

Fighting Against The Odds

Ponder: Are you fighting or retreating?

Scripture: “He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword” (2 Sam. 23:10, NKJV).

King David had an elite corps listed in Second Samuel as his “mighty men.” One of those was Eleazar (not the son of Aaron the priest; he was long-since dead). According to 2 Sam. 23:9-10, this Eleazar was one of three mighty men who were with David on a particular occasion when they were opposing the Philistines. So bleak was the situation that verse 9 says “the men of Israel had retreated.” In spite of what the rest of the army did, Eleazar most definitely did not retreat! Verse 10 says, “He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword.” Can you imagine wielding that sword so long that your hand cramped up and you couldn’t even pry your fingers loose from it?

The text doesn’t give a specific number of casualties Eleazar inflicted on the Philistines, but simply says, “The Lord brought about a great victory that day.” The main body of the army had retreated – they only returned to plunder the Philistines that Eleazar had killed. The Lord used one mighty man to do what a whole army of timid men ought to have done. They were happy enough to take the spoils, but wanted nothing to do with the battle.

Today our battle is not against flesh and blood. Paul says “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (2 Cor. 10:4). Our sword is not one of bronze or steel, but the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Our purpose is not to physically kill those who oppose us, but to kill the old man of sin and bring to life a new person in his place.

Far too many in the Lord’s army have retreated. Where are you? Have you retreated? Or will you be one who wields the sword until your hand cramps up and you can’t let go? The battle belongs to the Lord. The question is, will you subject yourself to the Lord for use in the battle, or do you just want to enjoy the benefits of what others do?

Song: “Soldiers of Christ Arise”

Prayer: Father, forgive us for retreating, and make us bold to press the battle against the odds. In Jesus’ name, Amen.