

DAVID

Two biblical characters are raised as warriors and subsequently are involved in war all of their lives. Joshua and David have the most to teach us about warfare because the Lord taught them, and they listened. Even the few mistakes they make serve to teach warfare concepts.

Few characters stir the imagination as much as David. When the Lord looked at David, He saw a warrior's heart. Major sections of the books of Samuel relate details of battles and tactics in which David is involved. David was a man of war raised up by the Lord to defeat Israel's enemies. The Lord's directions to David contain lessons valuable to spiritual warfare and add to our storehouse of knowledge necessary to defeat the enemy.

The fall of Saul due to disobedience heralds the rise of a new choice for king. The king will come from the house of Jesse and will serve as the lineage for the coming Messiah.

Scriptures relates:

With Saul's further disobedience the Lord instructs Samuel:

"How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate." Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?" Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the LORD." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one." Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down [\[a\]](#) until he arrives." So he sent and had him brought in. He was

ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah. (1 Samuel 16:1-13)."

When Jesse looked at his youngest son he saw a child of no account. It would appear that Jesse hardly regarded him as part of the family. The rejection may have been rooted in his reddish hair.

Regardless, finally Jesse brings David before Samuel. It is apparent that David was the object of scorn by his brothers as well as his father. It was no simple task tending the sheep. A young boy, facing the wild country filled with lions, wolves and bears, it was his responsibility to see that no harm came to the sheep.

This was the early training ground that prepares David to face his fears. The trials aimed at molding fortitude came in the form of two fierce animals--a bear and a lion. David was a boy perhaps around 17 or younger. He must have been tall because Saul, who was taller than any of the people (1 Samuel 10:23), personally gave his own armor to David prior to his battle with Goliath. (1 Samuel 17:38)

David spends many sleepless nights alone in the wilderness caring for his father's sheep. Mentally toughened by these experiences, David does not shirk from responsibility; rather, he uses the time to strengthen himself, physically, mentally, and spiritually. The early training emphasizes three aspects: weaponry, fearlessness, and accountability.

Eventually, David faces a test which reveals his inner character. The test comes in two stages, revealing David's knowledge and use of weapons, his response to unprovoked attack and his sense of accountability. David, as a shepherd, feels responsible for the sheep under his care.

Often wild animals would attack the flock and carry off lambs. Disregarding personal danger David would rescue the animals, bringing the sheep back to the fold.

Close reading of the text (1 Samuel 17:34ff) reveals interesting details about these rescues. Both bears and lions would attack the sheep, carrying off their victims. After rescuing the sheep alive David ceases bothering the predators.

However, both the lion and bear attack David. David resists the attacks and slays the predators. All of this, when added together, reveals a sterling character. A deep sense of responsibility, coupled with dogged fearlessness, is clearly seen in David's behavior. The use of a sword in close combat situation with these animals is a surprise. Why did he not use a sling at a greater distance? It was dangerous to be in this close of contact with a wild animal. The answer may lie in the need for the closeness of killing experience. Perhaps the Lord made the situation available in order to give David the experience. This will be explored further under the section on killing. David has no resistance to killing, yet it is purposeful and there is no joy in it. David is just a boy and news of these incidents spreads abroad. (1 Samuel 16:8)

David's familiarity with the common weapons and military tactics of the day is apparent. David's preparedness as a warrior is seen in stealth ability, tracking, knowledge of the terrain, and the manner in which he arms himself with sword and sling.

Other details about David's combat action with Goliath yield even further information. David stops to pick up appropriate stones for his sling. This means he was not carrying ammunition with him. The implication is David used the sling as a secondary weapon. Though secondary, the sling requires an expertise obtained only by constant use. It is capable of killing at a range of 50 to 250 yards depending on the size of the stone.

Further, David tries on the armor and weapons offered by Saul. This weapons check is not just a random act on David's part. He, as a warrior, is assessing their value in the coming combat situation. David decides the sword and armor would not improve his chances and therefore puts them aside.

