

Covert Operation



Scripture:

2 Samuel 23: 13-17

13 And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

14 And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem.

15 And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!

16 And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord.

17 And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men.

Introduction:

King David had an elite force that the Bible calls “three mighty men” and in 2 Chronicles they are referred to as “three mighty men of valour”. Additionally he had a large army.

The elite force has several notable battles and skirmishes recorded in the Bible. But one act is worthy of remembrance as a “covert operation.” The account appears in 1 Chronicles 11 as well as 2 Samuel 23.

This operation sent a message to King David, to the Philistine enemies down in the Valley, and a message to the people overcome by the enemy in Bethlehem as well. It is so noteworthy that God had this act recorded for us to learn from it thousands of years later.

As a side note:

The exact location of the cave[s] of Adullam located outside the City of Bethlehem is uncertain. There is a Cave of Adullam on the tourist stops in the Holy Land that is located about 6 miles out. It can hold 1000s of people. There are other caves in the system as far as 13 miles out to as close as 2 miles from the town.

The Valley of Rephaim [Valley of Giants] is located outside of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem and Bethlehem are 4.4 miles apart.

In the Valley of Rephaim

In the Valley of Rephaim the enemy, the Philistine, encamped. They stood between King David’s army and his beloved hometown of Bethlehem.

Three years of war had passed. Territorial lines had changed repeatedly. Some lands had to be retaken on more than one occasion. It had been a long war.

David and his army had setup their command post in the caves of Adullam in the bare rocky hills elevated so they could see the enemies movements and be safe for the time being. King David was a weary soul, longing for home.

There had been great victories, but there was more fighting to do, more lives would be lost, more ground to gain before the land of Israel would have peace again.

King David is facing the Valley of Rephaim between him and his hometown.

The name Rephaim means “giants” in the Hebrew. This had been the area where young David had slain Goliath the Philistine earlier. The area was known as the Valley of Giants or the Valley of Rephaim because of the tribes of people connected with the region.

King David is confronted with the Valley of Giants between his hideout in the caves and his Hometown where he had grown up, shepherding, and drinking water from the wells of Bethlehem. He was war tired and homesick overlooking this Valley of Giants.

THERE WAS A BARRIER BETWEEN KING DAVID AND HIS HOME.

How many of us have a barrier between us and the Lord? A valley of giants, that unspoken gnawing ache in our hearts and back of the mind of unresolved issues, unconfessed sins and the resulting broken fellowship with the Lord. You can put up a good front, put on a smiling face, and laugh with the folks around you, but underneath you know there is a Valley of Giants lying between you and your Lord.

Regrets, mistakes, bad decisions, and lost battles of the spirit and mind can be just as painful as what King David was experiencing.

Reflecting back, he says out loud: *Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!*

He wanted things back to “normal”; to be like they were when life was simpler. As a young shepherd drinking from the well at home, he had good memories. He longed for home.

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT HOW MUCH OUR KING, THE LORD JESUS, LONGS FOR THINGS TO BE LIKE THEY WERE “IN THE BEGINNING?”

God could walk and talk with Adam and Eve with nothing between them to hinder open communication; no sin barrier until after that day in the Garden of Eden.

NOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH GOD THROUGH THE MEDIATOR, CHRIST JESUS, THE SON.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

God communicates through Jesus the One that reconciled us through His sacrifice so that He could talk to God on our behalf. The Holy Spirit was sent by God to guide us personally and to comfort us.

The born-again believer is addressed by John with these words:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness

I imagine that God is looking forward to that day when again, there will be no sin barrier.

Risking All for the King

2 Samuel 23: 16a And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David:...

When King David commented about the well, he did not expect to get a drink from it until the nation had Bethlehem back from the enemy. However, he underestimated the love of his mighty men of valor.

It appears from scripture that they didn't tell King David what they were planning to do. They didn't tell anyone except the very elite group of three that were going to implement the plan. What if they had failed? These were his elite forces; his top command and very best soldiers. Why would they risk all for such a seemingly insignificant matter like a glass of water? They were getting water from someplace up there in the caves. A spring perhaps, or a brook down on the edge of the valley supplied water. So why risk their lives?

But nonetheless, they pull off a covert operation. With swords in hand and an empty water pitcher in a backpack the three men fight their way through the enemy lines. They get to Bethlehem, fill the pitcher with water, and have to fight their way back through the enemy lines again plus not spill the water.

All of these risks were taken just to please their King! What kind of love and devotion is this?

HOW MUCH DO YOU LOVE YOUR GREAT KING? IS YOUR LOVE FOR HIM GREAT ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU “MIGHTY” IN HIS SIGHT?

John 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE AND TOOK THE PUNISHMENT WE DESERVED UPON HIMSELF; YET, DO WE LOVE HIM ENOUGH TO GIVE A LITTLE OF OURSELVES, MUCH LESS OUR LIVES?

Reaction of the King

2 Samuel 23: 16b-17 ... and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men.

King David was astounded.

What he does next could be easily misunderstood in our culture. We might jump to the conclusion that he was angry or unappreciative of these three top mighty men risking their lives without his knowledge to “pull a stunt” like this!

After all, what if they had been killed? His top leadership would be gone and his entire army at risk of never regaining their beloved Bethlehem.

But that is not what we see happening.

David considered the Bethlehem water precious. This demonstration of love for him by these three mighty men could not be spent on himself.

King David could show no higher respect than this overwhelming act of gratitude than by what he does next. He pours the water out as a sacrifice to Almighty God.

THE THREE MIGHTY MEN COULD HAVE HAD NO GREATER THANK YOU NOR GREATER REWARD THAN THAT OF THEIR FRUITS OF THEIR SERVICE BEING SACRIFICED TO THE GOD OF HEAVEN.

THE WATER IS MORE PRECIOUS AS AN OFFERING THAN IF HE HAD KEPT IT AS A GIFT.

Conclusion:

In the Valley of the Giants there is a barrier between us and the God of Heaven.

But ONE Mighty Man of Valor, the Lord Jesus, not only risked it all, but knowingly went in and did give the ultimate sacrifice of Himself in order to give us the Living Water.

Good news, He had the power to bring Himself back to life so that you and I can have life.

If you have that life, that born-again life that He offers, are you willing to pour out your life as a sacrifice to Him?

Do you know Him?

Trail Markers to Discuss:

Take each highlighted sentence and use as a discussion point asking some of these questions:

- Can you think of where this can apply to you today? Right now at this point in your life?

Activity: Refer to: *War Heroes 2-Adult Workbook*