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Fit for battle – Pt 1 physical battles in the Old Testament

This is a new topic – fit for battle. In this our first study we establish what it meant in the Old Testament for soldiers to be fit for battle, and identify (1) soldiers, mighty men of valour, men of war are fit to go out for war, for battle, (2) men fit for battle can handle a shield, buckler and spear, and (3) a soldier's weapons in the Old Testament included a shield, buckler, bow arrow, handstave, spear and sword.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded –

1. Mighty men of valour – soldiers fit to go out for war, for battle.

“All...the sons of Jedaiel, by the heads of their fathers, mighty men of valour, were seventeen thousand and two hundred soldiers, fit to go out for war” (1 Chr.7: 11).

2. Men fit for battle can handle a shield, buckler and spear.

“And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler...” (1 Chr.12: 8), c.f – 2 Chr.25: 5 “Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and...he numbered them...and found them three hundred thousand choice men, able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield”.

3. A soldier's weapons in the Old Testament included a shield, buckler, bow arrow, handstave, spear and sword.

“And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears...” (Ez.39: 9) – c.f. 1Sam 17:39 “And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved [it]. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him”.

Illustration to help apply the teaching to our life.

Films like “Behind enemy lines” reveal men that when called to leave their families to go and rescue their brothers behind enemy lines take with them what they need to be “fit for the battle” – they take a military deployment bag equipped for the task of battle. Including uniform and laptops, while others take their weapons and armour.

Question to think about.

i) Can the soldier take part in a war without being “fit for the battle”?

ii) When David was but a youth he fought against Goliath who challenged Israel to set a man against him (1 Sam.17: 8).”, but he did so without armour and only a sling and a stone – why did David succeed without being fit with armour for the battle?

Our answer from the scriptures.

i) No soldier in a regular army unit can go to war without being fit for the battle.

ii) David succeeded in the battle because he trusted in the Lord his God! David knew that even though it was a physical battle with a champion, and he was but a youth without armour and weapons – there was more with him than against him (2 Chr 32:7). And the battle was NOT his, but the Lord's (2 Chr.20: 15).

David knew and trusted that the Lord could send an angel from heaven to smite the Philistine, or give him the skill and swiftness to overcome the champion of the Philistines. Be encouraged today to be fit for the Lord's battle, knowing that it is not ours, but the Lord's (1 Sam.17: 47).