His conclusion is based on several combat observations. David has ascertained that mobility is his greatest advantage. He has two opponents, both heavily armed. Their movement would be restricted. Goliath's body armor weighs 125 pounds. The armor bearer is carrying a shield and spear (or javelin) and body armor as well. Neither combatant is able to move quickly. David's assessment is correct. He is sure of himself based on two observations: the Lord is on his side and therefore the outcome is assured. But also Goliath did not have much of a chance. It is impossible for him to chase David around the battlefield because of his size and the weight of his body armor.

Notice as well, David joins in the follow-up attack on the Philistines as they are routed. This marks David's advancement into the rank of acknowledged warrior. Jonathan's response to David is unique. He immediately recognizes the warrior heart and is attracted to it. Jonathan then re-arms David. Jonathan gives David his robe, armor, sword, bow, and girdle which holds the sword. Jonathan is bestowing great honor on David. He is also giving him the highest quality weapons available.

Saul appears to have mixed feelings--enjoying the battle that David has won for them but at the same time exhibiting the paranoid tendencies which will overwhelm him later. Saul's behavior in the conflict with the Philistines reflects the loss of the Lord's Spirit. Forty days Goliath challenges the Israelites yet Saul is weak and indecisive. He notifies the army if anyone

would fight Goliath he would be rewarded. No one accepts the challenge. If the leader is fearful then the morale of the soldiers suffers as well.

There are character difficulties evident as well. When Saul is first elected king some of the tribal clans criticize him. Once the initial battle is won against the Ammonites some retort that these critics ought to be put to death. Saul wisely rejects the suggestion. Now Saul is indecisive, weak, and suffers from paranoia. David is responsible for routing the Philistines and is made a commander in the Israelite army. Almost immediately David is subject to Saul's anger. He offers his daughter as a prize, then turns and marries her to someone else.

Saul then decides because his youngest daughter loves David that he will give her in marriage to him. Saul then makes demands that would be impossible for an ordinary man in hopes that David will be killed. David gives Saul double what he asks for--proof that he has killed two hundred Philistines.

The Lord is preparing David for kingship. The Lord has opened the door to eventual royal acceptance yet David has much to learn. David will learn that being a warrior is far easier than ruling a nation.

David easily takes on the mantle of military leadership. Probably commanding a regiment of 1000 men, David sets out to destroy the Philistines. This phase teaches David about organized military planning and enemy strategy.

However it is relatively short, for the main method taught by the Lord to His commanders involved guerrilla warfare, night fighting, hit and run attacks, intelligence gathering, use of terrain and more. Quickly the Lord escalates the problems between Saul and David so that David finally reconciles himself to the fact he must leave. David's hesitation almost leads to his own death and seals the doom of many others.

A conversation and covenant with Jonathan and final warning spurs David into flight. Though warned numerous times, David fails to prepare for Saul's attempt on his life. David flees without food or weapons. God diligently attempts to warn His children of coming disaster. Fear of change and grasping at the secure and material blinds many to these warnings. David's delay costs the lives of 85 priests and other men, women and children. The whole town of Nob is put to the sword.

David now compounds his error by going to his enemy for protection. Achish learns that this is the David who is successful in battle against him. David fears for his life and escapes from the city of Gath by acting crazy. Finally David learns his lesson and turns to God for the answers. Each of the circumstances which follow displays God's faithfulness.

David now establishes guerrilla warfare in order to survive. David's first order of business after leaving Gath is to establish a fighting force. Many distressed, poor, and homeless hear of David's army and respond. Implied in scripture is the mobile nature of the force. Apparently they used horses.

As he establishes his command he provides for the safety of his family first by taking them to the King of Moab and working out protection. Now David is ready for war.

The Lord provides David's first assignment. He hears of the plight of the people of Keilah, a farming community, being looted regularly by the Philistines. David immediately inquires of the Lord whether he is to fight the Philistines. The Lord tells David to go and save Keilah.

The David we now see is more mature and obedient. As the depth of obedience increases so does his fearlessness. David's new formed army is apprehensive. They had thought that they would be looting the defenseless. Now they learn they are going into combat against a well-

trained force of their equal. They share with David their fear. David again inquires of the Lord, and this time the Lord affirms they are to go and that He the Lord would deliver the Philistines up. (I Samuel 23:1-6)

All the while, David's chief enemy is planning his defeat. Hearing that David has saved Keilah, Saul sees the opportunity to kill him because Saul knows the people of Keilah will turn David over to him. How often is it that our enemies are friends? Even those of one's own household often become our chief enemies.

