? Every blood-bought redeemed one. Everyone who's saved through faith in the blood of Christ. And as a consequence has received the Spirit of God, will be caught up to be with the Lord in the air. We're getting very near that day. Therefore, we should keep ourselves separated from the entanglements of the world and we should live for Christ. We should be looking for him. The men of Issachar had understanding of the times. [00:27:01] May the Lord give us an enablement to have understanding of the day in which we live and to discern what the Lord would have us to do in seeking to be faithful to him and attest to those around us. I'm sure there are many souls around us that don't know where to turn and they just want someone to say something to them. It's true that there are a great many that are completely indifferent and they're determined to go their own way and just live their lives for the world, the flesh and the devil and leave God out. It's sad to say there are many like that. But there are still souls seeking souls.

And we have the truth.

I don't say that boastfully. I mean that we have the truth of God and God has revealed much to us and we can be a help to these dear souls. And so if we have understanding of the times, the Lord will give us wisdom to know what to say to them. Then it says something else which I think is important that goes along with it. It says their brethren were at their commandment. They had an understanding of the times [00:28:01] and they had the confidence of their brethren and their brethren were willing to

do what they said. And that's important. We should have the confidence of our brethren. And this fits in with what it says of the men of Zebulun. It says in verse 33, Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand which could keep rank. They were not of double heart.

We've heard the story about the lady who is watching the troops marching by and her son John is in the troop, is marching along with them. Why? She says, John is the only one that's in step. Well, you know, these men of Zebulun weren't like that. It says they could keep rank. They could keep step with their brethren. It's a terrible thing, you know, to get out of step with your brethren. And that happens sometimes among the Lord's people. We get out of step with one another. We're not marching together.

[00:29:02] You know, it's very, very lovely to see some soldiers marching along and they're all in step. They're marching along together. Well, the Lord wants to see his army marching all in step, keeping rank, not breaking rank.

And only the Lord can give us grace to do that.

You know, it's a wonderful thing when there's a company of Christians and there's harmony.

The Lord so works in our hearts that we're in a spirit of harmony.

The Holy Spirit can work. God can use us.

And there's nothing so sad as to have a group of Christians, an assembly of the Lord's people, where there's disharmony. And you feel when you come in, there's something wrong here. And I believe the outsiders feel. People coming from outside, they very quickly discern if we have a spirit of harmony among us or not. And that is a wonderful testimony when there's a group of Christians who are harmonious.

[00:30:03] They're not only an individual. Each one is not only a testimony individually, but the company is a collective testimony.

And so these men of Zebulun can set us a lesson in that. They could keep rank.

And they were not of double heart. That's why they could keep rank. They had a single heart. Their heart was set on David. They thought, we're here to serve David. We want to be good soldiers for David. We want to do the will of David. And of course, no doubt, they recognized that David was under God and they were doing God's will. But with us, we don't have any man on earth that we could do the will of. But for us it is, we should be those who want to do the will of our blessed Lord and to do what pleases Him and to work together for Him and to keep rank, not to be out of step or thinking that we are the only ones that are in step because when people get out of step, you know, that's what they think. [00:31:01] They think everyone else is out of step when they're out of step themselves. And so we have a wonderful lesson in the men of Zebulun who could keep rank and were not of double heart. And of all these men, it says again in verse 38 of others from the Jordan, Reubenites and Gadites and the half of Manasseh in verse 37, all these men of war that could keep rank, mentions again, those who could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron to make David king over all Israel and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king. They came

with one heart. They could keep rank. David was to be king, David was the king and they were going to make him king. You know, we sing of him sometimes, this king of my heart, I crown thee now.

The Lord has the first place in our heart. Everything else will fall in its place. The reason why so many things go wrong sometimes among us [00:32:02] is because the Lord doesn't have the first place. If we give the Lord the first place, beloved, everything else falls in place. Well, just a few thoughts from the history of these men of David.

And then they were with David three days eating and drinking and then it mentions to close, there were those of Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali in verse 40 brought bread on asses and on camels and on mules and on oxen and meat and meal and cakes of figs and bunches of raisins, wine and oil and oxen and cheap abundantly for there was joy in Israel. They didn't forget the people had to eat. And so they brought, they willingly brought the food. There's no question of how much they were going to be paid for it. No, they brought it willingly because they wanted to make David king. And so they were provided with what they needed. And the Lord will enable us, if we're faithful, to bring the spiritual food that God can use for blessing [00:33:01] to his people and to those around him.