



Soldiering: A Biblical Perspective
Lesson 1
God's Good Soldiers (Soldiers in the Bible)

"The spiritual is to the physical as three is to one." Napoleon

1. Introduction.

a. The Bible is God's inspired writing telling of His love, forgiveness, and presence. It is rich with poetry, humor, inspiration, exhortation, and comfort. It is a prayer book, a songbook, and a love story. It tells of how God first loved us and gave His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the perfect sacrifice to redeem His creation. The Bible is also filled with accounts of battles, wars and heroic feats of combat. Professional soldiers, sailors, airmen or marines can and will learn many lessons from the Bible, which gives instruction and encouragement for professional excellence. In the Old Testament, we read about the God of Israel organizing, directing and blessing that nation's army during its many conquests and renewal. In the New Testament, we read of Roman soldiers. We see their cruelty during Christ's crucifixion, and we read of some Roman officers' godly character. While the central theme of the Bible is the gift of salvation, as military professionals we can also learn important lessons about how to be God's spiritual and earthly soldier.

b. To begin our look at what the Bible says about a good soldier, we need a frame of reference. What are the characteristics of a good soldier?

2. Jewish Soldiers.

a. The first use of trained soldiers in the Bible is recorded in Genesis 14:14-16. Why did Abram train men of his own house to fight?

b. Read Num 1:3, Num 1:45-50 & Deu 20:5-8, which describe the Lord's requirements for the Army of Israel.

(1) In Num 1:3 what was the basic requirement to be in the Army?

(2) In Num 1:45-50 and Deut 20:5-8 what exemptions did the Lord authorize?

(3) Why would the Lord give these directions to Moses to organize the Army?

c. Scan Numbers 2. How was the Army of Israel organized?

d. Followership and leadership among David's mighty men (2 Samuel 23:8-19)

(1) What were the individual accomplishments of David's mighty men?

◆ Adino:

◆ Eleazar:

◆ Shammah:

(2) Why were these men willing to risk their lives to bring David water from the well in Bethlehem?

(3) What did David do with the water? Why? What other action could he have taken?

(4) What does this incident suggest to you about Biblical principles of follower-ship and leadership?

3. The Apostle Paul's Experience with Soldiers. Read Acts 21:32, 23:23, 24:23 & 28:16.
 - a. What do these passages tell us about how well Paul knew soldiers?
 - b. Based on Paul's experience with soldiers, what do you think he thought about them?

4. Paul's definition of the Good Soldier (2 Timothy 2:1-6).
 - a. What is the source of the Christian soldier's strength (vs 1)?
 - b. What obligations do Christians have to share his/her faith (vs 2)?
 - c. What does Paul say is the defining quality of the good (vs 3)?
 - d. What is the Christian soldier's proper relation to his/her heavenly commander (vs 4)?
 - e. What obligation does this impose (vs 5)?
 - f. What common thread unites the soldier, the athlete, and the farmer (vs 3 & 5)?

5. Application: How can you apply the truths of this lesson to:
 - a. Your spiritual life?
 - b. Your professional life?
 - c. How do the two fit together? Are they two separate parts of you life?

Notes for Abraham's Pursuit of Northern Kings

Battles of the Kings: Abraham rescued Lot in a daring military action, demonstrating a strong bond to his nephew as well as leadership capacity. Abraham routed the armies of the Kings of the North that had plundered Sodom and Gomorrah. Gen 14

The Taking of Lot: When the kings of the north plundered Sodom and Gomorrah they captured Lot and his family. Abraham then went into battle with the kings. Gen 14

Melchizedek, King of Salem (Jerusalem): His encounter with Melchizedek, king of Salem, was a different matter. That priest-king met Abraham not with promise of booty, but with a blessing in the name of "God Most High, maker of heaven and earth: (Gen 14:19). The word used for God had been used of other gods also, but Melchizedek used it to refer to the true God, creator of heaven and earth. Abraham paid him tithes and then to the words of "Most High" added the name Yahweh (Gen 14:22, "Lord").

Meeting with the King of Sodom: After his victorious return to Canaan, Abraham met with the king of Sodom. Abraham refused all offers of gifts from the king of Sodom on the basis of a solemn oath that no one should attribute any part of his wealth to the Canaanite king. Abraham's allies (Aner, Eschol, and Mamre) did profit from the booty he had captured. Gen 14

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