Intelligence is absolutely imperative to the survival of a military unit and no less the case for the Christian. Knowledge of our enemy and his followers is essential and yet is the greatest weakness we face. So often we act like sheep, oblivious to the dangers surrounding us. Peter, knowing the danger, paints the picture of a roaring lion, starved and looking for prey. Thus, while the prey, prays, he is destroyed. Peter tells us to resist, fight, attack and stand firm against the enemy. We are to know our enemy well. (I Peter 5:8)

Saul knew his enemy. But David knew of his enemies' plans for evil and inquires of the Lord about what is to be done. Instructive in this passage is how David asked very clear, concise, simple questions of the Lord. Often our prayers are long drawn-out compound sentences which neither ask nor expect an answer. David asked the Lord very simple questions. "Will Saul come down?" "He will." "Will the people of Keilah surrender to me?" "They will." (I Samuel 22:9ff) David leaves. O, that our prayers were so concise. Lord, instill in your children the willingness to listen to you.

Again the scriptures provide the information that David is afraid. Jonathan visits David in the wilderness to encourage him to not be afraid. The Lord, through his servant Jonathan, sends

these strong words and renewal of their covenant, knowing shortly David will be betrayed into Saul's hands.

The Ziphites initiate the visit to Saul in order to betray David. But David escapes out of Saul's hands, only to find he must escape again at En-gedi. The warrior should take warning from these experiences of David. Satan continually hunts the soul of the righteous man.

Why did the people of Keilah and the Ziphites and those of En-gedi choose to betray David? Is there any evidence that David retaliated? These people were of the tribe of Judah, not Saul's tribe. However this general area bordered the tribe of Benjamin. It was an area of strong partisanship for Saul. Some researchers like to paint David as a chieftain who drained the people by taxing them, and therefore they wanted to rid themselves of David. However this could not be correct. For in the situation with Nabal, witnesses said of David that He and his men protected them day and night. They felt a kinship towards David and his men for the genuine protection that was given by him.

Furthermore, in Samuel 30:26ff after David has rescued the town of Ziklag he sent to the rulers in this area part of the spoils as payment for their help while on the run from Saul.

No, the reason for the treachery on their part rests on their relationship with Saul and for the monetary reward for turning in David. Of the three, only Keilah would have betrayed David out of fear. That fear was reasonable because Saul had already destroyed a whole town just because he thought it supported David.

Aside from this there is a possibility that David feared facing Saul because he knew he could destroy his army. 600 hundred against 3000 seems like hefty odds, but remember David was an expert at defeating far larger armies by ambush. But David knew the Lord would not allow him to defeat Saul. Thus he had no choice but to avoid a battle.

For the warrior the lesson is clear--one must have the Lord's permission to attack the enemy. At times the Lord protects the evil from the good for His own good reasons. Moreover, one must trust in the Lord and not fear the enemy. No doubt David was exhausted from running from Saul, so he finally leaves the battlefield. David goes back to Achish as an experienced warrior bringing his own troops. Achish welcomes him and gives him a city on the border of the Philistia territory which is highly vulnerable to attack by roving bands of Amalekites.

David's past experience gives him the ability to handle this task. Several years hence, this experience at Ziklag will allow David to recognize the importance of maintaining secure borders all around Israel.

David, fearful that Saul will eventually capture him, flees to the Philistines. Achish greets David in a much different manner than previously. David comes with 600 armed men. Achish is overjoyed and gives the town of Ziklag as a reward for serving him. This marks a major turning point in David's career. He is a military man in every sense of the word, and his reputation has preceded him.

Important lessons are learned by David at Ziklag. He learns of the continual threats Ziklag and other border towns experience from the marauding Amalekites and others who constantly harass the inhabitants. Declaring unrestricted warfare David destroys the encampments of the enemy one at a time leaving none alive to report his activity. David, following in the footsteps of Joshua sees the need for the complete destruction of the enemy. Sixteen months pass as David continually raids the surrounding areas clearing them of the enemy.

Achish calls for David and tells him that the Philistines are going to war against Israel and invites David to participate. The Lord intervenes and turns the hearts of Philistines so that out of fear they reject his help and David goes back to Ziklag.

David finds that the town has been burned and all of the people taken captive. The men of his army sorrow greatly over the loss of their families.

David immediately calls for Abiathar the priest in order to inquire of the Lord what to do. It is interesting that though David wanted to go after the Amalekites, he asked the Lord first.

David understood that he had to act under the Lord's authority. The Lord tells him to pursue and that he would be successful. He strikes out with 600 men. But thirty miles into the desert chase two hundred of his men have to stop exhausted. They remain behind. David and four hundred continue the pursuit. They discover an Egyptian who has fallen sick and is left behind by the raiding party. He leads David to the camp of the Amalekites where they discover the enemy eating and drinking and having a great party.

The Amalekites have disregarded an important principle of warfare. One is most vulnerable after winning a battle. The Amalekites have forgotten to put guard post out to warn of advancing troops.

David probably waits until dusk, resting his men and then in the usual godly pattern, David initiates a night attack. If he followed Gideon's example, David fired the enemy tents creating mayhem within the camp.

The battle rages nearly 24 hours and all but 400 are killed. Only the 400 escape by utilizing camels further south. All of the prisoners are rescued and released. The spoil is massive and divided among all 600 of his men and a large amount is sent to those who supported David during the time he was running from Saul.

Reiterating the major principles at work here David inquires of the Lord first in the midst of tragedy. Next he employs intelligence gathered to garner as much information about the enemy

and to scout for the enemies trail. The enemy, losing sight of the need for vigilance, stop to enjoy the fruits of their labor and are caught unprepared for David's advance.

David rests his troops in preparation for a night attack which will terrorize the enemy. Finally, David, with a grateful heart, shares the spoil with all of his men including those who stayed behind, and the towns who have supported him. The expressions of gratefulness pave the way for David's acceptance as king in place of Saul, who even now is in the process of losing his last battle and his life.

The fifteen years of training has prepared David physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually for the mantle of kingship. No doubt David reviews the years as a shepherd over his father's flocks where he first learned about fearlessness in the face of attack. He remembers the initial success as a commander over Saul's army and then the fall from grace at the hands of a godless man.

The years avoiding those who would kill him and refraining from taking vengeance on those opposed to him, teaches David patience and the importance of trusting God to fight the battles.

But David has learned some other important lessons about ruling a nation. David learns that the borders must be kept secure. David learns that unrestricted warfare frightens the enemy and subdues him. Crowned king in Hebron, David rules Judah for seven years strengthens his position in the south and conducts psychological warfare against the northern tribes who are loyal to Saul's son Ish-bosheth.

Ish-bosheth is killed after a short rule of two years and David is made king over all Israel. The first order of business is the creation of a capital on a neutral site. Jerusalem meets the criteria moreover, it is highly defensible.

Once David is crowned king over all Israel and captures Jerusalem, the Philistines react and invade. The invasion leads to two major battles which decimate the Philistines. The two battles are unique in that God directs the action as commander of the army. As the battles are reviewed consistencies in the Lord's leadership becomes apparent.

The first battle of Rephaim occurs shortly after Jerusalem is subjugated. The text introduces the action:

“When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold. Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" The LORD answered him, "Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you." So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, "As waters break out, the LORD has broken out against my enemies before me." So that place was called Baal Perazim. The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off. (II Samuel 5:17-21).”

The Philistines, hearing of David's rise to king following the death of Saul, decide to hunt David down and capture or kill him. They did not want Israel to reorganize their resistance movement and probably hope to set a governor over the territory. David hearing of the incursion heads for his fortress at Adullam.

The stronghold referred to is located near Adullam. (II Samuel 23:13-14). The location is about 12 miles southeast of Bethlehem and about 2 miles southwest of where David and Goliath met. There are many large caves in the area and the general area probably heavily forested during David's time.

The Philistines had a large garrison located at Bethlehem. Initial military movement by the Philistines proceeds from Gath, a fortified city, east past Socoh down the Elah Valley. Reaching the Rephaim Valley the Philistines set up camp. The text does not mention it but the garrison at Bethlehem probably sent reinforcements.

As the Philistines are setting up camp, David inquires of the Lord of whether he should attack the Philistines and if he would be successful. The Lord tells David that he will overcome the enemy.

David prepares for battle. His keen eye selects an area called Baalperazim. Here the Philistine army must pass through a narrow gorge where chariots cannot be deployed. Placing men on both sides of the boulder strewn passage he prepares for the enemy's approach. As the Philistines reach the ambush site the battle begins. The Philistines are taken by complete surprise and they flee in mass leaving behind everything even their personal idols. The second battle follows closely after the initial defeat.

Once more the Philistines came up and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so David inquired of the LORD, and he answered, "Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the balsam trees. As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move quickly, because that will mean the LORD has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army." So David did as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

Again the Philistines choose to attack up the Rephaim Valley. This area is heavily forested. Forest areas are not a place where battles should be fought. Not then, not now.

Just the mention of their names should bring back the horror of these battles. The Ardennes of World War II, the site of the opening German attack in the Battle of the Bulge cost the Allies 20,000 killed.

This battle was preceded by the Battle of Hurtgen Forest. The battle of Hurtgen Forest began in mid September 1944.

“Troops more than a few feet apart couldn't see each other. There were no clearings, only narrow firebreaks and trails. Maps were almost useless. When the Germans, secure in their bunkers, saw the G.I.s coming forward, they called down pre sighted artillery fire, using shells with fuses designed to explode on contact with the treetops. When men dove to the ground for cover, as they had been trained to do, they exposed themselves to a rain of hot metal and fragmented wood. They learned that the only way to survive a shelling in the Hurtgen was to hug a tree. This way they exposed only their steel helmets to steel and fragments coming straight down from the top of the trees. With air support and artillery almost useless, the GIs were committed to a fight of mud and mines, carried out by infantry skirmish lines plunging ever deeper into the forest, with machine guns and light mortars their only support. For the GIs, it was a calamity. In the September action, the 9th and 2nd Armored Divisions lost up to 80 percent of their front-line troops, and gained almost nothing.”¹

The Civil War of our own country saw massive casualties in the forest wilderness of Chickamauga, Tennessee. Union losses were 16,000 and Confederate losses came to nearly 18,000.

Several years after the battle of the Valley of Rephaim a forest much like Rephaim witnesses the death of Absalom. The text describes this forest as large enough that many died after becoming lost. Battles were not fought in forest areas of Israel because it was difficult to keep the army organized. Men would get lost, and coordination without watchers or compasses made the forest a difficult place to launch an attack.

Knowing the liability, David chooses the forest to launch his attack. As expected, the Philistines are unprepared for an attack from this quarter.

“Once more the Philistines came up and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so David inquired of the Lord, and he answered, "Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the balsam trees. As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move quickly, because that will mean the Lord has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army.” So David did as the Lord commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon [e] to Gezer. (II Samuel 5:17-25).”

¹quote from Ernie Herr, German infantryman during the battle.

The reference to the sound of marching refers to the sound made by the daily breeze from the sea which reaches Jerusalem about noon. The sound the wind makes in the trees would cover the movement of David through the woods.²

The Philistines are routed and killed in a running battle ranging over nearly 10 miles. The Philistines are subjugated by David and remain that way for nearly twenty years. Fierce warriors, they rebuild their forces and continue as a thorn in David's side after his unfaithfulness with Bathsheba. (II Samuel 21:15ff).

I suppose there must be a lesson in all of this. Our forest battles are no less tragic, or damaging. Jesus warns that a man's enemies are of his own home (Matthew 10:36). Family counseling bears this out. Families entangled in anger, immorality, addiction, and hatred, are entangled in a forest of emotions from which few find escape. Mistakenly, many think divorce is the great escape. Endless hours of counseling families reveal that rarely does divorce provide a solution of any but negative consequence. Most individuals are so adamant about getting their own demands they rarely see the outcome of their desires.

There are long lasting consequences for sin. David's illicit relationship and subsequent murder of her husband Uriah bears bitter fruit for the remainder of David's life. David's children observing their fathers rebellion and sexual immorality replicate it in their own lives. Absalom, Ammon, and Adonijah eventually die in immorality and rebellion. We leave it to the reader to learn of the sordid details from II Samuel chapter 11 through 17 and take up with the battle between the David and Absalom.

Absalom succeeds eventually in driving David from Jerusalem and making himself king. This leads to national civil war culminating in the battle in the forest of Ephraim.

² Battles of the Bible, p. 104.

Ahithophel is a wise person. As advisor to David, his advice is held in high esteem. For whatever grievance, he betrays David and becomes the advisor to Absalom. His first advice to Absalom is reprehensible. Go have sex with all of your fathers women, and do it in public. The purpose in the counsel was to further detach the people from David, and strengthen his own position. Absalom followed Ahithophel's advice.

Next Ahithophel tells him to take 12,000 men and pursue David run him into the ground, and then Ahithophel says that he will kill David himself. One may wonder why Ahithophel hates David so much, and how is it that David never detected Ahithophel's disloyalty.

Absalom then ask Hushai what his counsel was in this matter. Hushai, secretly David's friend, tells Absalom that he should fear David because he is a mighty warrior. Moreover David's greatest warriors follow him. Therefore, wait, gather your army together and go out against your father yourself. Absalom chose this advice, and would pay with his life. Ahithophel knows that Absalom will never be able to defeat David. He goes home and kills himself knowing eventually David will win.

Looking at the composition of David's army, we now see a highly organized military. The natural skills of the tribes are being used in training. For example look how individualize the training becomes.

"From the tribe of Benjamin: they were armed with bows and were able to shoot arrows or to sling stones right-handed or left-handed; Gadites ready for battle and able to handle the shield and spear.

The men of Judah, carry shield and spear armed for battle. Men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do. Men of Zebulun, experienced soldiers prepared for battle with every type of weapon, Men of Naphtali carrying shields and spears; Men of Asher, experienced soldiers prepared for battle, and from east of the Jordan, men of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, armed with every type of weapon. (I Chronicles 12:1ff)."

Major changes involving the overall structure of the army leads to conflict as time goes by. The army was divided into two major segments. The first is called the regular army further

subdivided into two sections. The 'mighty men', under the leadership of Joab, composed the regular army. The second section made up of foreign mercenaries under the command of Benaiah ben Jehoiada. Both groups were permanent and constantly trained for battle when not in actual war.

The second major section which equates to the national guard of this country was drawn from the tribes made into 12 corps each serving a month out of each year. This reserve formed the basis for emergency call ups in times of emergency. The commander of the reserve force is Amasa ben Jeter. Joab and Jeter were in constant conflict with each other.

The mighty men had two regiments called the first thirty and the second thirty. These two groups David gathered around himself when he first broke off from Saul and later when David was made king in Hebron. These units provided the leadership and spirit in training provided to the regular army. They spearheaded attacks in any conflict and were known for bravery and courage on the battle field.

The mercenaries, mostly composed of Philistines, provided a heavy infantry, perhaps cavalry units, and perhaps a archery unit. They were steadfastly loyal to David and protected David when Absalom rebelled. There is no doubt that the mighty men and the foreign mercenaries were feared by Absalom who probably depended on the national reserve as the backbone of his army.

The proof of David's genius as a military commander comes from parallel passages in II Samuel 23 and I Chronicles 11. David lists for all to read, then and now, the heroes of the military. Recognition of these men of valor sets precedence for all godly people. Whether in combat or spiritual warfare it is imperative that outstanding heroes be singled out for other warriors to look up to as examples worthy of honor. It is sad that one of these brave men, Uriah the Hittite, becomes a victim of David's lust.

It is David's unique ability to bring together the strongest and bravest, to defend God's kingdom. It should be remembered that this skill began in the hills surrounding Bethlehem where a shepherd boy, braving the elements, wild and dangerous animals, and many lonely nights, chose to serve the Lord. God honored this desire and turned those fearful nights into a brave heart.